

## NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **ANDY AND VALERIE MASON NAMED RECIPIENTS OF 2025 YOUNG JERSEY BREEDER AWARD**

*Reynoldsburg, Ohio, August 15, 2025*— The American Jersey Cattle Association (AJCA) has recognized Andy and Valerie Mason of Kennedyville, Md., with the 2025 Young Jersey Breeder Award, honoring outstanding dairy producers under the age of 40 for excellence in herd management, breeding, and industry leadership.

Andy and Valerie's partnership began while they were students at Cornell University, where both majored in animal science. One of their earliest conversations centered on dairy cattle—with Andy declaring his passion for Jerseys, and Valerie noting her family's Holstein herd in Mexico, N.Y. That shared enthusiasm for dairying soon turned into a shared vision for the future.

Andy grew up on a Holstein farm that eventually became home to multiple breeds through various 4-H projects. His passion for dairy cattle took him around the globe, including traveling to Europe as a member of the winning national dairy judging team. Valerie's love for the industry was rooted in her family's farm, where she developed strong skills in herd care and management.

After college, Andy's career direction crystallized during an internship at Yosemite Jersey Dairy in Hilmar, Calif. Inspired by what he saw, he returned to Maryland with the goal of transforming his family's farm into a large, progressive Jersey operation. In 2011, Valerie joined him in Maryland, and by 2012, the family had constructed a new parlor and freestall barn, allowing the herd to expand from 80 cows to today's 850 milking cows, including 800 Registered Jerseys under the *MFW* prefix.

The Masons also farm 1,600 acres, operate their own milk hauling business, and recently expanded into harvesting their own crops. Their commitment to efficiency and performance is evident in the Jerseys' current rolling herd average of 19,742 lbs. milk, 980 lbs. fat, and 703 lbs. protein on 826 cows. Focused on genetic improvement, they use a high percentage of genomic sires and have marketed multiple high-genomic heifers and bulls both privately and through consignment sales.

"The efficiency of Jerseys has been a driving force in our herd's growth," Andy wrote in their award application. "They outperform our other breeds in reproduction as well as productive life."

Their success has been recognized beyond the farm. The *Fawnwood* herd is enrolled in REAP and regularly advertises in the *Jersey Journal*. Andy serves as a corporate director for Land O'Lakes and sits on the board of the National Milk Producers Federation, while Valerie serves on the Kent Agricultural Center board.

In a letter of support, Katie Epstein, senior vice president of ag lending at Horizon Farm Credit, praised the couple's contributions: *"It is due to breeders like Andy and Valerie that the Jersey breed finds continued success and popularity. Not only are they passionate about Jersey cattle, but they have shown commitment through herd growth, improvements in both production and type, and a willingness to lead at local and national levels."*

Looking ahead, Andy and Valerie's greatest goal is to pass their passion for agriculture and the Jersey cow on to their children—Margrit, Abel, and Gladys—ensuring the family legacy continues for generations to come.

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*For a high resolution photo, please get in touch with the American Jersey Cattle Association Communications Department at [info@usjersey.com](mailto:info@usjersey.com).*