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TWO HERDS NAMED PROGRESSIVE DAIRY PRODUCERS BY NATIONAL DAIRY SHRINE

Maribel, Wis. - For the past decade, the National Dairy Shrine has recognized young dairy producers ages 21 to 45 for their outstanding dairy farming practices. Each recipient receives a \$2,000 educational travel award to use out-of-state to observe a dairy activity such as a management conference, trade show, seminar, or dairy herd visit to gain knowledge or new ideas to implement in their dairy operation.

This year's winners in the 300-cow and over division are Andrew and Lynette Buttles of Stone-Front Farm in Lancaster, Wisconsin, and in the 300-cow and under division are Derek and Luke Johnson of Joleanna Holsteins LLC in Unadilla, NY. They will be honored during the National Dairy Shrine Annual Banquet on September 30, 2010, at World Dairy Expo.

The Buttles family dairy has called southwestern Wisconsin home since its move from Waterford in May of 1997. With a heavy threat of urban sprawl near Milwaukee, Andrew's family began the search that resulted in their current Lancaster location. A recent UW-Madison graduate at the time, he decided to take over the family farm and purchased 278 acres, a double seven herringbone parlor, a three-row 150-cow free stall barn, and the 50 cows available with the farm.

Since their purchase of the farm, the Buttles have grown in acreage and cow numbers. They currently milk over 400 cows through the parlor, with an additional 70 dry and prefresh cows and 500 replacement heifers. Production remains the primary focus on the dairy, with a rolling herd average on 385 Registered Holsteins of 26,629 pounds of milk, with a 3.61% fat and 3.0% protein test. The Buttles have 35 Registered Jerseys in the herd as well, which average over 18,600 pounds milk with a 4.51% fat and 3.54% protein test. Cows are milked twice a day and boast these impressive numbers without the use of BST.

Just as important in the Buttles' herd is evaluation of type. They utilize Holstein USA's and Jersey Association's classification systems and boast a 104.5% BAA in the Holstein herd, which ranks in the top seven in the nation for herd size. The Buttles use the show ring to monitor a successful breeding program, and have bred individuals that have been highly successful on the national level.

The Buttles' utilize a strong business plan and team building as part of their management strategy to position their dairy for the future. By investing time and resources in their cattle, paying careful attention to their breeding program and providing top quality feed for the herd, Andrew and Lynette have been able to maintain cash flow, use the best bulls available, and feed cows to maximize production.

While the Buttles' have made significant progression strides, the most important additions to the dairy have been those in their family. Andrew and Lynette married in 2002, following her completion of a Master's degree in dairy nutrition from UW-Madison. She has since worked for Vita-Plus as a dairy nutritionist, and she and Andrew welcomed their first daughter, Christina, in 2007. Their second addition came in January of this year, when daughter Kayla was born.

The blending of the Buttles' passion for breeding and developing good cattle with sound business practices has allowed them the opportunity to do what they love while making a living doing it. Andrew and Lynette truly love what they do and the opportunity to interact with others involved in the dairy industry.

Located in the Susquehanna River valley of Central New York, Joleanna Holsteins was founded in 1973 by Derek and Luke's parents David and Catherine Johnson. The Johnson family formed an LLC in January of 2005 to transition ownership of the business to the next generation, and Derek and Luke are now equal partners of Joleanna Holsteins LLC. A family run operation, the farm currently employs David, as well as Derek's fiancée Erin Bose and Luke's wife, Janette, who manages the herd's nutrition in addition to her independent nutrition consulting work.

The farm consists of 600 crop acres, and is home to 140 milking females with an additional 160 head of young stock. Cows are housed in two adjoining tie-stall barns with a total of 121 stalls, and the herd consists of 100% Registered Holsteins. The Johnsons utilize Holstein USA's classification program, and their emphasis on breeding cows with high type has allowed them to reach a 110.5 herd BAA, with 43 EX, 66 VG and 29 GP cows, ranking them second in the country for herds over 100 cows.

The Johnsons insist that hard work, cow-side manner and monitoring consequences of specific decisions allow them to use pounds of milk sold per worker, milk income over feed cost and internal herd growth to monitor their business. The milking herd is currently averaging 92 pounds per day, and has increased its rolling herd average 3,000 pounds in the last three years to reach a current average of 27,000 lbs milk. Derek and Luke focus on keeping cows comfortable to keep production levels high, somatic cell count down and reproduction in order.

Internal herd growth has had a tremendous impact on the success of the Joleanna operation. As a Registered Holstein herd, the Johnson brothers strive to breed the kind of cows that will live long productive lives as well as have the potential to compete in the show ring. Derek and Luke have been able to maintain a very low cull rate and with the successful management of their young cattle program, an excess of cattle has been a valuable additional source of income.

Derek and Luke are constantly learning and adapting new forms of technology to maximize productivity and limit the amount of manual labor put into daily operations. They utilize a total mixed ration (TMR) and the use of a mixer wagon to improve feeding efficiency, and purchased automatic take-off milkers two years ago to shorten milking time and enable one person to complete an entire milking. Cow health benefits of the automatic take-off system have also been noticeable, including a somatic cell count of only 113,00.

The Johnson brothers have a vision to be competitive and aggressive in all management aspects of their dairy, and one of their goals is to increase the overall value of their herd of Registered Holsteins. Derek and Luke also hope to manage for maximum production through forage quality and pin point nutrition. They want their business to be profitable while continuing to progress in a rapidly changing industry.