

# THE PULSE

Summer 2023 • Holstein Association USA, Inc.



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# MUCH TO BE PROUD OF IN 2022

President Lamb's address during the Annual Meeting in Lexington, Kentucky

As I am finishing my first year in my two-year term as your President, I would like to reflect on some high points within Holstein Association USA.

Last spring, I wrote my column in *The Pulse* about our Junior programs, and how fortunate we are to have such strong Junior members and Junior programs. From the Young Dairy Leaders Institute, to showing, Dairy Bowl, Dairy Jeopardy, speech contests, and Distinguished Junior Member programs, our youth can take advantage of many opportunities. Our youth programs are the envy of other Holstein Associations around the world.

At the beginning of each board meeting and in each monthly report sent to the board by CEO Meyer, our board gets updated financials. The board has ample opportunity to ask questions and make comments. Often, I comment to the board on how fortunate we are to have CEO John Meyer and CFO Barbara Casna as our financial stewards keeping our organization financially healthy so we can focus on other important missions of the association.

## Research and data propel the breed forward

Holstein USA recently released a study, "A Million Reasons Why Conformation Matters". Dr. Jeffery Bewley and his colleagues put together this study, and Dr. Bewley has become a highly sought-after speaker in our industry. It probably comes as no surprise that cows with higher scores stay in our herds longer and make more lifetime milk.

Last fall, our Holstein Board had the opportunity to tour the Western Kentucky University (WKU) SmartHolstein Lab that Dr. Bewley heads up. Through this partnership with WKU, Holstein Association USA can help evaluate new technologies and be the go-to leader in the industry as an expert. The future possibilities of being a player in this arena are exciting.

AgriTech Analytics, or ATA, is the Holstein Association's Dairy Records Processing Center. The core function of dairy records processing and data crunching is a

natural fit with the Holstein Association. ATA is on sound footing, processing around a million cows per month!

## Incredible efficiency

There was not one, but two new lifetime milk production records in the past year. Chrome-View Charles 3044 made a record of 478,200 pounds of milk, 14,447 pounds of fat, and 12,576 pounds of protein, announced in February. Just a few short months later, Nor-Bert Colby Connie made a record of 486,300 pounds of milk, a whopping 27,062 pounds of fat, and 17,737 pounds of protein. Connie's impressive solids production is what really gets me excited. The reality is that our Holstein breed has made incredible gains in the past 10 to 15 years, and with solids production spreading out maintenance costs, the Holstein breed is truly the feed efficiency breed.

I would like to thank the team members at One Holstein Place and beyond. I am truly proud of their efforts. Most of all, I would like to thank CEO Meyer. I find his dedication to Holstein USA inspirational. Finally, thank you to the Holstein Board of Directors. This group is passionate about the Holstein breed and takes their role as stewards of the association seriously.

Sincerely,



**Jonathan Lamb, President  
Holstein Association USA, Inc.**



**"The reality is that our Holstein breed has made incredible gains in the past 10 to 15 years, and with solids production spreading out maintenance costs, the Holstein breed is truly the feed efficiency breed."**

# 2022 STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION ADDRESS

Presented at Holstein Association USA's 137th Annual Meeting on June 26, 2023.



Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, thanks for being here. This certainly is a wonderful venue for a convention, and I hope all of you are enjoying Kentucky as much as I am! Let's thank the Kentucky Holstein Cattle Club for the super event they're putting on, by joining me with your show of appreciation and thanks.

## Milk component records

Good news flourished about the Holstein breed

in 2022! Records were broken and positive news about our beloved black-and-white cow was plentiful! Two all-time milk production records for the Holstein breed were set in 2022!

Chrome-View Charles 3044 took the success of the Holstein breed to new levels in 2022. The impressive cow broke the record for the most lifetime milk produced by a U.S. Registered Holstein® cow with a lifetime milk production record of 478,200 pounds of milk, 14,447 pounds of fat, and 12,576 pounds of protein and counting. This cow is a model of efficiency and sustainability and shows what Registered Holsteins are capable of.

Hat's off to Alan and Paul Mason of Mason's Chrome View Ltd. of Nottingham, Pennsylvania, for breeding and developing Chrome-View Charles 3044!

Well, records are made to be broken and the U.S. Registered Holstein cow continues to impress us when it comes to production, efficiency, and longevity, thanks to the unwavering commitment of breeders like you who continuously improve the breed's genetics and performance. Soon after Charles 3044 set her record, another cow took home the title for most lifetime milk produced by a U.S. Registered Holstein as Nor-Bert Colby Connie achieved this incredible feat with her lifetime milk production record of 486,300 pounds of milk through her last completed lactation. Connie has calved again and is continuing to add to the record total.

Connie has impressive numbers for components with a lifetime record of 27,062 pounds of fat, and 17,737 pounds of protein through her last completed lactation. These tremendous fat and protein totals are currently the highest lifetime records for fat and protein in the Holstein Association USA database.

I salute Jeremy Dankert along with Monty and Jennifer Freeman of Nor-Bert Farms in Bremen, Indiana, the breeders and owners of Connie!

These two Registered Holstein cows clearly show the positive impact the Holstein breed has now and will have in the future when it comes to feeding the world.

## Sustainability

Furthermore, even though I think the word, sustainability, is being overused today, I think it's important for us to focus on that word for a minute here. We need to blow the Holstein breed's horn a little more when it comes to our magnificent cow's sustainability and her ability to provide much needed dairy proteins for the world. Nor-Bert Connie's 486,300 pound lifetime milk production total is equivalent to 56,547 gallons of milk – 904,744 cups of milk – 22,939 pounds of butter – 603,168 scoops of ice cream – 48,630 pounds of cheese – along with enough cheese for 129,680 12-inch pizzas!

Any way you slice it, ladies and gentlemen, these are spectacular facts and feats!

## Holsteins are more profitable

Dr. Barry Bradford and Lynn Olthof of the Michigan State University Extension have given us more reasons to smile with the new information they put out to answer the question, "Are Holstein or Jersey cows more profitable?"

In their report, Lynn and Barry wrote, among other things, "It seems like a debate that never ends: are Holstein or

Jersey cows the better choice for profitable dairy production? The question of breed profitability and efficiency has again come to the forefront as producers face increasing feed costs and volatile milk prices."

They went on to say, "A recent Michigan State University study evaluated costs and revenues of Jersey and Holstein cows managed in the same manner and location on three dairy farms in or near Michigan. Partial budgets were constructed to assess breed differences in milk revenue, milk bonuses and discounts, feed costs, costs of herd replacements, and value of cull animals and non-replacement calves."

Here's the information you should trumpet near and far every time you

get the chance, "The study found that Holstein cows were, on average, \$456 more profitable per cow annually than Jersey cows, with 77% of the revenue advantage for Holsteins came from producing about 810 additional pounds of components annually."

There's more good news. Quoting from the Michigan State University report, "The financial advantage for Holsteins was similar across all three dairies, increasing confidence in the findings."



Becky Cook accepts the 2022 Herd of Excellence award for Koepke Farms Inc. from CEO Meyer and President Lamnb.





A happy junior Holstein member at Keeneland Race Track.

As you know, for years another breed has tried to use components and efficiency as their calling cards. The Michigan State study clearly answers the components and the efficiency questions of the past.

Olthof and Bradford went on to report, “Each Holstein cow, occupying the same single freestall and time in the milking parlor, for example, produced much more total revenue, thereby greatly diluting the fixed costs of production relative to Jersey cows. Although feed is the largest single cost on a dairy, maximizing feed efficiency doesn’t necessarily maximize profitability.”

This report is absolutely awesome, and we need to promote it at every opportunity! This may be the best study I’ve seen comparing the profitability differences between Holstein and Jersey cows.

The Michigan State University study concludes that transitioning from Holstein to Jersey cows “does not appear to be a profitable decision for most dairy farms.” While we’ve known this for a long time, it’s nice to have the facts presented in black and white by a highly respected Big 10 University like Michigan State!

Dr. Jeffrey Bewley and other members of Team Holstein gave us more reasons to smile when the Association went public with our, “A Million Reasons Why Conformation Matters” study. You’ll hear much more about this great information later on in the Annual Meeting, but it’s the best study I’ve ever seen on how physical conformation in today’s dairy industry relates to economically important traits.

### Highest dairy consumption since 1959

America’s consumers gave us more to be optimistic about according to USDA’s annual report on per capita U.S. dairy consumption which was released in September. The USDA report revealed that domestic dairy demand increased from 655 pounds per person in 2020 to 667 pounds per person in 2021. That’s the highest level of dairy consumption in the United States since 1959! Yes, my friends, American consumers do love dairy!

Your Holstein Association program activity numbers are well chronicled in this year’s Annual Report available at the meeting. As you can see, participation is solid.

One of the things I’m most excited about is the great interest in our junior programs, as evidenced by the 684 new junior members who joined our Association in 2022. This represents an increase of 26 more junior members compared to the previous year. The commitment to our junior programs and their growth bodes well for the future of the Holstein breed, the Holstein Association USA, and the dairy industry at large.

You, as members, identified 586,663 animals in 2022. The classification program grew for the fourth year in a row, as our classification team appraised 203,040 animals for an increase of 2%.

### Multi-breed classification

On December 12, 2022, the American Milking Shorthorn Society (AMSS) announced their partnership with the Holstein Association USA (HAUSA) to appraise Milking Shorthorn cattle throughout the United States. This new multi-breed classification program is conducted by Holstein Association classifiers and coordinated with HAUSA staff and AMSS staff jointly to provide a widespread opportunity for more Milking Shorthorn breeders to classify cows on a regular schedule.

Since that time, the Ayrshire Breeders Association has joined our multi-breed classification program that also includes the Guernsey breed. I applaud the leadership of all of these breed associations for participating in this outstanding program.

I want to thank you, the members of the Holstein Association USA, who have accomplished so many great things in the last year. As you know, there is a role for all ages, all interests, and all sizes of dairy herds within the Holstein Association USA. All of you contribute to an abundant supply of wholesome fresh milk and a host of other nutritious and delicious dairy products for the world.

### Bright future

The Holstein breed is the breed of business. Our cows are the engine propelling the dairy industry forward. Holsteins are the choice for serious milk, protein and fat production, profound genetic improvement, and showcasing everything your livelihood represents.

With your Association’s adherence and commitment to the vision and mission of the Holstein Association USA, Inc., your participation and involvement, combined with the dedication of the Board of Directors and employee team, the future remains bright!

**John M. Meyer, Chief Executive Officer  
Holstein Association USA, Inc.**

# FROM THE GROUND UP

How a first-generation dairy farmer is making his mark with Registered Holsteins®.



President Jonathan Lamb (left) and CEO John Meyer (right) present Ty Etgen with the 2023 Distinguished Young Holstein Breeder Award.

**T**he 2023 Distinguished Young Holstein Breeder followed an unconventional path to his career as a dairy farmer. Growing up in town, he always jumped at the chance to spend time on his friends' farms. While other kids were dreaming of being doctors, firefighters or teachers, Ty Etgen had his sights set on the title of dairy farmer.

"I always wanted to be a dairy farmer," the Distinguished Young Holstein Breeder says. "I loved seeing how dairy farms work and how everything operated."

Today, Ty is living out his dream as sole owner and manager of Etgen-Way, a herd of 100 Registered Holstein cows near Harrod, Ohio. He's sharing the experience with his wife, Heather, and two sons, eight-year-old Cash, and seven-year-old Henry.

Holstein Association USA recognized Ty as the 2023 Distinguished Young Holstein Breeder on June 25 during the National Holstein Convention in Lexington, Kentucky. The accolade is a nod to how far he's come over the years.

"The whole list of Distinguished Young Holstein Breeders is impressive, and to be on that list, it means a lot to me," Ty shares. "Fifteen years ago, I had nothing, and to be recognized with this award, it's awesome."

## The road less traveled

Though he didn't grow up on a dairy farm, Ty found his place working on one as soon as he could. "When I was in high school, I got a job at a dairy farm, and I just fell in love with it," Ty explains.

He credits his involvement in 4-H and FFA, and participation on the dairy judging team for giving him the opportunity to learn about different aspects of the dairy industry. He worked for Richard and Kim Steinke in high school, and after graduating, Ty worked full-time for Blair Lammers for a year and a half.

During the economic downturn in 2009, Ty decided to pursue his degree in dairy cattle production and management from

Ohio State Agricultural Technical Institute (ATI). This decision was also influenced by his dairy judging coaches, Royce Thorton and Bonnie Ayars.

"The connections you make at college, especially on the judging team and trips, those are great experiences," Ty says. "You get to see different farms and meet different people."

No matter where Ty was on his journey as a young dairy enthusiast, his drive to gain as much knowledge as he could set him apart from his peers.

"Going to college, through high school and working full-time, I wanted to learn as much as I could," he shares. "I'd pick everybody's brain, I wanted to be the best I could."

In the summer between his two-year degree at Ohio State ATI, Ty gained exposure to a different part of the country through an internship at Air-Osa Dairy in California.

"It was a lot different from the Midwest farms I'd worked on, but I fit right in and did well and learned a lot," Ty shares, adding that the Airosa family was wonderful to work with and learn from.

"One thing that got me where I am today is, I've always been surrounded by great people that challenged me and pushed me on," he says.

## Building his herd

After gaining an education, both in school and through hands-on experience, Ty was ready to start his career as a dairy farmer. During his second year of college, he connected with Phil Fisher of Diamond Oak Holsteins. After farming with Phil for two and a half years, Ty started farming on his own.

This was right around the time he married his wife, Heather, who he met showing dairy cattle. Heather grew up on her family's Registered Ayrshire farm, and shares Ty's passion for parading beautiful bovines around the showing.





Toppglen Atwood Waki EX-94

Heather's family farm had sat empty for a dozen years, so the young couple moved in their small herd of Registered Holsteins and began their life together. During this time, Ty also worked full time at his father-in-law's welding and fabricating business.

"Things were going well, but I knew working off the farm wasn't my goal," Ty recalls. "My goal was to be a full-time dairy farmer and have a top-notch herd of Registered Holsteins."

In spring 2015, Ty and his family broke ground on a new 110 cow barn and double-seven herringbone parlor. He's thankful for the strong relationship he has with his father-in-law, Ron Kennedy, who gave him the go ahead on the project, and still supports him and the farm in many ways.

"He's a great mentor, day in and day out. Any major purchases or decisions at the farm, I'll ask him what he thinks," Ty explains. "He's involved here day to day, so he knows what's going on and the state of the farm. Having a great relationship with him has been important."

Ty takes on all the primary responsibilities on the dairy, including manager, herdsman, mechanic, breeder, crop farmer, repair man and more. He has a few employees who help with milking, and Heather and Ron are always willing to lend a hand.

### High standards, hard work

For the first-generation dairy farmer, Registered Holsteins were an easy choice.

"I've always admired the Holstein cow," Ty shares. "Even before college, I would study bull books and learn pedigrees, sire stacks, linear traits and health traits on Holstein cows."

The herd at Etgen-Way is milked twice a day and has a rolling herd average of 23,044 pounds of milk, with a 4.0% fat test and a 3.1% protein test. Ty says breeding high-scoring cows is also important to him.

"I breed for high type and high udder composite, with good proven cow families," he says. "I guess that's what drives me, is type and high scoring cows that last a long time, are profitable and well balanced."

Ty adds he's always admired the herds on the Top Breed Age Average (BAA) list, and it's his goal for Etgen-Way to rank towards the top of the list. In 2022, his herd's BAA of 111.4 earned a spot in the top 10 on the list sorted by herd size and was within the top 20 when the herds were sorted by region.

It's evident Ty has a passion for working with good cows, and Toppglen Atwood Waki EX-94 is one of those special cows.

"She's been a cow that has really taken my genetics to the next level," Ty says. "I've sold a lot of embryos and daughters out of her, and I've got a lot of daughters out of her." Ty has over 60 Waki daughters currently on the farm and has sold close to 150 embryos from her.

The entire Etgen family also enjoys showing, and they've been recognized with the Premier Breeder award at both state and national shows.

"I take a lot of pride in being able to show cows with our own prefix on them," Ty says. "I've always had a lot of respect for breeders who can breed their own and breed the good ones."

At the end of the day, it's not showing accolades propelling this year's Distinguished Young Holstein Breeder forward, it's the values he's passing down to his young sons. Seeing Cash and Henry take an interest in the farm brings Ty's own journey in the dairy industry full circle.

Although he'd be overjoyed if one or both of his sons wanted to be the second generation on the farm, he says it's not expected.

"I've told my kids multiple times, if they don't want to join the farm, that's fine too, but I want to teach them work ethic," Ty shares. "I've told them if they can outwork everyone else, they can pretty much do anything they want to do."

Ty's strong work ethic has certainly led him to where he is today, and though he acknowledges how far he's come, Ty still strives to continuously improve his herd. His path to being a successful dairy farmer is testament that with hard work, determination, and a will to learn, anything is possible.



Ty with his sons Henry and Cash.



# COMMITTED TO COWS

Bomaz Farms recognized with 2023 Elite Breeder Award.

**I**t's a picturesque spring day in northwestern Wisconsin. The sun is shining, alfalfa is growing and cows are resting comfortably. Bob Zwald walks out of the barn and is greeted with an enthusiastic, "Hi, Grandpa!" His grandson Matthew Schalla runs up for a big hug after arriving home from school.

Matthew, along with his siblings and cousins, are the fourth generation on Bomaz Farms. Bob and Kay Zwald operate the dairy, alongside their son Tom and his wife Ashley, and daughter Annette and her husband Steve Schalla. Together, the family has developed a herd of elite Registered Holstein® genetics.

"I currently have six of our family members who work on the farm," Bob explains. "We all have our own areas of expertise, but it all functions and works together."

Recently named Holstein Association USA's 2023 Elite Breeder, the Bomaz prefix is a household name throughout the dairy community. Known for profitable, high-producing cows with high components, Bomaz Farms has been supplying AI organizations with high quality Holstein sires for more than 40 years.

"We strive to have cows that produce a lot of milk with good components and are trouble free," Bob explains, adding they also place an emphasis on longevity.

The family at Bomaz Farms is also noted for their integrity and generosity, always genuine hosts who make time to show visitors their herd and talk genetics. Holstein Association USA also recognized the team at Bomaz Farms with the Elite Breeder award on June 25 at the National Holstein Convention in Lexington, Kentucky.

## For generations

Bob was in second grade when his parents, Bob Sr. and Mary Zwald, moved their herd from Lake Elmo, Minnesota, across the St. Croix River to Hammond, Wisconsin. Lake Elmo was quickly becoming an urban area, and the move created an opportunity for the farm to continue growing as the years went on.

"We moved here with 28 cows in 1962," Bob says. "The herd grew from those 28 cows to the current 1,500 milking cows."

Even as a young boy, Bob's love for working with cows was evident. Showing animals at the county fair as a 4-H'er furthered his interest in dairy cattle, and his experience dairy judging taught him what traits to look for in a good cow.

"I've always loved cattle, I've always loved dairy farming, and I've always loved the people who are involved in dairy farming" says Bob, who has passed down the same love and passion to the next generation.

"My dad's put his whole life into the farm," says Annette Schalla, Bob's daughter. "He was in high school when he and his brother went to Michigan and bought their first group of registered cattle, and we've just been trying to build on that."

The top-notch herd at Bomaz Farms is primarily homebred. As they've grown their high-genetic herd from within, one foundation cow stands out in Bob's mind.

"The big share of the herd probably goes back to one of our early cows, an Elevation daughter we had back in the '70s, Bomaz Elevation Dawn," says Bob, while walking down the alley in the barn. "Some of these heifers are 12 generations away from her, so that's probably been our strongest family."

The close-knit family members each play their own role on the farm, but meet regularly to discuss what's going well and evaluate what they could do differently.

Bob serves as farm manager and oversees the genetics program, and his wife Kay is the calf manager. Their son Tom directs the farm's agronomy program and keeps the equipment running, and his wife Ashley works with youngstock and herd health. Annette oversees the genetics program alongside Bob and does herd record keeping.

Her husband Steve handles human resource duties and farm finances. Bob and Kay's oldest son, Nate, has a Ph.D. in genetics and helps guide breeding strategy.

"The mission for our farm is almost unspoken, because we are on the same page on so many fronts," Annette says. "You have partners that you know always have your back."



Bob & Kay Zwald with the 2023 Elite Breeder Award.



## Blue collar ladies

Over the years, Bomaz Farms has been an early adopter of tools allowing for faster genetic progress. The family's aptitude for dairy cattle genetics has resulted in a successful herd of cows, and they have had more than 500 bulls in AI programs across the world with the Bomaz prefix.

"Our goal is to breed profitable, hardworking cows that make money every day and can produce the kind of bull that's going to make money for the commercial breeder," Bob shares. These overarching goals guide the farm's breeding program, as they have evolved into being a seedstock source for high-quality Holstein genetics.

"We've kind of changed from breeding the black and white beauties to breeding the blue-collar ladies," Annette says. "It's always a bonus if they look pretty, but we really want cows that are profitable, going to last and aren't going to be problem cows."

The family implements in-vitro fertilization and embryo transfer into their genetic program. A recently converted milking parlor serves as their IVF facility and oocyte collection center, and they flush donor animals each week. Every other week, they run about 30 animals on an accelerated IVF program. Additional tools such as classification and genomic testing also guide breeding decisions.

"The biggest change we implemented was being an early adopter of genomic testing and really starting to look at true traits instead of waiting an extra generation or two," Annette explains.

The farm's general herd management goes hand in hand with their genetic program.

In 2020, the family started milking in a new 40-stall rotary parlor and expanded the herd from 700 to 1,500 Registered Holsteins. This switch helped them achieve their goal of being more labor efficient, and they've seen improvements in milk production, too.

"We really focus on everything that makes a cow healthy and profitable, like good feed, housing and cow comfort," Bob says. "Whatever makes the cow happy makes us happy, and in turn, she seems to respond with good production."

The five time Herd of Excellence recipient has a current rolling herd average of 34,000 pounds of milk, with 4.2% fat and 3.3% protein. In 2022, the Bomaz herd also had an average classification score of 85.3.

"The most fun thing about dairy farming is seeing progress through the generations," Annette says. "We have two-year-olds that are calving sooner and making more milk, looking better, and lasting longer. You really get to see that happen."

## Community focus

Bomaz Farms has a significant presence both in the dairy industry and their local community. Bob has coached the St. Croix County 4-H dairy judging team alongside fellow dairy farmer Charles Kruschke for more than 40 years. Known as fun and competitive coaches, the duo's team has often found success at local, state, and national levels.

"Dairy judging gives youth more life skills than learning what a pretty cow looks like," Bob explains. "It's how to talk on your feet, how to give two-minute oral reasons, and how to express yourself and talk in front of a crowd."

Bomaz Farms also sees the importance of sharing dairy's story. The family often welcomes visitors to the farm, both in the dairy industry and beyond.

"The story we try to tell our consumers is that the cows are our life, they're our livelihood," Annette says. "We're not going to do anything that would be detrimental to them because in turn that would be detrimental to us."

They explain how everything on the farm works together to promote efficiency and productivity, from practices like crop rotation, to new technologies and genetic progress.

"The sustainability piece, for us, has been what we've always done," Annette shares. "Take care of the land, take care of the cows and, in turn, they'll take care of you and the land."

And that's exactly what team Bomaz does each day — care for their cows and the land they call home.

Their dedication, careful study of genetics and integrity have allowed them to build a herd that's positively influenced Holstein genetics on a global scale. Deserving recipients of the Elite Breeder award, the family says they are humbled to be recognized with the honor.

"I put it back at the family," Bob says. "It's an award for the farm, and it surely wouldn't happen without the family members being part of it."

**"I've always loved cattle,  
I've always loved dairy  
farming, and I've always  
loved the people who are  
involved in dairy farming."**

**-Bob Zwald**





# SERVANT LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

John Marshman recognized for countless contributions to the Registered Holstein® cow.



John Marshman with his wife Shelia and daughter Lily.

Over the years, John Marshman has used his talents for the benefit of fellow Holstein Association USA members. Known for his astute financial mind, John spent his entire tenure on Holstein Association USA's Board of Directors as a member of the audit committee.

Those who have worked alongside John are struck by his well thought out and carefully researched recommendations, particularly when it came to his input on the board. A sixth-generation New York dairy farmer, his perspective as a Holstein breeder is also valued in the agricultural organizations he serves.

A fellow Holstein Association USA board member, Peter Dueppengieser, attributes John's passion, commitment and leadership to the successful outcomes.

"Servant leadership is prioritizing the team and organization above oneself for the greater good," Pete says. "It is often talked about, but in John Marshman, I witnessed it being lived out in many ways."

John's dedicated service is why he was recognized with the 2023 Distinguished Leadership Award from Holstein Association USA. The honor is presented to an individual who has provided outstanding and selfless leadership, making notable contributions to the association or the dairy community.

## From the start

Dairy farming is a rhythm of life for the Marshman family — one they have maintained since 1856 in Oxford, New York. While he grew up immersed in dairy farming on his family's multi-generational operation, John was quick to make his own path in the industry.

He studied animal science at Cornell University and was a member of the 1983 dairy judging team. In 1985, he was

named a Distinguished Junior Member Finalist by Holstein Association USA. John would go on to graduate from the university's dairy executive program, as well. These achievements were an early indicator of his service to come.

Soon after, John and his brother, David, took the reins at Marshman Farms. It was in the late 1980s, a difficult time to be involved in agriculture, but the young men were determined to carry on the family's legacy from their father, Robert, who served as a role model and taught them to make wise decisions on the farm.

The brothers started out with about 100 cows, and by 1991, broke ground on a new facility — a double-8 parlor expandable to a double-12, with 220 stalls, and a bunker silo for corn silage. This allowed them to move away from the tiestall barn and upright silos, and start down the path of becoming a more efficient dairy.

Marshman Farms today cares for 420 milking cows and 400 young stock, mostly Red and White Holsteins. They also oversee 1,100 acres of cropland, mainly used as feed for the herd. Day-to-day, John and David work in tandem with David's son, Corey.

Registered Holsteins have always been part of the business plan to generate additional profits beyond the milk check, John explains. Staying involved and active within Holstein Association USA has been an important priority for their family, as well.

The Marshmans were early adopters of polled genetics within the herd. They also had interest in showing Red and White Holsteins and decided to use the polled bull Lawn Boy on a flush of Red and Whites. The result was several high-genetic, polled offspring and significant marketing opportunities for the farm.

Today, the family's Tiger-Lily prefix is one recognized around the world for elite Red and White polled genetics. They have achieved showing success at all levels. A recent partnership with Hembury Farms in Pennsylvania also created the Cherry-Lily prefix, which has furthered interest and demand.


Continuing to fine-tune breeding decisions and incorporate data has been a guiding force for the Marshman brothers, along with a relentless passion for cows.

"We've been happy with what we've done with our dairy over the years, and how we've applied our genetics," John says. "I think we've been successful in that regard."



John and Lily pose with Tiger-Lily Apple Pie-Red-ET after she won Senior and Grand Champion Red & White in 2022 at the Premier National Junior Red & White Show.





**“Servant leadership is prioritizing the team and organization above oneself for the greater good. It is often talked about, but in John Marshman, I witnessed it being lived out in many ways.”**

**-Peter Dueppengiesser**

### **Giving back**

John says coming together and supporting fellow dairy producers is always important, especially in the northeastern U.S. where competition for land is a growing challenge. The region’s dairy organizations recognized this early.

“There was a wave in the ‘90s, especially in the northeast, to become more efficient,” John remembers. “It positioned our part of the country to be a major player in the dairy industry, even though we’re not considered the breadbasket of the country. I was happy to have been a player in that, to help keep dairying in the northeast viable, and a profitable part of the landscape.”

John has worked extensively with local and state agricultural groups throughout the years, including the New York Holstein Association. In 2020, he and David were recognized with the state association’s Active Master Breeder Award.

“John Marshman quietly leads by example with integrity, honesty, humility, perseverance and determination,” says Patsy Gifford, New York Holstein Association co-executive manager. “His clear, fair, numbers-crunching mind has led New York Holstein for nearly 20 years of service on the finance committee.”

As with any business, the last two decades brought uncharted levels of change, Patsy says. John’s ability to carefully plan and manage not only allowed them to survive, but thrive.

“He has been and still is instrumental in leading and guiding NYHA to stay on track and move forward,” she says.

True to his nature, John says that, above all, family is the cornerstone of progress. His daughter, Lily, and wife, Sheila, are major supporters of his well-being and life. Both are involved in agriculture, as well, Sheila a professor at SUNY Morrisville’s School of Agriculture, and Lily an active member of Junior Holstein Association.

In 2019, Marshman Farms was recognized with the Herb Staring Memorial Award at the New York State Fair; and they were also honored as the 2007 Business of the Year by the New York Ag Society.

### **A lasting impact**

In addition to his lifelong community involvement and seven years on Holstein Association USA’s board of directors, John believes the land is where the roots of success are planted.

“That’s where it all starts, back on the farm,” he says. “Agriculture and farming is a process of building, and I think all agricultural organizations have to look at the long term. We want it to be here for whoever comes after us.”

For him, that means carrying on a tradition set in motion nearly 170 years ago. Known as a man whose personality is as humble as it is noteworthy, John says he is beyond honored to receive the Distinguished Leadership Award.

“I’ve never thought of myself as leading the charge. I am more of the type who does the supporting,” he says. “It’s overwhelming to realize that others think of me in the same vein as those who were previously been honored. It’s a prestigious award, and I appreciate it.”



A young John with Dreamstreet Willow Joann, the most successful show cow he owned as a Junior Holstein Association member.





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