

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WALTER OWENS RECEIVED DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD FROM NATIONAL JERSEY ORGANIZATIONS

Reynoldsburg, Ohio, June 28, 2023—Walter Owens, Frederic, Wis., was awarded with the 2023 Distinguished Service Award by The American Jersey Cattle Association on June 24 in LaCrosse, Wisconsin.

The Distinguished Service Award is presented by the Board of Directors to as many living AJCA members and/ or members' families, who, in their opinion have rendered outstanding and unselfish service for many years and thereby made a notable contribution to the advancement of the Jersey breed in the United States.

Walter's biggest support has been as an advocate of the NAJ Equity Program and participation in REAP since its inception. Another one of his roles within the dairy industry was in 2011 when he was the co-chair of the National Heifer Sale the last time the AJCA-NAJ Annual Meetings were in Wisconsin. Owens Farms Inc. donated a heifer for the all-donation sale that benefited the Jersey Youth Academy program. This year for the 2023 meeting, Walter has stepped up as a co-chair of the event.

In addition to supporting these individual events and programs, Walter has also supported the association as a whole. From 2012-2019, he has served on the AJCA board and jumped from many roles including vice president as one of them. As of 2019, Walter has been sitting on the NAJ board on the Investment Advisory Committee and will be serving as the chair of the Junior Activity Committee for the All American Show and events in Louisville, Ky., for 2023.

Water has also shown support for the Jersey breed higher than the AJCA level. He has had the opportunity to travel to Washington D.C. to speak to congressional representatives where he lobbied, educated, and talked about possible solutions to problems facing dairy farmers. He has also been a member and on boards where he was elected to high positions including being president of the Wisconsin Jersey Breeders Association. From a young age, Walter had an interest in evaluating. He has participated in 4-H and collegiate dairy judging and coached the Polk County Dairy Judging team for 37 years. In this time, he took his team to 10 nationally recognized competitions.

The care and support coming from Walter does not stop with the AJCA. It continues to the love he has for his family and herd. Walter's personality is one that lights up any room he is in. He is described as caring, inviting, and always up for a good joke. With this attitude paired with his love for the Jersey breed, it is no surprise why Walter was recognized. He has acted as a mentor

to others within the industry and has always given thoughtful advice and compassion to others.

Walter learned this way of life from his father, a previous Distinguished Service Award winner ~~in 1997~~. Walter grew up on Sunny Slope Jersey Farm owned by his parents. After earning a Degree in Animal Science from Wisconsin-River Falls in 1979, Walter returned to the farm and changed it to Owens Farm Inc. with hopes of expanding. His success in this plan can be seen through his 2022 numbers. The herd average of 21,283 lbs. of milk, 1,082 lbs. of fat, and 824 lbs. of protein on an m.e. basis on 692 lactations.

He and Joyce received the 1989 AJCA Young Jersey Breeder Award, the same award all his children have also received. In 2019, Walter and his brothers, Wilfred, and Roger, were awarded the AJCA Master Breeder Award.

As previously stated, family is a big priority to Walter. His greatest supporter has been Joyce, his wife since 1983. Together they have had three children, Brendon, Jeff, and Michelle, who are all shareholders and work on the family farm. His grandchildren, Marissa, April, Cole, Lane, and Callie, also have a hand in the family business and he could not be prouder.

The Owens family has also taken the opportunity to be the ones handing out awards. Walter and his wife created the Walter and Joyce Owens Family Scholarship in 2019. This scholarship has already allowed two past recipients to go on and continue their passion for the industry through opportunities they otherwise would not have.

The American Jersey Cattle Association, organized in 1868, compiles and maintains animal identification and performance data on Jersey cattle and provides services that support genetic improvement and greater profitability through increasing the value of and demand for Registered Jersey™ cattle and genetics, and Jersey milk and milk products. For more information on the association's complete line of services for dairy business owners, visit USJersey.com or connect at [Facebook.com/USJersey](https://www.facebook.com/USJersey).

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