



1951 Photograph

## CAVANAUGH DEVOTES CAREER TO DAIRY INDUSTRY

James Francis Cavanaugh, Executive Secretary of The American Jersey Cattle Club (AJCC) from 1956 to 1985, devoted thirty-eight years to the Jersey breed and its breeders. This was followed by four years with the AJCC Research Foundation.

*Hoard's Dairyman* credits Jim with six years on its editorial staff, although three of these years were spent in the military. As an Air Force pilot, he flew 50 bombing missions and was discharged as a Major.

Since 1947 when he first went to work with the AJCC as assistant secretary, Jim Cavanaugh has worked in the trenches of a changing dairy industry. The unmatched production increase which the Jersey breed has experienced is testament to his tenacity in making the most of Jersey opportunities.

Cavanaugh fought to buck the breeding trend in the 1960's by placing selection emphasis on USDA sire summaries. This wasn't a popular move to many Jersey breeders, but increased breed production progress justified his efforts in winning the battle. "The milk production increase Jerseys have maintained is a reflection of the leadership role the Club's boards of directors have taken with the breed and dairy industry as a whole," Cavanaugh relates. "I've also had the privilege of developing and working with a staff that is devoted to AJCC-NAJ goals and yet demonstrates creative knack necessary to move ahead where few breed associations have dared to go."

The creative knack and courage to expand the AJCC's services has been a hallmark throughout Cavanaugh's combined career as executive secretary of both the AJCC and NAJ (National All-Jersey, Inc.-incorporated in 1957) which specialized in developing Jersey milk markets. In recent years, he has been at the help as non-traditional programs have been adopted to make Jersey dairying more profitable. In the mid-70's, the Equity program was developed and implemented. Equity was designed to develop Jersey milk markets based upon the value of the components. In this same time period, Genetic Recovery was also instituted. Genetic Recovery involved bringing superior unregistered Jersey females into the Jersey herdbook and is an industry model today. For each of the last four decades, the Cavanaugh name is bound to projects that have made Jersey cows synonymous with profitability. In 1983, a Jersey Pride trademark cheese program was launched. "Success of a breed is directly dependent on that cow's ability to make a profit for the folks on the farm," Cavanaugh states. "That has been the key to membership acceptance of Club programs."

"I don't think we have a better recent example of this than our Equity program. We've asked breeders to check-off a few cents per hundredweight for Equity. This money is then exclusively used to promote Jersey milk as a raw product

with exceptional characteristics. Jersey milk can make milk or cheese processors additional profits over the premiums it takes to attract high quality milk. As our membership has seen the results of this program, in terms of additional income, acceptance has grown tremendously."

Born in 1917 to a Kansas dairy and wheat farm family, he works with people equally well on the concrete floor of a holding pen or the carpeted floor of a CEO's office.

Today, Cavanaugh can look back on honors from an industry that has followed his progress through the Kansas State dairy barn and creamery, the 1939 New York World's Fair where he worked as a Borden's herdsman, a 50-mission bomber pilot during World War II, on the editorial staff of Hoard's Dairyman, and finally at the AJCC-NAJ headquarters in Columbus, Ohio. "At this stage I guess I've grown a bit gray at the temples," the Irishman says with a chuckle, "but I do enjoy and appreciate the awards and I'm not above accepting them as an opportunity to spread the Jersey word."

Numerous honors have been bestowed upon Cavanaugh. The following is a list of those awards that have particular industry significance:

2000 - Ohio Agricultural Hall of Fame  
 1994 - Who's Who in the Midwest  
 1993 - National Pedigreed Livestock Council, Distinguished Service Award  
 1992 - World Jersey Cattle Bureau, Distinguished Service Award  
 1987 - National Association of Animal Breeders, Distinguished Service Award  
 1985 - American Jersey Cattle Club, Distinguished Service Award  
 1984 - National Society of Livestock Records Association, Distinguished Service Award  
 1984 - National DHIA, Distinguished Service Award  
 1982 - Kansas State University, Distinguished Service in Agriculture  
 1978 - National Dairy Shrine, Guest of Honor  
 1977 - World Dairy Expo, Inc., Man of the Year Award  
 1976 - Kansas Interbreed Dairy Council, Certificate of Honor, Kansas Dairy Leaders  
 1975 - The American Dairy Science Association, Distinguished Service Award  
 1975 - The American Jersey Cattle Club, Lifetime Membership  
 1971 - Commonwealth of Kentucky, Kentucky Colonel  
 1968 - The Ohio State University, Dairy Science Hall of Service  
 1964 - The Borden Company, Certificate of Appreciation  
 1961 - University of Southwestern Louisiana, Honorary Acadian

After retiring from the Jersey organizations, Jim joined the staff of the American Guernsey Association. His contributions to that organization in an eighteen-month period were most significant.

From April 15, 1987 to March 1988, Cavanaugh was acting executive secretary of National Dairy Herd Improvement Association, Inc.

From January 1, 1988 to January 1, 1992 Jim was Research Development Coordinator for the American Jersey Cattle Club Research Foundation.

The following is taken from Max Drake's nomination of Jim to the Ohio Agriculture Hall of Fame:

"In 1999 Jim was an 'Ohio feature' on national press, radio and TV to celebrate the 60th birthday of Elsie the Borden Cow. (As a college student, Jim helped care for The First' Elsie at the 1939 World's Fair.) Over the years he helped select Jerseys to 'play' Elsie.

"For over five decades, Jim Cavanaugh's name has been linked to projects that have made Jersey cows synonymous with growth and profitability. But more than anything, Jim deserves credit for saving the Jersey breed. Miles McCarry labeled it the 'Great Jersey Turnaround' and ranked it as one of the top livestock happenings of the 20th century. Miles asks, 'Has anyone ever accomplished anything so miraculous?'

From a pretty little 'show cow' to a much larger milk machine... the new' Jerseys are still great show animals, and more importantly, major milkers on the national dairy stage. Jim Cavanaugh was the change agent. His leadership charted the course.... to move ahead, where few breed associations have dared to go. Now it's time to move ...that Jim Cavanaugh into the Ohio Agriculture Hall of Fame."

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