

MARITIME HERD PROFILES: PINE HAVEN FARMS

Eric and Kelly Thompson, Pine Haven Jerseys, Oxford, Nova Scotia

One of the more established Jersey herds in the Maritime provinces, Pine Haven Jerseys has been getting increased attention in the last few months from the debut of Pine Haven Senior at the top of the LPI list this year. However, the Thompson family has been breeding top quality Jerseys for many years, with recent successes being a measurable result from many years of hard work.

Eric notes that he was raised with Jerseys from a young age, with his father starting a mixed farm with some Jerseys in the late 1940's and early 1950's. His father, Claude Thompson, operated under the Pinecrest prefix, and was a member of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Jersey Cattle Club, rising to the position of 2nd Vice-President at one point. Eric took over responsibility for the herd in the early 1970's establishing the Pine Haven prefix for the herd. Eric has also served as a member of the Jersey Canada Board of Directors in the 1980's, also serving in the position of 2nd Vice President at one point.

Pine Haven Farms is located in Oxford, Nova Scotia, in the North Shore region of the province, not far from Amherst and the border with New Brunswick. This has been a traditional Jersey area, with many successful Jersey breeders operating in this area in the past 100 years. The farm consists of a total of 870 acres, of which 270 is cultivated. The rest is woodland, which is managed under a silviculture program of forest management.

The herd is currently milking approximately 55 cows, with the same number of young stock. They milk in a tie-stall barn, employing automatic take-offs to assist in milking. The Thompsons have been working with herdsman Andrew Gaunce for the past two years, with Andrew responsible for much of the milking and artificial insemination work on the farm, as well as some work with hoof trimming. Kelly also helps with relief milking or field work when needed.

The feeding program for the herd consists of round bale hay silage, an 18% protein balanced dairy concentrate, and some high moisture corn. In the summer, a green chop is fed to the cows. Eric has previously won numerous awards in the Maritimes for the quality of his forages, so the cows are being fed top notch forage to make quality milk. The cultivated land on the farm can be described as "early soil", meaning Eric tends to have crops in earlier than many

other farms in that area, and will have forages harvested earlier in the season, which plays a large part in ensuring top quality feed.

When it comes to breeding decisions, a lot of scrutiny is put into selecting quality sires for the herd. Bulls must be from solid cow families, with good udders, strong feet and legs, and high test for component percentages. Sires with a balanced proof for production, conformation, and durability are desired, with specific emphasis on high proofs for type and components. Currently, homebred Pine Haven Senior and SC Gold Dust Paramount latola are being employed as proven sires. The herd has historically been a strong promoter of young sires. Rock Ella Perimeter was used with success as a young sire and as a proven sire. Wilsonview Legend Merit was also used as a young sire, and sired many productive, long-lived cows. Young sires that fit the herds balanced breeding program continue to be used on a regular basis. A noteworthy result of this was having the 2nd and 4th place animals (the only Jerseys placing among Maritime Holsteins) in the CAPSTAR program in the Maritimes, acknowledging progeny of young sires in the Semex program that combine excellence in production and conformation as young cows.

The Pine Haven herd has always employed natural service herd sires as part of the breeding program. Two sires in particular which are noted as being quite successful were Mordale Merit Mister, a son of Lindale Merit from a Beautys Master Advancer dam purchased from the Mortsons in the 1970s which bred a wide array of top quality cows. In the 1990's, Hollylane CH Copyright, a Wilsonview Legend Merit son of Hollylane Juno N Chelsea worked very well, and injected a strong shot of production at the time.

One of the most famous products from the Pine Haven herd has to be Pine Haven Miss Pixie EX-94 (a daughter of Mordale Merit Mister), who was Grand Champion at Montreal and Nominated All Canadian Two Year Old in 1979. She was also Reserve Grand Champion at Montreal as a Three Year Old in 1980. In 1997, Pine Have CR Lucille (sired by Copyright) was 1st place Summer Yearling at the RAWF, and was All Canadian Summer Yearling that same year. More recently, Pine Haven BRC Eva (by "Comerica) was 1st place Summer Yearling and Junior Champion at the RAWF and All Canadian Summer Yearling and All Canadian Champion Heifer last year.





Pine Haven BRC Eva



Pine Haven Senior

Perhaps the current most famous bearer of the Pine Haven prefix is Pine Haven Senior, the current #1 LPI sire in Canada. "Senior" is a son of Glenholme Counciller from a Perimeter dam with three records over 10,000 kgs of milk in 305 days. He has a full sister at Pine Haven that is VG-89 and is currently projected to BCAs of 293-282-314 at 3 years, 11 months. It is no wonder that "Senior" is respected so much as a balanced, all-around sire, given the breeding program from which he was created!

The Thompsons continue to be very involved with the Jersey breed going into the future. Eric is a founding member of Jersey Atlantic, the new regional marketing association in Atlantic Canada. The Pine Haven herd continues to participate in all breed improvement programs, and are strong supporters of young sire progeny testing. With these balanced, productive, and long-lived cows from Nova Scotia, we expect to hear more good things from Pine Haven in the very near future!