

(Slide 1)

Greetings from the United States and the American Guernsey Association. I would like to express a huge thank you to the New Zealand Guernsey Breeders for planning an outstanding group of tours and conference! The AGA has undergone quite a bit of change in the last three years since we last met on Guernsey Island in 2013. Most notably Seth Johnson moved on after 18 years of service to the Association and we underwent some other staff changes as well. This is my first World Conference as Executive Secretary, as I have been in this position for a little over one year. The last three years have included a lot of excitement and enthusiasm for the Guernsey breed within our country. **(Slide 2)** We hit what we hope is our low mark for registrations in 2013 with 4,050; however, the past two years we have seen dramatic improvement in that area and just last year we totaled 5,135! A very strong milk market in the U.S. in 2014 and early 2015 had a lot to do with this increase, but also an increase in embryo transfer work using sexed semen and reverse sorted semen has helped this increase as well. Many of our breeders that are flushing cattle are implanting the embryos into non Guernseys which has helped us increase our numbers.

Social media has allowed AGA staff and other Guernsey enthusiasts to improve on promotion of the Guernsey cow in the states. As a staff we have been exploring more avenues to better promote our breed not only in the United States but also internationally. **(Slide 3)** The Guernsey breed was recently highlighted in Holstein International's color breeds issue. A feature story was done on Springhill Farm and the Dix Lee Tiller Joke cow family and AGA placed an advertisement in this issue as well. The increased demand for A2 milk and A2 milk products in the U.S. by the consumer has really given the popularity for Guernseys a bump as well. We are constantly receiving inquiries about how to purchase Guernseys. There are a record number of public sales scheduled in the U.S. in 2016 and despite current low milk prices, the sales thus far are showing that the demand for Guernseys remains very strong!

There are a few outstanding cows in our country that have had some outstanding achievements in the last three years that I would like to recognize. In

the past two years, 2 cows have achieved a classification score of EX-95. **(Slide 4)** One of these cows is Knapps Regis Tambourine, sired by Marodore Enhancer Regis and bred and owned by Randy Knapp and Family of Epworth, Iowa. She just completed a 365 day record with over 40,000 pounds of milk after being named the Unanimous All-American & Jr. All-American Aged Cow in 2015. Knapps have raised and collected semen on two sons of hers thus far, an American Pie son (Top Notch) and a Prada son (Primetime). **(Slide 5)** Rolling Prairie Bella Blue is the other cow recently achieving EX-95 status. Blue was bred by Dan Walther & Family of Garnavillo, Iowa and was purchased by Hoard's Dairyman Farm of Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin as part of their herd expansion in 2009. Blue has completed her accomplishments in a commercial environment, living in a free stall barn comingling with the rest of her herdmates. Blue calved 5 times by the age of 6-04, completed 3 records over 30,000M and now is currently on an extensive embryo transfer program. She had a Grumpy son, Dairyman Grumpy Big Boy that has been collected and marketed by Hoard's Dairyman and there are numerous Big Boy calves on the ground around the country. She has a young son on the ground sired by Copper and a VIP daughter that just freshened earlier this month. Hoard's Dairyman flushed the VIP daughter as a virgin heifer and sold sexed embryos to Japan.

I wanted to mention two other cows that have made a tremendous impact in our breed in recent years. **(Slide 6)** Coulee Crest AP Lorilee, EX-90, became the first cow in breed history to become a 3rd generation 40,000 pound milk cow! Bred by Coulee Crest LLC in Cashton, Wisconsin, Lorilee completed her record setting lactation for Trotacre Farm and Melinda Rushing after being purchased early in her second lactation through one of our National Convention Sales. She has two sons in A.I., a Conqueror son named Logo that is at Genex/CRI and a Millborne Tiller Fayes Fame son, Latimer who is available through Taurus-ST genetics. **(Slide 7)** Flambeau Manor RO Lauren has been a breed favorite the past few years as well. Lauren burst on the scene in 2014, being named Grand Champion at World Dairy Expo as a 3rd calf 4-year-old. After freshening again in July 2015, Lauren returned to the show circuit and was named Reserve Sr. Champion at World Dairy Expo. She currently has 3 sons either with semen

available or going through collection, 2 Indian Acres Phoenix sons (Lucifer and Boman) and 1 Levi son (Ladys Man) who will be available through Select Sires and also available for export. Lauren was bred and owned by Gary Van Doorn and Family of Tony, Wisconsin.

(Slide 8) In 2014 we also recognized a cow who broke the world record for milk production in a lactation. Trotacre Tiller Brenna, bred and owned by Jim, Dave and Bob Trotter and Families of Enon Valley, PA finished her world record with 7-08 365D 3X **47,340M*** 1633F 1446P.

Niche Marketing has really picked up in the United States in recent years as breeders try to find an alternative to the unstable traditional milk market as well as to meet demands of the consumer. Several Guernsey breeders have been marketing Guernsey products: **(Slide 9)**

Kevin & Dina Stoltzfus of Warwick Manor Farm in PA – pasteurized milk in bottles and ice cream

Todd & Deanna Moore of Lavon Farms in Texas – drinkable yogurt, a few specialty cheeses – products found in various Whole Food's stores throughout the south and west coast

Mar Mik Farm – Mike & Karen Trenholm in Maine – cheeses sold off the farm

Golden Valley Guernseys – Chris & Theresa Mick – raw milk sales through a cow share program in Virginia

MyShan Dairy – Mylon & Shannon Smith – pasteurized milk in Northwest Washington

Jim Sinnema – raw milk in Northwest Washington

Ripley Farms – looking into marketing milk that will be strictly Guernsey A2 milk.

I know there are others I am omitting, but these are some examples.

The AGA and its members have identified that reproductive efficiency is the number one issue within our breed and we need to address it in order to remain competitive with other breeds in the U.S. dairy industry and also throughout the world. We have attracted new breeders (young and old) to Guernseys, but if the cows do not breed back, they won't be involved with the breed for long. AGA has taken and is in the process of taking some steps to help improve this area. **(Slide 10)** A new CPI/PTI formula was just approved and implemented last week for the April proof run. The new formula – as seen on the screen – places an increased emphasis on daughter pregnancy rate. An increase of 8% for DPR was made to the formula to now make DPR 15% which is the third largest part of the formula behind protein pounds and fat pounds. We have also added a negative component for stature at 3%. Bulls and cows will lose points for being above average on stature and gain points for being below average to try and promote a moderate sized cow. As you can probably imagine, adding the stature component was a point of contention among some of our breeders. However, I feel strongly that some of our DPR problems have risen due to cows being too big so indirectly I feel this added component is also a step in the right direction toward improving reproduction.

One of the main reasons why we decided now was the time to change the CPI formula, was because of the introduction of genomic proofs in the Guernsey breed. Our first official genomic proofs became a reality just last week. I will talk in more detail about genomics tomorrow but genomic data is giving us more reliable proof information at our disposal and has especially helped solidify genetic expectations in the area of health traits. This gave us the confidence to put more weight on DPR in the CPI formula.

The last three slides show the number of young sires sampled over the last three years and list the sires of these young bulls. **(Slide 11)** Some members of AGA have spearheaded an effort to start a new young sire sampling group in the United States. A.I. companies are sampling fewer and fewer Guernsey bulls all the time and we realized it was important that something be done to ensure that we are sampling enough young bulls each year. This new group, which will be known as Profitable Golden Genetics, will join United Guernsey Genetics and

Dairybelt Guernsey Sires as three young sire proving groups either controlled by AGA or its members. **(Slide 12)** The new group has a goal of sampling bulls that are positive for daughter pregnancy rate and productive life while also focusing on genetic diversity and identifying some new cow families. Current bulls being considered include a Logo son out of a VG-89 Lewis with 150,000 lifetime; an Aaron Levi son out of a 13 year-old Prestige daughter that calved 9 times and a Copper son out of an EX-91 Stone daughter with super high health traits. The plan of this new group will be to collect and sample these bulls in larger herds that use significant young sires and use them in a timely fashion to get a good number of daughters. The group will collect these bulls without the use of an A.I. organization and will aim for a low bank of semen (roughly 2500-3000) units. Export requests will certainly be entertained if there is definite interest in certain bulls. **(Slide 13)** Dairybelt Guernsey Sires and United Guernsey Genetics continue to sample bulls with A.I. organizations and also sample a couple from time to time without an A.I. company's assistance or independently as we call it. In the last three years, while AGA has been in a transition period with much of its staff, I am sorry to admit that young sire sampling has taken a back seat while some other things were handled. Fortunately, I feel we are at a place now where the sampling program will get rolling again and we will begin doing a much better job providing bulls for our breeders to sample. The one thing that I was pleased about when putting these slides together is that while I wish we had sampled a few more bulls each year, at least we have a wide variety of sires of sons.

I know that the United States has a reputation of putting a lot of emphasis on the showring and also on breeding cows that are considered too big. The showring continues to be a big priority for a number of our breeders; however, I can honestly say that I feel our country has made huge strides in the last 10 years to change the style of cow that we breed for and still have fun in the show ring. We are now breeding a more moderate sized cow with good width and great udders! The decisions we have made here recently will allow us to take yet another step in making our cow even better and more competitive in the entire dairy landscape not just domestically but also worldwide.