

## Dean Sayles of Paris, Ontario is named 2010 recipient of the Earl Vander Meulen Memorial Award

In 2007, a committee of close friends of the late Earl Vander Meulen established an award to honour the memory of a dedicated dairy farmer who passed away as a result of a farm accident in July 2006. Since then, three outstanding people who model humility, hard work and family values have been named annual recipients of the award: David Schwartz of Cookstown, Ontario in 2007, Fred Armstrong of Auburn, Ontario in 2008 and Dean Warner of Hastings, Ontario in 2009.

During the 2010 Canadian National Jersey Show at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto, **Dean Sayles of Spruce Avenue Farms, Paris, Ontario** was announced as the fourth recipient of this prestigious award.

Earl Vander Meulen was a partner in Peninsula Jersey farm at Stirling, Ontario. Documentation for the award notes that it "commemorates Earl's strong character and recognizes his legacy of caring for family, establishing life-long friendships, a strong faith and love of the farm". In making their annual selections, the committee is searching for candidates who "exhibit a high degree of integrity, display a positive attitude and progressive leadership skills, and great involvement in the dairy industry and other community organizations."



In all the categories outlined above, the life and times and actions of Dean Sayles tick all the boxes. He is the fourth generation of his family to reside at Spruce Avenue Farms, a 475 acre farm where 80 dairy cows (predominantly Jersey, but with Brown Swiss and Holstein herd members) and a broiler operation are maintained.

The Sayles family involvement with registered Jerseys commenced in 1932 with Dean's grandparents. Seventy-eight years later, descendants of original herd members are part of the current Spruce Avenue herd! In 2001, Dean and his wife Lynda and their family received Jersey Canada's premier award for cattle breeding finesse, the Master Breeder Award. The Spruce Avenue herd provides a favoured stop for both international and domestic tour groups. The herd exhibits a consistently high level of productivity and conformation and is known as a "true breeder's herd!"

Dean has generously served the breed in multi-year roles as director of his local Brant-Norfolk Jersey Club, Jersey Ontario and Jersey Canada. He was President of Jersey Ontario in 1991 and Jersey Canada in 2009. These board roles have brought with them decades of service on provincial and national committees. Dean currently serves on the board of Jersey Cattlemen of Canada, a private Jersey marketing trade organization. Additionally, he was one of the Jersey leaders who worked to establish Canada's multi-breeds classification system prior to its introduction in August 2005. Judging dairy cattle is a great passion of Dean's and he has officiated at shows in Australia, Brazil, Eastern and Western Canada and Canada's National Jersey Show plus an abundance of smaller shows within Canada.

On the local scene, Dean is a willing committee member and volunteer at the highly successful Paris Fair, attends an abundance of soccer, hockey and ringette games where his grand children are on teams, and is a leader in his local United Church. Dean is also an enthusiastic member of the Drumbo and District Men's Choir, a 19 member team who provide musical entertainment at a plethora of community events for the joy of singing and making music. In earlier years, Dean was a 4-H leader and served on the Brant County Milk Committee and committees related to the International Plowing Match when that event was held in Brant County.

Dean and his wife Lynda greatly enjoy family life centering around four children and five grand children. The group of friends submitting Dean's nomination described him in these glowing terms: "Family is extremely important to Dean as are his dairy cows and large number of farming friends who are like an extended family. He is a man of great integrity and is sincere, honest and trustworthy."

During the 2010 award presentation, the selection committee announced that they would begin providing financial support for the **Explore Jersey Canada youth exchange program** from funding donated in Earl Vander Meulen's memory. The exchange program is coordinated by Jersey Canada's Youth Committee. Young people with an interest in the Jersey breed have traveled to other parts of Canada for one to three week educational visits as part of this program. The sponsorship is appropriate as Earl Vander Meulen served as a mentor for many young people interested in dairying. For more information on this award and prospects for making nominations please contact Vince Brennan at [brenwoodjerseys@bell.net](mailto:brenwoodjerseys@bell.net).