

*This magazine was developed for those passionate about Polled! In the #PolledPanel feature of #PolledPlace, breeders have the opportunity to share their perspective on Polled. Thank you to Tim Baumgartner for sharing your Polled story and views on the future of Polled Jerseys!*

### **Jer-Z-Boyz Ranch - California** **Tim Baumgartner**

#### **Farm Background**

Jersey cattle arrived at Jer-Z-Boyz Ranch in 1995. The farm is located in Pixley, CA and originally owned by Gary & Donna de Graaf and family. The farm is now transitioning to the second generation with son Daniel and his wife Emily, now being the managing partner and majority owner. The original facility in Pixley houses 3,000 lactating age females as well as all young calves up to 5-6 months of age. This facility is all loose housing. The second milking facility is at the south edge of Tulara and houses 2,000 milk cows. This facility is a mix of free-stalls and loose housing. In addition, we have three heifer facilities – 2 in California and 1 in Texas. Jer-Z-Boyz Ranch employs over 60 people with the farm manager and other employees being involved with the farm for over 30 years.

#### **How long have you been breeding for Polled and what inspired you to start?**

Polled cattle arrived at Jer-Z-Boyz with the first purchases. While breeding for Polled genetics was not the main focus in the early days, it became an important part of Gary's genetic program about 10 years ago. About the same time that A.I. companies started coming to Jer-Z-Boyz to acquire genetics for their programs, Schultz Legal Critic-P was a popular sire of sons. We sent 6 or more Critic-P sons to A.I. and via the use of these sons, the Polled individuals within the herd grew quickly. Today there are over 1,650 Polled individuals in the herd and more being born daily.

#### **What is your breeding philosophy for Polled?**

The advantages of Polled will be more important in the dairy industry with each generation. However, it is important to recognize/remember that single trait selection is not always wise either. For us here, bulls must have the qualities that we need to maximize our production profitability, while having the desired physical characteristics for a long life as trouble free cows. The A.I. companies have done a tremendous job of buying Polled genetics that can equal or surpass the genetic value of their horned contemporaries. This allows us dairy producers to not give up on genetic gain in exchange for the simple possibilities of a calf being born Polled. When mating cows, when all sire options are equal, we will choose the Polled bull as first choice.

#### **Who was your first Polled cow?**

That is a great question. I know that some of the original Jersey purchases were sired by Hank Aron-P and some registered as Polled. However, not all farms recorded the Polled feature when registering calves. What is rewarding to us here is finding a new born calf that is Polled, with no immediate Polled parents. The majority of time, I find a grand dam or great grand dam, etc. that was sired by a Polled bull. Then when I go to physically inspect the maternal parents still at the farm, I find they are Polled and weren't properly identified. The other way we validate Polled on these calves is via genomic testing, which often time informs us of an incorrect sire or maternal grand sire identification issue.

#### **What cow families are you breeding Polled into?**

Simple answer is all of them! With there being nearly 13,000 Jerseys at the farm today, the number of cow families is vast. However, Polled is an important part of the long term goals of the herd, so as I mentioned earlier, whenever we can use a Polled bull as the best mating option, we will do so.

We have numerous Polled females that we could discuss. We even purchased a few elite young Polled females in 2018 that we  
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*Pictured L-R: Tim, Gary, John & Daniel*

will build cow families from in addition to some very special ones bred here at Jer-Z-Boyz. Of the top 100 Polled females on the HR or GC4-6 index list as published at US Jersey, we are the breeder/owners of 11. We are the only herd that has two lactating females on that list and up to the April 2019 genetic evaluations; we were home to the #1 Homozygous Polled female of the breed.

#### **What Polled bulls are represented in your herd?**

The list of sires is vast. I have mentioned Critic-P earlier and his sons. We have used a good deal of Polled sons from the Jars-Of-Clay Venerable cow family at Kash-In. Hillview Listowel-P will have an impact here as well. Other bulls such as Dutch Hollow Dominic-P, Buttercrest Goldstar-P and various young bulls also have large groups of daughters at the farm.

#### **What Polled bulls are you currently using?**

Currently, we are using JX Alhem Baltazar Kiawa {6}-P-ET, River Valley Pfen Promo-P, All Lynns Demos-P and JX Co-Op WC Mr. Chavez {4}-P-ET in our mating program as they are available in gender selected semen.

#### **What are your thoughts on the availability of Polled bulls?**

There needs to be more, but again, Polled options must be of equal genetic values of their contemporaries. As the dairy industry moves forward, consumer opinions will continue to have an impact. We must be conscientious of things of this nature and forward thinking in the decisions being made today.

#### **What would you like to see available in the future?**

In regards to bulls, more options. The Jersey breed is expanding in the USA by 1-2%/year and I believe Jersey semen sales are expanding at a quicker pace. Many non-Jersey dairy producers are considering the addition of Jersey genetics to their herds either via purchases or through breeding due to the bottom line profitability that the Jersey offers.

Over the last few years, young Jersey sires have anchored the majority of semen sales domestically. However, young Jersey bulls have a limited ability to produce the volumes needed to supply demand. Thus, having more bulls with the ability to produce a quality gender selected product will aid in fulfilling market demands. On the flip side, I believe the trend in recent months has seen daughter proven bulls gaining market share. While this will help in supplying the market with a high reliable product, the availability of a quality gender selected product is still limited.

#### **Where do you see the future of Polled in your breed?**

Perhaps one day Jer-Z-Boyz Ranch will be 100% polled; only time will give us that answer. If looking into the crystal ball; having bulls available that can be Polled, A2A2, BB, positive for flow, components, health and type traits will always be important. Let's not forget that strong maternal lines play a most important role that is often not quantified.

#### **Additional comments**

Jer-Z-Boyz Ranch has been a major supplier of Jersey genetics in the west. Our use of gender selected semen has allowed us not only grow our Jersey herd to where it is today, but allowed us to help many others throughout the west and even into the mid-west expand into the world of Jersey. Whether it is a bull for A.I., a calf consigned to a public auction or a group of 100 head to a non-Jersey herd converting, our goal is buyer satisfaction. Polled is an important part of our program and long term, I believe will have an impact on the dairy industry in general. We will continue to focus on Polled for its long term benefits.

*Visit [www.JerZBoyzRanch.com](http://www.JerZBoyzRanch.com) for more!*

*[www.polleddairy cattle.com](http://www.polleddairy cattle.com)*