

WORLD JERSEY CATTLE BUREAU

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2021

Our Jersey cow is without doubt the most adaptable and practical of all dairy breeds to provide viable livelihoods across all the regions of the world and it is up to us, the guardians of this fabulous "brown cow," to nurture her natural qualities for the benefit of the world. As the farming world grapples with steeply rising input prices, climate change and environmental challenges, there has never been a better time for us to promote the Jersey as the dairy breed for the future.

2021 saw the world again largely consumed by the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, as it continued to affect every corner of the globe. Lockdowns and restrictions being widely imposed in most countries has caused the traditional international Bureau activities to be cancelled. However, it is good to see that during the year events in some countries started to happen as confidence grew from protection by the vaccination programme, and also as less deadly strains of Covid became more prevalent.

With world events being unprecedented over the past couple of years, it is virtually impossible for me to restrict this report solely to 2021, so please excuse me if I delve a little into what has happened in 2022 as well, as it puts everything into better perspective.

As mentioned in my last report, the 2021 International Conference in Australia had to be postponed to 2022, and that also proved to be impossible to hold due to international travel still being so challenging with some countries being reluctant and much slower to open-up their borders to visitors. However, we are grateful to Jersey Australia for hosting the 2022 WJCB Global Online Conference in April this year, with a fabulous line-up of speakers. Sadly, it was not supported in real time as well as we would have hoped, but that might have been because of the issues that are always encountered by the time zone differences. Nonetheless, a very big "thank you" to Jersey Australia for this initiative and all the hard work that went into it.

In December 2021 we successfully held our Annual Council meeting in two stages, initially by correspondence to address the wide range of business that we are compelled to transact under our constitution, followed by a virtual meeting "live" to discuss and make decisions. Logistically this was very challenging, and required us to seek professional I.T. assistance, but I am reassured by those who participated that they found the experience relatively easy. Included in this process was the re-election of Officers of the Bureau, with those elected being in office until our next International Conference in Denmark in 2024.

At the beginning of November 2021 the Bureau was pleased to be involved with the African Jersey Forum's "The Jersey Footprint in Africa" virtual conference which attracted 953 live participants over the two days from 36 countries around the world (including 14 countries from across Africa). The event provided compelling evidence that the Jersey cow is ideal for the many different production systems in this vast continent, and as a Bureau we must continue to support those on the ground getting their message across to governments, technicians and farmers.

The Jersey Educational Travel Award (JETA), the Bureau's main youth initiative, was not presented due to the cancellation of the 2021/2022 International Conference. During the coming year the Officers will assess the required funding and sponsorship with a view to running the programme during the next International Conference in Denmark in 2024. It may benefit from being adapted from its traditional format, and we welcome suggestions from members on this. We are delighted that youth programmes in many countries around the world have re-started following the pandemic, and we will also draw on the experiences of our national association members for their comment prior to re-launching JETA.

The national associations are the bedrock of the success of the Jersey breed over many decades, and it is so encouraging to see increasing cooperation between countries within the regions and also between regions. The evolving "Jersey Forum" network is key to the continuance of this drive, and it is so good to see great activity taking place in Europe, Latin America and Africa through these channels. If Bureau members are not already involved in your own regional Jersey Forum, I would recommend that you join to benefit more from the knowledge and enthusiasm that exists in the wider Jersey "family."

I am delighted that next month we will have the opportunity of meeting in person officially as a Bureau since the last "physical" meeting took place in Rwanda in June 2019. There is a WJCB tour of Jersey Island, followed by a week in France in conjunction with the annual meeting of the European Jersey Forum. During that time we will enjoy numerous farm visits, a day at the SPACE show in Rennes, and the first part of the annual Council meeting of the Bureau. Approximately 80 people are booked for the Bureau meeting and French tour, which is a good start, and I am grateful for those who have committed to international travel for the first time since the pandemic reared its ugly head in February 2020.

In preparation for the annual meetings, the reports of the five Vice Presidents show that the Jersey breed is flourishing in all parts of the world, and I urge all members to read each of those summaries of the regional activities to gain a better perspective of the "health" of our breed globally. Financially we remain stable, and this holds us in good stead as we emerge from the restrictions of the pandemic and once again we embark on our "normal" programmes and activities.

In the aftermath of the pandemic, and more recently Russia's invasion of Ukraine resulting in a destabilisation of world energy and food prices, never before has it been more important for nations to secure their own food and energy supplies. The Jersey cow with its lower environmental footprint compared with other dairy breeds, has a vital role to play in the future to provide a more sustainable food source for the planet's rising population, and the Bureau must play its part in identifying and encouraging research into the benefits of the breed.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to give special thanks to the officer team and their considerable input to the running of the WJCB. We have regular on-line meetings, and due to the seventeen time zones that we span, it inevitably means that for some it is early morning, and for others it is late at night. We now look forward to meeting up more regularly in person, as the effects of COVID-19 lessen, beginning in France next month.

The five Vice Presidents do sterling work to keep the Jersey flag flying in their respective regions, and I know that they in turn receive much support from national associations and individual breeders in their areas of the world.

My sincere thanks to the Secretary and Treasurer who provide me with much needed support and counsel with regard to the day-to-day business of the Bureau, which has been particularly challenging over the past couple of years.

To all Bureau members and Jersey breeders and their families around the world, I wish you continued success with your Jerseys and businesses. We have a wonderful cow that sustains us and can play a much more prominent role for many more in the dairy industry in the years to come. We must all work together to get that message across in a more meaningful way.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen V Le Feuvre
President, WJCB
August 2022