

# American Miniature Jersey



## Registry & Association

# Why homestead cows are so important...

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We all have varying sets of values. Some want to cling to the “ways” in which they were raised while others wish to discard those “ways”, never to have touch with them again.

Yes, the values I am referring to are “old fashioned” but there are many other descriptions that fit such as, wholesome, educational, healthy, satisfying, enjoyable and more.

So, you decide to go back to your roots and buy an acreage in the country. Once it is properly housed, the water and sewer are in place as well as all other living necessities, then thoughts can turn to barns, corrals, pastures and live-

stock.

Reaching back in memory we recall having had fresh milk and dairy products provided by the family cow or cows while we were growing up. All of this was taken for granted, it was a fact of life. Now we remember that the milk, butter, cheese, ice cream, etc of a homemade nature sure did taste great. In those times these products were pretty much an economic necessity as well.

The full sized dairy cows that we knew have been changed a great deal over the years. They are now much larger and through genetic selection they have become high production machines. They are great in their own place but for a homestead owner to have a cow that produces 100 lbs of

milk or 12.5 gallons a day is not practical. The volume that this cow will produce will take much time and lots of sore hand and arm muscles to milk. In fact they have been selected for udder type that is best for a milking machine.

Keeping this milk factory running smoothly requires a great deal of hay and grain daily. They also require a manager with a lot of know how to keep their finely tuned, highly productive body functioning properly. They require larger facilities and thus are not practical as homestead cows. This is where the Miniature Jersey enters into the picture.

The Miniature Jersey is a scaled down dairy cow. These little cows really don't know that they are little and

thus they are big producers for their size.

Besides for the milk that they produce they have also produced a calf. A bull calf will either be a breeding bull or a steer to fatten for the freezer. A heifer calf will go on to become another one of these little magical cows that will be worth her weight in gold.

For those who do not necessarily want to milk and do all of the domestic duties that go with milking there is the option of raising additional calves to be marketed. Some opt to raise bum lambs or goat kids or a combination of this livestock.

Those who want to raise calves as an income supplement will know that milk replacer costs \$40.00 to \$50.00 per bag and it takes

1.5 to 2 bags to get a calf to weaning age. If a homestead cow can feed 3 calves during the first 3 months of lactation and then be switched to another 3 calves and three months later yet another 2 calves she will have replaced 16 bags of milk replacer with an approximate value of \$750.00. Add to this savings the value of the calf that she gave birth to and you have a producing cow that will more than hold her own in the commercial cow world. I also must mention that the calves that are started on whole milk will outgrow those that are fed on milk replacer.

In years past the calves were fed skim milk after the cream had been separated from the milk. This is another option in which the calves may not grow quite so quickly but one could still reap the benefit of making the many good food products that derive from cream.

The number of calves that a cow can 'start' varies and needs to be adjusted according to the individual cow. Generally one can plan to use a milking cow for 9 months and give her a three month break before she calves again. This also may vary from individual to individual.

An additional benefit that Homestead cows provide is a learning environment for children and grandchildren. They also allow adults to reminisce and get back to their 'roots'.

The education includes becoming familiar with the bovine species, learning to read their mannerism and to understand more about livestock. Then there is the aspect of learning how to feed and house them adequately. Learning about preventive medicine, immunizations, worming, etc. Learning what to do when the cow is ill. How to watch for telltale signs of illness and how to treat them.

The education continues in learning about milking, and then care for the milk. And the enjoyment of making butter, homemade ice cream, creamy pancake syrup, caramel's, desserts with whipped cream, recipes that call for sour cream, and the list is endless.

The hands on experience is unbeatable.

Why do we need registered homestead cows?

The Jersey as a breed is known for it's production of rich, high butterfat milk. The miniature Jersey is the original Jersey. The Jersey breed, like many others, has been selected and bred

to become a larger breed. This has been done in the quest to have cows that produce more volume of milk.

The Miniature Jersey has become a rare breed that needs to be preserved. By recording their pedigrees we can insure that their identity will go on. The small number of Miniature Jersey cattle in the country shows us that this is a breed that needs to be expanded.

Recording the pedigrees on the existing Foundation Miniature Jerseys is important. From there we can work with Artificial breeding and embryo transfer to make more foundation stock. As the demand is greater than the supply of these little purebred cows there is also a niche for an up breeding program.

In using an up breeding program other compatible breeds are bred to the Miniature Jersey to create half bloods. Breeding the half blood heifers back to Miniature Jersey will get us to three/Quarter Bloods and continuing back each generation will bring the up breeding program to Seven/Eights bloods which females become known as Native Pure (a product of the up breeding program). The males can reach Native Pure (acceptable for regis-

tered breeding stock) at Fifteen/Sixteenths bloods.

By carefully recording each of these animals and what their percentages of blood lines are will allow the buyer to know exactly what they are buying. The breeder will have an exact record of their stock and the product of the up breeding program will insure the preservation of the Miniature Jersey as a strong genetic breed.

The experience of breeders who have bred Miniature Jersey to other breeds has been that the cross bred animals are very good quality individuals with excellent udders and strong dairy characteristics. The Jersey has the ability to pass their traits on to other breeds very well. Some of the percentage animals are very colorful depending on the base breeds involved. This adds to the interest of homestead owners.

When a breed has a very small genetic base the lines become very closely mated and eventually there are not enough options in breeding combinations and the breed becomes inbred and weak.

Part of the goals of the American Miniature Jersey Association and Registry, LLC are breed preservation and advancement.