

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR COMMENTS

by Becky Payne

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Happy Holidays! Time has sure flown by this year, hasn't it? I've had the opportunity to visit with many of you over the last few months, and it seems like we're all caught up in our own frantic pace trying to get work done.

In addition to the normal traditions of the holiday season and enjoying the company of family and friends, this occasion is also the trigger for thinking of new beginnings and evaluating every business decision.

Over the last year, the ABA Board of Directors and a subcommittee tasked specifically with program review have studied the Rewards program and evaluated fees and participation since its inception in 2000. The program has really evolved over the years, and some interesting statistics were brought to light for those who weren't decision makers in the beginning. It might interest you to know:

- The per cow fee has been relatively constant over the 21-year span from \$16 in 2000 to \$19 in 2021.
- The herd fee has remained the same at \$100.
- The lowest registration fee for members was \$12 in 2000 for heifers under 4 months old and increased to \$17 in 2013 where it remains today.
- The classification program has made significant changes over these years. From the beginning to present day, every herd enrolled in Rewards has been eligible for two classification evaluations per year.

From 2000 to 2005, the per cow fee

was \$7 which paid for a computer-generated final score plus linear trait evaluations. In 2006, breeders could choose a cowside final score and pay \$11 per cow for this service, or continue the computer-generated process for the \$7 per cow fee.

In 2013, the ABA entered into an

*"The REWARDS Program as a whole is geared for Ayrshire breed advancement as the entire program is built upon contributing data to the dairy industry and recognizing our breeders for this contribution. I encourage every Ayrshire breeder to evaluate the benefits of this valuable program. **REWARD yourself, REWARD your Ayrshire breeding program, and REWARD the Ayrshire Breeders' Association by committing to the advancement of our breed.**"*

agreement with the Brown Swiss Association for them to coordinate our classification program. At that time, the fee increased to \$12 per cow, and all cows received a cowside final score. The latest classification fee increase came in 2020 at \$15 per cow.

As you can clearly see, the Board of Directors has been determined to make Rewards THE PROGRAM for breeders committed to Ayrshire breed progress. This effort must be tied to responsible business decisions as well, and the time has come to adjust the fees for the 2022 Rewards Program. The entire program is outlined in this issue as well as the application itself. Updates to the program include:

- The per cow fee will increase to \$22 and breeders will continue to be eligible for two classifications per year. The herd fee continues to be \$100.

- The registration component of the program is changing, and will not affect many herds unless you register many ET calves. Starting in 2022, the Rewards program includes registrations of animals born in the year of enrollment for no additional fees, up to 65% of the number of cows enrolled in the program year. Animals regis-

tered beyond this will be charged at \$14 each for those 4 months and younger. Registration applications received after 4 months of age will incur an additional \$2 fee.

- Incentives such as discounts on Yearbook entries and free online pedigrees have been added. More of these types of bonuses will be added as the supporting technology becomes available to us.

If you need assistance evaluating if the Rewards program is ideal for you, please contact me at your convenience.