Board of Directors CANDIDATE RESPONSES

PRESIDENT

DAYNE VOELKER

Farm Name: Voelker Kiley Farms LLC, Perryville, MO

Family Members: Spouse Kayla and son Charles, who just turned a year old in February.

Previous & Current Work Experience (if not a full-time breeder): Actively involved in breeding decisions in my cattle and show my cattle several times per year at regional and national shows. I work at Mayo Clinic Rochester as an Allergist/Immunologist.

Educational Background: BA/MD at University of Missouri-Kansas City; Internal Medicine residency at Mayo Clinic Rochester; Allergy/Immunology fellowship at Washington University in St. Louis

Farm Operation Background & Current Operation Details:
Currently own 17 cows and 20 heifers. Our cows and heifers currently live in Missouri, Kentucky, Texas, and Illinois.

Outstanding Herd/Show Recognition Received:
I am a previous recipient of young master breeder award. Have bred numerous All-American nominations.

Brown Swiss Activities & Honors:
Current District 6 board of director.

Activities/Interests Outside of the Farm:
Spending time with my wife, Kayla, and son, Charles. We love to ski and spend time outdoors.

DISTRICT 1

STEPHANIE POPE

Farm Name: Iroquois Acres, Bridport, VT

Family Members: Husband Seth Pope, children Rowdy 12 and Remy 10

Previous & Current Work Experience (if not a full-time breeder): Farm with my family and my husband, Seth, parents Steven & Sherry Ouellette, and niece Ashlynn Fleming.

Educational Background: Associate's degree from SUNY Cobleskill in Agricultural Business; Bachelors Cornell University, Animal Science

Farm Operation Background & Current Operation Details:
Milk 600 head and crop 2500 acres.
Last classification average 87 points

Outstanding Herd/Show Recognition Received:
Bred the 2023 & 2025 Grand and 2023 Reserve Grand Champions at the International Brown Swiss Show. Iroquois Acres Jong Cali Excellent 97 (Canada)
All American Senior Best Three 2023, 1st International Brown Swiss Show.
Owned the 2025 Intermediate Champion International Brown Swiss Show, 2025 All American Junior 3-year-old Jenlar FC Whipsaw

DISTRICT V

MITCH KAPPELMAN

Farm Name: Meadow Brook Farms, Manitowoc, WI

Family Members: McKenzie (wife) and Jovie (daughter, 18 months)

Previous & Current Work Experience (if not a full-time breeder): Accelerated Genetics as Herd and Sire Analyst (May 2013-May 2015)
Select Sires Inc. as Sire Analyst (April 2017-Current)
Meadow Brook Dairy Farms LLC (May 2015-Current)

Educational Background: 2013 Bachelor's of Science from UW-Madison, majoring in Dairy Science

Farm Operation Background & Current Operation Details:
Currently milking 40 registered Brown Swiss cows and 400 registered Holstein cows. Our Brown Swiss RHA is 24,805 milk, 4.02%f, 997 lbs. fat, 3.29%p, 816 lbs. protein, and 54 SCC. The average classification score of our herd is 85.3.

Outstanding Herd/Show Recognition Received:
15 Homebred Bulls in A.I.
2013 J.P. Eves Trophy Winner
2016 High Selling Live Lot at World Premier Sale

Brown Swiss Activities & Honors:
2024 National Brown Swiss Convention Farm Tour Stop
2020 National Brown Swiss Young Breeder Award

Other Dairy-Related Activities & Honors:
2024 World Dairy Expo Grand Champion Forage Producer
2022 National Holstein Association Distinguished Younger Breeder Award

Activities/Interests Outside of the Farm:
Going for walks with my wife, daughter, and dog. Attending Packers, Brewers, Badgers, and Bucks games. Cruising around on my Harley-Davidson motorcycle.

RICHARD THOMPSON

Farm Name: Random Luck, Darlington, WI

Family Members: Daughter, Allison, 23, Son, Matthew, 21

Educational Background: UW-Platteville BS AgBusiness/Animal Science

Farm Operation Background & Current Operation Details:
130 Head- Brown Swiss, Jersey, and Holstein

Outstanding Herd/Show Recognition Received:
Premier Breeder WDE, Southeast & Southwest National shows over 100 AA nominations bred or developed.

Other Dairy-Related Activities & Honors:
Past President of the WI State Brown Swiss Association
Past officer for PDCA, Area Holstein & Jersey organizations.
WI State Fair Hall of Fame Inductee

Activities/Interests Outside of the Farm:
Diehard Chicago & WI Badger Fan. Also love to play golf a couple of times a year.

DISTRICT VII

DAVID ERF

Farm Name: Curvecrest Farm – Oakdale, MN

Family Members: My wife, Kathy, along with our children, Kristin, Mikayla, Kelsey, and William, are involved

Previous & Current Work Experience (if not a full-time breeder): I am employed at Zoetis, where I travel the country supporting our genetic portfolio. Before that, I was a sire analyst for Accelerated Genetics

Educational Background: I graduated from Ohio State and then obtained a Master's Degree in Dairy Genetics from the University of Minnesota

Farm Operation Background & Current Operation Details:
We maintain a herd of 15 Brown Swiss cows in a large Holstein herd. Cows have records up to 38,000 milk and are classified on every tour. The current average score is 87 points. We raise all the heifers at our farm (currently 22 on the farm). Some IVF is done for a few special ones.

Outstanding Herd/Show Recognition Received:
We have had All-American nominations, and our children have had many State and National Bellringer awards. Last fall, our son had Reserve Junior Champion of the Junior Show and Reserve Grand Champion of the Junior Show at the Southwest National

Brown Swiss Activities & Honors:
I have been and continue to be a long-time member of the Association's genetic committee. I am also a past president of the MN Brown Swiss Association, and with my family, continue to be actively involved in that group.

Other Dairy-Related Activities & Honors:
I have served on the genetic committees, not only for Brown Swiss, but also for the Guernsey and Holstein breeds in the past. I have helped for many years as a co-coordinator of the National 4-H Dairy Contest in Madison.

Activities/Interests Outside of the Farm:
I am actively involved in the men's group at our church. I serve as Vice President of the group and am active in all the group's activities and fundraisers for charity.

CANDIDATE RESPONSES

1. How do we break the stereotype about Brown Swiss calves being difficult to raise and that Brown Swiss cows are difficult to breed? What are your suggestions for addressing this issue?

VOELKER: First, I want to congratulate all the breeders across the country who have started to diligently fight back on this stereotype. Being a breeder for the last 15 years and being involved in multiple breeds, this generalization of difficulty in raising calves and poor reproductive traits has significantly reduced over the last few years. The biggest thing is awareness, and with more multiple breed operations, the former stereotype is significantly improving. For the reproductive traits, this has been a focus of the AI stud companies as well as the Brown Swiss Association. With the updated PPR formula and focusing on other reproductive traits outside of DPR, this will further push this initiative of better reproductive traits in Brown Swiss. Being on the front line and discussing these improvements with other dairy breeds is important.

POPE: This is a loaded question! First, the calf issue. When people tell me that Swiss calves aren't very smart, I usually chuckle! I will say that the issue of Brown Swiss calves being difficult to start has gotten a lot better than when we first started in the breed in the early 90's. The first thing I tell people is they have to get to them soon after birth, and if at all possible, do not let them suckle off from Mama. I feel the earlier you get a nipple in the baby's mouth, the better! Patience is key!!

The breeding issue is one of the biggest issues we face in the Brown Swiss breed. In today's dairy economy, we have to fill stalls with profitable cows and profitable cows breed. We have struggled with this on our own dairy. Since fertility is highly hereditary, we looked at cow families first, and we made decisions on which cows to keep and which to part with. I know it sounds drastic, but we needed cows that could make money in the stalls we had. Now we do things maybe a bit

unconventionally. We breed Brown Swiss on their first clean heat after 50 days in milk. We also breed cows 2x once on the day they are in heat and then the next day.

But we need to be aware of the bulls we are choosing. Look for positive DPR and CCR. And don't always wait to have show age calves! Breed them when they are in heat!!

KAPPELMAN: We need to share success stories and benchmarking data from modern Brown Swiss herds. Comparative trials that look at average daily gain, survival rates, etc., can help to debunk the "slow to start" myth. We can also develop "best practice" protocols specifically for Brown Swiss calves. Often, they have different nutritional needs or temperaments that require specific management practices.

I believe that we need to continue to focus on genetic selection when it pertains to cow fertility. Prioritizing traits like DPR, HCR, and CCR in our selection programs will help us buck that stereotype. By showing consistent genetic progress in these areas, we can prove that the breed is evolving to higher standards.

THOMPSON: Brown Swiss Cattle do carry some strong stereotypes. The calves fed colostrum shortly after birth have no differences in my mixed herd. Keeping Brown Swiss on bottles and offering fresh water, I've found the best success with.

As for cows breeding, I feel genomics can help rectify this issue. Along with semen quality standards. More emphasis needs to be put on the positives, such as stress/heat resistance, robot-friendly, and a great source for cross-breeding.

ERF: These are areas that our breed has worked on through the Genetics Committee to try to improve. Reproduction has been a long-term focus of this group and needs to continue, as there is no quick fix here. The same thing could be said for calf rearing – we know some do extremely well here – getting their stories out will help others and shed that label as being difficult. Overall, we need to show that the past does not mean the future will be that way – we can and have made progress.

2. The world population of Brown Swiss is over 4 million. What can we do to look more outside our borders to promote US genetics? What can the association do to promote US Brown Swiss genetics outside our borders, beyond traveling to these countries?

VOELKER: I think further collaborations with other national Brown Swiss Associations can promote US genetics. I think sharing multi-national genetic information can also help promote US genetics because we would actually be able to compare more apples to apples then. I think the US brown Swiss Association could host forums at well-attended US multi-national events such as World Dairy Expo. These forums could be 20-30 minutes and titled, "The significance of US genetics outside our borders." Also, our Association can do more social media posts specifically talking about US genetics and post on international pages.

POPE: We have so many great cows here in the United States, and I feel that we need to share our genetics with the world. The easy answer is social media. It is free and can be a great and powerful tool. I don't know how far the Brown Swiss Bulletin reaches, but publications such as Cowsmopolitan are sent all over the world. Find an international publication to partner with once a year, or something of that nature. Partner with breeders across the world to consign embryos to sales. The sky's the limit, we just need to be creative!

KAPPELMAN: There are three things that I think we can do: digital showcasing, strategic partnerships, and embryo accessibility. First, invest in a high-quality, multilingual digital "Genetic Catalog" featuring video content of US cows in commercial settings. Virtual farm tours can bridge the gap without the need for international travel. Second, collaborate with international breed associations to co-host webinars to focus on US genetics. Third, streamline the logistics for embryo exports. Making US genetics available in "ready-to-implant" packages for international farmers can increase our global footprint more effectively than live animal exports.

THOMPSON: I think the bulletin is a great way to promote US genetics. Finding an affordable way to keep this publication can be a huge positive. The reality is that maybe a more active or updated website would be more effective in today's world.

ERF: To me, this is such an opportunity area for our Association. The market for our genetics will remain strong as long as we continue to focus some improvement in our weaker areas and maintain our strengths. I often consult with herds of various breeds on breeding a better cow, and often caution them that we need a good all-around cow that lasts and gives high volumes. If we can help drive the breed in the direction that gives us a more profitable, high-type, good reproducing cow, those markets will come find those genetics. Our association is the rudder of the breed; we need it to help direct us in the best path forward.

3. What other new ways can the association drive revenue to grow the viability of the Brown Swiss Association?

VOELKER: Discussion with breeders and key leaders in the dairy industry could help our association find avenues to drive further revenue and viability of our Association. Increasing our communication and collaboration with key stakeholders can further achieve these goals.

POPE: This is a tough question to answer since I am not familiar with all of the revenue streams that the association has. The first thing I would say would be, instead of 6-month registrations being free for the programs, I would decrease it to 3 months.

However, if elected, I would look for ideas with the rest of the board to try to generate more revenue.

KAPPELMAN: Partner with nutrition and health companies for breed-specific research projects that benefit both the association's treasury and the breeders' knowledge base. Explore niche marketing for high-solids milk products (cheese/yogurt), potentially through a certification program that processors can use for a fee.

THOMPSON: I'm unfamiliar with the financials of the BSA. I'm not sure of the correct answer. I think, like any business, expanding on areas that are profitable and addressing areas that are not cost-effective. Outsourcing or combining resources could be an answer. As an association, we must communicate with other breed associations and network with different business practices that work. Reaching out to other species with breed associations could lead to some new ideas.

ERF: Partnering with other companies that offer products or services that the association can endorse or refer to breeders that get the association a commission or fee for that opportunity. I have seen this approach work in our industry, and it is a win-win for the organizations that have done this well. The key here is finding the right partner. Also, we have many new dairies and breeders getting into Brown Swiss. Having a way to maintain contact and communication on what the association can do to add value to their operation is a way to at least maintain or potentially grow our revenues.

4. What role do you see Registered cattle, in particular Brown Swiss, playing in the future of the dairy industry?

VOELKER: I see registered Brown Swiss Cattle playing an important role in both the commercial setting by providing high resale value and increased components, and the show industry with Brown Swiss show animals being in new herds and in herds that previously didn't have Brown Swiss secondary to high marketing potential.

POPE: In today's dairy economy, it may be hard to see the value of registered animals with the price of beef calves and the prices of commercial cows. But good individuals with good pedigrees always sell well. But in the downturn of the commercial cow prices, pedigreed animals, I feel, still hold a premium. It isn't just being registered in my mind; it's the pedigree and the generations behind said registered animal. I always say it costs no more to have a good cow than a bad cow.

In our own dairy, we purchased some deep cows with pedigrees and have been doing IVF. We implant embryos throughout the year for pedigreed animals for the future. Whether it be a sale out of the hutch or just milking a deep-pedigreed animal, we feel it adds value to our herd. We can't get much bigger where we are, so we are reinventing our dairy a bit to have more registered animals.

On our dairy and for most family farms, the next generation is the future. On our dairy, the registered animals are what bring excitement to the kids. Ashlynn started showing and going to sales with her papa, and now she is the start of the 4th generation at Iroquois Acres. And to see the boys' excitement when a special calf is born or when they do well at a show is priceless. If you ever come here, Rowdy will be your tour guide, and he will rattle off every pedigree of every animal here. That is our why, and for us, that is enough.

KAPPELMAN: As the industry moves toward sustainability, the Brown Swiss breed's natural longevity is a massive asset. Fewer replacements needed means a smaller carbon footprint per pound of milk. Brown Swiss are uniquely positioned for the growing A2/A2 and high-component markets, ensuring their relevance in a diversifying dairy landscape. Registered cattle provide a verified "Paper Trail of Quality." In an era of precision farming, knowing the exact genetic makeup and lineage of an animal is crucial for maximizing ROI.

THOMPSON: The role of registered cattle has lessened with software and services available through milk testing. The value of high-type and high genetic cattle has increased. Leading for something that purebred breeders can still aspire to.

ERF: The role of the breed associations is constantly changing. The future of the industry is collecting and utilizing data. Our association is the collector and keeper of the phenotypic type information – that is very much needed for our breed's future. In addition, the registered population has and will continue to drive the progress of each breed, including Brown Swiss. It is the duty of the association to make sure that the breed moves in a direction that keeps our cow relevant to the dairy industry.

5. What impact do you see genomic testing playing in the development of the Brown Swiss breed? What can be done to promote more genomic testing?

VOELKER: Increased genomic testing can increase the reliability and interpretability of genomic results. Partnering with AI companies and establishing multinational genomic testing consortia to share and improve genomic testing data can also promote more genomic testing.

POPE: Genomics is a tool, and just like any tool, it works how it is used. I will say that genomic testing provides data, and the more data we can gather, the more informed decisions we can make. I do think that more animals should be tested to gather more information to make the data we have more reliable.

We have partnered with New Generation Genetics to get our Swiss tested. It has worked great! It is exciting to get the results! We are getting back results for multiple generations, and it is so exciting and fulfilling to see the progress we are making within our own little herd.

So, my advice would be to find a partner, or maybe the association can facilitate a partnership between breeders and a lab to get more people to genomic test their herd. Sometimes that is all it takes for people to start.

KAPPELMAN: Genomics is the ultimate "time machine," allowing us to identify elite females and sires years earlier. For a breed with a smaller population like ours, this can accelerate genetic gain exponentially. A few ideas to promote more genomic testing include tiered pricing and incentive programs. Work with labs to provide volume discounts for whole-herd testing. Offer "Genomic Credits" for registrations or association fees when a breeder tests a certain percentage of their annual calf crop.

THOMPSON: Genomics is key in keeping pace with other breeds. I feel all ET cattle should be genotyped. This would ensure parent verification and give more information to potential buyers, while adding to our genomic base and increasing reliability.

ERF: As many who know me will attest, this is a passion area for me. Genomic testing is learning from the past to predict the future – If we can identify potential outstanding animals at a young age, we can increase progress towards a better cow for the future. The more animals we test, the more accurate the predictions become. To increase testing, the association could look at a closer partnership with a testing company that could actually help initiate some unique research into new areas.