

## Nola Brown Continuous Achievement Awards 2010



Two young people with strong Jersey backgrounds have been named 2010 recipients of the prestigious Nola Brown Continuous Achievement Award. The award honours the memory of Ms. Brown, who was a dedicated and proficient Jersey Canada staff member during the 1990s until her untimely passing in July 1999. Nola Brown exercised great leadership skills, was an active volunteer in her local community in the Guelph, Ontario region and was a life-long learner. All of these qualities are evident in the lives and accomplishments of **Melissa Sparling of Varna, Ontario and Sean Smith from Clanwilliam, Manitoba.**

These awards were presented during the 2010 Canadian National Jersey Show at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair on November 13. Melissa was regarded as being "Champion" and Sean "Reserve Grand Champion" of the awards program. Melissa received a \$1500 scholarship from the award.



**Melissa Sparling** is the daughter of Jim and Tammy Sparling of Varna, Ontario. She was raised at their Jasper Jersey Farm. Melissa enjoyed an 11 year career in 4-H showing Jersey calves and completing 24 clubs. She has subsequently volunteered as a 4-H leader to give back to this tremendous youth development program. Melissa's passion as an educator on agricultural topics spurred her to seek and achieve titles as Seaforth Fall Fair Ambassador in 2006, Jersey Canada Youth Ambassador also in 2006 and more recently Ontario Queen of the Furrow for 2010. In describing the latter role Melissa had this to say: "The opportunity has been nothing short of amazing! I have been able to travel around Ontario meeting people, making connections and speaking about agriculture and women in agriculture."

*Melissa Sparling (photo by Angela Smith)*

Melissa has charted a career path that will involve her in the agricultural field of horticultural production. In 2010, she completed the Horticulture Technician program at Fanshawe College in London, Ontario. She graduated on the Dean's Honour Roll along with being a Gold Medalist in the Ontario Skill Competition in Landscape Construction. As her next step Melissa has enrolled in the Bachelor of Applied Science (Horticulture Production) program at Olds College in Alberta while also milking 330 cows at a large dairy nearby. Melissa's passion for horticulture blossomed during her seven years of work as a greenhouse caretaker in Bayfield, Ontario. During her high school and college years Melissa has filled a bounty of community leadership roles including President of Huron Junior Farmers; Junior Director on the Ontario Co-operative Board of Directors, Director of the Seaforth Agricultural Society; Junior Leader in Huron County 4-H and program facilitator for Co-operative Young Leaders.