

A little four-year-old girl who cried on the way home from her first visit to the zoo because her dad wouldn't let her have the ostrich and who, at age eleven, saved up money until she had enough to order a South American Cayman from the Montgomery Ward Catalog, now finds herself serving as President of the International Miniature Zebu Association!

Judy Rohner has served the IMZA as a member of the Board of Directors since the association was formed in 1991, 22 years and counting. It was only fitting that she became acting President in 2012 and was subsequently elected to the position for the 2013 year.

Natives of south central Illinois, Judy Dobbs Rohner was born at Dix, IL, 20 miles from their present home at Centralia, and Larry Rohner of Glen Ridge, was born five miles away. They met at a basketball game where Larry went to High School. Larry's family were dairy farmers. When his dad became disabled and his brothers left home, he was left to take over the dairy at age 12. Judy's parents operated a discount department store known as Dobbs Bargain City, which was established in 1949. As Judy described it, their store was the original WalMart of the area.

Larry and Judy were married on March 17, 1962, and have now been married for 51 years. They first operated the Rohner dairy for two years and then went into a family partnership operating Dobbs Bargain City with her brothers and their wives. The six of them ran the business until 1998. During the years, the Rohners also enjoyed raising exotic species of animals, and the miniature zebu fell into that category in 1989.

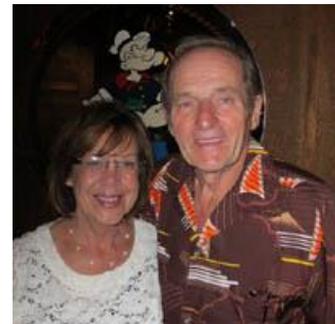
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Breeding Miniature Zebu--The Early Years

Larry and Judy Rohner

Buffalo Hill Exotics

Centralia, IL



By Maureen Neidhardt, Former IMZA Registrar and Newsletter Editor,



Taken from the September 2013 IMZA CoN*Nection Newsletter

Buffalo Hill Super Star T-5671, Rohner's current herd sire that they raised out of Buffalo Hill Red Rosetta and DAB Red Hot Shot. White with red and black spots. Very colorful and small. They are proud of him!



Larry compares 27.5" "The Other Sides Tango," a favorite mini zebu bull, to a pygmy goat.



Larry shows some of the Buffalo Hill Exotics miniature zebu herd that has been developed by breeding selection to show many reds, spots and some of the traditional grey zebus.

They were first introduced to miniature zebu cattle via Paul Seabold of Keokuk, Iowa, who became a very dear friend. They met him while looking for a llama. Paul boarded animals for zoos over winter. He had gotten into zebus back in the 1940's. He was a horseman and in his younger years a bronc buster. He loved zebus and encouraged the Rohners to get some from Bob Purtscher. Actually in 1989, their first cows came from Bill Speeds Ranch at Vinton, Texas. They then went to Dave Hale's 5-H Ranch exotic animal sale where they got a petting-zoo miniature zebu bull that they named Buffalo Hill Zachariah.

Their bloodlines have developed into their own style by melding animals from several sources. Their breeding selection included improved conformation, small size and breeding for color until their herd is currently mostly red with some spots and, of course, some greys.

In 1990 at Lolli Bros. Exotic Sale, right in the hallway in front of the shoe-shine man, Bob Purtscher and Paul Seabold approached Judy Rohner and asked her to join with them to start a miniature zebu registry. Paul said that he had found some red cattle in a zoo in Sweden and Bob Purtscher wanted to import them. Paul knew Charles Wilson from the Memphis, TN, zoo and that Charles knew how to set up a Non-Profit organization. Jim Morgan and Bob Baker also wanted a registry so they were also asked to join in the formation of the registry.

The bloodlines of the Buffalo Hill Exotics miniature zebus originated from the first cows of the Bill Speed line crossed on Buffalo Hill Zachariah from Dave Hale, Mighty Mite and Rusty Mite and additional herd sires bought through years that came from Dennis Beranek, Rolling Prairie Farm, Ida Bess Howes of

Texas, one from Warren Ferriss and a more recent bull from Don and Julie Chegwidden of Russell, Kansas.

Over the years, the Rohners have raised almost 60 different species of animals and poultry. They have now settled on their favorites, which include miniature zebus, Bactrian camels, miniature horses, Nilgai antelope, Ibex goats, Bennetts wallabies, Dama wallabies, Great Red kangaroos, as well as various chickens, geese, guineas and turkeys. Now retired, Larry and Judy are busy full time with the animals but don't feel that it is work when you are doing what you love to do. In the past they have had monkeys, hedgehogs, cavies and more; but no carnivores and no caged animals as they want their animals to live as much in a natural state as possible.

Their favorites among the miniature zebus have numbered many, but perhaps their favorite bull was just a pet. He was "The Other Sides Tango," purchased from John and Kathleen Schmidt of The Other Side Farm, Dunnellon, FL. He was so tiny that they took him home as a bottle baby in a puppy-dog crate, and he spent the winter in their bedroom! He matured to a whopping 26.5 inches tall, and they had fun taking him to shows and letting children enjoy his demure size. Some little children showed him in classes even though he wasn't competitive with the "bigger" miniature bulls. The kids sure had a great time getting practice showing and being able to manage this very small bull!

Their favorite cow is "DAB Juliette," who they purchased from Dennis Beranek. She was a couple of weeks old and a bottle baby that grew to be a nice, gentle and special cow who is a good producer. Dennis normally doesn't bottle-raise calves unless there is a reason; so in this case, Judy took on the duties and raised the little heifer that her mother couldn't raise.

The Rohners' son, Dr. Scott Rohner, is a Chiropractor at Opelousas, LA. Scott has a little herd of miniature zebus acquired from his parents, and Judy takes care of his registration duties in exchange for his little extra bulls. Scott and his wife have three children.

The Rohners also have identical twin daughters; Lisa, who lives close by in the Centralia area and has three children; and Lori, who lives near Indianapolis, IN, and has four children. So you see, Judy and Larry have 10 grandchildren and also have one great-grandchild. When the families come to visit, the grandkids enjoy meeting the menagerie of animals at Buffalo Hill Exotics.

Larry has Paso Fino horses that he has had for many years and has raised some foals, as well. He rides and trains them himself. The Rohner daughters have some of the Paso Fino offspring.

Judy's hobbies include animals--for the past 26 years, she and Larry have raised bottle-baby Giant Red kangaroos and wallabies, some of which are raised for themselves and some for sale. She recalls the years of the Macropod Information Exchange organization as having been a great experience. She enjoys doing some watercolor and also enjoys growing fruit trees and doing yard work.

Judy and Larry Rohner are a couple who work in agreement in their life's philosophies and offer their statements as a sharing of wisdom learned by 50-plus years of cultivating their pursuit of life's dreams. Larry always says, "If you like what you are doing, you will never work another day in your life." Judy says, "When you love what you are doing, it is not work." "Life with animals is a very good life."