

Press Release



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30th Team Winners Announced

Cambridge, ON May 12, 2009 – The Ontario Dairy Youth Award selection committee is pleased to announce the winners of the Ontario Dairy Youth Award for 2009.

This year marks the 30th year of the Ontario Dairy Youth Award, initiated in 1980 in order to recognize young people between the ages of 25-35 who are actively involved in operating a dairy farm, who have shown strong leadership abilities, and taken active roles in their communities as well as within their breed or breeds.

The four award recipients will receive an all expenses paid trip to the World Dairy Expo in Madison, Wisconsin this fall. This award is funded through the Ontario Dairy Youth Trust Fund as well as the Ontario Holstein Branch.

West Central: Wilco Vaarkamp, Hagersville (905) 768-3938, e-mail: wilcovaarkamp@hotmail.com

Wilco milks 90 cows in a free stall setup and works close to 400 acres. His herd consists of 90% Holsteins and 10% Jerseys. Wilco was an active member of 4-H in Haldimand County, served as a Director of the Haldimand-Norfolk Holstein Club for 3 years, been Treasurer, and presently is a Councillor for the Club.

Since becoming involved in the farm operation, Wilco has had a Lely heat detector installed in order to improve heat detection. He is striving to make the herd 100% registered, and has started using Scout/305 dairy comp in order to manage his herd more efficiently. The barn has been renovated to accommodate for better calving facilities and their vaccination program and protocols have improved greatly.

Wilco believes that by providing a quality product as well as striving to stay informed and continue learning within the dairy industry that he can grow as a farmer. He believes that Ontario's dairy industry has a strong future as long as it maintains quality standards.

Western: Jack Danen, Tavistock (519) 655-2865

A graduate of the University of Guelph's diploma program in 1993, Jack farms in corporation under the Danensview Farms Inc. name. Jack was strongly involved in many youth programs when growing up, completing 16 4-H clubs, a Junior Farmer for 15 years, before winning the most outstanding retiring member award in 2003. Jack has been very involved in developing youth in agriculture and as a member of the Oxford County Dairy Producer Committee, was the chair of the annual Dairy Days program to educate approximately 1500 4th graders about the dairy industry. He was also the Treasurer of the Oxford county Agriculture in the classroom committee for many years. Jack sits on numerous other committees including the South western Ontario Dairy Symposium, church council and is a member of the Progressive Dairy Herd Operators.

Milking 80 cows, Jack has worked to improve the genetics in his herd, setting up a mating program to ensure the goals of the herd are kept in check and that there is constant improvement. He has also done a lot in terms of herd health, striving to do as much as he can by himself to reduce veterinary bills. In the future, Jack looks to focus on cow comfort, both to increase production as well as longevity. He feels longevity must be a major focus in Canada to maintain profitability in aggressive environments and management styles.

Jack feels that emphasis on promotion of milk products in the future can do a lot to further the industry as a whole. Taking an active role in educating the public, he wants to ensure that all misconceptions about the dairy industry in Canada are eliminated. By attending dairy seminars, reading up on innovations and issues in the industry, he feels that he can be an active voice in the dairy industry and help the Ontario dairy industry to move forward and flourish.

East-Central: Randy Bullock, Lakefield (705) 657-3442, e-mail: tara.bullock@sympatico.ca

Randy milks 55 cows along with his wife Tara, in a split Holstein and Jersey herd. He is a member of both the Kawartha Jersey Club as well as the Peterborough Holstein club. They milk in a 3 row, 54 stall tie stall barn with newly introduced tunnel ventilation that Randy says has done a lot to improve cow comfort as well as the comfort of the people working around the cows. He focuses on using bulls that are high in milk, a plus for both fat and protein and ideally have double digits for type. They also watch sale books and breed magazines to see what other breeders are using on similar bloodlines.

There have been numerous changes implemented since Randy has become involved and taken over the farm operation. Some highlights include changing from strictly commodity feed to using a TMR blend of ensiled feeds, purchasing quota and adding stalls to the milking line. A new heifer barn was built recently to improve heifer health and comfort. This was followed by a new dry cow facility to focus on getting proper care and nutrition to pregnant cows. They have also improved ventilation in both their tie stall as well as their calf raising facility to increase comfort and general health.

Randy is very goal oriented and has set goals yearly as well as for five years and ten years down the road. These focus on increasing milk production per stall, increasing calvings per year and to only keep cows that are meeting their potential. Ultimately, Randy hopes to breed a Master Breeders herd while maintaining productivity and longevity within the herd.

Eastern: Andy Cavanagh, Kinburn (613) 839-2423, e-mail: cavanhill@hotmail.com

A graduate of the University of Guelph in 2000, Andy has become extremely involved in the dairy industry since. He has been a Director of the Carleton-Russell Holstein Club since 2000 and was President in 2008. He has also been a Carleton County milk Director for the past 2 years, a soil and crop Director and President of the Carleton-Lanark Pork Producers. He has had numerous accolades through the years, including being a member of the Ontario 4-H dairy Judging Team and winning the William Park Carr Scholarship for showing leadership qualities, activity in community activities as well as high academic standing.

Farming with his father Mel and brother Dale, they not only milk 60 registered Holsteins in a tie stall, but have a 125 head cow and calf beef operation, 65 sows farrow to finish and work 900 acres of land. They average a 4.6% butterfat and 10, 692 kg of milk. Their main emphasis in their breeding program is on type however they put some emphasis on milk components. Since Andy has been home, they have built 3 coveralls, renovated and expanded their barn, purchased quota, built a silo and purchased a harvester and a TMR mixer. All with the goals of improving cow comfort and efficiency.

In the future, Andy wants to increase the herd size, increase milk production, improve heifer raising facilities and increase dairy sales. He thinks that producers should be focusing on feet and legs and good mammary systems. He also sees the importance of health traits in creating longevity while producers push for an increase in milk production.

We would like to once again congratulate these young dairy enthusiasts and wish them the best of luck in all future endeavours.

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