

Congratulations

to the 2018 winners of the Ontario Dairy Youth Award! Established in 1980, the competition recognizes young people aged 25-35 who are actively involved in the operation of a dairy farm, who have demonstrated leadership and taken an active role in their communities. These talented winners will receive an all-expenses paid trip to World Dairy Expo in Madison, Wisconsin this fall. The Ontario Dairy Youth Award is funded through the Ontario Dairy Youth Trust Fund, the Ontario Holstein Branch and Gay Lea Foods as a supporting sponsor.



Scott Groniger

WEEBERLAC HOLSTEINS,
CARLSBAD SPRINGS

Scott helps run a 40-cow tie-stall operation owned by his family. He and his father are the main contributors on the 300-acre farm, with Scott looking after the cows and his father managing

the field work. Both parties take care of milking the cows, dividing the farm's three times daily milking schedule.

The Gronigers grow all of their own forages on the farm and feed a TMR of corn silage, chopped balage, dry corn, soybeans, minerals and a purchased protein supplement. They make an ambitious four cuts of hay each year, aiming for maximum protein levels in order to minimize the amount of supplement they are required to purchase. One hundred acres each of corn, hay and soya beans are grown on their rented land.

Scott graduated from Kemptville College in 2009 and returned home to the farm part-time. In the four years that he worked off the farm as an A.I. Tech with EastGen, he took on the responsibility of artificially inseminating cows at home and milking and feeding. He also travelled to Australia for two breeding seasons to artificially inseminate cows there. Since 2013 he's been at home farming full-time alongside his father and has helped bring about several changes. In the past six years, Scott has helped transition the farm's feeding program from component feeding to TMR. He's also helped build a manure pit, renovate an old storage shed into a calf facility and make improvements to the current tie-stalls, allowing for longer, wider stalls with rubber mats for added cow comfort. Last year, Scott became involved in the farm's business accounts. Scott is proud of these changes made to the overall management of the cows and is pleased to see the herd's genetic potential for production on the rise.

Scott schedules regular herd health visits every four to five weeks and flushes two to three animals per year. He breeds for a balance of type, production and high components and has recently taken a keen interest in using polled genetics. The top half of the herd is bred to proven and genomic sires; the bottom half is used as recipients or bred to beef. Almost all of the heifers at Weeberlac receive embryos.

In the coming five years, Scott plans to build a new heifer and dry cow facility to allow for expansion in the main barn. He believes purchasing quota will allow him to keep up with inflation and plans to continue purchasing more each year.

Scott was active in 4-H and completed 36 clubs during his tenure. He is a past 4-H leader for the Carleton Dairy Judging Club and a past Director of the Carleton-Russell Holstein Club. Currently, he serves as a member on the Ottawa Carleton Milk Committee.



Lorenz Guntensperger

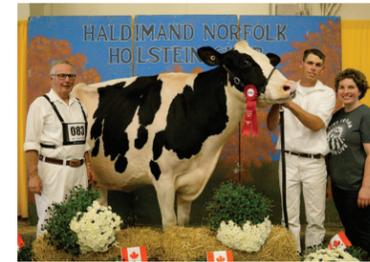
GUNTENSPERGER DAIRY, SEAFORTH

Lorenz farms full-time in partnership with his brother, Adrian, and father at Guntensperger Dairy in Seaforth, Ontario. The free-stall operation, built in 1996 and expanded in 2003, is home to 180 milking cows and 300 acres of workable land. The past year has been an exciting one for Lorenz and his family, who originally hail from Switzerland, as they focus their efforts on building a 330-cow sand-bedded tunnel ventilation barn with a double-12 parlour. They currently milk in a double-eight Boumatic herringbone parlour and house their milking herd on sawdust-bedded pasture mats.

At home on the farm Lorenz is responsible for milking, breeding, hoof trimming and keeping the herd healthy. His father takes care of feeding the cows and bringing them to the parlour, while his mother and wife share in the care of the calves and help with milkings as needed. The couple's two children, Levi (3) and Stella (1) are big helpers in the barn too. Every decision at this family farm is heavily weighed and executed in line with the resources the family currently has at their disposal. Due to a substantial growth in cows and quote over the past five years, heifers are being housed off-site at a custom raiser until a new barn is in place and they can move into the old one. The Guntensperger's cropping strategy is admittedly limited, due to their finite land source, and their 300 acres are split equally between corn and haylage. Their feeding program focuses on a high-forage diet, with an emphasis on corn silage due to the herd's ability to produce more tonnes of milk per acre with a high corn diet. Lorenz recently switched dry cows to a "Goldie Locks" diet, which is working great for them and has helped improve the health of newly fresh cows.

The farm's breeding strategy has seen great changes since Lorenz returned home six years ago. He enjoys genetics and now uses a lot of sexed semen on heifers and 2-year-olds to improve the herd's genetic level. Today, 70 per cent genomic bulls are being used. Lorenz references the Pro\$ index to breed cows with high production and low-stature, two of his top criteria, followed by udders, DPR and herd life. His family has had great success with the full-synch program he implemented for first breedings, averaging a 58 per cent conception rate and 40 per cent pregnancy rate since 2012.

Lorenz currently serves as the President for the Huron County Holstein Club and is involved in the Huron Milk Committee. He has volunteered at Breakfast on the Farm, helped with the Plowing Match, handed out chocolate milk at area Christmas parades and organized the dairy section of Seaforth's Ag and Water Festival. Though coordinating volunteers and animals for the event adds to an already busy schedule, Lorenz says nothing beats watching how excited the kids get when they see a cow being milked for the first time.



Jennifer Peart

ERIEVIEW HOLSTEINS, SELKIRK

Twenty-sixteen was a big year for Jennifer – she and her husband, Charlie Anderson got married and acquired an ongoing dairy operation, all within the span of a month! In eighteen months'

time, they've grown that operation to 40 kgs of quota and have proudly filled all of their quota and incentive days along the way. Jennifer was raised at Peartome Farms in Hagersville, Ont., and purchasing the Raeland herd was a way to expand the farm's quota holdings and work on a plan of succession.

Jennifer and Charlie share in the farm's labour, with Charlie taking on responsibility for the feeding program, AI work, tractor work and cattle sales, and Jennifer leading the charge on the milking side. In addition to keeping the farm's paperwork and accounting up-to-date, Jennifer also works full-time as a Senior Relationship Manager at Farm Credit Canada in Simcoe.

The couple works jointly on the farm's breeding program, with both Holstein and Jersey genetics being used. They consider themselves fortunate to have purchased a "really good herd of cows" from Rae and Concetta Stadder with large frames and amazing udders. Their most recent classification yielded 20 EX, 27 VG and 5 GP animals. Currently, they're working on increasing the herd's overall milk production and were pleased with their latest DHI test measuring 34 kgs of milk. They attribute the increase to a change in their feeding regime, which consists of large square-wrapped hay, ag bags of corn silage and a complete protein pellet. Jennifer and Charlie purchased their own bale wrapper last year to avoid customer operator fees and wait times.

Jennifer and Charlie are proud of the changes they've implemented in the last year-and-a-half and have come to realize that many small changes can add up to big results. Since taking over, they've retro-fitted the original tie-stall barn with an automatic pipeline wash system, installed fans for ventilation, added two roll-top garage doors for easier cleaning and put in 20 head gates for easier animal handling. They've also implemented a plate cooler system, with water running back to the cow's water bowls, and switched from disposable paper towels to terrycloth towels and an iodine teat dip. These changes earned them a General Milk Quality certificate last year from DHI. Jennifer and Charlie's plans for 2018 include installing a TMR mixer and motorized feed cart in order to improve feed management and reduce labour. An ongoing goal is to continue to grow their quota holdings and fill their quota and incentive days each year. The couple is excited to see their first Erieview heifers calve out next summer.

Jennifer has been heavily involved in the dairy industry for several years, first as a 4-H member in Haldimand and Brant counties, where she earned top member honours, and currently as a Director of the Haldimand Norfolk Holstein Club where she served as the club's President from 2014-2016. In 2013, she was pleased to volunteer her time on the National Holstein Convention Committee in Niagara Falls. In her spare time, Jennifer enjoys volunteering with the Norfolk County Fair in a variety of capacities. She looks forward to making the trip to World Dairy Expo this fall, the same trip her father Doug Peart made in 1984, three weeks before she was born!

Stephanie Murphy

RONBETH HOLSTEINS, HASTINGS



Stephanie was raised at Ronbeth Holsteins in Hastings, Ontario, and today operates the farm in partnership with her parents, Carol and Dean Warner, husband, Camron Murphy and sister Lacey. This family-run operation is successful because everyone works together and utilizes their strengths and expertise where best suited. Stephanie also works full time for Grand Valley Fortifiers as a Dairy/Beef Specialist covering from Lindsay to Kingston.

At Ronbeth Farms, 50 to 55 cows are milked daily in a tie-stall barn. Cows are put out to pasture daily – even in the winter for a few hours – while the barn is cleaned and re-bedded. Top-quality crops are important at Ronbeth, and Stephanie's family aims to grow the very best forages possible on the 600 acres (300 owned) they farm. With the exception of grain corn, they grow all of their own crops for the TMR they feed the herd, including alfalfa, timothy, rye and orchard grass, as well as corn silage, barley, oats/peas and wheat for straw. They purchase a protein supplement pellet as well. Cows are bred for type, with an emphasis on good feet and legs, mammary systems and longevity. As much as possible, proven bulls with a plus 15 for conformation are used; however, more genomic bulls have been used in recent years. Stephanie and her family continue to do some flushing on the farm both for use in their lower-end heifers, as well as to sell as embryos.

A great deal of time has been spent on improving calf-raising facilities since Stephanie and Camron became partners in the operation in 2016. Calves are housed in hutches bedded with shavings and straw shortly after birth and receive colostrum from their mother within the first half hour. After that, they receive whole milk, textured calf starter, hay and water. Calves spend two to three months in individual hutches before moving to a super hutch until five or six months of age. At that time, they move to the retro-fitted calf barn, and later, at 11 months of age, to the heifer barn. Retro-fitting the old calf barn by removing 14 small pens and bringing the total pack pen count to six is something Stephanie is proud of and the results speak for themselves. Calves are growing faster and are much healthier. From a cost standpoint, vet bills are reduced and the hope is that these heifers will enter the milk line at a younger age. Additional changes implemented since 2016 include the switch to TMR, the installation of a bigger bulk tank and an automatic wash system, the upgrade to Dairy Comp 305 and a new accounting program (FCC AgExpert) and the conversion of a hay storage area for close-up bred heifers to keep them away from mature dry cows. In addition to some small changes on the farm to decrease feed costs and improve functionality this year, Stephanie and her family hope to install a heat monitoring system within the next couple years, and eventually purchase more land. In the long term, they'd like to build a new barn.

Stephanie is the President of the Peterborough County Holstein Club and a member of the Peterborough County Milk Producers Committee. She is past Chair of Holstein Canada's Young Leader Committee and is a past Norwood Fair Director and Ambassador. Stephanie is a Level 3 Judge with Holstein Canada and has had the pleasure of judging the Showmanship division at the 2017 TD Canadian 4-H Dairy Classic as well as the Intermediate Showmanship Competition at World Dairy Expo last year and this spring the Atlantic Spring show.