



Representing Alberta's Dairy Producers

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## Dairy Study Groups Receives Top Industry Award

**Edmonton** – The East of Olds Dairy Farmer Study Club was the recipient of the Alberta dairy industry's top award this year, the Dairy Industry Achievement Award. The award seeks to convey the respect that Alberta's dairy farmers hold for the people and organizations that go above and beyond to help sustain and grow the dairy industry.

"This year's recipients are particularly special as they are fellow dairy farmers," says Tom Kootstra, chairman of Alberta Milk. "This group truly is the essence of what the DIAA is because of their ability to inspire other farmers and close the gap between farmers and consumers."

The study club was started in 2003 when a few individuals from the east of Olds area started a group based on a similar model they experienced in Holland. They planned kitchen table meetings to learn more about various topics like estate planning or herd health. The core of the club was that they wanted to know more and do better.

Beyond their internal meetings, this group is responsible for the phenomenon of Breakfast on the Dairy Farm. The event invites consumers to enjoy a hot breakfast on a local dairy farm and meet the people that help produce milk. With about 300 people coming to enjoy the inaugural event in 2012, the group unknowingly started a legacy.

"As a group, we like to take the opportunities to learn from each other, to involve the next generation of farmers, and to engage with our local consumers," says Miranda Verhoef, a member of the group and dairy farmer near Bowden.

Fast forward six years later and other dairy farmers took notice and followed their lead. There are now three breakfast events spanning the entire province and their combined reach is 20 times the Study Group's original 300 visitors since 2012. By welcoming people to see the passion dairy farmers have for what they do, they earn consumer trust from everything from animal care, milk quality, and what it really means to be a dairy farmer in Alberta.

"We are truly honored to receive this prestigious award," says Miranda Verhoef, a member of the group. "As committed dairy farmers we strive to do our best and show the public that we take good care of our animals and produce quality milk. As a group, we like to take the opportunities to learn from each other, to involve the next generation of farmers, and to engage with our local consumers."

The group was recognized at the Alberta Milk Dairy Conference in Calgary on November 21, 2018.

### About Alberta Milk

Alberta Milk represents the province's dairy producers. Our vision is growing a sustainable dairy industry by being a trusted source of quality milk.

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