



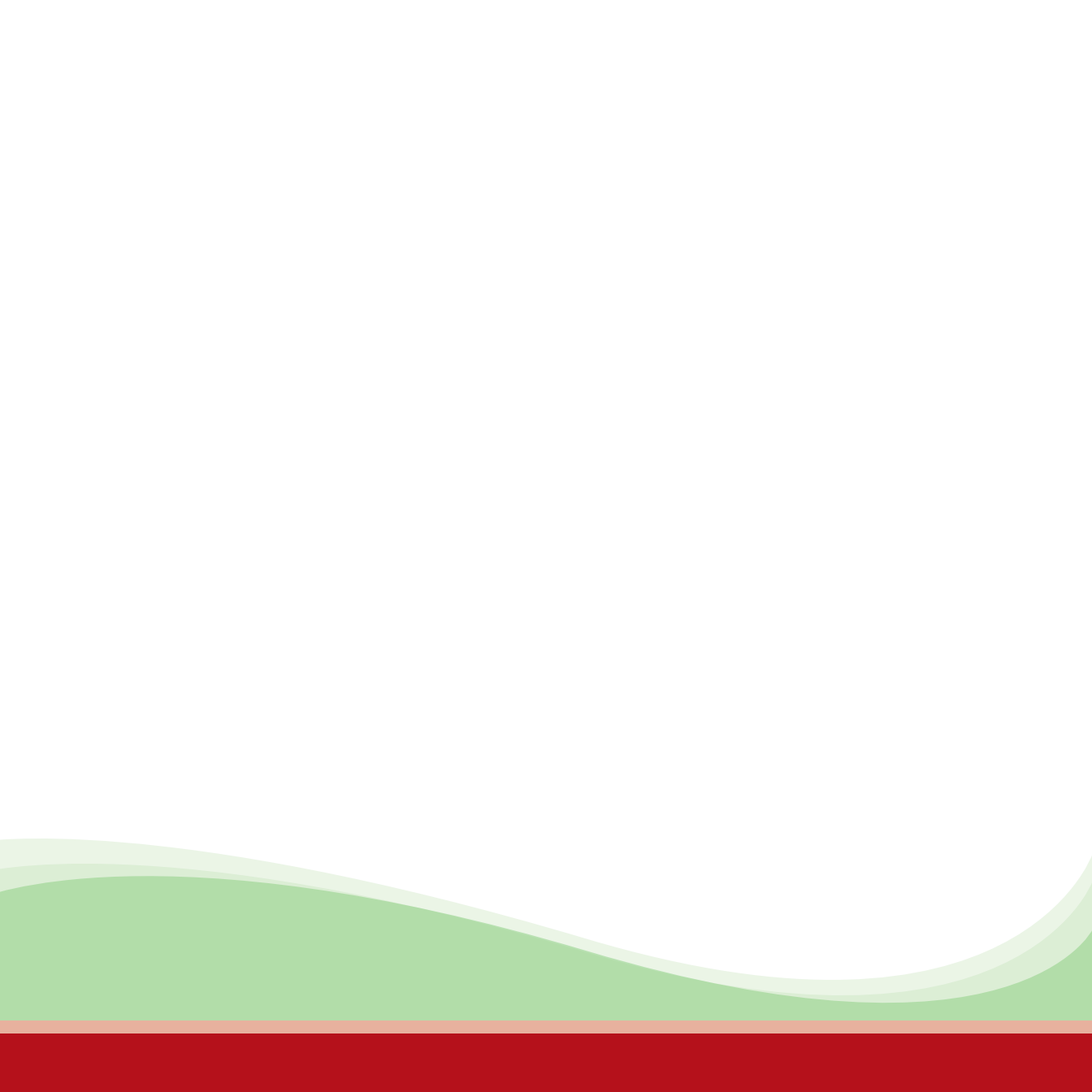
Premier's Award for Agri-Food Innovation Excellence



Celebrating

Ontario's crop of new ideas!
2008

Listowel



The 55 recipients of the 2008 Premier's Award for Agri-Food Innovation are announced in 2009.

Table of Contents

Message from the Premier of Ontario	2
Message from the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	3
Premier's Award Winner	4
Minister's Award Winner	5
Regional Award Winners (in alphabetical order)	6

Message from the Premier

A Personal Message from the Premier

On behalf of the Government of Ontario, I am delighted to extend warm greetings to the leaders of and stakeholders in the agriculture and food industry as we recognize the invaluable contributions of farmer-innovators to our province's agri-food sector.



To remain competitive in today's global market and to ensure our continued prosperity, all sectors of the economy – including the agri-food sector – must look to innovation to gain advantage. These awards are testament to the vigorous culture of innovation that characterizes our province's agri-food industry and a fitting tribute to the talented women and men who drive it. Our government remains firmly committed to recognizing and encouraging innovation in Ontario agriculture and to ensuring the ongoing vitality of our agri-food industry.

As Premier, I am proud to recognize the farmers whose innovation has helped them thrive in this competitive sector, and I applaud your dedication, creativity and hard work. My hearty congratulations go out to this year's award recipients on your tremendous success in generating new products, creating jobs and building opportunity.

As we continue to work together to harness innovation to build an even stronger Ontario, please accept my best wishes.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dalton McGuinty". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dalton McGuinty, Premier

Message from the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

A Message from the Honourable Leona Dombrowsky

The Premier's Award for Agri-Food Innovation Excellence recognizes that primary producers, agri-food businesses and agri-food related organizations, have always been innovative in the running of their businesses and will foster even greater innovation across the province's agri-food sector.

We received more than 180 applications for this year's award, and I continue to be impressed by the calibre and breadth of ideas being showcased through these submissions.

The ideas that are springing forth as a result of agri-food related innovations will not only ensure the ongoing vitality of our agri-food industry but also leave a legacy for generations to come. Some may even change the face of the agri-food sector.

I am proud to recognize the 2008 recipient of the Minister's Award for Agri-Food Innovation Excellence. On behalf of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, I congratulate all 55 winners of the 2008 Premier's, Minister's and regional awards for Agri-Food Innovation Excellence, and I thank all of you who dare to think outside the box and open up a world of opportunity for all to share.

Sincerely,



Leona Dombrowsky, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs



Premier's Award Winner

Fifth Town Artisan Cheese Company – Prince Edward County

Fifth Town Artisan Cheese Company is combining tradition with innovation – the fine craft of artisan cheese-making, in a modern, green environment. The dairy is the largest artisan cheese manufacturing facility in Eastern Ontario to process goat and sheep milk. It's also Canada's only certified Platinum LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) dairy.

This state-of-the-art facility's solar, wind and geothermal technologies have helped reduce its energy consumption by 60 per cent. The dairy's sustainability theme is carried throughout the entire enterprise, from environmentally-friendly waste processing to green cleaning agents and biodegradable packaging. Their chevre (goat cheese) packaging, for instance, is a corn-based container that is 100 per cent biodegradable. The dairy has also created subterranean caves crafted out of poured cement to age its cheese. The walls are left unfinished and natural, providing a steady, cool environment with little energy required.

Fifth Town Artisan Cheese Company has received multiple industry 'green building' awards for using environmentally friendly materials, such as sustainable wood and an innovative, green concrete mix. The dairy has also garnered top awards for its products and promotes cheese education by offering regular cheese tasting seminars, courses and summer internships.

When it comes to producing a quality product, 'going green' and sharing knowledge, you could say this dairy is 'the big cheese' in its field.



Minister's Award Winner

Hillside Gardens Limited – Simcoe County

Hillside Gardens Ltd. is a family farm that has supplied quality produce to consumers for more than four decades. Their latest innovation is helping to build trust in food safety and traceability by strengthening the 'gate to plate' connection.

Ron Gleason, president, redesigned an existing software program for use as an innovative farm traceability program. The farm has hosted a pilot traceability project and shares its knowledge with other producers through on-farm tours and industry presentations. This innovation can be used by other growers to monitor their physical inventory, manage planting dates, spray records, production planning, staffing needs, and enhance food safety and traceability.

The program is capable of tracing all field activities from harvest to packing, to shipping dates and destinations. At the farm, lot IDs are assigned in each step in the process, and the end product is dated with a bar code sticker. The wireless, computerized system will only allow product that has been assigned to a load to be picked and scanned. This improves many aspects of the business, from rotation and quality issues to recall efficiency and inventory control. The system provides "real time" inventory and work is underway to expand its capabilities.

This innovation is giving the agri-food sector new tools that can help build consumer trust in Ontario food, from field to fork.



Regional Award Winners



**Bert Fisher
Farms Limited –
Perth County**

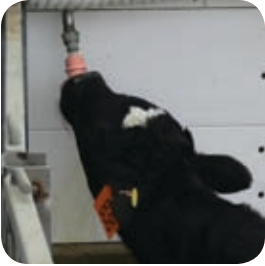
Bert Fisher Farms has responded to a growing market demand for antibiotic-free chickens. In 2007, they began delivering 15,000 birds a week to a national grocer. That demand has since grown to 60,000 birds a week and the farm has filled the bill. Their innovative antibiotic-free management process has seen their birds' seven-day weights increase an average of 40-70 per cent, with some flocks attaining more than five times gain from placement weight. The business also built a commercial research facility and has conducted upwards of 50 trials which have helped to build on and fine-tune its success.



**Best Baa
Farm –
Wellington County**

Eric Bzikot counts ideas instead of sheep at night. This innovator has created a value-added venture for his farm that also benefits other producers. A processing plant and a small co-op have been established for the sale of sheep milk product. The co-op currently produces 12 types of artisan sheep cheese, two types of yogurt and is looking at potential in the ice cream market. With distribution to 60 stores and restaurants, Best Baa is creating innovative growth opportunities for Ontario's sheep milk product market.

Regional Award Winners



**Lawrence
Brubacher –
Wellington County**

Calves in Wellington County get the royal treatment by having their milk delivered right to them whenever they want it. Lawrence Brubacher spent several months devising an automated system that includes a heated outdoor tank and pipeline. He knew there had to be a way to save the time it took to manually feed all his calves with buckets. Now, Lawrence is happy, the calves are happy and healthy, and the system may be coming to other farms in Ontario and Canada in the near future.



**Enviro Mushroom
Farm Inc. –
Halton Region**

Getting all steamed up means better mushrooms and reduced energy costs at this farm in Halton Region. Steam from two boilers sterilizes the material in which mushrooms are grown. The wasted heat in the steam and hot water from an auto-clave chamber is recycled to provide energy and heat for the farm. To save more costs, the system was constructed from recycled parts. The mushrooms are moister, the monthly energy bill is down by \$7,000, and business is booming.

Regional Award Winners



**Hilton Soy Foods –
Perth County**

Thousands of Canadians suffer from life-threatening nut allergies and many schools ban peanut butter from the classroom. Consumers are demanding more peanut-free products. Hilton Soy Foods is answering the call. This innovator has created a soy product that tastes like peanut butter. Their product, Soy Butter, has won several taste tests and is being used by various manufacturers to develop new nut-free products. Caterers for children's camps and schools are also asking suppliers to carry this product. This innovation has benefited soybean farmers, created new jobs and market opportunities in the processing sector and offers peace of mind to consumers.



**Oakridge Acres
Country
Meat Store –
Waterloo Region**

Oakridge Acres Country Meat Store is not your typical little country corner shop. Owners Mark and Cindy Gerber started out by setting up a country produce store for 40 area farms. It didn't take long for their sales to grow exponentially. They sell their Black Angus beef in their new 3,000-square-foot store, as well as a full range of food products from neighbouring farms. An in-store kitchen provides value-added products that feature local farm ingredients. Customers can also shop on-line. These innovators have actively marketed through farm open houses and networking at health and wellness-themed events, building a growing roster of health professionals who endorse the store's products to clients.

Regional Award Winners



**Ontario Farm
Animal Council –
Wellington County**

Do you want “the real dirt on farming”? The Ontario Farm Animal Council offers a booklet under the same name, just one of the many creative materials it has developed over the past 20 years to promote agricultural awareness. The Council continuously finds innovative ways to tell the story of Ontario’s farmers. Almost 100,000 visitors have accessed its “Virtual Farm Tours” with a click of their computer mouse. People also enjoy the “Faces of Farming” calendar, sold out each year. The non-profit education organization is a leader in developing resources and participating in events that help educate and raise awareness of Ontario’s agri-food sector.



**Jim Shea –
Huron County**

Jim Shea gets a real lift out of his innovative invention. With a metal cage, a hydraulic jack, and an extendable post, the Non-Kick Jack Cage makes farm equipment repair and construction jobs safer than they used to be. The engineering marvel reduces the danger of the jack kicking sideways under extreme pressure. Whether it’s the corner of a barn or the wagon, this invention is definitely up to the job.

Past Award Highlights

Premier's Award Winners:

2007 – Bill and Caroline Nightingale, B&C Nightingale Farms (Norfolk County), for their work in improving Ontario's fresh vegetable yields by adapting the use of high tunnels over vegetable field crops.

2006 – David VanderDussen, NOD Apiary Products Ltd. (Hastings County), for developing Mite-Away II, an environmentally friendly product to protect honeybees from mite infestations, which is exported around the world.

Minister's Award Winners:

2007 – David Freeman, Freeman Farms (Grey County), for his innovation in developing freeze-dry technology and building a state-of-the-art processing plant equipped to process botanicals for use in nutraceuticals and whole foods.

2006 – Fritz and Paul Klaesi, (Renfrew County), for adapting the use of technology that generates electricity from manure in Ontario.

Premier's Award for Agri-Food Innovation Excellence

For more information
www.ontario.ca/omafra
1 877 424-1300