

*For immediate release*

**Alberta and Ontario farmers take top spots as 2015**

**Outstanding Young Farmers for Canada**

**Churchbridge, SK  [November 24, 2015]** – Canada’s Outstanding Young Farmers for 2015 are hog farmers Mike and Amy Cronin of Bluevale, ON, and dairy farmers Patrick and Cherylynn Bos of Ponoka, AB. These two farm families were chosen from six regional farm couples across Canada at Canada’s Outstanding Young Farmers (OYF) annual national event held last week in Edmonton, AB. Special guests at the event included Alberta Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Bev Yee, Member of Parliament for Red Deer, Earl Dreeshen and Member of Legislative Assembly for Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock, Glenn vanDijken.

Strength and ingenuity in the face of adversity and a penchant for taking the right risks to advance their operations appeared as a common thread for the Bos and Cronin families, who are the newest additions to the family of OYF ambassadors for Canadian agriculture.

“Canada’s Outstanding Young Farmers provides a wonderful platform to recognize and celebrate Canada’s agricultural entrepreneurs and leaders,” says Bev Yee, Alberta Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

The Cronins both grew up on Ontario dairy farms, and when it came time to start their own operations, saw opportunity in the hog industry. Though they entered during a severe downturn in 1998, the Cronins have expanded their operation from their first 1,800 farrow-to-wean operation to the 17,000 sows they run today between several farms in Canada and the U.S.

The Boses have built a milk cow and goat farm business where they operate a herd of 1,400 dairy goats. Following the closure of the goat milk and cheese processing facility they were selling to in 2004, the Boses decided to see the challenge as an opportunity and built their own facility. Today, Rock Ridge Dairy is a successful cow and goat milk and cheese processing facility selling to major grocery chains across Western Canada.

“Every year, our organization recognizes and welcomes more innovation and more passion with farm families who are helping shape the dynamic future of Canada’s agri-food sector,” says OYF President Luanne Lynn. “The Cronin and Bos families both exhibit the values of OYF and the agriculture industry in their unique and successful farm businesses. We are thrilled to welcome them to join 35 years of OYF winners.”

Mike and Amy Cronin share their win with their six children, all of whom have a keen interest and involvement in their hog operations. With risk management at the centre of their business plan, the Cronins have managed to expand their operation in size and advance to meet new supply chain needs. In 2014, they built the first crate-free farrowing system in North America after researching the newest technology from around the world. Their barn includes a thumb print entry system, electronic sow feeders and video cameras.

“Every one of us has worked hard and dedicated our whole lives to family, farming and our communities,” Amy Cronin said of her fellow OYF honourees at the awards ceremony on Friday.

The Bos family, including their four children, shares a passion for farming and sharing their story with their customers, hosting more than 600 guests on their farm yearly for tours. Their new goat milking rotary system, expected to be up and running in the next several weeks, will be one of the most technologically advanced systems of its kind in North America. Passionate about giving back to their communities, the Boses currently donate 2.5 cents for every litre of milk they sell to the Calgary Food Bank as part of their Children’s Milk Program.

“It’s very humbling to be chosen to represent this year’s honourees,” said Cherylynn Bos. “We wouldn’t be here without the support of our families.”

Patrick and Cherylynn Bos from Alberta and Mike and Amy Cronin from Ontario were chosen from the six 2015 regional finalists – including the following honourees from the other four regions: David and Sara Simmons (Atlantic region), Christian Bilodeau and Annie Sirois (Quebec region), Mark and Cori Pawluk (Manitoba region), and Jeff and Ebony Prosko (Saskatchewan region).

Celebrating 35 years, Canada’s Outstanding Young Farmers’ program is an annual competition to recognize farmers that exemplify excellence in their profession and promote the tremendous contribution of agriculture. Open to participants 18 to 39 years of age, making the majority of income from on-farm sources, participants are selected from seven regions across Canada, with two national winners chosen each year. The program is sponsored nationally by CIBC, John Deere, Bayer CropScience, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. The national media sponsor is Annex Business Media, and the program is supported nationally by AdFarm, BDO and Farm Management Canada.

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**For more information or a photo of the 2015 OYF winners, contact**:

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