

DAIRYBUSINESS

Sustainability awards to highlight excellence across dairy supply chain

Nominations sought for new awards program

Rosemont, Ill. — The Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy[®], in affiliation with the Dairy Research Institute[™], today announced the U.S. Dairy Sustainability Awards, a new program to recognize dairy farms, businesses and collaborative partnerships for efforts that deliver outstanding economic, environmental and/or social benefit, thus helping to advance sustainability of the dairy industry.

The awards are divided into three categories: dairy farm, dairy processing/manufacturing and energy conservation/generation. Nominations are being accepted at USDairy.com/Sustainability/Awards through Dec. 1, 2011.

“Consumers are increasingly interested in choosing nutritious, responsibly made products,” said Larry Jensen, president, Leprino Foods, and chair, Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy. “The U.S. Dairy Sustainability Awards highlight the dairy industry’s long-standing commitment to healthy people, healthy products and a healthy planet, while showcasing that sustainability makes good business sense, as well.”

Winners of the U.S. Dairy Sustainability Awards will be announced in February 2012. In addition, honorees will share their stories and passion for sustainability on a national scale in forums and venues, and will be featured on USDairy.com/Sustainability.

The awards are part of the U.S. Dairy Sustainability Commitment, an industrywide effort to measure and improve the economic, environmental and social sustainability of the dairy industry. Launched in 2008 under the leadership of dairy producers, the Sustainability Commitment has the support and participation of hundreds of organizations across the industry as well as others from academic, government and nongovernmental organizations.

“Across the entire U.S. dairy industry, the sustainability commitment is producing model programs and processes for improved efficiency and business value,” said Mike McCloskey, owner and general manager, Fair Oaks Farms, and chair of the Innovation Center’s Sustainability Council. “These awards provide an opportunity to recognize and share advances in production practices and technology that will help us meet the needs of an ever-growing population.”

Nominations are open to all segments of the U.S. dairy value chain — from farm to table — for the following awards:

- *Elanco Award for **Outstanding Dairy Farm Sustainability***: This award will recognize dairy farm businesses for demonstrating outstanding achievement in sustainability. Three farms will be honored to illustrate that the highest standards of excellence can be regardless of farm size, location or type of operation.
- *U.S. Dairy Export Council Award for **Outstanding Dairy Processing & Manufacturing Sustainability***: This award will recognize dairy processing and manufacturing businesses for demonstrating outstanding achievement in sustainability.

- *Center for Advanced Energy Studies/Idaho National Laboratory Award for **Outstanding Achievement in Energy***: This award will recognize outstanding achievements in energy conservation and/or renewable energy generation.

All nominations will be evaluated based on the program's or project's results as measured by triple bottom-line success — economic, environmental and social. Judges also will assess the potential for adoption of the idea by other dairy farms and businesses; demonstrated learning, innovation and improvement; and scalability.

“Dairy farm families and businesses have a proud legacy of providing nutritious, high-quality milk and dairy products while being good stewards of our natural resources,” said Jerry Kozak, president and chief executive officer of the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF). “These awards are another example of the leadership role the dairy industry is taking to secure a healthy future for the next generation.”

Judging will be completed by an independent panel representing the full spectrum of the dairy supply chain, as well as academia, government, media, business and nongovernmental organizations. The distinguished panel of judges will be announced in October 2011.

Deadline for applications is Dec. 1, 2011. There is no fee to enter. For more information or to nominate, go to USDairy.com/Sustainability/Awards.

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Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy[®] is a forum for the dairy industry to work together pre-competitively to address barriers and opportunities to foster innovation and increase sales. The Innovation Center aligns the collective resources of the industry against common priorities to offer consumers nutritious dairy products and ingredients, and promote the health of people, communities, the planet and the industry. The Board of Directors for the Innovation Center includes dairy industry leaders representing key producer organizations, dairy cooperatives, processors, manufacturers and brands. The Innovation Center is staffed by Dairy Management Inc.[™]. Visit USDairy.com for more information about the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy.

Dairy Research Institute[™] is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization affiliated with the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy[®] and was created to strengthen the dairy industry's access to and investment in the technical research required to drive innovation and demand for dairy products and ingredients, globally. The Institute works with and through industry, academic, government and commercial partners to drive pre-competitive research in nutrition, products and sustainability on behalf of the Innovation Center and the National Dairy Council[®].