



Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy announces winners of inaugural sustainability awards

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy announced the winners of the inaugural U.S. Dairy Sustainability Awards — a program to recognize dairy farms, dairy companies and collaborative partnerships for efforts that advance the sustainability of the dairy industry — during an award ceremony held here March 7.

“Across the supply chain, the dairy industry continues to demonstrate leadership in meeting consumer demand for great-tasting, wholesome and nutritious dairy products, while finding new ways to preserve our planet’s precious resources,” says Barbara O’Brien, president, Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy.

In its first year, the U.S. Dairy Sustainability Awards have gained support from organizations, including Elanco, U.S. Dairy Export Council, the Center for Advanced Energy Studies/Idaho National Laboratory, United States Department of Agriculture, World Wildlife Fund, MilkPEP and the Dairy Research Institute.

Winners of the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy Elanco Award for Outstanding Dairy Farm Sustainability are:

- Blue Spruce Farm, operated by the Audet family in Bridport, Vt. Blue Spruce Farm has pioneered operational efficiency and was among the first farms in the country to install

variable-speed vacuum pump controls, reducing energy used during milking by nearly 60 percent. Blue Spruce also was the first dairy farm to participate in the successful Central Vermont Public Service’s Cow Power program, which allows consumers to purchase renewable energy generated on a dairy farm at a premium price. By implementing new technologies in lighting, milking, milk cooling, barn construction, ventilation and water heating, the farm reduced energy use from an average of 1,000 kilowatts per cow per year, to an average of 500 kWh per cow per year. These savings, in turn, reduced greenhouse gas emissions by an estimated 500 pounds of carbon dioxide per cow

per year, according to the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy.

- Holsum Dairies LLC, Hilbert, Wis., focused on sustainability when it designed its dairy, planned operations and partnered with nearly 40 local crop farmers and custom harvesters to provide all of the dairy’s forage needs. Benefits of the arrangement include higher quality feed, 11,000 acres under a single nutrient management plan, lower cost and emissions associated with manufacturing and transport of fertilizer, more efficient crop production and more precise fertilizer application.

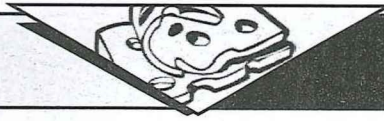
- A decade ago, Werkhoven Dairy Inc., Monroe, Wash., assumed a leadership role in developing a collaborative partnership between the farm and neighboring dairy and beef producers in the Sno/Sky Ag Alliance; the Northwest Chinook Recovery (an organization working to restore salmon habitat); and the 3,500-member Native American Tulalip Tribe. These entities formed a non-profit organization that operates an anaerobic digester system, creating enough energy each day to produce electricity for 300 homes while keeping the air and water clean and protecting salmon streams. The system also produces enough Grade A compost for Werkhoven Dairy to naturally fertilize its fields and share with neighbors.

Meanwhile, Darigold Inc. was named the winner of the U.S. Dairy Export Council Award for Outstanding Dairy Processing & Manufacturing Sustainability.

Through a companywide commitment to sustainability, Darigold, Seattle, has empowered its employees to work together to reduce use of water, fuel and energy. Darigold has reduced its water usage by more than 15 percent, equal to more than 130 million gallons. It recycles 50 percent of its waste, and has seen nearly a 50-percent improvement in fuel usage per unit, equal to more than 216,000 gallons of diesel fuel annually. It has completed more than 20 sustainability-driven packaging redesigns, reducing costs by more than \$1 million and reducing corrugated and plastic usage, according to the U.S. Dairy Export Council.

The honorable mention recipient of the U.S. Dairy Export Council Award for Outstanding Dairy Processing & Manufacturing Sustainability is Oakhurst Dairy, Portland, Maine. Oakhurst Dairy was one of the first companies in Maine to sign on the governor’s Carbon Challenge and has developed a sustainability road map with long-term reduction goals across all aspects of the operation. Over a two-year period (2008-2010), Oakhurst reduced its plant energy, greenhouse gas emissions, water use and transportation fuel use by roughly 10 percent each year — achieving half

NEWS/BUSINESS



SUSTAINABILITY

Continued from page 58

of its overall goal. This family-owned dairy processor has been a leader in sustainability, from the installation of a solar energy system to the use of hybrid delivery trucks and biodiesel fuel.

Winners of the Center for Advanced Energy Studies/Idaho National Laboratory Award for Outstanding Achievement in Energy are:

- Brubaker Farms, Mount Joy, Penn., has mastered energy efficiency by creating a new revenue stream through the implementation of an anaerobic digester system. The farm now produces its own electricity, and the surplus electricity — enough to power approximately 200 homes — is sold to the local utility. The Brubaker family is committed to sharing its lessons learned by hosting bus loads of visitors to tour the property, which includes three solar panels totaling 10,000 square feet producing an additional 130 to 150 kWh on sunny days.

- In a collaboration that formed DF-AP LLC, Gooding, Idaho, Dean Foods Co. and AgPower Partners teamed up to create the first major third-party owned and operated dairy digester project in the nation. From the very first year in operation, the project has been financially self-sustaining and has paid a return to its investors, while lowering operational costs for the dairy, improving manure management and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The methane-fueled renewable energy system produces enough energy to provide the power needs of approximately 900 homes and produces 34,000 cubic yards of ammonia-free fiber that is sold at retail as a landscape fertilizer.

This year's award recipients were selected by a panel of judges representing the full spectrum of the dairy supply chain — as well as academia, government, media, business and nongovernmental organizations — based on the program's or project's results as measured by economic, environmental and social responsibility aspects.

"In reviewing more than 40 nominations and selecting the 'best of the best,' the Sustainability Award judges were impressed by the model programs and processes that deliver real benefit to the business, community and the environment," says Molly Jahn, who serves as special adviser for Sustainability Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and as the U.S. commissioner on Sustainable Agriculture and Climate Change. "Clearly, sustainability is core to the success of these farms and organizations. They serve as leaders in their communities and industry."

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, the Sustainability Commitment is supported by hundreds of organizations, including universities, government agencies and nongovernmental organizations.

The Innovation Center represents the entire dairy value chain — dairy producers, processors, manufacturers, transporters, retailers and brands.

"We are developing unique and traditional partnerships that work toward the common goals of protecting our environment, growing our communities and strengthening our businesses," O'Brien says. "The Sustainability Award winners are a testament to efforts underway across the country, and we commend them for their outstanding work and dedication to sustainability." CMN