



Oakhurst Dairy Recognized for its Best in Class Sustainable Business Practices by Innovation Center



PORTLAND, MAINE — March 8, 2012 — Oakhurst Dairy, northern New England’s largest independent family-owned dairy company, announced today the company has been recognized for its best in class sustainable business practices. Yesterday, at a ceremony in Washington, D.C., Bill Bennett, president of Oakhurst Dairy, accepted an award for Honorable Mention for Outstanding Dairy Processing & Manufacturing in the first ever U.S. Dairy Sustainability Awards from the Innovation Center for U. S. Dairy®. The inaugural award program is designed to recognize dairy farms, dairy companies and collaborative partnerships for efforts that advance the sustainability of the dairy industry.

“Oakhurst Dairy has made caring for the environment and their community a core value,” said Erin Fitzgerald, senior vice president of sustainability for the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy, which was founded by dairy producers. “By developing a sustainability roadmap, they are able to focus on key opportunities and track progress against their goals. We commend them for their successes to date and hope that their actions are emulated by many companies.”

Oakhurst Dairy was recognized for its formal sustainability program, which has set 20 percent reduction goals across aspects of the operation by 2014. The company has established an internal process to monitor, evaluate and benchmark improvements. 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 – almost halfway to its 2014 goals.

More than 40 nominations were submitted from across the country in three different award categories, including: Outstanding Dairy Farm Sustainability, Outstanding Dairy Processing & Manufacturing Sustainability and Outstanding Achievement in Energy. The judge's panel, comprised of experts from academic institutions, government organizations, dairy science organizations, industry associations, national dairy publications and environmental and dairy industry leaders, evaluated the nominations and selected the winners. Winning submissions were based on the programs' results as measured by economic, environmental and social responsibility aspects. Nominations were accepted from September 8, 2011 to December 1, 2011.

For more than three generations, the Bennett family has made caring for the environment a core value of the Oakhurst brand and has been an industry leader in adopting sustainable business practices with many sustainability firsts as a company. Some of these include: using locally produced biodiesel fuel which now meets 14% of the company's overall fuel needs; adding truck skirts to its fleet of semi tractor trailers which result in 6% to 8% per vehicle fuel savings; investing in innovative technologies including a hybrid delivery truck which uses 25% less fuel, hybrid vehicles for 45% of the company's auto fleet (including sales force) and an alternative energy source such as thermal solar energy as a means to reduce the company's dependence on petroleum.

"We've been spearheading initiatives to enrich the local environment and dairy industry for as long as I can remember," said Bill Bennett. "Years ago, we didn't think of it as sustainability – it was more about doing the right thing for our community."

Bennett continued: "At Oakhurst, we're always exploring new ideas that focus on preserving the environment while allowing us to continue to operate a sustainable and profitable business. Implementing sustainable projects will be something we do forever because it's part of who we are as a company."

The U.S. Dairy Sustainability 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 Council is supported by hundreds of organizations, including universities, government agencies and nongovernmental organizations. To learn more about yesterday's award recipients, visit: www.usdairy.com/Sustainability/Awards.

About Oakhurst Dairy

Oakhurst is northern New England's truly local brand of milk. As the region's largest independent family-owned dairy company, Oakhurst is committed to the health and wellbeing of the community and the environment. For 90 years and three generations, the Bennett family has stood behind every glass of Oakhurst milk, while contributing 10% of profits to local organizations through their Living Natural Goodness program to support healthy kids and a healthy environment –just another reason to choose Oakhurst, The Natural Goodness of Maine. For more information, visit www.oakhurstdairy.com.

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