



# U.S. Dairy Sustainability Award winners announced

by Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy |

March 12, 2012 – In a March 7 award ceremony in 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.

## Winners of the Elanco Award for Outstanding Dairy Farm Sustainability:

[Blue Spruce Farm](#), operated by the Audet family in Bridport, Vt., is admired as a pioneer in operational efficiency. It was one of the first farms in the country to install variable speed a vacuum pump control, reducing energy used during milking by nearly 60 percent. [Blue Spruce](#) also was the first dairy farm to participate in the [Central Vermont Public Service's Cow Power](#) program, which allows consumers to purchase renewable energy generated on a dairy farm. 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 kWh 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 CO<sub>2</sub>e per cow per year.

For Holsum Dairies, LLC, of Hilbert, Wis., sustainability of the community and the natural environment were significant factors when they designed the dairy and planned the operations. Holsum relies on a model of trust and mutual benefit in working with nearly 40 local crop farmers and custom harvesters to provide all of the dairy's forage needs. In this win-win relationship, benefits to the farm, the community and the environment 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., of Monroe, Wash., assumed a leadership role in developing a collaborative partnership between their farm and the neighboring dairy and beef producers of 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 nonprofit 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 their fields and share with their neighbors.

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

Brubaker Farms of Mount Joy, Pa., has mastered energy efficiency by creating a successful 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 busloads 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, of Gooding, ID, [Dean Foods Company](#) and AgPower Partners embraced the essence of innovation when they 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.

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

The awards are part of the [U.S. Dairy Sustainability Commitment](#), an industry-wide 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.

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