

WISCONSIN Agriculturist.

A Toast to Dairy Sustainability

The Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy is looking for a few good dairy sustainability farmers.

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In 2011, the Innovation Center launched the U.S. Dairy Sustainability Awards program. The awards recognize efforts that advance the sustainability of the dairy industry by delivering benefits to business, community and the environment. Gold Sponsors include World Wildlife Fund, Pfizer Animal Health, Elanco, DeLaval, DVO Anaerobic Digesters, EPA, Milk PEP and the Center for Advanced Energy Studies.

Through these awards and other efforts, the dairy industry is taking a leading role in promoting sustainability and providing consumers with the nutritious dairy products they want in a way that makes the industry, the earth and its people economically, environmentally and socially better – now and for future generations, says Kenn Buelow of Holsum Dairies LLC, Hilbert who is a 2012 recipient of the U.S. Dairy Sustainability Awards. Holsum Dairies is one of six winners – "seven if you count the planet."



SUSTAINING DAIRY: Kenn Buelow, far left, of Holsum Dairies LLC, Hilbert, is one of six 2012 U.S. Dairy Sustainability Award winners – seven winners if you count the planet.

"Consumers increasingly expect that we not only produce high-quality and great-tasting products at an affordable price, but that we produce those products responsibly by protecting natural resources and supporting communities," Buelow says. "I think the dairy industry is taking a leadership role in sustainability. The U.S. Dairy Sustainability Awards is a model for other industries including beef, pork and poultry."

How to apply

Nominations for the U.S. Dairy Sustainability Awards may be submitted by an individual, group or organization involved with or part of the U.S. dairy industry. The nominated farm, program, project or practice must have specific and measurable results, have already been

implemented and be capable of adaption by other farm businesses or organizations.

"Part of the award is about being profitable," Buelow explains, "whether it's using less energy, which is generally good from a business standpoint, or using renewable energy like a manure digester or sustainable cropping practices. Profitability is an important part of sustainability."

Innovations and efficiency improvements have allowed the dairy industry to reduce the environmental impact of a gallon of milk, according to the Innovation Center. Since 1944, it takes

- *90% less cropland
- *76% less manure
- *65% less water
- *63% less carbon to produce a gallon of milk.

The Innovation Center's first voluntary goal is to reduce greenhouse gases for fluid milk by 25% by 2020. The deadline to apply for the 2013 Dairy Sustainability Awards is Nov. 15.

Winners will be announced at the Innovation Center's Sustainability Council meeting in April 2013 in Washington, D.C. Honorees will share their stories and passion for sustainability on a national scale in various forums and will be featured on USDAIRY.com/Sustainability.

There is no fee to enter. To learn more about the application and eligibility requirements, visit USDAIRY.com/Sustainability/Awards.

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