

**2008 Growing Alberta Leadership Awards
Backgrounder**

Profiles of the 2008 Growing Alberta Leadership Awards Recipients

Recipient: Calgary Stampede Agriculture Education Committee

- Calgary, Alberta

Category: Building Youth Leadership

Sponsor: Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development

The Calgary Stampede Education Committee has developed a program that educates over 8000 elementary students annually and provides them with an agriculture experience. *Aggie Days* is a five-day program that allows today's urban children to learn about the original sources of their food and how agriculture touches their lives daily. Celebrating its 23rd year, this program includes a teacher's expo, video conferencing, a supplement in the Calgary Herald, art contest and a newly developed component that includes the special needs community. The true success of the program is owed to the dedicated volunteers and their partners within the livestock and grain sectors.

Recipient: Conrad & Rhonda van Hierden – Fort Macleod, Alberta

Category: Community Spirit

Sponsor: Save-On-Foods

With a thriving and highly productive dairy farm, the van Hierden's promote and are strong advocates for the agriculture industry in Alberta. They are leaders in the Fort Macleod community, active members of the local Rural Crime Watch Program, faithful to their church and take their responsibility of protecting their land for future generations seriously. In addition to these responsibilities, they raise awareness and funds for a rare and fatal disease, known as ataxia-telangiectasia (A-T). With a hope to further research and end this devastating disease for others, they annually plan and organize an annual "A-T Walk for the Cure" in Fort Macleod and a Charity Golf Scramble in Coaldale. Recently, Conrad assisted in attracting over 100 top-tier scientists and physicians from around the world to a conference in Banff to present their latest findings and to generate new research strategies on this disease.

Recipient: The Little Potato Company – Edmonton, Alberta

Category: Economic Development

Sponsor: ATB Financial

Angela Santiago had a vision that led to establishing “The Little Potato Company” in 1996. A product they were familiar with from their family roots in Holland is attributed to their success today. The company achieved \$1 M in sales in the first 3 years and exceeds \$15 M today. They currently process more than 15,000 lbs. of small potatoes at their 30,000 sq. ft. facility in Edmonton. It is the only company in Canada and the U.S. specializing in the growing and marketing of small potatoes. The company has been nominated and has received numerous business awards. The company continues to expand and is positioned as one of Alberta’s most efficiently operated companies.

Recipient: OH Ranch – Longview, Alberta

Category: Environmental Stewardship

Sponsor: Alberta’s Credit Unions

Celebrating their 125th Anniversary and covering approx. 34 sections of land, this ranch preserves the history and heritage of ranching in Alberta. Their commitment and dedication to environmental sustainability is a model for the livestock industry. Taking proper care of the land, water and animals while raising a healthy product with minimal impact on the natural surroundings is a vision they have adopted. The owners and managers of the OH Ranch continue to bring awareness and understanding of the land use management practices that impact the environment. They are truly committed to the preservation of Alberta’s native Eastern Slopes.

Recipient: Olds College – Meat Processing Program – Olds, Alberta

Category: Food Safety

Sponsor: Meyers Norris Penny

The Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) is a food safety program recognized internationally as the best system to effectively manage food safety. The Olds College Meat Processing Program provides students with the knowledge and skill in sanitation, food safety, slaughter, meat cutting and sausage and meat processing. The graduates of the program are highly recognized for their practical, hands-on training in an industry-like setting and are widely recruited by processing businesses. Mr. Brad McLeod and his team at Olds College provide an outstanding commitment to the sharing of knowledge and innovation in this program.

Recipient: John Moore – William Moore Farms – Acme, Alberta

Category: Innovation

Sponsor: Agricultural Financial Services Corporation (AFSC)

Challenges from operating a traditional mixed farming operation, led John Moore to a creative way of diversifying their farm. As a fifth generation Alberta farm family, he saw a future in the preservation of ornamental grasses and “Pure Prairie Ornamental Grasses” was established in 2004. Offering nine varieties of hardy prairie grasses in the beginning, the business has expanded to offer other varieties. In the true spirit of community partnerships, John Moore has developed strategic partnerships with many well-known horticulturists and public garden venues. He participates in Communities in Bloom programs and makes presentations to local schools about the growth cycle for plants and crops.

Recipient: Bles-Wold Dairies Inc. – Lacombe, Alberta

Category: Rural Development

Sponsor: UFA Cooperative Limited

Tinie Eilers and Hennie Bos welcomed the wide-open spaces and the opportunity Alberta provided for an ambitious family farm in 1994. They began their dairy facility with 60 Holstein cows and named the operation, Bles-Wold Dairies, a combination of their respective hometowns in Holland. They employ approx. 14 staff and a daily milk truck driver. Their products are shipped throughout the province 3-4 times per week. Working with industry partners and leading researchers, they developed Canada’s first conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) yogurt product. Developed as a hobby within their dairy operation, the yogurt production business has continued to grow near their rural community of Lacombe.

2008 Distinguished Service Award

Mr. Doug Livingstone – Vermilion, Alberta

Exclusive Sponsor: CIBC

Mr. Doug Livingstone and his wife, Cheryl, are proud Alberta producers in their mixed cow/calf and seed grain operation near Vermilion, Alberta. They are true believers of preserving the wildlife habitat and natural surroundings for all to enjoy.

Participants in Alberta's Environmental Farm Plan led them to enter into agri-tourism. Preserving wildlife habitat and natural watersheds on their property is important to them.

Their advocacy of the agriculture industry continues as they educate consumers about the safe food supply and food products that are available in Alberta. A goal to diversifying their farm was to build on the strengths of family members. Operating a catering business and having a trained chef in the family has allowed them to open new opportunities of awareness for those with an interest in how products are grown and available throughout Alberta.

Mr. Doug Livingstone has extensive knowledge and involvement in Alberta's agriculture industry. He is currently elected as Chair of the Agriculture and Food Council of Alberta and has past participation on the Alberta 4-H Foundation, the Agriculture Summit process of 2000, Alberta Wheat Board, Canadian Wheat Board Review Panel, Lakeland College Board, Vermilion Agriculture Society and many more.

His extensive knowledge and dedication to ensuring that many Albertans are aware of this vital industry make Mr. Livingstone very deserving of the 2008 Distinguished Service Award.
