

# Ontario Dairy Youth Award 2011

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS OF THIS YEAR'S ONTARIO DAIRY YOUTH AWARD! THESE FOUR AWARD RECIPIENTS WILL RECEIVE AN ALL-EXPENSE PAID TRIP TO THE WORLD DAIRY EXPO IN MADISON, WISCONSIN THIS FALL. THE ONTARIO DAIRY YOUTH AWARD IS FUNDED THROUGH THE ONTARIO DAIRY YOUTH TRUST FUND AND THE ONTARIO HOLSTEIN BRANCH. IT IS AWARDED ANNUALLY TO INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN A FARM OPERATION AND WHO HAVE TAKEN AN ACTIVE ROLE WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITIES.



*Wray Brubacher*  
Brookhaven Holsteins, Drayton

FOR WRAY BRUBACHER, WEST-CENTRAL'S DAIRY YOUTH AWARD WINNER, hard work, commitment and good management are the keys to a successful dairy operation. Along with his wife, Brenda, Wray owns and operates Brookhaven Holsteins just outside of Drayton. With five young children, he never finds himself short of helpers. Sons, Tyler and Dawson, look after the calves and help feed and name the animals. Daughters, Tiana and Tierra, help in the house and enjoy taking care of their new baby brother, Dallas.

Their tie-stall bank barn houses 54 cows. At present, 25 cows are classified as VG, with the remaining cows being classified GP. Since becoming involved in the operation, Wray prides himself on having only registered, purebred Holsteins in the barn. He's maximized cow comfort and health by feeding TMR and installing mats and additional fans in order to improve ventilation. Using sexed semen and relying on AI for all breeding has allowed him to quickly improve his herd. Recently, he started flushing some of his better cows and even has one cow contracted to Select Sires.

Wray tries to balance type and production on his farm. He grows barley, grass, corn and beans on 200 acres of land. In terms of a feeding regime, he uses a TMR mixer, has two tower silos in which he stores corn haylage, and wraps 200 bales of hay annually.

Looking ahead, Wray has big plans to make his operation run even smoother. He hopes to build a new tie-stall barn and house cows and heifers under one roof in order to cut down on labour and improve efficiency. A modern calf barn with maternity pens, big fans for ventilation and a feed room large enough to store hay and straw also make the short-list of his future farm improvements.

Outside of the day-to-day farm operation, Wray is a Sunday school teacher and a referee for youth hockey. He is a dedicated volunteer in his community and involved in prison ministry.

As an Ontario Dairy Youth Award winner, Wray hopes to encourage other young farmers to work hard and achieve their full potential. He'd also like to promote the good Canadian cows he's been fortunate to work with his entire life.



*Collin Walker*  
Walkhaven Farms, Stayner

SINCE TAKING OVER HIS FAMILY FARM IN 2000, EAST-CENTRAL ONTARIO DAIRY YOUTH AWARD WINNER COLLIN WALKER has implemented a series of modifications that have resulted in healthier, happier and higher-producing cows at Walkhaven Farms in Stayner, Ontario.

In just eight short years, Collin and his wife Tanya have increased production by 30 per cent, cow genetics with respect to GLPI and Conformation by 50 per cent, and doubled their land base. And if that wasn't enough, they've also installed floor mats on alleys and renovated stalls to allow their cows to be more content and move more freely within the barn. According to Walker, change is essential when running a successful dairy operation.

The Walkers are kept busy on a daily basis, moving from barn to barn on their property in Simcoe County. They house 67 milking cows in a tie-stall barn and 36 heifers in a heifer barn across the road. A coverall contains calves and 4-H calves, while a poll barn is shared by lower-producing and dry cows. A new barn, which Collin says would greatly improve efficiency, is in the five-year plan. He says this would allow him to devote more attention to each cow and spend more quality time with his wife, Tanya, and children, Connor and Larissa.

Two dominant foundation cow families, Zoe and Eve, have helped contribute to an impressive herd classification of 5 EX, 29 VG and 31 GP and an average composite BCA of 218. Cows are fed with a TMR mixer and those producing over 38 litres of milk per day are top dressed with additional feed. The family grows hay, wheat, corn and soybeans on 600 acres of owned property and 550 acres of rented land.

Aside from his day-to-day farm responsibilities, Collin is an active member of the Simcoe County Holstein Club and currently serves as 2nd Vice President. He is the Chairman for the Simcoe County Holstein Club Show this year and is in his 2nd year as a Chairman for the Stayner Evangelical Missionary Church. Collin has completed 14 4-H projects and has been a leader with the Clearview Dairy 4-H Club for the past 11 years.

**EASTERN ONTARIO DAIRY YOUTH AWARD WINNER, BRAD LOWRY**, knows a thing or two about overcoming hardship. In the summer of 2010, a fire destroyed a machine shed on his family's farm in Almonte, taking a large portion of equipment with it. A look-on-the-brightside Brad says that although the fire put on hold plans to renovate an existing heifer barn, the family was "extremely lucky" it wasn't the dairy barn that was lost.

Though the fire was a definite setback, Brad has continued to move forward with his eye on the prize of breeding excellent cattle and filling a quota of 64 kgs daily at Penlow Farms. To date, he's been successful on both fronts.

"I like to think we have a pretty good herd of cows," he says modestly. With a herd classification of 11 EX, 28 VG, 16 GP and an average BCA of 230, Lowry has what many would refer to as more than just "pretty good." Their current breeding program focuses on type, with approximately three-quarters of sires used coming from Semex.

Along with his parents, Allan and Donna and the involvement of his 84-year-old grandfather, Bert, Brad milks 50 cows in his head-to-head barn and aims to keep the stalls occupied at all times in order to fill his quota. Heifers and dry cows graze on dry hay and a homemade ground grain made up of barley or corn, with protein and minerals added. A rotation of barley, wheat, corn and soybeans is grown on 500 acres; hay, pasture and swamp make up the remaining 250 acres of owned land.

Brad has implemented several changes since becoming involved in the operation of Penlow Farms several years ago. The biggest of those changes, he says, was in their heifer feeding program. Ten years ago, they moved from a haylage/corn silage ration to a free-choice round bale feeding program. Although Brad admits the new way is more labour-intensive, it helps develop the deep, capacious frames the family looks for in heifers.

Three years ago, spurred by the ongoing concern of Johne's disease and other transmittable diseases, the Lowry's started purchasing dry colostrum powder and feeding that to calves in replacement of the mother's milk. Milk replacement is then fed until weaning. In addition to preventing diseases, the family has noticed a marked improvement in the overall health of their calves.

Off the farm, Brad is the President of the Lanark Holstein club where he has been a director since 2005. He is a member of the North Lanark Agricultural Society (Almonte Fair), the Eastern Ontario Western Quebec Championship show committee, and the Chair of the Dairy Committee. In the past, he has been involved in Lanark Junior Farmers, and has completed over 25 4-H clubs focusing on dairy, dairy judging and showmanship.



*Brad Lowry*  
Penlow Farms, Almonte



*Chancy Burgess*  
Chakelburg Holsteins, Mildmay

**WHEN WESTERN ONTARIO DAIRY YOUTH AWARD WINNER CHANCY BURGESS** first began breeding cows under his Chakelburg Holsteins prefix five years ago, he set his sights on maximizing efficiency and improving farm management. Burgess took over his father's half of the award-winning A to Z herd in 2006 and hasn't looked back since.

With the A to Z herd having been awarded a Master Breeder shield in 2005, Burgess had a strong foundation on which to build. But like any ambitious young farmer, he admits he still set some "lofty" goals at the outset. Two of those goals, Burgess would soon discover, were both realistic and attainable: to make his herd the top-producing herd in the county within the first five years of management and to breed an excellent cow before the age of 30.

In 2010, Burgess's herd was first in Bruce County in terms of production with an impressive 10,932 kg of milk produced and a BCA of 236-249-239 (up 30-19-26 from three years prior). His second goal became a reality the same year when Chakelburg Sept Pizza went EX 90 in December 2010.

The Chakelburg herd is comprised of 140 Holsteins with a current classification of 9 EX, 36 VG, and 23 GP. Burgess says he breeds for type and components and keeps a close eye on bloodlines that cross well in order to incorporate them into his herd. He focuses on feet, legs, and udders to work with the current classification system, but still values frame, capacity and width throughout. Along with his father, Robert, Burgess milks 55-60 cows on average in a

tie-stall barn outside of Mildmay. A warm-style calf barn with a new naturally ventilated heifer barn was built in 2009 to house animals from three months old to breeding age. Burgess grows hay, corn and mixed grain on the 225 acres he owns, and purchases additional grains and supplements as needed. Looking ahead, he hopes to install a TMR feeding system to maximize forages, as well as a manure system to handle animal and milkhouse waste.

Burgess is active in his local community and has volunteered as a 4-H leader in Mildmay for the past eight years. Before that, he was a member himself, participating in several leadership camps and representing Bruce County at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair on six different occasions. He has been a Gay-Lea delegate for the past three years and volunteers his time with the Mildmay Agricultural Society to help out with numerous events, including the annual Mildmay Fair. His four children, Dalainey (7), Addison (5), Kenadee (3) and Hudson (2) also keep him busy. Burgess is thrilled they've taken an interest in the farm and says you'll often find them riding their bikes or helping out with the calves.