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Dairy Farms, Businesses Recognized For Sustainable Farm-to-Table Practices

Winners of seventh annual U.S. Dairy Sustainability Awards announced

ROSEMONT, Ill. — The Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy, established under the leadership of dairy farmers, announced its seventh annual [U.S. Dairy Sustainability Award](#) winners during a May 16 ceremony at the Morton Arboretum in Lisle, Ill., outside of Chicago.

The program recognizes dairy farms, businesses and partnerships whose practices improve the well-being of people, animals and the planet.

Award winners represent the U.S. dairy community's voluntary efforts toward continuous improvement in sustainability, demonstrating how transparency and ingenuity lead to sustainable and scalable practices that benefit their businesses, communities and the environment.

"This year's winners exemplify how a drive to be economically viable, socially responsible and environmentally sustainable is at the heart of our dairy industry, from farm to table," said Barbara O'Brien, president of the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy. "Each winner showcases what is possible and how innovation and initiative can take a vision and make it a reality."

Through creative problem solving, this year's winners addressed water quality, manure management, recycling and more.

Judges evaluated nominations based on their economic, environmental and community impact. The independent judging panel — including leading dairy conservation and commercial experts— also considered innovation, scalability and replicability.

"As a dairy farmer, I'm extremely proud of the innovation these award winners have demonstrated across the dairy community," said Marilyn Hershey, Pennsylvania dairy farmer and chair of the Dairy Management Inc. board of directors. "These progressive practices highlight the dairy industry's commitment to improving the land, caring for the animals, and doing more with less."

One of this year's judges, Kevin O'Donnell, director of global sustainable sourcing and operations at General Mills, added, "It's inspiring to see so many different members of the dairy industry rally around a common goal of sustainability. The dairy community is showing that being sustainable is a part of doing everyday business and it is producing meaningful results."

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The 2018 U.S. Dairy Sustainability Awards winners are:

Outstanding Dairy Farm Sustainability

E-Z Acres (Homer, N.Y.)

At E-Z Acres Farm, the ties between the farm and its neighbors run deep – at least as deep as the aquifer (water in an underground layer of glacial outwash) that provides drinking water to the surrounding region. Brothers Mike and Pete McMahon, who own and operate the farm, take their roles as environmental stewards seriously. With a focus on their local water quality for more than 20 years, they manage fertilizers and reduced phosphorous use by 30%, protecting waterways and much more. In addition, through rigorous community outreach and frequent voluntary monitoring of wells, they keep their neighbors informed about the safety of the local water supply.

Reinford Farms (Mifflintown, Pa.)

With a digester in place and a beneficial location, Reinford Farms found they were uniquely positioned to begin collecting food waste from their area's grocery stores and food manufacturers. However, these items often arrived in packaging their farm's digester couldn't process. To solve the issue, the dairy installed a depackager that separates the food from its packaging, allowing cleaner food waste to be piped into the digester. The farm now recycles 6,000 to 12,000 gallons of food waste daily and has kept more than 35,000 tons of waste out of landfills in the past 10 years.

Royal Dairy (Royal City, Wash.)

Last summer, Austin Allred put millions of worms to work on his farm. And now they're busy processing cow manure day and night. The manure is filtered through worm-dense soil, wood shavings and gravel. The result? Reduced odors and greenhouse gas emissions – and the opportunity to recycle thousands of gallons of water on the farm each day. Allred's novel approach for his farm is a product of his collaboration with BioFiltro, a Chilean firm that creates worm filtration systems for wastewater treatment globally. Last year, Allred's 6,000-cow farm became the largest U.S. dairy to use the technology.

Outstanding Dairy Processing & Manufacturing Sustainability

The Kroger Co. (Cincinnati, Ohio)

The Kroger Company unveiled its "Zero Hunger | Zero Waste" initiative last year to end hunger in its communities by 2025 and eliminate waste across its company by 2020. Their sustainability commitment – reducing, reusing and recycling cardboard, paper, pallets, packaging and food waste – has yielded impressive results. Kroger's 19 dairy plants around the country have diverted more than 1.46 billion pounds of material from landfill in the last few years, reaching a rate of 97-percent diversion in 2017. Its commitment has also benefitted the company financially. Kroger's dairy processing facilities have generated more than \$4.7 million in recycling revenues since 2010.

Outstanding Supply Chain Collaboration

Magic Dirt (Little Rock, Ark.)

Getting a peat moss replacement made from dairy cow manure into Walmart stores in 43 states is no small feat. But partners throughout the supply chain – from farm to retail – rose to meet consumers' demand for a more sustainable gardening product. And they did it quickly. In just a few years, Magic Dirt was innovated and distributed nationwide thanks to dairy farmers' enterprising spirit and Walmart's logistical and marketing expertise.

Outstanding Achievement in Community Impact

Tillamook County Creamery Association (Tillamook, Ore.)

This creamery on the coast of Oregon does more than provide jobs and delicious dairy products. It contributes to its community through donations and volunteer work. In fact, Tillamook County Creamery Association implements its vision to make a positive impact on housing, education, hunger and more through generous

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donations and employee-led volunteer work. Regional pride, the farmer-founders' work ethic and an interconnected community make their social innovation compelling and impactful.

This year's recipients show how innovation and creativity sparked by one farm, one person or one organization can have a ripple effect that goes well beyond their farm gate or front door.

The [U.S. Dairy Sustainability Awards](#) program is supported by generous sponsors. This year's sponsors are: DeLaval, DSM, Syngenta, World Wildlife Fund and Zoetis.

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Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy® is a forum that brings together the dairy community to address the changing needs and expectations of consumers through a framework of shared best practices and accountability. Initiated in 2008 by dairy farmers through the dairy checkoff, we collaborate on efforts that are important both to us and our valued customers – issues like animal care, food safety, nutrition and health, the environment and economics. The Innovation Center is committed to continuous improvement from farm to table, striving to ensure a socially responsible and economically viable dairy community.

Visit USDairy.com for more information about the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy.

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