

*THE 40TH ANNUAL*

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## THE 40TH ANNUAL SOUTH WESTERN ONTARIO DAIRY SYMPOSIUM

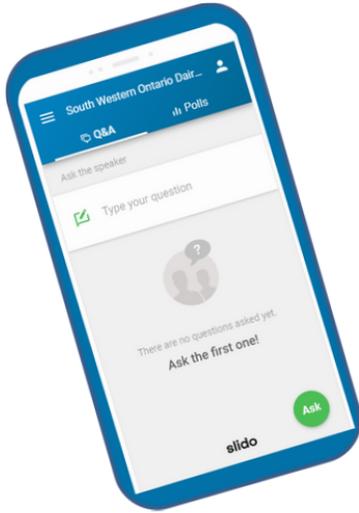
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Our committee is made up of the following people on behalf of their DPC Committees:

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<b>Huron County</b>	Lieven Verschaeve
<b>Oxford County</b>	Steven Veldman (Chair) Anita Heeg, Jack Danen
<b>Perth County</b>	Jamie Beaumont
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**Dairy producer representatives from each Southwestern Ontario County are encouraged to join the SWODS committee! Want to help plan the 41st edition for 2026? Contact the SWODS Event Coordinator and join!**

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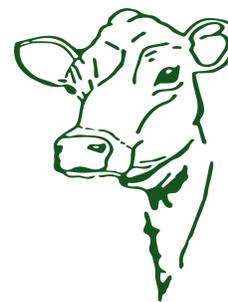
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# PROGRAM

20.02.2025 | 9AM-4PM



<b>9:00am</b>	Exhibits Open - Registration and Coffee
<b>10:05am</b>	Welcome - <i>Steve Veldman, SWODS Chair</i>
<b>10:15am</b>	Speaker Topic: To be Announced <i>Speaker: To be Announced</i>
<b>10:40am</b>	Winter Triticale Forage: The Quiet Crop with a Big Impact <i>Tom Kilcer, Advanced Ag Systems LLC.</i>
<b>11:30am</b>	Artificial Intelligence on Dairy Farms: Friend or Foe? <i>Dr. David Kelton, University of Guelph</i>
<b>12:00am</b>	Foods From Our Farms <i>Jack Rodenburg, SWODS Committee</i>
<b>12:15pm</b>	Lunch - Featuring Foods From Our Farms
<b>1:45pm</b>	Speak Your Mind - <i>DFO Representative</i>
<b>2:00pm</b>	Understanding the New Ontario Building Code: Key Changes for Dairy Producers <i>Tyler Griffith P. Eng, Tacoma Engineers</i>
<b>2:30pm</b>	Producer Panel: Innovations Driving Sustainability on Dairy Farms <i>Steve Veldman - Velrob Farms Ltd., Korb Whale - Clovermead Farms and Mapleton's Organic Dairy, Dan Breen - Breen Acres Family Farm Inc.</i>
<b>4:00pm</b>	Exhibits Close

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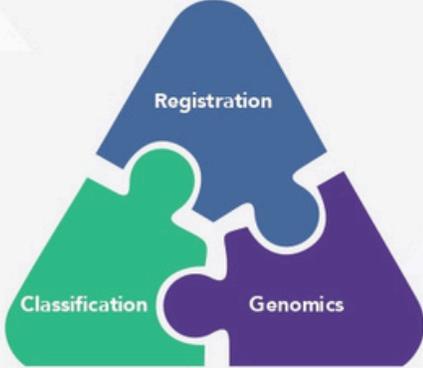
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**TOM KILCER, CCA**  
**Advanced Ag Systems LLC.**

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Tom Kilcer grew up on a dairy farm in Columbia County, New York. He earned an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Agronomy from SUNY Cobleskill and a Bachelor of Science (BS) in Fisheries Science from Cornell, and worked on environmental impact studies for Peach Bottom and Indian Point Nuclear plants. In 1976, he obtained a second BS in Agronomy from Iowa State. For 33 years, he was the multi-county Field Crop and Soils Educator; and Program Leader for Agriculture at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rensselaer County, NY.



In 2009, Tom made the move from Extension to private consulting, conducting forage research and education in close cooperation with University and Extension specialists and private companies. Much of Tom's effort is to develop alternative crops, rotations, and harvest systems to support high-forage dairy diets that enable Northeast farms to compete nationally and globally. This work carries on with his move to Tennessee and the University there. His efforts continue to improve agriculture by sending a free electronic newsletter to over 1000 Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) advisors, agribusiness, and farmers in the northeast and has articles in numerous dairy/field crop agriculture magazines. Hundreds of seminars on his forage crops research have been presented across the US, in Canada and Europe, and on YouTube.

**Winter Triticale Forage: The Quiet Crop with a Big Impact**

*Tom Kilcer, Advanced Ag Systems LLC.*

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**DR. DAVID KELTON**  
**University of Guelph**

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David Kelton is Professor Emeritus at the University of Guelph. He retired as Professor of Veterinary Epidemiology in 2023 and held the Dairy Farmers of Ontario Dairy Cattle Health Research Chair at the University of Guelph for the last 10 years of his career. He is a founding member of the Canadian Mastitis Network and Dairy at Guelph, a Past-President of the National Mastitis Council, and the Chair of the International Dairy Federation Standing Committee on Animal Health and Welfare. He has co-authored more than 320 manuscripts focused on infectious disease surveillance and control, and dairy cattle welfare. His recent work has focused on antimicrobial use and resistance, using a One Health approach that embraces transdisciplinary collaboration.



**Artificial Intelligence on Dairy Farms: Friend or Foe?**

*Dr. David Kelton, University of Guelph*

The Ontario Dairy Research Centre at the University of Guelph is a modern dairy farm milking just over 200 Holstein cows in an environment with a broad range of automated systems equipped with various sensor technologies. These systems generate approximately 600,000 individual pieces of data every month, or about 100 individual data elements per cow per day. As farmers and farm advisors we are barely scratching the surface in terms of our ability to efficiently and effectively make use of these data to inform better management decisions. The obvious path forward includes continuing to incorporate tools such as artificial intelligence (the other AI) on dairy farms. While there are many challenges that remain to be overcome, there are some clear and exciting opportunities as well.

As a demonstration of the power of AI, I asked ChatGPT the following question: *What are the advantages and disadvantages of applying AI on Canadian dairy farms?*

# THE 40TH ANNUAL SOUTH WESTERN ONTARIO DAIRY SYMPOSIUM

**ChatGPT said** (the following is copied directly from the output on the ChatGPT interactive site):

"Applying AI on Canadian dairy farms offers several advantages and disadvantages:

## **Advantages:**

### **1. Improved Efficiency:**

- **Automation of tasks:** AI can automate repetitive tasks, such as milking, feeding, and monitoring cows. This increases labor efficiency, freeing up farmers to focus on other tasks.
- **Optimal feed management:** AI systems can analyze data to optimize feed rations, improving cow health and milk production, while reducing waste.

### **2. Increased Productivity:**

- **Enhanced milk yield:** AI-driven systems can monitor cow health, predict the best time for milking, and optimize milk production. This can lead to higher yields per cow.
- **Precision breeding:** AI can aid in identifying the best genetic traits for breeding, improving herd genetics and overall productivity over generations.

### **3. Better Health Monitoring:**

- **Early disease detection:** AI-powered sensors and wearables can detect early signs of illness or stress in cows, allowing farmers to take preventative measures and minimize veterinary costs.
- **Monitoring cow behavior:** AI can track behavioral patterns, helping to identify when a cow is in heat or showing signs of discomfort, ensuring timely intervention.

### **4. Cost Savings:**

- **Labor savings:** With automated milking and feeding, fewer human workers are needed, reducing labor costs.
- **Efficiency in resource use:** AI can help optimize water, feed, and energy usage, reducing operational costs and increasing farm profitability.

## 5. Sustainability:

- **Environmental impact:** AI can optimize resource usage and reduce waste, contributing to more sustainable farming practices, such as reducing the carbon footprint and improving waste management.

## Disadvantages:

### 1. High Initial Costs:

- The cost of purchasing and implementing AI technology can be prohibitively expensive for smaller farms. The upfront investment in smart sensors, robotics, and software may not be feasible for all dairy farmers.

### 2. Complexity and Maintenance:

- AI systems require technical expertise for installation, monitoring, and maintenance. Farmers may need specialized training to operate and troubleshoot these systems, which can be a barrier, especially in rural areas with limited access to tech support.

### 3. Dependence on Technology:

- Over-reliance on AI and automation could lead to challenges if technology malfunctions or fails. In rural areas with limited internet connectivity or infrastructure, system downtime could severely disrupt farm operations.

### 4. Data Privacy and Security:

- AI systems collect and process large amounts of data about cows and farm operations. There could be concerns about data security and privacy, particularly if sensitive data is vulnerable to cyber-attacks or misuse.

### 5. Potential Job Displacement:

- The automation of certain tasks, such as milking or monitoring cow health, could reduce the need for human labor on farms, leading to job losses in rural communities that rely on agricultural work.







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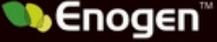


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**TYLER GRIFFITH, P. Eng.**  
**Tacoma Engineers**

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Tyler is a senior structural engineer at Tacoma Engineers in Guelph, Ontario. Tyler has experience with a wide variety of project types and a wide variety of construction materials including wood, steel, concrete, and masonry. He is an expert in wood frame construction including agricultural farm buildings and commercial structures. Tyler has sat on the Board of Directors for the Canadian Farm Builders Association (CFBA) since 2018 and



has been President of the CFBA since 2022. Tyler has been heavily involved in the current updates to the Farm Building Code since 2020.

**Understanding the New Ontario Building Code: Key Changes for Dairy Producers**

*Tyler Griffith, P. Eng.*

Constructing a new farm building can be a large undertaking so it is important to get it right the first time. This presentation will provide an overview of the latest changes to the Ontario Building Code and their implications for dairy producers.

The National Farm Building Code of Canada (NFBCC) was established in 1995 and was adopted into the Ontario Building Code (OBC) in 1997. Since 1995, the farm building code hasn't been keeping up with the requirements of the modern farming industry. With the aging Farm Building Code, there were concerns about provinces and design professionals losing confidence in the existing code.

In 2006, lobbying started to develop the new farm code. In 2020, an update was made to the National Building Code (NBC), which now included a new section called Part 2. NBC 2020 Part 2 is now for the design of large farm buildings. Large farm buildings have building areas greater than 600m<sup>2</sup>.

## THE 40TH ANNUAL SOUTH WESTERN ONTARIO DAIRY SYMPOSIUM

In an effort for Ontario to harmonize with the NBC 2020, the OBC was updated in 2024. The OBC 2024 is now in effect as of January 1st, 2025. All large farm buildings in Ontario must conform to the OBC 2024 and designers may no longer reference the existing NFBCC 1995.

The OBC 2024 Part 2 has a focus on life and occupant safety. Farm buildings are now classified as Group G, Agricultural occupancies with Divisions 1, 2, 3 and 4 noted below.

**G1** – High Hazard (Dairy facility with below barn manure storage)

**G2** – All other farm buildings (Dairy facility without below barn manure storage)

**G3** – Greenhouses

**G4** – No human occupancy (Grain bins, horizontal or vertical silos)

Structural design for large farm buildings has some very significant changes. Climatic data used in determining the snow and wind loads are now being referenced from the new OBC 2024. Previously this was referenced from the existing OBC 1997. This change creates an increase in the design snow load of up to 15% (+/-) and an increase in the design wind loads of up to 45% (+/-). This has a significant impact on the cost of the building structure. Along with an increase in the snow and wind loads, there is now a requirement to complete a Seismic screening to determine if a seismic analysis and design is required. Previously all farm buildings were exempt from seismic analysis.

Since some dairy facilities have below-floor manure storage, these buildings become a G1 high-hazard agricultural farm building. These buildings now require provisions for ventilation systems designed to OBC Part 6 to control the risk of toxic and explosive gas accumulating within the building. Ventilation systems for buildings with below-barn manure storages will require minimum of 2 air exchanges per hour.

The existing building code required single-story buildings to be limited to 4800m<sup>2</sup> in building area. This means if the building was greater than 4800m<sup>2</sup> a fire separation would be required. A benefit of the new farm code is that





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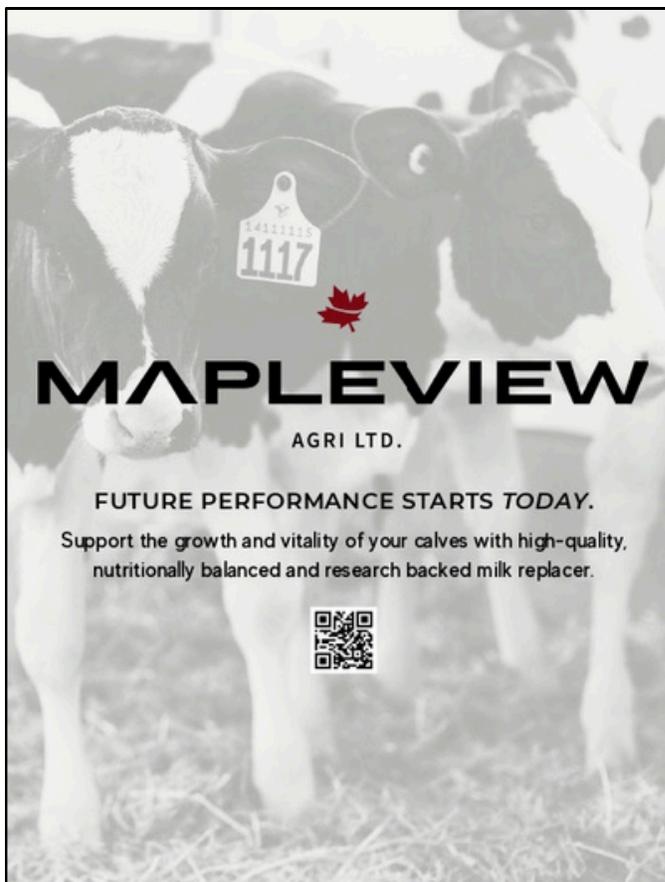
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## **KORB WHALE**

### **Clovermead Farms and Mapleton's Organic**

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Korb Whale is the owner of Clovermead Farms and Mapleton's Organic Dairy in Wellington County north of Guelph. The Whale family has embraced the concept of sustainability for many years and has incorporated many of these concepts into their long-term strategic plan. Korb strongly believes that using resources diligently and producing as little waste as possible, will lead to greater efficiencies on the farm and less negative

impacts on the environment. While striving for good genetics, high production and superior health traits make for a strong resilient herd, using water, manure and energy efficiently as well adds to the bottom line and the resilience of the business. Korb's latest venture into ice cream making has him working directly with customers, and trying to provide them with what they want as well. There is a lot to learn in all aspects of our Dairy Industry!



## **DAN BREEN**

### **Breen Acres Family Farm Inc.**

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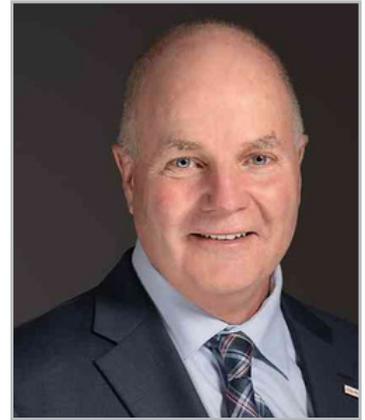
Dan Breen is the 4th generation to operate a dairy and crop farm between London and Woodstock along the 401. With the help of his family along the way, now with the 5th generation, his daughter Vanessa and her husband Ryan, the farm has grown from 20kg to 140kg of quota currently being filled by 80 cows and 100 to 1100 acres. Thirty-six consecutive years of 100 percent no-till and 20 years of cover crops have given him some insights into building resilient soils.



**STEVE VELDMAN**  
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Steve and his wife Carol started dairy farming in 1985 north of the village of Embro in Ontario. They have one daughter, three sons and eight grandchildren. Their goal from the start was always to leave the farm and the environmental impact of the farm in better condition for future generations than they received it. Key initiatives have been to protect their soils from all types of erosion and to produce high-quality milk using less energy resources.



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**NOTES**

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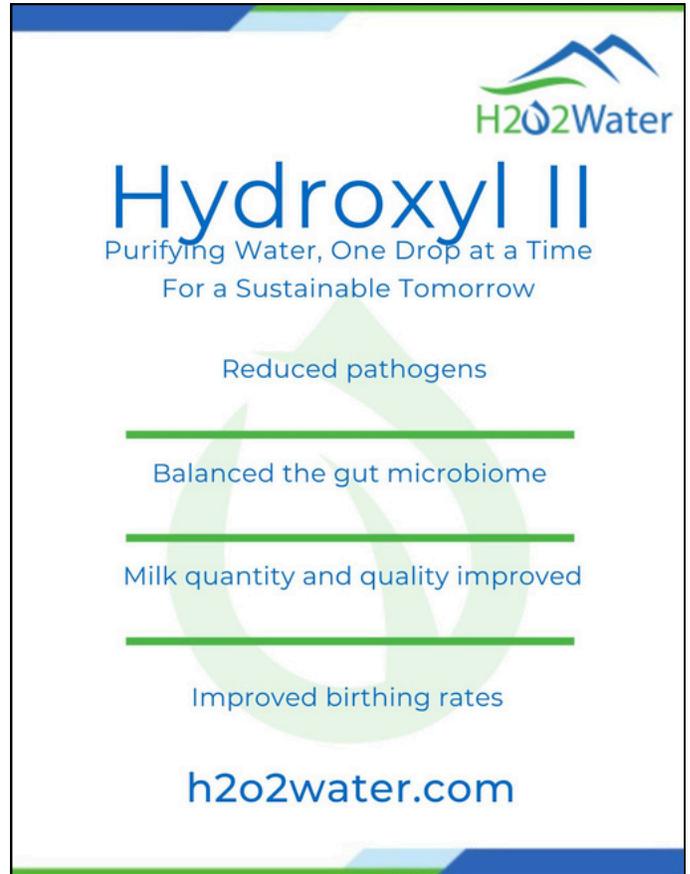
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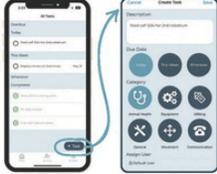
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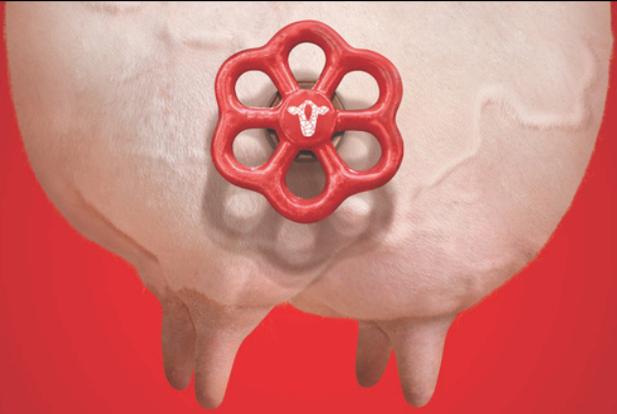
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## THE 40TH ANNUAL SOUTH WESTERN ONTARIO DAIRY SYMPOSIUM

### FOOD FROM OUR FARMS . . . AND FOOD FOR THOUGHT ABOUT MARKETING

2025 marks the 19th year of featuring dairy products selected to help us “learn from lunch”. The products featured this year focus on the theme of “celebrating expanded processing capacity” and what it means to our market and the consumers who drive it. Dairy is a major contributor to the economy in the 13-county region that plans this program. This region produces more milk than any other part of Ontario, and regionally as well as nationally, our industry has long suffered from a shortage of processing capacity that limits new product development, restricts market growth and leads to increasingly unpopular food waste when weather, equipment failures, and holidays disrupt markets. We salute both the united determination of processors and producers and the much-needed government support that is addressing this critical issue through a combination of private and public funding from a variety of programs.

The \$333 million Dairy Innovation and Investment Fund (\$127 million for Ontario), announced in November 2023, has been fully allocated. While details remain confidential, funded projects are in active development and implementation. Ontario dairies also received \$21.5 million from the Supply Management Processing Investment Fund (SMPIF), and several of the processors that participated have donated product for our enjoyment this year.

We salute **Sheldon Creek Dairy** for an SMPIF supported expansion that has added new cultured beverages like **fruit smoothies and kefir** to their product line. By making their plant accessible for co-packing, they provide opportunity for other entrepreneurs to explore possibilities without investing in hardware. Their focus on **whole unhomogenized milk, A2 and artisan flavoured milk** sourced from their own farm is contributing to market growth and building a positive image for all dairy producers and products. Their expansion has led to a wide variety of new cultured products that we are sampling today.

Large processors are critical to our future, and we are grateful that multinational **Lactalis**, number 1 in gross sales in the world and number 3 in Canada, continues to invest here. They are adding new processing capacity at their Ingleside cheese plant with support from SMPIF. We thank them for their donation of a new product, **Lactantia 1% chocolate milk** for our symposium.

## THE 40TH ANNUAL SOUTH WESTERN ONTARIO DAIRY SYMPOSIUM

While coffee is not a dairy beverage, making it white is a multimillion dollar undertaking and ensuring that happens with real dairy is important to us. We thank Farm Credit Canada for sponsoring our coffee and we thank Kawartha Dairy for providing coffee cream for our event. With both their head office and several outlets and numerous retailers in cottage country, the Kawartha brand makes memories from cottage life and builds loyal dairy clientele with their high-quality ice cream and other products.

We featured them just two years ago for their health focus, and now we welcome back **Modhani 2% Yogurt with Turmeric and Fruit** as we celebrate the new processing capacity provided by their new plant in Tillsonburg. Completion of the plant last July, supported with SMPIF funding, increases Modhani's processing capacity by 400% and allows them to expand into new grocery markets.

When an Ontario dairy farmer is a panelist on our program and he is also a processor, it makes sense to make that part of the conversation. Korb Whale owns and manages Clovermead Holsteins, a modern 160 cow freestall dairy with a digester, as well as **Mapleton's Organic Dairy** featuring **organic ice cream and fluid milk** made from the 70 organic cows housed in their compost pack barn open to visitors. Mapleton's includes on-farm retail, as well as **agri-tourism, barn tours and farm adventure experiences**. Personal connections with consumers made at dairies like Mapleton's play an important role in educating our clients about sustainability, animal care, and all that dairy has to offer. As a contribution to "dessert for you", **DeDell Seeds**, who offer high sugar silage varieties they call "dessert for cows" are cost sharing in the ice cream donation, and we thank them for this additional sponsorship.

Cheese processing is a key area where we can benefit from expanded capacity to accommodate growth, new product development and flexibility. Three companies with expansion projects benefitting from the SMPIF program have donated cheese products for us to sample and we appreciate the confidence they have shown by investing in new capacity. The Borgo brothers, William, Albert and Joseph, are the fourth generation of a cheese making tradition that started in the Asiago region of Italy. Their father Almerigo moved the family to Ontario in the 1950's and today **Quality Cheese** is a thriving family business

## THE 40TH ANNUAL SOUTH WESTERN ONTARIO DAIRY SYMPOSIUM

marketing Italian cheeses under the **Bella Cassara** and **Albert's Leap** labels.

Founded by Joe Galati in 1988, **Galati Cheese** is also a family run cheese business with Italian roots. They are growing with new investment in processing capacity at their Windsor plant and retail store. This is their first time participating in our symposium and we welcome the opportunity to sample some of their "locally produced cheeses".

Our third cheese sponsor is **Arla Foods Canada**. The well-known and highly regarded Arla Foods company based in Denmark and Sweden has been part of the processing scene in Ontario since 1961. It's great to see their growing commitment to manufacturing here with Canadian milk and the blue cow logo on all their Canadian-made products.

On the subject of cheese, your Dairy Symposium team wants to thank our speakers with a gift, and we choose to give dairy. The eight cheese baskets used as speaker gifts and for the early bird draw are sponsored by **Scotiabank** and are provided by specialty retail cheese shops in the region listed by name and location below. The interest in specialty cheese products these retailers create is a big factor in the growing market for these high value products. **As dairy farmers who take pride in our industry, we need to "give dairy" as gifts at every opportunity.**

**Vodkow**, distilled in Almonte, Ontario is the only "Canadian" dairy based product in our liquor stores, and is a unique phenomenon for our industry. Vodkow is distilled from milk permeate, a low value by-product that would otherwise go into animal feed. With Vodkow as the base, this company also makes a wide variety of excellent quality **Vodkow Cream Liqueurs** using all Canadian cream.

Finally, we want to remind you that our farms produce other foods in addition to dairy products. This year we are once again serving veal on a bun to acknowledge the local veal producers who we rely on to market bull calves and surplus heifer calves as premium quality veal products. Our veal purchase for lunch was supplied and subsidized by **Highland Packers**, a local family-owned meat processor in Stoney Creek, and we thank them for their contribution.

## **THE 40TH ANNUAL SOUTH WESTERN ONTARIO DAIRY SYMPOSIUM**

It is our hope that these products and the information presented about them will increase awareness and stimulate interest among producers in the marketing side of the industry. We salute these products and the companies behind them as opportunities to expand markets, add value and strengthen the industry.

We also acknowledge the important role of government in providing funding to stimulate the expansion in processing capacity that is taking place. Producers and processors, working and lobbying together, along with financial support from our governments, are reshaping our supply chain in a way that will reduce waste, improve sustainability and encourage growth, ensuring a healthy future for the dairy sector.

***Jack Rodenburg, on behalf of the Planning Committee***

MORE ON OUR 2024 FOOD FROM OUR FARMS CONTRIBUTORS



Thank You to Farm Credit Canada for sponsoring our coffee . . . . .  
and to Kawartha Dairy for their 10% and 18% coffee cream.

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**4300 Concession Rd 5, Loretto, Ontario, (705) 434-0404**

Monday-Sunday 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Already well-known for their easily digested non-homogenized A2 milk, their expanded processing capacity has added a wide range of delicious new cultured products like kefir and yogurt smoothies in a great variety of flavours. Their line of flavoured milk will keep you engaged with new flavours like Apple Pie, Crème Brûlée, Pina Colada and S'mores. Hats off to Sheldon Creek for making dairy so much more interesting!

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Thank you for the new 1% chocolate milk donated for us to sample . . . . and thank you to this multinational processor for their big commitment to Canadian dairy, with new processing capacity and blue cow labelling.



## THE 40TH ANNUAL SOUTH WESTERN ONTARIO DAIRY SYMPOSIUM



New investment in a processing plant in Tillsonburg is expanding markets for this company's healthy 2% Greek Style Fruit Bottom Yogurt with Turmeric which we are

sampling at the symposium. Health benefits of Turmeric include reduced risk of cancer, reduced inflammation and arthritis pain, lower cholesterol and reduced risk of heart disease, easier weight management and control of diabetes, improved mental health and reduced risk of dementia.

Modhani also makes a variety of ethnic dairy products like Dahi, Makhani and Ghee.

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**8648 Wellington Road 7, Moorefield, Ontario, (519) 638-1115**

Visit the store, the barns and the adventure area!

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Mapleton's Organic ice cream is sold in specialty stores as well as on the farm, where memories are made with agri-tourism adventures that connect us with consumers. Unique ice cream flavours like Dandelion, Cappuccino, Ginger, Raspberry and Chai make Mapleton's ice cream a very special treat.

The Mapleton's ice cream served here as dessert for us is co-sponsored by DeDell Seeds, who make "Dessert" corn silage hybrid for your cows.

THE 40TH ANNUAL SOUTH WESTERN ONTARIO DAIRY SYMPOSIUM

THANK YOU TO THESE CHEESE COMPANIES FOR INVESTING IN  
NEW PROCESSING CAPACITY AND FOR THE CHEESES WE ARE  
SAMPLING TODAY.



111 Jevlan Drive, Vaughan, Ontario, (905) 265-9991

Monday-Saturday 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. | [info@qualitycheese.com](mailto:info@qualitycheese.com)



Owned and Operated by the Galati Family  
**Locally Produced**

**MR. GALATI, OUR MASTER CHEESE MAKER**

932 Tecumseh Road West, Windsor, Ontario (519) 973-7510

Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. | [sales@galaticheese.com](mailto:sales@galaticheese.com)



**EXPANDING IN ONTARIO WITH THE BLUE COW ON THE LABEL!**



VODKOW is a distillery located in Almonte, Ontario. We make an award winning triple distilled vodka by repurposing unused milk sugars from the dairy process.

Our carbon neutral vodka is used to power a line of "lactose free" cream liquors in the following flavours: coffee, maple, chocolate, classic cream, eggnog, London fog, mango sunrise, key lime and strawberry social. Less sugar, Canadian cream and better ingredients for a better tasting product than other cream liquors.



**YOUR COUNTRY BUTCHER**

**Highland Country Market & Highland Packers**  
432 Highland Rd. E. Stoney Creek  
(Highland & Tapleystown Rd.)  
**905-662-8396**  
[www.highlandpackers.com](http://www.highlandpackers.com)

MONDAY-SATURDAY 7AM-6PM  
CLOSED SUNDAYS.

Thank you to Highland Packers for their support in providing partial sponsorship for the veal on a bun served at the Dairy Symposium. This family business started by the DeJonge family in 1958 includes meat packing, as well as retail. It has a strong focus on local foods including the freshest meats and deli items, cheese and other dairy products and fruits, vegetables and baked goods.

# Scotiabank®

## CHEESE BASKET SPONSOR



This year Scotiabank has purchased our gift baskets from these selected specialty cheese shops located throughout the region. The stores listed below are ambassadors for gourmet artisan cheeses that are growing high value markets for our industry.

### **Two Girls and a Cheese Shop**

20 Brock Street West, Tillsonburg  
519-688-2228

### **The Cheesy Cow**

525 Dundas Street, Woodstock  
519-900-8692

### **The Wine Cellar and Cheese Shop**

188 Thames Street S., Ingersoll  
519-425-4999

### **Village Cheese Mill**

33744 Plank Line, Salford  
519-485-0600

### **Devizes Cheese Factory Outlet**

23498 Highbury Avenue, Denfield  
519-225-2646

### **The Milky Whey Fine Cheese Shop**

18 Ontario Street, Stratford  
519-814-9439

### **The Tipperary Bog Cheese Shop**

84 Charing Cross Street, Brantford  
519-771-9174

### **La Fromagerie**

209 Lexington Road, Waterloo  
519-897-6994

### **East Hamilton Cheese Company**

205 Ottawa Street North, Hamilton  
905-920-2314

**Encouraging dairy farmers and agribusiness to take pride in their products and give the gift of dairy!**

**Thank you for attending!**

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***JOIN US IN  
FEBRUARY 2026  
FOR OUR  
41ST  
ANNIVERSARY  
EDITION!***

***Follow us @SWODSdairy  
and [www.dairysymposium.ca](http://www.dairysymposium.ca)***