



media release

HOLSTEIN CANADA, 20 CORPORATE PLACE, BRANTFORD, ONTARIO CANADA N3T 5R4
PHONE | 519-756-8300 | 1-855-756-8300 FAX | 519-756-5878 WEB | WWW.HOLSTEIN.CA

For immediate release

January 12, 2016

Contact: Jennifer Kyle

Phone: 519-756-8300 ex. 234

jkyle@holstein.ca

Distinguished Award Winners to be Honoured at AGM

Brantford, Ont. – Holstein Canada is pleased to announce that both a Certificate of Superior Accomplishment and a Certificate of Recognition will be presented at the Annual General Meeting in Banff, Alta. on April 23, 2016. Norm and Marj Atkins of Continental Holsteins in Leduc, Alta. will receive the Certificate of Superior Accomplishment, while Bruce Witmer of Speedside Holsteins in Cambridge, Ont. will receive the Certificate of Recognition.

The Atkins' and their Continental Holsteins have a long, successful history in the show ring locally, nationally and internationally. In addition to their many show champions over the years, the Atkins' have bred countless great cows earning them a Master Breeder Shield in 1988. Both Norm and Marj were Official Judges with Holstein Canada and have judged many shows across Canada and internationally. For many years, Norm was an integral member of the team in charge of transporting, caring for, preparing and showing the animals from the west going to both World Dairy Expo and the Royal Winter Fair. Both Norm and Marj have served as Alberta Holstein Branch Directors, each also serving their term as President during their 10-year tenures. Norm also served as a Director of ADHIS (Alberta DHI). During the show years of *Acme Star Lily* and *Rainyridge Tony Beauty*, Continental Holsteins always promoted Alberta Holsteins, and also promoted that good Holsteins can be found in Western Canada. Beyond their success with their herd, the Atkins' are first and foremost mentors to many. They are always quick to help out local 4-H clubs and Western Canadian Classic participants, and are keen to share their judging/reasons skills with these enthusiastic young dairy people. Norm was awarded the Curtis Clark Achievement Award in 1995. Marj served as Chair of the Curtis Clark Achievement Award committee for many years, doing numerous award presentations over the years, and was presented with an award named in her honour, the Marj Atkins Achievement Award, in 2014.

"The Continental team of Norm and Marj put their heart and soul into the Holstein business and prefer working in the barns, being at the shows or talking Holsteins," writes nominator Doug Peart, on behalf of an extended group of Holstein enthusiasts from across a few provinces involved in putting this nomination together. "This passionate couple has promoted Canadian Holsteins throughout their entire farming career and they are very deserving of this award as their accomplishments truly are superior."

Bruce Witmer of Speedside Holsteins is a passionate cow man with a true love for great cows with superior cow families. He was raised on his family's purebred Holstein farm; took over the milking herd with his wife Joyce in 1960; and continued to milk cows every day until 2005. His animals have since been moved to his son's herd in Oxford County where Bruce remains an active part of the breeding decisions and still registers approximately 20 animals per year under his Speedside prefix. He has always been a strong advocate of the Canadian Holstein, a great supporter of Holstein Canada programs and true believer in the value of advertising. Bruce has given back to industry by serving as a Director and President of the Waterloo Holstein Club; Councillor with the Ontario Holstein Branch; host to many domestic and international tour groups; and involvement with the Soil & Crop, Waterloo Federation of Agriculture, Advance Registry Yorkshire Club and Galt/Cambridge

Fall Fair. Most impressive is Bruce's commitment to enhancing our youth. Serving as a 4-H leader for over 56 years, Bruce has been a true mentor to hundreds of young people who have gone on to build their own successful dairy farms, including former hired man Mike Bechtel who got his start with the support of Bruce and continues to milk his herd at the Speedside farm. A founding financial supporter of the Ontario Holstein Jr. Shows, Bruce has made significant financial contributions and has seen more than 3,500 young people start their show careers at the two-day educational events. Bruce was a 4-H Arbor Award Winner, Citizen of the Year for Waterloo Region, University of Guelph Award winner for his numerous contributions to Agriculture and has received many conservation accolades.

"Bruce has been instrumental in not only promoting the programs of our Holstein breed, but initiating the lifelong interest in the dairy industry for so many of our young people," writes Angela Howard on behalf of the nominator the Ontario Holstein Branch. "His mentorship and incredibly generous support make possible the opportunity to educate and promote the importance of utilizing all of the programs and services that our industry offers."

Both incredibly prestigious and distinguished awards, the Certificate of Superior Accomplishment and the Certificate of Recognition have only been awarded a combined total of 21 times since 1954. The Certificate of Superior Accomplishment was last awarded in 2013, while the last Certificate of Recognition was honoured in 2008. Both awards recognize qualities and activities such as: enhancing working relationships; promoting the breed, the Association, and/or Association programs; mentorship and leadership; education; and time and contribution significantly over and above what is considered "part of the job". The Certificate of Superior Accomplishment recognizes these qualities and activities with a national/international impact, while the Certificate of Recognition recognizes these same qualities and activities with more of a provincial or regional impact.

###