

Congratulations to the 2015 Regional and National Winners,

Mike and Amy Cronin, Bluevale, Ontario

Mike and Amy have been passionate about agriculture all their lives. Mike grew up on a dairy/beef/cash crop farm and knew from a young age that he wanted to farm. Amy grew up on a dairy farm and was active on the farm from the time she was three. When they were married, they saw opportunity in the hog industry and after managing a farm for three years, purchased an 1800 sow, farrow to wean operation in 1998 and 150 acres.

Over the years, the couple has grown both their family and their operations. Their six children are at the heart of everything they do and, through farming, they've been able to teach them the value of work ethic, the wonders of living on a farm, and the importance of being a part of, and giving back to, the community.

Relationships are the key to their business. By surrounding themselves with, and empowering, dedicated team members, Mike and Amy have been able to grow both their Canadian and US operations by increasing their land base and pork production. Recognizing that the hog industry can be a volatile one, risk management is essential. They have found opportunities to diversify within their industry, securing a variety of markets on both sides of the border in addition to a unique hedging program that allows them to book their hogs with no margin calls.

Together the couple understands that a social license is required to farm and the importance of embracing changes. In addition to many innovative improvements in 2014, they built a crate free system, one of the first of its kind in North America, researching and incorporating the newest technology from around the world. The barn has a thumbprint entry system, electronic sow feeders purchased from the Netherlands, and video cameras linked to their customer. The Cronin's worked with a local manufacturer to design a special crate that transitions to a pen for the farrowing rooms.

Their farming goals are guided by their vision, mission, strategic intents, and core values. They include continual improvement in production and margins, both in barns and with crops purchasing land, and creating a succession plan that will enable the next generation to farm.

Giving back to their community and industry is a high priority for the couple. Mike is a delegate for the Huron County Pork Producers, is active in his own parish and has coached youth soccer for 22 years. He was recently invited, as one of only two Canadians, to join the 21st Century Pork Forum in the U.S. Amy is a school board trustee, vice chair of the Listowel Libro Credit Union branch council, and sits on the board of the Catholic Community Foundation of Southwestern Ontario. In addition to other provincial organizations, she is the chair of Ontario Pork, a member of the National Pork Value Chain Roundtable and of the 21st Century Pork Forum in Canada. Most recently she was appointed co-chair with the Deputy Minister of Agriculture to the Growth Steering Committee of Agriculture in Ontario.