

*For Immediate Release*

*Agricultural advocates honoured*  
**Three “Farm & Food Care Champion” awards presented**

April 11, 2018 – (Guelph) In celebration of the organization’s 30th anniversary, Farm & Food Care Ontario has handed out three Champion Awards at its annual conference. All three were recognized for significant commitments to public outreach, and support for Ontario’s farming community.

In presenting the awards, Farm & Food Care board member Bruce Christie said that there had been a record number of nominations this year which shows the interest that the agricultural community has in sharing its stories with a non-farming public.

*The 2018 Champion Award recipients are as follows:*

- **Durham Farm Connections**, a long-standing regional agricultural outreach organization in Durham Region
- **Jamie Reaume**, Chief Executive Officer of Country Heritage Park in Milton
- **Tim May**, dairy farmer, “Farmer Tim” social media personality and former 4-H leader from Wellington County

**Durham Farm Connections**

“Durham Farm Connections (DFC) has provided agriculture education and awareness for farm and non-farm communities across the region since 2006,” says Nancy Rutherford of Durham Region who submitted the nomination. The group’s “*All About...Farming*” education trailer can be spotted at fairs and community events throughout Durham Region. Visitors are greeted with eye-catching displays, knowledgeable staff and interactive activities or resources that provide a closer look at where food comes from.

One of DFC’s most popular initiatives allows 1200+ grade 3 students to experience ‘Life on the Farm’ for a day; students visit eight types of farm demonstrations where they learn first-hand from local farmers. This program was awarded the Ontario Premier’s Award for Agri-food Innovation Excellence, as well as a Watershed Award from the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority. The overwhelming positive feedback since the launch in 2006 resulted in an expansion of the program for high school students and an annual open house event.

To celebrate Canada’s 150<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2017, DFC honoured Durham’s agricultural heritage by recognizing families and organizations that have been farming in the region for over 150 years. Honourees were encouraged to share their stories and were commemorated at the annual “*Celebrate Agriculture Gala*”. This October marks the fourth annual gala, where guests are invited for an evening of hospitality and celebration of Durham’s agriculture. DFC is comprised solely of dedicated and passionate volunteers; their “tireless commitments to raising awareness, sharing knowledge, and

creating opportunities are very deserving of this award.”

### **Jamie Reaume**

According to Susan Powell, Artist and Economic Development Funding Strategist and Anna DeMarchi-Meyers, Halton Region, who submitted the nomination for recipient Jamie Reaume, Reaume’s two decades of experience as an agriculture advocate, both in the field and at the policy level, make him an ideal choice for the Champion Award. “He believes strongly in education and food literacy, and respects the producers of our food,” she says. Reaume is a veteran policy influencer, unafraid to forge new paths towards industry goals. “His approach is to always engage and inform [people] about our food, where it comes from, and its economic importance, while promoting farming in this province.”

As the founder and former Executive Director of the Holland Marsh Growers’ Association (HMGA), Reaume was determined to demonstrate to Ontarians what the marsh and those who farm in it have to offer. He is also responsible for dubbing the region as Canada’s “salad bowl.” Under his leadership, the group was awarded the Premier Agriculture Innovation Regional Award and released the award winning documentary *The Marsh Mucker’s Tale*.

Currently, Reaume is the CEO at Country Heritage Park in Milton, Ontario where he has revitalized the 80-acre park into a farming and food education and appreciation centre. Reaume has restored the park to a revenue-generating operation with growth in public and corporate interest, facility rental, and education programs. Over 12,000 students, grades 1-10, participate in programs that include food literacy, history, outdoor education, sustainability, environmental awareness, and the arts. The park now features community gardens, bees, livestock and a community kitchen.

Reaume has made many other significant contributions to Ontario’s agriculture community. He is now collaborating on a project that provides land for new farmers and interest groups to farm economically and sustainably in the Toronto area.

### **Tim May**

Farmer Tim May received a record three champion award nominations from three completely different sources – from Dairy Farmers of Ontario, John Drummond and a joint submission from Ann Godkin and Dr. Kerry Lissemore, with letters of support coming from many other sources including social media followers of “Farmer Tim”. Laural Adams, communications manager for Dairy Farmers of Ontario, said that Tim has become well known for his willingness to share Ontario’s farm story and reality of farm life through many different social media mediums. His willingness to actively engage the Canadian public through social and more traditional forms of media, while simultaneously – and with regularity – communicating the importance of outreach to Ontario’s farm community. May, they say, continues to be at forefront of agricultural outreach, employing humour and honesty to create a positive platform where farmers and the general public can engage.

“Tim has done a tremendous job of educating consumers on agriculture, specifically the dairy industry,” says Drummond. “He has a wonderful way of connecting with the everyday person through

social media, and has developed a report of trust, education, and common sense through his posts and tweets. He has made an incredible name for himself as “Farmer Tim” with 27,500 Facebook followers.

In addition to congratulating the three 2018 Champions, Christie also commended the individuals and organizations for making the effort to nominate candidates to be honoured as Farm & Food Care champions. He noted the official nomination process requires considerable preparation time and diligence to properly highlight the special attributes of potential champions.

Christie told the audience “it’s a very special recognition and we encourage nominations from across diverse segments of Ontario’s agri-food industry”.

The Champion Award has been presented annually, since 1999, to worthy agricultural advocates. This year’s recipients received the award at the Farm & Food Care Ontario annual conference in Milton on April 11.

Farm & Food Care Ontario is a coalition of farmers, agriculture and food partners proactively working together to ensure public trust and confidence in food and farming. For more information visit [www.FarmFoodCareON.org](http://www.FarmFoodCareON.org).

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(Left to Right): Bruce Christie, Farm & Food Care Ontario board member with recipients Mary Ann Found, Brenda Metcalf, Marilyn Pearce, volunteers with Durham Farm Connections; nominator Nancy Rutherford of Durham Region.



(Left to Right): Bruce Christie, Farm & Food Care Ontario board member with nominator Susan Powell; recipient Jamie Reaume, Country Heritage Park; nominators Janet Horner, Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance and Anna DeMarchi-Meyers, Halton Region.



(Left to Right): Bruce Christie, Farm & Food Care Ontario board member with nominators John Drummond, Chantel Crockett, Dairy Farmers of Ontario; recipient Tim May, dairy farmer; nominators Dr. Kerry Lissemore and Ann Godkin.