

Embracing the “Farm-to-Table” Movement

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Art and Elaine Pruim and their family have never been afraid to put in the hard work and long hours when it comes to embracing new opportunities to expand and diversify their successful Saskatchewan farm operation. Twin Peaks Creamery, owned and managed by son John, is their latest venture and has seen them dive into the growing “farm-to-table” movement with the establishment of an on-farm dairy processing plant, ice cream parlour and retail store that also sells beef and pork products direct to consumers.

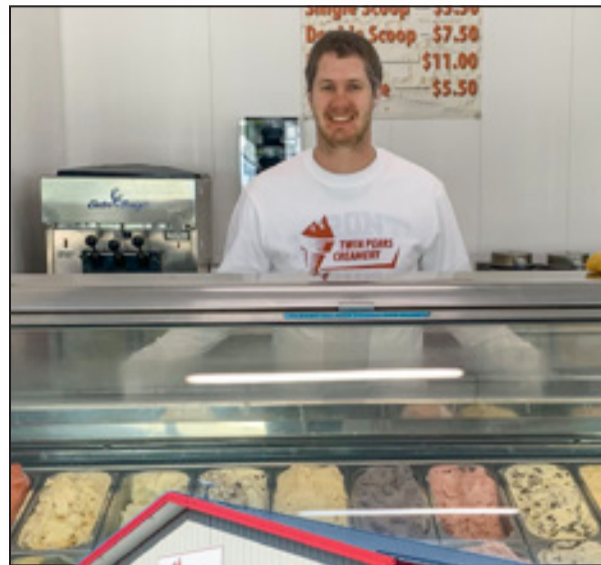
Plumblossom and Peak Farms

Art Pruim, 53, grew up in British Columbia. A third generation dairy farmer, he was very involved in his family’s Plumblossom Farm in Abbotsford. Always keenly interested in Holstein genetics, he had his own prefix, Matvale, when he was just 15. After graduating from agricultural college in 1990, he worked four years as a semen salesman before returning to the family farm. With Art and his wife Elaine wanting to farm, the Pruim family decided they needed to expand. Land and milk quota prices were expensive in BC at the time, so the family searched elsewhere for a farm. In 1998, Art and Elaine relocated to a newly acquired farm at Osler, SK, and constructed a new dairy facility. They started with 110 milk cows, the result of purchasing two registered Holstein herds.

Art and Elaine became the sole owners of Plumblossom Farms Ltd. in 2004. In 2009, they were recognized as Saskatchewan’s Outstanding Young Farmer. Art’s commitment to the dairy industry has seen him assume roles in the past as President of the Saskatchewan Holstein Branch, a WestGen Board Director, and Genetic Evaluation Board member. Currently, he is a Councillor for his regional municipality and a Director for the Canadian Speckle Park Association. Joining the Pruims in their journey have been their five children: John, 28, runs the new Creamery; Brad, 26, is involved in the dairy operation; James, 24, a member of Holstein Canada’s Young Leaders Advisory Committee, is presently working as a cattle fitter in Ontario and Quebec; Nicole, 22, is employed by Supreme Mixer Wagons in Alberta; and Travis, 20, is in his third year at the University of New Brunswick pursuing a business degree.

The Pruims farm today at two sites 15 minutes apart under two different corporate names – Plumblossom and Peak Farms. “Plumblossom Farms is our dairy operation where our Holstein and Jersey animals carry the Matvale prefix,” explains Art. “That is where all our ‘supply managed’ commodities are. The dairy farm encompasses 620 acres of land, 470 irrigated, plus another 150 rented acres. We grow corn and barley for silage there and underseed the barley with Italian ryegrass wherever it is under the irrigation pivots. Peak Farms was established in the early 2010s when we started grain farming,” he continues. “How we came up with Peak is P is for Pruim, E for Elaine, A for Art, and K for Kids. Peak Farms is our ‘free market’ corporation and deals with all our grain and oilseeds, plus our Speckle Park beef herd. Twin Peaks Creamery is located here.”

The Pruims raised over 15,000 layer hens for eggs every year from 2009-17. It was after the chicken operation was closed that they purchased their second farm near Warman in 2019 that is now home to Peak Farms. “The dairy barn had been



The new Twin Peaks Creamery at Warman, SK, includes processing, retail and storage areas in this attractive on-farm facility located just 10 minutes from Saskatoon.

empty for 10 years,” says Art, “but used to milk 200 cows so we repurposed all the facilities. In addition to beef, we raise all our Holstein and Jersey calves here, plus grow wheat, canola and barley on this 1800-acre farm.”

The Pruims presently milk 380 cows (15 Jersey and the balance Holstein) at Plumblossom 3X/day in a double-10 herringbone parlour with cows housed in free-stalls. “The next big decision we have to make is how do we move ahead technology, cow health and comfort wise as we look to rebuild or change our 25-year-old dairy facility,” remarks Art. “But that will be our boys’ decision.”

Over the years, continual investments in members from some of the best Holstein cow families like COMESTAR LAURIE SHEIK, SMITHDEN GOLDWYN ALEXANDRA, GLEN DRUMMOND SPLENDOR, RAINYRIDGE TONY BEAUTY and others, combined with an intensive embryo transfer program, bolstered the quality and depth of pedigree in the Matvale breeding program. Two purchases in the 2021 Vogue Genetics by Design Sale have been recent highlights for them. VOGUE MIRAND HANALEI-P EX-92-USA, a Polled, A2A2 Mirand daughter from the SNOW-N DENISES DELLIA family, went on to be sold privately by the Pruims at the 2022 Holstein Canada National Convention Show in Saskatoon where she was first Fall 2-Year-old and Intermediate Champion. The other purchase, DREW HOLME DELTA LEISURE P VG-86, is a current favourite with this Polled, A2A2 4-year-old completing 16 generations of VG/EX in the RAVENSWELL LYDIA family.

The Pruims use predominantly “Proven” bulls now in their dairy breeding program, along with their own Speckle Park purebred beef bulls for clean-up and on their low-end group. Heifers are bred with sexed A.I. semen or beef. “About 25% of the calves born here now are crossbred calves,” relates Art. The Pruims started breeding the bottom 20% of their dairy herd to Speckle Park in 2015. “A couple years later, we got into this ‘hobby’ of

John Pruim, oldest son of Art and Elaine Pruim, always dreamt of making ice cream/gelato. He realized that dream in 2023 with the opening of Twin Peaks Creamery, an on-farm dairy processing plant, ice cream parlour and retail store that he owns and manages on his family’s Peak Farms north of Saskatoon.

buying purebred Speckle Park cattle and started to breed our own Speckle Park animals under the Peak prefix,” Art says. “We are now finishing our fourth year of having purebred Speckle Park stock. We run 25 cow/calf pairs. We are actually flushing more beef than dairy currently and selling beef embryos and show age calves. We even showed some of our Speckle Park at Lloydminster and at Agribition in Regina in 2021-22.”

Twin Peaks Creamery

“Peak Farms is the closest active farm to the city of Saskatoon on the north side. Greater than 300,000 people live within 10 minutes of the farm. That is why,” states Art, “we deemed it was a perfect location and opportunity for us to open an on-farm retail store there. I firmly believe that if there are opportunities out there that we should explore, and our kids are interested, we need to find a mechanism or way to support them.”

The Pruims’ oldest son, John, had always had a dream to make ice cream/gelato. A 2017 University of Guelph graduate, he travelled the world for two years after obtaining his agriculture business degree. When travel was permitted again after the restrictions related to Covid-19 in 2020, John jumped on a plane and flew to Bologna, Italy, to take a course in how to make gelato. When he came back, he began the lengthy process of getting all the necessary permits in place for the Creamery. Then they started construction. “If I’m

putting the Creamery on Peak Farms, why don’t we name it Twin Peaks?” suggested John. “We can brand it with two scoops of ice cream on top of a cone and call it Twin Peaks.”

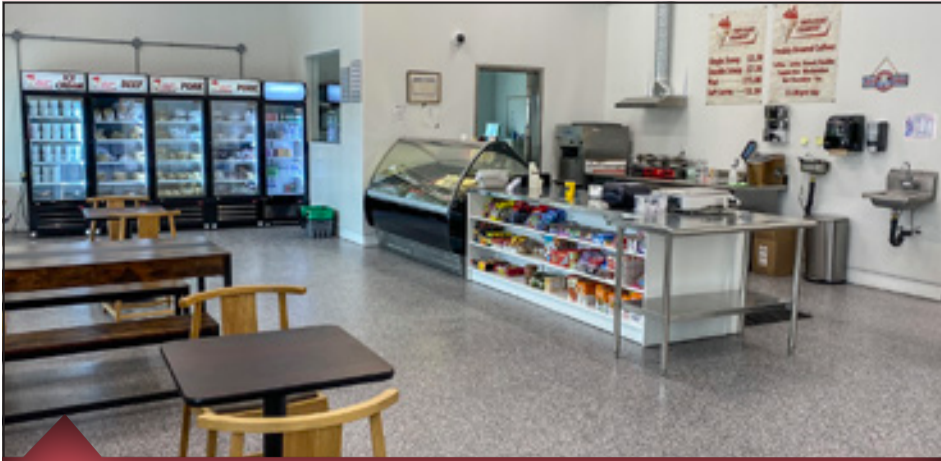
Twin Peaks Creamery “officially opened” in late March 2023. It consists of a processing, retail and storage area. “John picks up fresh milk twice a week from Plumblossom Farms and takes it to the Creamery where he does all the recipe building in the processing plant. We like to say,” says Art, “We take milk from our cows to people’s mouths.” During the peak summer ice cream months, John offered 15 different ice cream/gelato flavours and two sorbets out of the display case. He also sells ice cream in one pint containers for takeout. “John actually calls our product a ‘hybrid’ because he took the best qualities of gelato and ice cream and put them together to create virtually a unique product. It runs at 13% cream,” notes Art. While they have no scientific way to explain it, Art says they have had a number of customers who thought they were lactose intolerant tell them that they have had no issues consuming their ice cream.

The Pruims also sell beef and pork products in the store from their own farm-raised Speckle Park and pigs and have recently added other items like imported Dutch goods to their offering. “We started raising pigs a few years ago to feed our waste milk to because all our calves get milk replacer,” explains Art. “Now all the skim milk from our processing facility goes to the pigs as well. We raise three batches of 15 weaners a year. We make all kinds of products like breakfast sausages, wieners, and beer and pepperoni sticks that have different percentages of pork and beef in them.”

Twin Peaks Creamery has been a huge success. “People love the local story and the fact that the ice cream, beef and pork they buy from our store all comes from our farm. They know where their food is coming from and that really resonates with them,” says Art. “John is already going to have to upgrade his equipment



This delicious Raspberry Citrus ice cream/gelato cone tastes as good as it looks and was just one of the 15 different flavours that John Pruim made and sold at Twin Peaks Creamery this year.



The retail store at Twin Peaks Creamery, Warman, SK, not only offers customers ice cream/gelato cones and one pint ice cream containers for take-out made from fresh milk from Plumblossom Farms, but also the opportunity to purchase pork and beef products from the Prui family's own farm raised pigs and Speckle Park beef cattle.

in 2024 because he blew through all his 2023 projections from revenue to volume of product sold. During July and August, John never got to the retail side of the store because he was too busy in the processing plant making product from 8 a.m. to midnight. Elaine stepped in and ran the retail side, plus we had one other girl help out on Friday and Saturday afternoons. That's the problem," Art adds, "when you are entrepreneurial and build a new business. You never know where it is going to go. We already know we need to hire a full-time person next summer."

The Creamery was open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., Monday to Saturday during the summer. "Because of the quality of our product, and the service we have offered to consumers, we have had many people ask us to stay open the remainder of the year, so we are

planning to be open reduced hours outside of the summer months," Art notes. This fall and winter, John plans to go to a retail packaging trade show in Ontario and take another ice cream course at the University of Guelph to enhance his knowledge even further. Because of requests, John is looking at selling cream, and potentially butter and bottled milk, in the store in the future.

What have the Pruiims learned from their latest diversification venture? "We've learned that the consumer is always king and what they want is what you have to try to provide," replies Art. "We are first and foremost producers and now we are trying to wear a different hat. You can have big dreams. You just have to be bold and aggressive. If you provide a high quality product with excellent service, and have a great story, people will buy into the product."



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Merry Christmas and Best Wishes for the New Year from our family to yours.

