

Tars' Tale-Spins

Expecting *More* from 2024!

Tars Cheema
tars@holsteinnews.com

So it's 2024.

Deep breath. It's been quite a time for our dairy community for a few years, and the latest challenges of increased costs, increased interest rates and deferred milk price increase have knocked more than the fun out of farming.

I don't usually like to rant (my family might disagree...), but I feel like there's a glaring disconnect – and it's not just Canada.

The public is vibrating over inflation and the effects of high interest rates on food and housing affordability. Politicians scramble to be seen doing something! Suddenly the Grocery Code of Conduct is in the spotlight along with the Grocery CEOs. Makes for great media coverage for a few nights. But the decision to delay the desperately-needed dairy price increase to May 2024 is placating the public at the expense of producers who are mostly cash-flow negative these days. The general public would not go to work for no pay, but producers out west seem to be doing just that. This situation is both heartbreaking and certainly not sustainable for any long period.

Christophe Lafougere spoke at the Dairy Conference about France's 'agri-bashing' and the repercussions of declining farmer numbers. Throw in the environmental/climate issues in NL, NZ and other countries, and we have serious changes unfolding. I'm not saying we should not address climate change and environmental

protection, but we need to do it with the involvement of **food producers**. If the public thinks farmers are the enemy, I wonder what they plan to eat?

I maintain food is still affordable – but we need to **reprioritize it** – we've had too many decades of cheap food, especially in North America and it's allowed us to revel in an amazing standard of living. Now we take cheap, plentiful, high quality food for granted.

People have forgotten what it's like to be hungry. These are complex global issues and I doubt we will see a return to the pre-pandemic 'normal.'

On a positive note, I spoke to many at the Pacific Ag Show in Abbotsford who were anxiously anticipating the February quota allocation, the May milk price increase and the softening interest rates later in the year – there is hope...

Thanks Dave...

Besides enjoying a long farm-friendship with Dave Taylor and his family, I have admired Dave's *industry-first* attitude in his roles with BCDA and DFC. Our industry has seen challenges on so many fronts that Dave has engaged with at DFC – trade, consumers, animal welfare. They take a toll on the person and at home where someone else has to pick up the slack. I was thrilled to see Dave recognized with the Scotiabank Champion of Agriculture award at the BCAC Agri-food Gala in Abbotsford on January 24.

Dave has filled many roles, always extending his expertise and perspective with great care and objectivity. We deeply appreciate Dave for his voice of reason, collaborative nature and focus on *building, not blame*. Thanks for your work on behalf of the whole dairy industry, Dave.

Hope is Right in Front of Us

In other news... Dave and his wife Lisa were thrilled to welcome their fourth grandchild Violet Grace on January 21, while they were in Rwanda, celebrating the most incredible wedding of their son Christian to Grace...also on January 21!

Back in 2020, newly graduated from university, and without many job prospects due to Covid, Christian went volunteering in Rwanda. The agricultural development program supported by Mennonite Central Committee and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank provided him with opportunities to influence agricultural practices to improve yields and soil health for the Rwandan people struggling with food insecurity. Christian wrote three articles for us in 2021, opening our eyes to this very different part of the world.



It was here that 'Shyaka' met Grace and eventually would lead to this wonderful union of two vastly different cultures, from opposite sides of the world.

Congrats to all – may we balance the difficulties of this time with the optimism and hope that comes from new babies and new marriages.

Turi Kumwe,
(we are together- Kinyarwanda language)

Congratulations Dave Taylor – Scotiabank's Champion of Agriculture!

Rebecca Senicar,
BC Young Farmers Rep/Co-MC

"This year's recipient is a remarkable leader who has invested significant time and energy to the betterment of not only his commodity but also agriculture in general in BC and across Canada.

He is a leader known to encourage and contribute to collaborative efforts in support of producers. His dedicated, knowledgeable and tireless approach to serving – but perhaps most of all his **diplomacy** – set his leadership apart.

As a commodity group board director for a decade, he has spent uncounted hours in meetings and consultation, regularly sitting down with producers, federal and provincial government agriculture ministers and their staff to listen and, in turn, advocate for the best interests of agriculture.

Held in high regard by his peers, the recipient was one of only five farmer representatives chosen to represent the nearly 10,000 farmers within his commodity's sector in Canada.

From June 2019 to March 2023 he was part of revising Canada's Code of Practice for animal care. Through this project, the recipient will have a lasting impact on the cornerstone of his sector's animal welfare strategy. Beyond its significant impact in Canada, the new Code the recipient helped develop will influence animal welfare standards internationally.

Working at his family's fourth-generation Vancouver Island dairy operation, the recipient's first-hand expertise has been a great asset to solving problems and recommending solutions for the sector in all these areas of involvement. The BC Dairy Association notes that he has served as a role model for other farmers in British Columbia, and across Canada.

Currently serving terms on the Animal Health Canada and the Executive Committee of the National Farm Animal Care Council, the recipient is also just concluding a five-year term representing BC on the national Dairy Farmers of Canada board – which we think is perfect timing for us to award this recognition.

Please join me in congratulating Dave Taylor, the recipient of the 2024 Champion of Agriculture award."

From Dave Taylor:

"I'm blessed," began Dave, "We've just celebrated the arrival of our fourth grandchild and we just celebrated our son Christian's wedding in Rwanda."

He showed no hint of weariness from the significant Rwandan time-change as he calmly continued...

"It's not about the individual... it's about all of us together collectively and we have a great ag sector I'm truly proud of. I get to leave the farm because of those back home that are doing all the hard work. We go out and we advocate for what we need to do to make our sectors better and I'm proud of that part of the work that all of you have done.

Yes, you honour me today, but I know there's many in the room that are also champions – in every way. Because that's what we all do together!

"Thank you so much everyone!"



(L-R) Rebecca Senicar, co-emcee and Janice Holzschere, VP and Head of Agriculture Scotiabank, present Dave Taylor with the Scotiabank Champion of Agriculture award at the BC Ag Council Ag Gala on January 24.

"Thanks to everyone back home."

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April 11-13th, 2024 • Prairieland Park - Saskatoon SK



CONTACT: Bryce Fisher: 306-221-2620
Logan Leyenhorst: 306-230-6844

Visit our facebook page for updates & more info!

EVENT SCHEDULE

Monday, April 8th - Barns open for move in

Thursday, April 11th at 10am

TIERS 1 & II JUDGING SCHOOL

1PM JUNIOR SHOW - Judge Mark Sweetnam, MB

Friday, April 12th at 12 Noon • Judge Aaron Eaton, NY

OPEN HOLSTEIN & JERSEY HEIFER SHOWS (Breeds alternating)

Saturday April 13th at 10AM

OPEN HOLSTEIN & JERSEY COW SHOWS (Breeds alternating)

Join us after the show for an exhibitor social!

Entry Deadline - March 25th, 2024 (enter at expoassist.ca)

Hotel Block at Sandman Signature South: (306) 518-7263