

Jersey Canada News

Legend Dairy Love Story



The 40-cow herd, currently achieving 5.25% BF, is fed a ration built around high-quality grass silage.



Doug and Meghan were engaged in April 2025, after meeting on CTV's *Farming for Love* in 2022.



Doug's automated egg vending machine was one of the first of its kind on Vancouver Island, kept full by his 'small-lot' poultry permit, featuring 399 hens.

Morgan Sangster

Legend Dairy Farms
Prefix: ICONIC

- Herd: 40 lactating, 10 dry, 15 youngstock
- 28 kg milk • 5.25% BF • 3.8% Prot
- Breeds: ~75% PB Jersey, ~10% cross, ~15% PB Holstein (replacements 100% Jersey)
- Facilities: Freestall • Double-6 herringbone
- Forages: Grass silage; 60 acres

When Doug Groenendijk invited Canada into his life on CTV's *Farming for Love* (2022), he wasn't looking for fame—he was looking for a partner who shared his passion for cows, crops, and the daily flow of dairy. Enter Meghan Russell, a Guelph graduate with farm roots as deep as his own. Doug and Meghan dated for two years, were engaged in April 2025 and are planning a wedding early 2026. The romance is real, but so is the work.

From New Entrant to New Chapter
Doug started Legend Dairy in April 2023 through BC's New Entrant Program. He grew up dairy farming with his parents at Greendike Farms. After university, and a slight detour into professional volleyball, the pull back to farming was strong. Meghan's path began in the Ottawa Valley, where her family operates Dojo Holsteins, and her father owns Pasture Barn Designs. Between them, they bring West-Coast grit and Eastern know-how together.

Doug is still working at Greendike Farms, while doing most of the daily chores at Legend Dairy. Meghan works full-time as an animal nutritionist at Topshelf Feeds and heads to the farm for evening chores. Doug's family steps in to support when

needed during cropping and other busy times. Doug's landlord Wally Smith, and former herdsman, Scott, offer mentorship and the kind of practical backup only seasoned dairy people can give.

Why Jerseys? Why Now?
Their efficiency, longevity, and size fit the facility best, plus they're different. With Jerseys' smaller intakes, Meghan and Doug lean hard into feed quality and consistency to keep energy up without overcomplicating the ration. They're not chasing extremes; they're chasing **healthy, durable cows** that quietly breed back and keep cash flow steady.

Doug purchased cows from several herds in 2023 and is excited to see his first home-bred replacements calve in late 2025. Today the 40-head milking string is approximately 75% purebred Jersey, but all replacements are 100% Jersey.

Jerseys, Data—and the Iconic Prefix
Legend Dairy recently joined Jersey Canada, utilizing tools like registration, pedigree clarity, and inbreeding checks, as the ICONIC prefix takes shape. Doug and Meghan have no flashy show ring plans, just continue breeding for high quality, workable cows that last, and learn as they go as their heifers hit the lactating string.

Calves First, Results Follow
Every newborn heifer is weighed, colostrum serum levels checked, and benchmarked as part of the Agwest Calf Care program. Early-life attention is already showing up in growth and health scores. The goal is self-reliance—no outside purchases once replacements are flowing.

A Simple, Strong Feed Philosophy
The ration is built around high-quality grass silage, from one silage source, that is managed well. With Jerseys, every bite matters. The pair leans on forage testing, tight harvest timing, and Meghan's nutrition expertise to turn a smaller intake into big performance. The aim is predictable energy, not fancy inputs. They harvest their own grass; approximately 60 acres support the forage base.

Facilities & Tools
Legend Dairy has a double-six herringbone parlour (2x/day) with freestall housing. The barn is simple, the routine is steady, and a few key technologies keep labour smart: an activity/rumination system for reproduction and health, and a Juno feed pusher to keep the bunk honest. Genomics are used to understand the mixed foundation cows Doug purchased and to guide mating decisions. Classification can wait; right now, the priority is building the herd.

Community, Eggs, and Everyday Joy
Doug holds a small-lot poultry permit—up to 399 laying hens—and was one of the first on the Island with an automated egg vending machine. It's a fun way to connect with the neighbourhood.

Off the farm, the couple's shared sport shows up again: volleyball. They hike, travel, and carve out pockets of rest in a schedule that leaves little of it.

What They're Building
When asked to describe the ideal cow, Doug states, "One I don't notice." Good

production, no drama, breeds back, stays sound—repeat. Herd objectives are practical and progressive: longevity, comfort, quality, reproduction, and steady profitability, powered by a consistent calving and transition rhythm.

Stepping from hired hand to owner has been a learning curve and brought a new layer of risk, paperwork, and responsibility—on top of high interest rates and input costs. Surviving those initial challenges, plus excellent results in calf care and conception, rank as the farm's biggest wins so far.

Looking Ahead
Legend Dairy currently farms 100 acres (all rented). The dream is to buy a farm, keep growing carefully, and maybe try on-farm processing if or when the time is right. Technology is on the wish list—robotics for flexibility and the kind of data that makes a nutritionist's heart beat faster. They hope the industry keeps creating on-ramps for young farmers and that the high cost of production realities will align a little closer to the milk cheques.

Hard-Earned Advice

Expect detours. Plans rarely unfold on schedule; celebrate the good days, keep going through the rest.

Be teachable. Don't get "set in your ways." The cows like consistency; but management should keep learning.

Do the little things early. Calf care, clean bunks, quiet routines—compounding returns start small.

Alberta Dairy Congress Jersey Show June 4-6, 2025



Junior Champions (L-R): Dale Bienert, Melissa Morey with BRI-LIN MAVERICK SONGBIRD – Honourable Mention; Markus Hehli with MOSNANG TIKTOK VIDEO – Reserve; Raelyn Lovich with CHARLYN VIP EVOLUTION – Champion; Judge William Wikkerink.

Grand Champion Jersey (L-R): Dale Bienert, Nicole Verhoef with BRAMVILLE VIVALDI MAJESTIC – Reserve; Casey Morey with UNIQUE HALIFAX WEEKEND – Champion; Judge William Wikkerink.



JUNIOR CHAMPION
CHARLYN VIP EVOLUTION
(1st Fall Heifer)
Reata, Renelle & Raelyn Lovich, Balgonie, SK

RESERVE JUNIOR CHAMPION
MOSNANG TIKTOK VIDEO
(1st Summer Yearling)
Markus Hehli, Rimbey, AB

HONOURABLE MENTION
BRI-LIN MAVERICK SONGBIRD
(2nd Summer Yearling)
Unique Stock Farm, Rochester, AB

JUNIOR BREEDER'S HERD
Markus Hehli, Rimbey, AB

INTERMEDIATE CHAMPION
AWESOME VICTORIOUS KNIGHT
(1st Senior 2 Year Old)
Fred & Chance Hofstra, Leduc County, AB

RESERVE INTERMEDIATE CHAMPION
COYTEE EW CASINO ROYALE NITE
(1st Senior 3 Year Old)
Markus Hehli, Rimbey, AB

GRAND CHAMPION
Unique Halifax Weekend
(1st 5 Year Old)
Unique Stock Farm, Rochester, AB

RESERVE GRAND CHAMPION
BRAMVILLE VIVALDI MAJESTIC
(1st Mature Cow)
Markus Hehli, Rimbey, AB

HONOURABLE MENTION
UNIQUE MATT ARTIST
(1st 4 Year Old)
Unique Stock Farm, Rochester, AB

SENIOR BREEDER'S HERD
Unique Valleystream Genetics, Rochester, AB

JUNIOR PREMIER BREEDER & EXHIBITOR
Markus Hehli, Rimbey, AB

PREMIER BREEDER & EXHIBITOR
Unique Stock Farm, Rochester, AB

★ 29 Head Shown