

Women IN Dairy

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"I'm so thankful to have my Mom in my life. Her genuine love for family and farming has always overshadowed any challenges that have arisen throughout the years. She has taught me resilience, strength and kindness, and now I see her teaching my two girls the same. Whether she's out in the barn, showing the girls the calves, or in the garden picking cherry tomatoes and beans, her passion for life continues to inspire us."

Michelle Wagner

"Terry is one of the most passionate women in our industry. Her strong focus on cow families is evident in her herd. Whether it's walking the barn looking at cows, talking pedigrees over a 'whikky,' or showing off her latest new (probably sired by a 20-year old bull) project in the calf barn, she is a true cow person to the bone."

Toby Kleinsasser,
Close family friend & Holstein
Canada Field Services



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Evergraze: An Evolving Legacy -Terry Wagner

Selling her steer at the Kamloops Winter Fair
as a member of the 4-H Beef club in 1974.

Amanda Poelman

For over 25 years, Terry Wagner's voice has carried across the dairy show rings of the North Okanagan. The cheerful way she announces the winners, thanks sponsors and highlights the achievements of her peers, has become unmistakably recognizable by generations of dairy families. But beneath Terry's ringside presence is a lifelong dedication to cows, deep pedigrees, and to the dairy industry that has given her so much. Terry always knew she wanted to be a farmer – to build a great herd and make her mark on the industry. Alongside her late husband, Bob, she did just that, building Evergraze Holsteins on a foundation of good cows and hard work. Today, Terry carries that legacy forward by honouring the past and continuing to find new ways to share her passion with the next generation.

Laying a Foundation

Born in Lumby, BC, the middle child of Roger and Terry Fournier, Terry and her family moved nine times before she turned eight years old. Along with her sister Louise, and brother John, Terry and her parents settled in Armstrong on a 17-acre mixed farm where they raised beef, chickens, sheep, goats, turkeys, rabbits, horses, cats, dogs, and one Jersey cow. Terry loved being in the barn and spending time with the animals. She joined 4-H as soon as she could and participated with the Armstrong 4-H Beef Club, showing at the Interior Provincial Exhibition (IPE) and the Kamloops Winter Fair, where she sold her project steers each year.

In 1976, Terry won the title of 'Miss 4-H,' allowing her to go on to compete in the 'Miss Armstrong' contest, which she also won. As Miss Armstrong, Terry travelled throughout the Okanagan Valley as an ambassador for Armstrong/Spallumcheen. "It was a lot of fun," she says, "We visited lots of communities and helped to promote and celebrate special events while representing our hometowns."

With her duties as Miss Armstrong occupying her weekends, Terry needed a flexible job. "I started working at the local Drug Store and my boss was very flexible with my travel schedule," she says. "The following September, I continued working at the store every day after school and was trained as a Pharmacy Assistant."

Terry continued working at the store and participating in 4-H right through the end of high school. By this time, she'd caught the eye of a dashing young man in the 4-H Dairy club, Bob Wagner, who she married in 1979. "Bob and I had grand plans to have kids young, breed a great herd of cows, and still be young enough to travel the world attending cow shows when we retired," laughs Terry, unsure if retirement was ever actually part of the plan.

Bob, along with his parents, had operated Primrose Dairy, situated in the present location of Evergraze Holsteins, from 1961-1974. "Bob was only 18 at the time his dad sold out and not quite ready to commit to farming," recalls Terry. "The open cows and heifers that did not sell in the dispersal sale, which Bob milked while also working off

Terry traveled around
the Okanagan Valley
as 'Miss Armstrong' in
1976, after winning the
'Miss 4-H' contest.



the farm, became the foundation of our herd." The couple incorporated Evergraze Holsteins the year after they got married and bought out Bob's parents, who got into registered quarter horses and built a riding arena and a house behind the farm.

With their modest herd of 25 cows, Terry continued to work full time at the Drug Store in Enderby, dropping down to part time as she and Bob welcomed their three children: Michelle (1982), Matt (1984) and Marc (1985).



Family photo at the 1993 NOK Spring
Show – Michelle, Terry, Marc, Matt
and Bob.

Balancing farm life as a busy mom

While the kids were young, Terry helped on the farm as much as she could, but she was the "Team Manager" of all the kids' activities. "Bob just wanted to stay with his cows!" The Wagners took care of all their own fieldwork for years, handling the swathing, raking, baling and chopping. "I was the dump truck driver, so I would load all three kids into the cab with me, along with the Fisher-Price cassette player and lots of snacks and we would rock out to the Disney Classics!"

Although life was busy, Terry maintained a vegetable garden and the yard work, and she and Bob still managed to find time to curl twice a week and participate in Holstein Club events.



Terry and Bob with EVERGRAZE CRYSTAL,
Reserve All-Canadian Junior Yearling in
1987, further sparked the desire
to breed more like her!

Evergraze had Junior Champion several times and Grand Champion a few times at the local shows, as well as hosting numerous club activities at the farm. "We often had a group of breeders around the kitchen table discussing the latest bull proofs," Terry says, adding with a laugh, "or maybe it was just a lot of BULL!"

As the kids got older, Terry stayed involved in all their extracurriculars. "I was a 4-H Leader, President of the Youth Soccer program, President of the Junior Lacrosse League, a devoted hockey mom for all three kids, and baseball fan." Additionally, she served as the Dairy Director of IPE for many years and the North Okanagan Holstein Club secretary, for which she was honoured with the 'Lifetime Achievement Award' from the club in 2025.

Evergraze Holsteins Inc.

In 1986, Bob gifted Terry with a heifer for Christmas – EVERGRAZE CRYSTAL. Sired by Marathon, Crystal was named Junior Champion at the local shows the following year, earning herself a trip to WCC in Calgary with Dave Luttmerring, where she finished fifth in the Junior Yearling class. Impressed by the April-born heifer, Don Chalack joined the partnership with Bob and Terry, exhibiting Crystal at the Edmonton Farm Fair later that month, where she was named Junior Champion. From there it was off to Toronto for the Royal Winter Fair. Crystal again won her class and went on to be named Honourable Mention Junior Champion, earning her the Reserve All-Canadian Junior Yearling title that year. "It was so much fun for us to go to Toronto and watch her show," says Terry, "It really motivated Bob and I to try and breed more like her."

By far, the most prolific cow family at Evergraze has been the 'M' family, which



Proudly receiving their second Master Breeder Shield. (L-R) John Buckley (President, Holstein Canada), Wilf Wagner (Bob's Dad), Terry, Michelle, Doug (holding Brynn), Kelsey, Marc (holding Brooklyn) and Karen Buckley.



Recognized for her many years of service, Terry received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the NOK Holstein Club in 2025.



Terry and her granddaughters (L-R): Brynn, Brooklyn, Maddy and Blair.

can be traced back to EVERGRAZE MAGIC GP-81, who was born in 1968. The family proved *magical* indeed, producing offspring like EVERGRAZE MILA VG-86 8*, EVERGRAZE MARIA STORM EX-92 5E 9*, and her daughter EVERGRAZE BLITZ MONROE EX-92 6E. Descendents of the M line were the source of show ring success stories, production awards, and herd favourites, culminating in the highest honour for the Wagner breeding program: a Master Breeder Shield. "It was an exciting day in January of 2000, when we got the call that we were Master Breeder," Terry says. "We hosted a huge party at a local hall with food and drinks and people came from all over to help us celebrate." In April, Bob and Terry flew to the National Holstein Convention, held in Kitchener/Waterloo (ON), to attend the Master Breeder Gala and receive their shield.



EVERGRAZE MONETARRI DEMPSEY EX-92 7E 5*, from the heart of the herd and Terry's favourite cow. She was BC Cow of the Year in 2024.

An Unexpected Blow

After the kids had all started school, Terry was working two days a week at the Drug Store, until she and Bob received devastating news that they could never have prepared for in their 18-year marriage. Bob had cancer. Terry immediately took on more responsibilities at the farm, while juggling Bob's medical appointments and treatments. "I will always credit Bob for teaching me everything he could think of about breeding cows and running a business," says Terry, "The foundation we built in the early years is still a driving force in our success."

After an 11-year fight with lymphoma, and many highs and lows, Bob passed away on December 5, 2008. Just prior, youngest son Marc had returned home from his travels and decided he wanted to join the farm. "I truly believe that Bob hung on just so he could hear those words," shares Terry. "Marc and I decided to give it a go for one year and see if we could do it. The year flew by and we haven't looked back!"

Evergraze 2.0

As the Wagners found ways to forge ahead following Bob's passing, they continued to focus on cow families, cow comfort, and breeding functional cows that could excel in any environment. In 2015, Terry and Marc

built a new robot barn with one Lely A4 robot and 50 freestalls. "Our three-stall individual Surge parlour had been built in the 1950s and after adding one stall, we milked in there right up to 2015," says Terry proudly. "The barn didn't owe us anything and we love the robot for the flexibility it gives Marc and his young family, as well as how it offers the very best life for our cows." The old barn now provides housing for baby calves and heifers, as well as hay storage.

A year after moving into the new facility, Terry had the thrill of a lifetime in January of 2016 when she received a second call from Holstein Canada, letting her know that Evergraze was now a two-time Master Breeder. "I couldn't even talk I was crying so hard," remembers Terry, hanging up and calling the kids before she had composed herself enough to call Ann Lousie Carson back at Holstein Canada. "It was so rewarding and gratifying to be acknowledged for carrying on Bob's legacy." With the 2016 National Convention in Calgary that year, celebrations carried on into the wee hours of the morning as friends and neighbours were able to make the trip to Alberta.

While the facilities may have changed, the commitment to breeding has remained steadfast. One of Terry's most recent favourites is EVERGRAZE MONETARRI DEMPSEY EX-92 7E 5*, also descended from the heart of the M family. Monetarri has nine daughters, two EX, three VG, two GP and two N/C, was BC's 'Cow of the Year' in 2024 and was nominated four times for Holstein Canada 'Cow of the Year.' In nine lactations, she produced 155,565kgs of milk and 6405 kgs of fat. "Unfortunately, we lost her in July, not long after she calved," says Terry of the 14-year-old cow, "I miss seeing her out in the paddock, but I'm excited to see how her offspring develop."

The Next Generation

In a carefully thought-out succession plan, Terry has been slowly backing away from the day-to-day management of the farm, leaving that to son Marc and his wife Kelsey. Marc married Kelsey in 2012, and they have two children, Brooklyn (10) and Maddy (5). Marc has taken over most management decisions and Kelsey helps with herd health, bookkeeping and mating discussions, which Terry also stays involved in. "I am moving towards retirement," says Terry, who has enjoyed participating in the WestGen tours to Brazil, Australia and South Africa, as well as trips with Progressive Dairy Operators (PDO) to Denmark, Sweden and Iceland.

Daughter Michelle and her partner Doug also have two daughters, Brynn (10) and Blair (8). They live on a small property up the road from the farm and Michelle, who has a Degree in Business Administration, prepares all the farm books for the accountant. She is currently enrolled in a Practical Nursing

program and will finish in April 2027. As Doug works out of town, Terry helps out as a 'taxi driver' for the girls.

Son Matt and his wife Kris are not involved at the farm. Matt loves country music, and he keeps busy singing and recording under his own label, Hometown Famous.

A Rewarding Lifestyle

"I never really put much thought into being a *Woman in Dairy*," admits Terry. "I think of myself as a farmer." Crediting both her mother, who also grew up on a dairy, and her mother-in-law as early mentors, Terry says, "They both set me up with a great work ethic and taught me all the basic skills of cooking, cleaning, gardening, canning, and raising a family." Throughout her career, Terry has also been inspired by other women in the dairy business, including Marj Atkins, Bonnie Cooper, Barb Souter, Marg Chalack, and Dr. Lisa McCre. "There have been many women who have worked tirelessly in the background of their farms and businesses."

Terry believes that a life as a dairy farmer is certainly available for all women, who

today are more visible than ever. "It's great to hear about and see more women excel in this industry and listen to their stories," she says. "We all knew they were there before, but we maybe just didn't see them out all the time."

For Terry, the most rewarding part of farming has been walking to the barn in the morning, enjoying the fresh air, looking out over the land and then entering the calf barn, where the future of Evergraze Holsteins is waiting and happy to see her. "It's also pure joy for me to watch my granddaughters experience farm life with a menagerie of kittens, puppies, chickens, peacocks, sheep, pigs and horses. It's important to grow up with these things!" Both she and Bob instilled in their children to always do their best at whatever career or activity they chose, even if that wasn't farming. However, Terry says, "My granddaughters will be *amazing* dairy farmers if that's what they choose to do."

While Bob may no longer be standing next to her, the legacy they built together is never far away. It lives on in the pedigrees, in the thrill of breeding "the next great one," and most of all, in Terry's unwavering passion and dedication for the dairy industry, the Holstein breed she loves, and the desire to pass these attributes on to the next generation.



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Michelle Forrest
Client Relationship Manager
778.548.7844
michelle.forrest@scotiabank.com

Nathan Tiefisher
Senior Client Relationship Manager
236.887.3420
nathan.tiefisher@scotiabank.com

Amrik Gill
Senior Client Relationship Manager
604.854.0688
amrik.gill@scotiabank.com

Olivia Bauch
Client Relationship Manager
778.548.3154
olivia.smith@scotiabank.com

Amanda McCardell
Client Relationship Manager
250.808.5647
amanda.mccardell@scotiabank.com

Jill Dornblut (Tataryn)
Director National Accounts
236.622.1261
jill.tataryn@scotiabank.com

Henri Peeters
Director and Head,
National Accounts
604.798.7396
henri.peeters@scotiabank.com

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