



# NEWS RELEASE

## Ontario Goat

449 Laird Road, Unit 12, Guelph, Ontario, N1G 4W1

Tel: 519-824-2942 Fax: 519-824-2534

[www.ontariogoat.ca](http://www.ontariogoat.ca)



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## **Ontario Goat announces goat farmer of the year award winner**

*Port Dover dairy goat farm recognized for their contributions.*

GUELPH: Ontario Goat is pleased to announce that William and Sara Zondag of Sunny Day Acres in Port Dover are the recipients of the first annual "Goat Farmer of the Year" award. The award was announced as part of the International Goat Symposium program held recently in Orangeville and Toronto.

The award was created to recognize hard working goat farmers who have contributed to the development of the Ontario Goat industry. "We have a lot of great stories to tell about Ontario's goat farm families, producing top quality milk, meat and fibre products, and we wanted to recognize their contributions in helping to develop our growing industry" explained Jennifer Haley, Ontario Goat Executive Director.

"We had a number of excellent nominations from across the industry and it was very difficult for the judges to review and only pick one winner" suggested Haley. "William and Sara, however, are dedicated, passionate and focused dairy goat farmers with a commitment to quality and continuous improvement".

Over the past few years, the Zondags have worked hard to improve their dairy goat operation by focusing on herd improvement and sound management decisions. Last year, the Zondags won the Platinum Award for Quality from Hewitt's Dairy. They maintain a CAE free herd, heat treat the colostrum, implemented an acidified milk replacer feeding program for the kids. Recently, the Zondags began an artificial insemination breeding program using the natural heat cycle of the goats. Their focus is on year round quality milk production and having good cost of production information.

Sara has been involved in a number of industry initiatives and committees and they have helped other goat farmers by hosting farm tours and an Open House. As well, the Zondags are one of the pilot farms for Ontario Goat's GoGen Dairy Goat Herd Improvement Pilot Project.

"We are surprised and honoured to receive the first ever Goat Farmer of the Year Award" stated Sara Zondag. "It has been great to be part of the goat industry for the past ten years. Our years of hard work have brought many rewards to our family. This award is greatly appreciated" she added.

"As any farmer knows, it is not a one man show- it is a family affair. Our two year-old daughter, Anna is already busy training kids to drink from the nipple. Ultimately, our success comes from up above and we give Him all the praise and thank Him often for entrusting a small part of His beautiful creation into our care" added Sara.

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“Ontario Goat would like to congratulate William and Sara Zondag” stated Tobin Schlegel, Ontario Goat President. “They are very deserving of this award and recognition from their fellow peers for their hard work and dedication to our growing industry”.

Ontario Goat is a producer organization representing the meat, milk and fibre sectors with a united voice.

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**For More Information Contact:**

Jennifer Haley, Executive Director  
Kendra Keels, Industry Development Manager  
519-824-2942

*Picture available upon request*