Murray Hunt Honoured with Dairy Cattle Improvement Industry Distinction Award

August 20, 2026; Guelph, Ontario and Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, Québec

Lactanet is proud to recognize Murray Hunt as the recipient of the 2026 Dairy Cattle Improvement Industry Distinction Award, celebrating a lifetime of visionary leadership, innovation, and dedication that has profoundly shaped Canada's dairy cattle improvement industry.

Murray's passion for dairy cattle began as a teenager on his family's Huntsdale Farm in Ontario, where his enthusiasm for genetics and herd improvement quickly became evident. His early adoption of milk recording, artificial insemination, and type classification reflected a forward-thinking approach that would define his career and influence generations of dairy producers.

After earning both a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture and a Master of Science in Animal Breeding from the University of Guelph, Murray produced groundbreaking graduate research that set the foundation for

Canada’s young sire sampling programs. His work demonstrated the importance of evaluating large numbers of young sires to accelerate genetic progress—an approach that helped position Canada as a global leader in dairy cattle breeding.



Throughout nearly four decades of industry organization professional service, Murray held influential leadership positions with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Holstein Canada, the National Advisory Council for Dairy Animal Improvement, the Canadian Milk Recording Board, the Canadian Association of Animal Breeders and the Canadian Dairy Network (now Lactanet Genetics). At every stage of his career, he championed innovation, collaboration, and science-based decision-making that transformed Canada’s dairy landscape.

Among his many accomplishments, Murray developed Canada’s first profit-based sire ranking index, the Production Dollar Difference Guide, a concept that ultimately paved the way for today’s national genetic Pro$ index. At Holstein Canada, he modernized the national type classification program, advanced the use of genetic evaluations in breeding decisions, strengthened research partnerships, and helped establish governance structures within the industry.

Alongside his professional achievements, Murray continued to build the reputation of Huntsdale Holsteins, earning Holstein Canada’s prestigious Master Breeder Shield in 1984 through outstanding breeding and herd

management. He also dedicated more than 15 years to mentoring young people as a 4-H leader, helping develop future generations of cattle judges, industry leaders and dairy farmers.

Even after retiring from his formal career, Murray's commitment to the industry never slowed. Through consulting, international publications, and his continued participation in Lactanet's Open Industry Sessions, where he remains a respected voice, whose insights continue to influence dairy breeders around the world.

For more than 55 years, Murray Hunt has helped shape the direction of dairy cattle improvement through innovation, collaboration, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. His extraordinary vision and lifelong service have left an enduring legacy that continues to benefit dairy producers globally, making him a truly deserving recipient of the Dairy Cattle Improvement Industry Distinction Award.

Murray Hunt becomes the sixteenth recipient of this prestigious award since its creation in 2008. The presentation to Murray will take place during the 2026 Dairy Cattle Industry Forum on September 22-23 at the Sheraton Gateway Hotel in Toronto.

For more information:

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