

## **Stratford area hog producers first farmers to win Business Achievement Award**

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Phil and Eleanor Anwender of Town & Country Enterprises, of Stratford won the 2003 Business Achievement Award for Environmental Initiatives from the Stratford & District Chamber of Commerce. They are the first farmers to ever receive a Business Achievement Award, now in its 7<sup>th</sup> year.

This environmental award recognizes one local company for outstanding achievement and leadership in programs designed to maintain and protect a healthy environment. Nominees were assessed on their initiatives around waste reduction, energy and water conservation programs, pollution reduction activities, commitment to environmental training for employees and environmentally responsible design or innovation

Town & Country Enterprises Inc. is a family-owned farming operation which includes pork and crop production. Begun in 1989 and currently employing six staff, it produces over 1100 tonnes of pork per year, grows 500 acres of crops and has a feed manufacturing facility which produces 3600 tonnes per year.

Phil & Eleanor view the farm from a business perspective. Their mission statement reads “We are and will continue to be a profitable family business that produces high quality pork while maintaining the highest regard for the environment.”

Phil states “We believe that the family farm is the backbone of Ontario agriculture and hope that our kids will be involved in their business for the long-term. Yet we realize we cannot expect their kids to come home to a non-profitable farm. While we value our lifestyle, our decisions are based on return on assets, return on equity and margins.”

They pride themselves in producing a quality product. In 2002, the combination of superior genetics and top management skills resulted in them being awarded the “Highest Lean Percentage” from a field of 400 producers by Maple Leaf Pork.

Phil and Eleanor are big believers in taking advantage of all available risk management options. They aggressively purchase the Canadian dollar at 63 cents, forward contract a large percentage of their production and book the majority of their feed costs a year in advance. Innovative financing requests also led to the creation of Royal Bank’s Multiple Lending Option Royfarm Mortgage, a product which Phil has helped to launch.

Everyone at Town & Country Enterprises is well aware of the need to protect the environment. Phil states “The one thing that many non-rural people forget is that our water supply is the first one affected if something goes wrong. For the safety of our own family and that of our livestock, we cannot allow carelessness in the environment by us or anyone else. That’s way we invest in better equipment and participate in programs like the Environmental Farm Plan. We can’t afford to make mistakes.”

In 1999, Town & Country Enterprises was the first farm in Perth County for file a Nutrient Management Plan with the country. Through their Plan, they continually test the soil to ensure that the nutrients applied are matched exactly to the nutrients deficient in the soil. They have recently invested \$100,000 in new manure spreading equipment with flow metres so they can have complete control over their rates of manure application and hope to incorporate the use of Global Positioning Satellite Systems into their manure application process again to ensure that nutrients are applied only as needed. They have also completed an Environmental Farm Plan for their operation and Phil is a licensed pesticide applicator.

During the last few years they have taken advantage of the increased availability of by-products from the food industry which has increased their bottom line substantially. Whey permeate from the cheese industry, condensed distillers grains from the ethanol industry are both ingredients in the Anwender's feeding regime. They use only highly digestible feed products, thus eliminating the need to supplement the feed with additional inorganic phosphorus.

Besides being smart business people, the Anwenders and their staff are also very community-oriented. Phil is a graduate of the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program, a program which develops leadership skills in present and potential agricultural leaders so they can better lead their communities and industries. In addition to now assisting AALP, they support the Sunshine Dreams for Kids, Knox Presbyterian Church, Cancer Relay for Life, Operation Christmas Child and the Stratford Festival. They realize the importance of maintaining positive relationships with their neighbours. Someone from the business advises neighbours of their plans to spread manure and Eleanor gives away scented candles. "They're something to help remove the inevitable smell of manure during spreading," she says. "It's a small effort with big paybacks."

Town & Country Enterprises, under the smart leadership of Phil and Eleanor Anwender is a hog farm that deserves to be recognized for its excellence.

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