



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Prairie Farms Receives Prestigious French Culinary Excellence Award

Prairie Farms is the only American Dairy Manufacturer to receive the honor

EDWARDSVILLE, Ill. Deep within the vineyards and fruit orchards of Loire Valley in central France sits the [Le Calabash School of Cooking](#) and home to the International Culinary Adventure. This gastronomic center of France is where some of the best up and coming culinary aficionados from around the world, professional and amateur alike, come to hone their food preparation and presentation skills.

Prairie Farms recently sponsored three culinary students from Illinois, Missouri, Florida and one from South Africa so they could make the trip to LeCalabash for an international culinary master class that's second to none. The students, including 23-year old Dillon Witte, Sous Chef at Farmhaus Restaurant in St. Louis, spent ten days with Prairie Farms' Corporate Chef, Rob Lagerlof, and world-renowned LeCalabash Chefs, Alison and Sidney Bond, for an in-depth course on French cuisine preparation. The techniques for properly preparing and plating a dairy-centric menu, the staple for any top-notch French dish were demonstrated.

While chefs shared time with students in the kitchen, they also shared another important attribute – a respect for the basics of using the best dairy products available. French chefs take pride in using only the best locally sourced fresh milk, cream, and butter sourced from farms that treat cows with utmost care. French chefs prefer to work with companies that are aligned with these principles. For that reason, Prairie Farms received a surprise award that no other American dairy company has previously received; the prestigious Gourmets des Régions Culinary Excellence Award.

[Gourmets des Régions de France](#) is an organization based in Saint-Aignan-sur-Chèr that recognizes and promotes top-notch local food producers, eating establishments, and those furthering French gastronomy. It is certified by the Worldwide Gastronomy Organization and is akin to the Master Food Craftsmen of France. Consideration is given to food producers based on quality, animal treatment, belief in clean, natural ingredients, respect for the environment, and family-oriented small business practices. These traits are paramount to French culture. If these tenets are met, a medal of excellence and laureate plaque are awarded to a representative of the business.

Prairie Farms Dairy and its partnership with Le Calabash Cookery School in Yzeures-sur-Creuse were duly recognized as meeting the requirements of Gourmets des Régions. Chef Lagerlöf and Chefs Alison and Sidney Bond were presented a joint laureate by Gourmets des Régions President, Jean-Luc Osché. It was a proud moment for Prairie Farms and everyone in the room.



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“The French don’t just hand out culinary excellence awards to anyone,” said Chef Lagerlof. “If you want to cook with the best dairy products that America has to offer, you need to look no further than Prairie Farms. I’m proud of our dairy farm families for their commitment to animal care, sustainability, and all the hard work that goes into providing milk for the world’s best dairy products.”

Prairie Farms Dairy, Inc. is one of the largest and most successful dairy cooperatives in the Midwest, with over 700 farm families, 6000 employees, 44 manufacturing plants, over 100 distribution facilities and annual sales of over \$3 billion. Prairie Farms is a nationally recognized leader in the dairy industry and is known for setting the standard for milk flavor innovations and producing award-winning milk, cheese, and cultured dairy products. With headquarters in Edwardsville, Ill., the Prairie Farms distribution footprint covers over 30 percent of the United States; products are available in grocery chains, mass merchandiser stores, club stores, convenience stores, dollar stores, drug stores, schools, food service outlets, and warehouse distribution centers. Prairie Farms charitable giving program, [Our Caps, Your Cause](#), supports a variety of non-profit organizations.

Photo Caption: Prairie Farms Corporate Chef, Rob Lagerlof, receives prestigious gourmets des regions award from Le Président, Jean-Luc Osché at La Calabash School of Cooking, February 8, 2020.



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