



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Prairie Farms and Hiland Dairy Receive Multiple Plant and Product Excellence Awards at QCS Purchasing Cooperative Annual Conference

Prairie Farms and Hiland Dairy are Winners of Best Collaboration Award

Edwardsville, Ill. (November 12, 2024) – Prairie Farms Dairy and its joint venture partner, Hiland Dairy, demonstrated their commitment to quality by winning 33 awards at the annual QCS Purchasing Cooperative Conference held in Denver, Colorado, October 20-22. The conference features a gathering of quality leaders from food and beverage companies across the country for recognition of plant and product excellence achievements. Judging for the competition was conducted by independent food and beverage marketing industry leaders.

One of the biggest wins for both Prairie Farms and Hiland Dairy is the [QCS Best Collaboration Award](#), the celebration of a collaboration between a member and a supply partner to solve a problem or achieve a desired outcome. This year's award recognized a collaboration between Prairie Farms, Hiland Dairy, Vital Pack, and Paragon Films, to improve the stretch film wrapping functions at each dairy processing plant. A new standardized process for stretch wrapping at all plants resulted in a significant increase in efficiencies and substantial plastic waste reduction.

Prairie Farms and Hiland Dairy were also finalists for the collaboration award thanks to a partnership with Ecolab® to achieve efficiencies by using a new CIP water management system. The innovative system helped both companies save water, reduce risk, and minimize energy use.

Other big wins for Prairie Farms and Hiland Dairy processing plants include ten **Merit of Excellence Awards** in the fluid milk, and cultured products categories. Because QCS compliance levels are well above industry standards, achieving these awards is a challenging, yet rewarding, recognition of their efforts. The ten plants receiving this award include:

- Fluid Milk:
 - Prairie Farms Dairy: Anderson, IN., Dubuque, IA., Jefferson City, MO., Olney, IL., Sioux Falls, SD.
 - Hiland Dairy: Little Rock, AR., Springfield, MO.
- Cultured:
 - Prairie Farms Dairy: Carbondale, IL., Quincy, IL.,
 - Hiland Dairy: Omaha, NE.



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“Our quality and management teams work hard to make excellence a priority at our plants and I could not be more proud to receive these awards,” said Matt McClelland, CEO/EVP for Prairie Farms. “Our dairy farmers are providing the freshest high-quality milk to our plants, so it’s important that our quality processes continue all the way through to the grocery store shelf. Congratulations to our winning teams for these important QCS recognitions of your efforts.”

To cap off a successful year of excellence, 22 plants within the Prairie Farms’ network received **QCS Quality & Food Safety Plant Assessment Awards**. Plants receiving this award must achieve a formal Quality and Food Safety Audit score of 96% or higher by demonstrating a level of organizational excellence and quality assurance. The complete list of winners is available in this [QCS press release](#).

Prairie Farms Dairy, Inc. is one of the largest and most successful dairy cooperatives operating in the Midwest and the South. Elements of the cooperative include more than 600 farm families, 7,000 associates, 48 manufacturing plants, 100+ distribution facilities, and annual sales of over \$4.69 billion. Prairie Farms is a nationally recognized leader in the dairy industry 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, foodservice outlets, and warehouse distribution centers. For more information visit www.prairiefarms.com.

About QCS Purchasing Cooperative – QCS Purchasing Cooperative is a buying group owned and managed by its members that caters to food and beverage production companies. As the most significant purchasing cooperative of its kind, it combines everyday supply purchases to achieve more competitive pricing. Our strategic sourcing specialists offer deep category expertise, tackling complex sourcing challenges and providing valuable market intelligence. With over 200 national supplier partners, QCS offers solutions in packaging, ingredients, fleet and logistics, plant operations and supplies, and many value-added services. For more information about QCS Purchasing Cooperative, please visit www.qcspurchasing.com.

Photo Caption from L to R: Rick Beaman, Brad Suhling, Charlie Mack, Greg Helbig, Brett Sollberger, Ken Klug, Ana Guillen, James Luyben.



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