

Press Release

24th August 2015

Dairy Industry Award still open for nominations

Dairy farmers and industry representatives have less than three weeks left to nominate candidates for the prestigious Dairy Industry Award.

Presented at the Dairy Industry Dinner on the eve of the Dairy Show, this year the dinner is sponsored by Yeo Valley, Wyke Farms, Barbers, Roddas, Lye Cross, Godminster and Crediton Dairy the award recognises people who have made an outstanding contribution to the industry. Last year's winner was local dairy farmer Peter Winstone, who sits on the board of Mole Valley Farmers and was influential as a farmer director with Milk Link and Arla. "It was a real honour to win," he says. "It was a great surprise, but it is so nice to have an award that recognises people who are trying to make a difference in the industry."

Mr Winstone milks 420 dairy cows at Briars Farm, Glastonbury, and is a strong believer in farmer co-operation. "I'm absolutely convinced that farmers have to take as much control of the product as far down the line as possible. We don't have the scale to process milk ourselves, so being part of Arla and developing branded dairy products put us in a much stronger position with large retailers."

Given the pressure on dairy farmers' margins and following this summer's milk protests around the country, milk prices and profitability are sure to be hot topics at the Dairy Show on 7 October. But Mr Winstone is convinced that the future is bright. "The dairy industry is cyclical and I think we're probably at the worst part of the cycle right now," he says. "We are focussing more and more on costs – the industry needs be robust, and if we can survive the downturn we should be profitable in the future."

It's also important to encourage new entrants – and they will have plenty of experience to draw upon at the show, he adds. "We are well placed to be dairy farmers in this country and it's important to encourage young people to have a go. There are some very good practices out there of all sorts of different systems. I'm very confident looking forward."

Nominations for the Dairy Industry Award close on 10 September. For more information visit www.bathandwest.com.

- The Dairy Show will be held on 7 October at the Bath & West Showground. Schedules for show classes are now available online, and advance saver tickets can be purchased from www.bathandwest.com or via the ticket hotline - 01749 822222.