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## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **ANNUAL ONTARIO GOAT ADVOCATE AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED**

*Recognizing the importance of education, mentoring and innovation in Ontario goat industry*

Guelph, ON, March 2, 2016 – Ontario Goat (OG) was thrilled to announce this year’s Ontario Goat Advocate Award winners at its recent Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Producer Education Day held at Goff Hall in Woodstock on February 24, 2016. This year, the award is shared by three well deserving winners representing the dairy and meat goat sectors: Ed Franken and family; Elo Bowman; and Tiffany Drong.

The Ontario Goat Advocate Award was created to honour Ontario’s goat farmers who continue to demonstrate a passion for the industry through their involvement in education, mentoring, innovative management approach and who have gone above and beyond to positively represent the Ontario goat industry. “We truly have some amazing goat farmers in our industry - people who continue to make a difference by promoting the industry and mentoring newcomers,” stated Anton Slingerland, OG President. “As our industry continues to grow, it is important to celebrate and say thank you to the people who work hard to make our industry even better.”

Ed Franken and his family operate Frankhaven Farms in Teeseewater. Together with their children, the Frankens milk 800 Saanen, Alpine and Toggenburg dairy goats. Having been involved in the dairy goat industry for the past twenty five years, the Frankens have given tirelessly to the industry by providing goats for various goat milk demonstrations and events including the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, the Outdoor Farm Show and various media events like Breakfast Television. The Frankens are also one of the premier exhibitors at the Royal and most recently won the 2015 Grand Champion Saanen. The Frankens continue to host meetings, workshops and tours at their farm in order to help others. “It is for so many reasons that we wish to acknowledge the contributions of Ed Franken and his family and say thank you for helping to develop the Ontario dairy goat industry” stated Slingerland.

Elo Bowman of Listowel is known amongst many for taking the time to help anyone who calls and asks for input and advice and drawing on his fifteen years of experience with breeding and milking goats. Elo and his family currently milk 250 goats with a focus on building his herd to a disease free status. Elo is putting the finishing touches on a new barn with the goal of completion by June and most recently imported bucks from Iowa to bring new bloodlines into his herd. Over the years, Elo has hosted workshops and meetings at his farm, organized goat sales and has mentored new entrants to the industry. Elo believes that everyone needs to work together to help advance the dairy goat industry and this in turn will help unify the industry to move forward. “Elo is a well-respected producer in his community and in the Ontario dairy goat industry as a whole and we all appreciate the time he takes to answer questions and help those seeking his advice” added Slingerland.

Lastly, Tiffany Drong, a meat goat producer from Troy, was recognized for her entrepreneurial spirit and drive in building her Goats in Motion business from the ground up. Tiffany is a young, enthusiastic meat goat producer who started out in the industry with 22 breeding does. Since then, she has expanded her operation to 122 breeding does with a business plan that will see an expansion to 500 once her new

barn is finished. Tiffany has built a thriving retail meat business by pursuing unique opportunities, creating value added goat products and educating consumers on the nutritional value of goat meat. Most recently, Tiffany has added a line of meat rubs and mustards which compliment her goat meat products. In addition to running the farm and the retail business, Tiffany is also a Director with the Canadian Meat Goat Association and gives back to the development of the meat goat industry through her volunteer service. “Tiffany is a great example of what a young person can do in the goat industry and start up a thriving business when you are focused and dedicated” stated Slingerland. “The possibilities are endless for those willing to put in the time but also give back to the goat industry” he added.

#### About Ontario Goat

Ontario Goat (OG) is dedicated to enhancing the goat industry through education, collaboration, innovation and strategic alliances. OG continues to focus on sustainable growth, industry development and profitability in order for all sectors of the Ontario goat industry to reach their full potential. [www.ontariogoat.ca](http://www.ontariogoat.ca)

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