

## Vermont Ag Hall of Fame Announces 2021 Inductees

**Essex Junction, VT-** The Vermont Agricultural Hall of Fame is excited to announce the 2021 inductees. Over the past 19 years, 90 contributors of Vermont agricultural have been celebrated with the Vermont Agricultural Hall of Fame honor. This year the nominations were thoughtful and competitive with over 25 submissions. Thankfully, this year the COVID-19 restrictions have eased enough to enjoy a celebration in honor of the 2020 and 2021 inductees.



The luncheon is scheduled during the Champlain Valley Fair on September 1<sup>st</sup> at 12pm.

**2021 Emerging Leader:** This category highlights those who are stepping up to become the next generation of agricultural leaders in Vermont. Age 40 or younger (born after June 1, 1981), these individuals demonstrate a deep commitment to Vermont’s working landscape and are poised to lead our Ag community into the future. They are remarkable for their service, youthful energy, and dedication to Vermont agriculture.

**Caleb Fisher**, *Farmer/Owner Rusty Bird Farm. Walden, VT*

**Ag Innovator:** Those in consideration for this category have demonstrated a fresh and forward-thinking approach to agriculture. They are making or have made a significant, positive impact on Vermont, in areas such as but not limited to: growing the local economy, promoting stewardship and conservation, improving community health and nutrition, developing new tools and practices, and using alternative models in business and land ownership. They are notable for their unique perspective and unconventional approach. (Age is not a factor for consideration in this category.)

**Amy Richardson**, *Richardson Family Farm, Farmer. Hartland, VT*

**Lifetime Achievement:** This category recognizes those who have made a significant contribution to the advancement, improvement, or development of Vermont agriculture over the course of their long career. Nominees shall have played an active role in Vermont agriculture for at least thirty years.

- **Roberta MacDonald**, *Service Provider. Burlington, VT*
- **Polly Whitcomb McEwing**, *Farmer, Essex Junction, VT*
- **Robert “Bob” D. Wellington**, *(deceased) Agri-Mark’s Senior V.P. of Economics, Communications and Legislative Affairs. Andover, MA*

### **About the Inductees**

**Emerging Leader Caleb Fisher of Walden** has worked very hard in a short time to build a farm from scratch after graduating from Sterling College in 2007. Since then, Caleb has embraced true organic farming principles to thoughtfully manage the soil while continuously staying up to date on new innovations and techniques. Caleb works to connect with the community through local Farmer's Markets and farm CSA's where he has grown into a much-loved vendor. His true spirit shines through with his eagerness to drop whatever is at hand to help a neighbor in need. Caleb is quickly becoming a pillar of the Walden community; Vermont is lucky to have him and his farm reside here!

**Ag Innovator Amy Richardson of Hartland** is known throughout the state for her dedication and work as not only a dairy farmer, but a voice for farmers. Amy is extensively focused on sustainable practices at her family's farm and the surrounding watersheds. This has led her to become a member of the board of directors on the Connecticut River Watershed Farmer's Alliance where she strives to support producer conservation efforts to maintain and improve water quality. Amy serves as Windsor-Orange County Chair of the Green Mountain Dairy Promotion Council; serves as a Delegate on the New England Dairy Promotion Council, is the appointed alternate for Agri-Mark on the Vermont Dairy Promotion Council, and has spent over 10 years as the district Farm-to-School coordinator. Additionally, she has become a strong voice in the Vermont legislature on behalf of producers with her experience, innate knowledge and dedication to the environment. Aside from Amy's local community work, she has over 18,000 followers on Instagram, connecting with a broader audience across the US and other countries! With those connections, Amy took a trip to the UK to deepen her understanding of different techniques which she shared upon returning. The trip was so successful another is planned when times become safer.

**Lifetime Achievement recipient Roberta MacDonald of Burlington.** As Anson Tebbetts states, "Roberta MacDonald loves her farmers and wakes up every day trying to improve their lives." As the Senior Vice President of Marketing and Brand Strategy at Cabot Creamery Cooperative and over 40 years of consumer product marketing experience, Roberta has been an integral part of Cabot's national success and award-winning products. Her Vermont values have shown through in her commitments to lead Cabot to become a B-Corp company which commits to serving the environment, employees and consumers through low-waste/energy efficient channels from farm to shelf. Roberta's underlying goal in everything she does is to make a meaningful difference in the daily lives of Vermonters with other work in the Vermont Historical Society, the Vermont Cheese Council, the Vermont Ski Area Association, the University of Vermont and the State of Vermont.

**Lifetime Achievement recipient Polly Whitcomb McEwing of Essex** has spent the last 50 years dedicated to her family's dairy farm in Williston where she can do any task on the operation. From accountant to silage truck driver, Polly does it all to ensure the next generation is set up for success. Polly's contributions off the farm helped many farmers as well where she was the first Agricultural Director for the Vermont Land Trust. Here, Polly worked with farmers to understand the program and easements they maybe eligible for. Darby Bradley, past President

of the Vermont Land Trust states, "The program was in its very early stages and Polly gave us credibility with the farmers. She respected their point of view and advocated for the farmers within the VLT and the Housing Conservation Board. We would not have been nearly as successful without her." Polly also co-founded the Dairy Center at the Champlain Valley Fair in the early 1960's which is still one of the most popular attractions at the fair each year putting a positive face on dairy while educating consumers!

**Lifetime Achievement recipient Robert "Bob" D. Wellington of Andover, MA.** Bob was one of the most passionate supporters of the dairy industry throughout his 30-year career with Agri-Mark Dairy Cooperative and Cabot Creamery. Bob held expert knowledge in Federal Milk Order and milk pricing systems which made him a valuable resource to farmers, industry partners, ag industries, and legislative office both state and federally. He worked tirelessly to move the industry forward with initiative like the Federal Order Reform, Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact and multiple Farm Bills. All his efforts worked to bring dollars back to the dairy producers through component and milk class pricing and in the Farm Bill's Margin Protection Program (now Dairy Margin Coverage Program). Bill Beaton of Agri Mark remembers Bob for "His constant presence, honest personality and friendly laugh earned him a deep respect, appreciation, and love. Bob is missed dearly by all those who knew and loved him."

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The 2020 Vermont Agriculture Hall of Fame inductees will also be celebrated at this year's luncheon.

**Lifetime Achievement Recipients:**

- **Harold J. Howrigan**, *Dairy farmer, Sheldon, VT*
- **Jacques and Pauline Couture**, *Missisquoi Valley Farm, Couture's Maple Shop and B&B Westfield, VT.*
- **Alan Curler**, *(deceased) Agriculture lender, consultant, AI technician, herdsman and farmhand in New Haven, VT.*

**Ag Innovator Recipient:**

**Reg Chaput**, *Dairy farmer, Newport, VT*

**Emerging Leader:**

**Abbie Corse**, *Dairy farmer, Whitingham, VT*

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**About the Champlain Valley Expo**

The Champlain Valley Exposition is a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization with a mission of serving the people of Vermont and the region by promoting agriculture, education, arts and culture, commerce and entertainment activities. Since 2003, the Expo has hosted the Vermont Ag Hall of Fame, which honors Vermonters who have made significant achievements to Vermont's working landscape. For more information, visit <https://cvexpo.org/hall-of-fame/>