

# Saanichton Farm launches Hall of Fame

## Community recognizes local farmers and mechanics

KATE AYERS

SAANICHTON – On April 28, over 250 people attended the Saanichton Farm Hall of Fame hosted by the Rashleigh family to celebrate local farmers and mechanics for their contributions to the farm and broader community.

"It was unbelievable. I've never seen anything like it," says event organizer and Saanichton Farm owner Bryce Rashleigh. "My heart was touched and I hope it touched others. It was just the right thing to do."

Rashleigh was inspired to organize the event after news of yet another friend and long-time farmer facing dire medical news.

"I said to [my wife] Jill, why do we wait until everybody's gone and then we talk about them. ... These farmers are still here; why don't we do it?" Rashleigh says. "They farm all their life and they don't always feel appreciated."

Over the course of three weeks, Rashleigh pulled together a roster of valuable community members and government officials to hand out the awards to recognize locals with a long history of producing food and fixing the equipment that makes it possible. To start the program, Saanich-Gulf Islands MP and federal Green Party leader Elizabeth May inducted Brian Delbrouck into the Saanichton Farm Hall of Fame.

Delbrouck was a John Deere dealer equipment mechanic for a number of years, then a lawn and garden mechanic who began working on Saanichton Farm in 2003.

With 45 years of experience, he's fixed nearly every piece of equipment on the farm and neighbouring farms, Rashleigh says.

"He's quit three times. But he can't quit," he quips. "He's never taken his tools away. He's still here one or two days a week."

BC agriculture minister Pam Alexis inducted Bruce Grant, an employee of 28 years at Saanichton Farm.

Western Canadian Dairy News publisher Tars Cheema and BC United agriculture critic Ian Paton inducted Barry Youell.

The Youell family operated the first dairy farm on

Vancouver Island and the sixth in BC to receive the coveted Holstein Canada Master Breeders shield.

When they sold the cows in 1994, Barry Youell started haying with Rashleigh and he's worked on Saanichton Farm every year since.

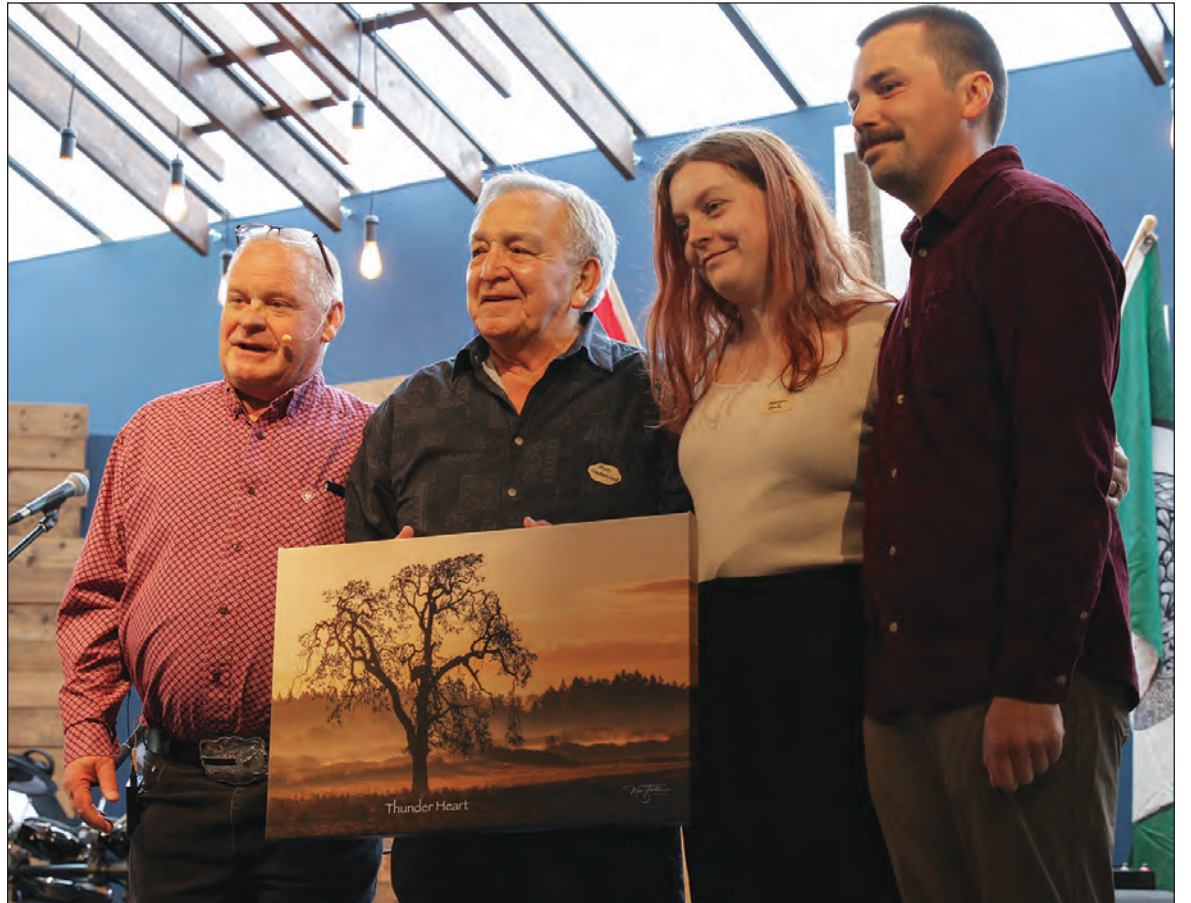
"In my former life in the cattle and farm auction business, there was at one time nine dairy farms in the Saanich area, and I did a lot of business with them," Paton says. "It was a great social event. I got to visit with farmer friends who I haven't seen in years."

Through buying and selling cattle, Paton came to know and befriend the Youell brothers – Barry, Ron and Burt.

Past farm employee and current Government of Yukon official Robyn Burns inducted lifelong farmer and plumber Brian Thompson, who is well known in the Central Saanich farming community for his straight rows and affinity for pie and ice cream.

In addition, Rashleigh inducted Don Henderson, a glass smith and fisherman who always wanted to farm. He has worked on Saanichton Farm the last 20 years to help with the round bale business.

During the event, several other local farms and mechanics were recognized, including Somerset Farm on Gabriola Island, Brackenhurst Farm in North Saanich, Mar Farms in Central Saanich, Galey Farms in Saanich,



Saanichton Farm's Bryce Rashleigh (left) stands with long-time friend and mechanic Gus Underwood as well as daughter Allison (Rashleigh) Paul and her husband Jacob Paul. Underwood and Paul belong to the Wsanec people, for whom the Thunder Heart tree of Saanich held special significance prior to being felled by a storm in 2018. Underwood received a print depicting the tree at the Saanichton Hall of Fame event, April 28. ILENE DUGUAY

Claremont Poultry in Saanich and "machinist extraordinaire" Pat Hoole.

"I've never seen anything promoted better, ever," says Eric Boulton of Somerset Farm, whose 96th birthday happened to be the same week as the Hall of Fame event. He has been farming on Gabriola Island for 74 years alongside his wife Sue and now operates the farm with their daughter Alexa.

"It's a huge honour. It's not something we tried to do, but when these things come along, it's a huge honour," Boulton.

"If Sue and I are still here, we would like to go and celebrate it every year," Boulton says. "I think that farmers don't get enough recognition for all the sacrifices and difficulties of weather and storms and ferries. I don't think farmers get enough recognition in a sense of understanding exactly how people get fed."

John Pendray of Pendray Farms in North Saanich passed away on March 31 at 98 years and was inducted posthumously.

While this year marked the inaugural event, Rashleigh sees the potential for an annual celebration.

"It was amazing and the buzz that's happened since, people are still talking about that," Rashleigh says. "It was totally worth thanking our farmers and our mechanics. They're all getting old, there's getting fewer of them. ... I would do it again in a minute."

Those who attended were grateful for the opportunity to get together. The event wrapped up by highlighting young area farmers who contribute to the local food economy.

"We recognized old, recognized new," Rashleigh says. "Wouldn't it be neat if other people just took the time to honour their senior farmers because we're getting older and we need help and maybe through admiring them, some young ones will go, 'Wow, this could be possible for me.'"

**Preventing Injuries | Minimizing Impact  
Encouraging Worker Health & Wellbeing**



Have Questions?  
Connect with AgSafe!



SCAN HERE!

**Return to Work Injury Management**  
Employers and Employees have a Duty to Cooperate. Policies changed in British Columbia for Return to Work on January 1, 2024

(604) 881-6078  
1 (877) 533-1789  
Contact@AgSafeBC.ca




**roost solar**

**Go Solar and Save**  
Access the Canada Greener Homes Loan - up to \$40,000 in interest-free financing for solar installations




**Solar PV Arrays | Home Battery Systems | EV Chargers**

Roost Solar is a licensed electrical contractor with Red Seal Journeyman Electricians. As the only installer in the region with a NABCEP Certified PV Installation Professional, we are committed to the highest level of quality, customer service, and technical expertise.

Visit us online for information about **How to get started** and the **Canada Greener Homes Grant** and **Greener Home Loan** which offer up to \$5000 in grants, and up to a \$40,000 10-year interest-free loan for solar installations.

TSBC License #LELO209968

**Call or click for a FREE Solar Consultation and Estimate.**

250.307.5042 tf 1.877.707.5042  
info@roostsolar.com www.roostsolar.com

