

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Randy & Jennifer Gross named Progressive Commercial Dairy Managers

Randy and Jennifer Gross of Ash Grove Dairy, LLP in Lake Benton, Minnesota have been named the Progressive Commercial Dairy Managers of 2018. This award, given by the National Dairy Shrine, is designed to recognize outstanding dairy managers who have introduced and applied effective management and business practices to help achieve a more profitable dairy business. It acknowledges young dairy managers early in their careers and encourages others to look at a career in dairy production.

“Our primary goals for Ash Grove Dairy, LLP are profitability, growth and developing a top-notch herd of Registered Holsteins,” they explained. “We strive to achieve these goals in a manner that benefits our cows, family, employees, consumers and community. We believe that if we do our best to take care of the cows, in turn they will take care of us.”

The Gross family has pioneered a rather unconventional path in the world of family dairy operations. Although he was active in 4-H in his youth, Randy did not grow up on a farm and Jennifer’s family sold their cows while she was studying dairy science at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. This left no family farm for the Grosses to take over; they had to start from scratch. After gaining ten years of experience from managing a 3,600-cow dairy in Elkton South Dakota, the Gross family took a confident leap to purchase their own farm.

Established in 2016, Ash Grove Dairy, LLP, named after the Gross family homestead in South Dakota, is a new construction, cross-ventilated free stall barn permitted for 1,383 cows and 200 calves. Although Ash Grove is a new construction, the Gross family is constantly making progress. “Ash Grove, LLP was designed and built with the future in mind. While we currently house 1,200 milking cows, the barn was built so we can expand 50% to the east and 50% to the west, providing enough room for expansion.”

Randy and Jennifer are passionate about the success of their farm, not only investing in animal welfare, but also providing a satisfying work environment for their employees. “Another way we determine success, which is not as clear cut as calculating pregnancy rates or feed efficiencies, is employee retention and development. Jennifer and I are really pleased that of our 14 employees, nine have been with us for seven to thirteen years, choosing to follow us from our former dairy in South Dakota to our new farm in Minnesota.”

Randy and Jennifer are dedicated to the dairy industry and look for new ways to improve their herd and management style. “As our herd matures, and new technologies are implemented, we expect this to see improvement. We’re already seeing this occur.” Ash Grove has recently started regular classifications and genomic testing. They have also begun an embryo transfer

program to improve their herd more rapidly, hoping to generate 4-H projects for their sons and create an Ash Grove, LLP family legacy.

Randy and Jennifer Gross will receive the 2018 Progressive Dairy Cattle Managers Award at the annual National Dairy Shrine awards banquet on Thursday, October 4th in Madison, Wisconsin. For more information about the banquet or about students, producers and dairy industry individuals being recognized by the National Dairy Shrine, please contact National Dairy Shrine at info@dairyshrine.org

Information on the National Dairy Shrine membership is also available online at www.dairyshrine.org

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Pictures are available if desired. Please contact info@dairyshrine.org to obtain photos of the honorees.