



*For immediate release*

## **Acme-area grain and beef farmers named Alberta's Outstanding Young Farmers for 2011**

**Olds, AB [March 24, 2011]** – Matt and Tara Sawyer were selected Alberta's Outstanding Young Farmers (OYF) at a recent banquet in Olds, Alberta. The Acme, Alberta couple operate a crop and beef operation, and will represent Alberta at the national OYF event later this year in Brandon, MB.

In 2003, Matt and Tara purchased his grandparent's farm, a 2,400 acre operation where they grow grain and oilseeds, and raise their 50-cow herd of purebred Black Angus cattle. Driven by a desire to constantly improve and enhance the environment, the Sawyer's adapted a no-till model on their farm and are now using their third no-till 50-foot drill. Their fall calves are sold directly to a small feedlot, helping them monitor performance and offer a branded product that is traceable back to their farm.

"The Sawyers have found a terrific balance in their farm operation – building a productive operation with stewardship initiatives while working in time to actively participate and support their industry and community through volunteer work," says Derek Janzen, Western Vice-President of Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers.

The Sawyer's were chosen from four farm couple nominees in Alberta including Dean and Farrah Williams from Arrowwood, Clinton and Marsha Aarsby from Didsbury, and Brad and Cheryl McDermid from Bowden. The Alberta OYF event attracted many dignitaries including the Hon. Jack Hayden, Minister of Agriculture; Judy Dahl, Mayor of Olds; Dr. Tom Thompson, President of Olds College and Member of Parliament Earl Dreeshen.

Matt graduated with a diploma in agricultural production from Olds College and continues to keep up to date with ongoing farm courses. They are both active in 4-H and their local Elks and Order of the Royal Purple Lodges. Matt is chairman of the Alberta Barley Commission and a director of the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association. Tara gives back through volunteer activities at their children's school and as a soccer coach.

With a special respect for the land Matt's grandparent's pioneered, the Sawyers operate their farm with their three children (10, 8 and 6).

Celebrating 31 years of identifying great agricultural successes, Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers' program is an annual competition to recognize farmers that exemplify excellence in their profession and promote the tremendous contribution of agriculture. Open to participants 18 to 39 years of age, making the majority of income from on-farm sources, participants are selected from seven regions across Canada, with two national winners chosen each year. The program is sponsored nationally by CIBC, John Deere, Bayer CropScience, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and supported nationally by AdFarm and Canadian Farm Business Management Council.

Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers for 2011 will be chosen at the national event in Brandon, MB from November 14-20, 2011.

**For more information or a photo of Matt and Tara, contact:**

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