

2019 BMO Farm Family Awards Biography Batho Farms Ltd.

Batho Farms Ltd. had its start in the Cameron District (north of Minnedosa, Manitoba) in 1942 when Ron Batho's father, Everett, purchased his first registered horned Hereford female. Ron Batho lived on this farm (which raised mixed grains, cattle, hogs, and hens) until 1952, when the family moved to Oak Lake to specialize in the cattle business. The "Big Hill Polled Hereford" name was well-known for quality animals. In 1967, the farm was incorporated as "Batho Farms Ltd.," with Ron and his wife Sheila as well as Ron's parents, Anna and Everett, as partners. Everett was very active on the farm until his death in 2000. Sheila passed away in 1982; however, Ron and his new wife, Kathy, continue to run Batho Farms Ltd. In 2007, Ron Batho was named to the Canadian Hereford Association Honour Roll.

Ron and Sheila's daughters, Michelle and Tracy, were very active on the farm growing up and continue to be involved in farming today. Michelle married Albert Rimke and they now farm with Ron in Oak Lake under the name "AM Ranching." In 2006, Albert and Michelle were recognized with a Manitoba Outstanding Young Farmers award. Michelle and Albert's children—Jay, Samantha, and Levi—are also very active on the family farm. Tracy married Tere Stykalo and they now farm in the Dauphin area. Tracy and Tere are raising their children—Terron, Talya, Trent, and Tyler—on a family farm that produces grain and raises sheep and chickens.

Batho Farms Ltd. and their family partners have contributed to Manitoba agriculture through many outstanding projects, several of which have involved providing agricultural education to various age groups. For many years, University of Manitoba students in the Agriculture Diploma program toured the farm annually. For the past several years, Batho Farms Ltd. has also hosted grade one and two students in the spring, showing them the newborn calves as well as the adult cows and bulls and teaching them about farm safety. Furthermore, in the fall of 2003 and 2004, Batho Farms Ltd. donated free cheeseburger and milk lunches to the students and staff of Oak Lake Community School to promote Canadian beef and nutritious lunches during the BSE outbreaks. Batho Farms Ltd. has also hosted Grassland Grazing Tours, giving participants the chance to see the Southwest Bull Development Centre (established in 1994), rotational grazing, and the windmill and solar watering system. Batho Farms Ltd. has hosted many international delegations, including most recently from Kazakhstan, Russia and China.

Batho Farms Ltd. has also participated in the show circuit. In the 1950s, Batho Farms Ltd. showed cattle at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto and at the Royal Manitoba Winter Fair in Brandon. In more recent years, AM Ranching has extensively showed their animals across Canada at the Hereford Junior Bonanza shows as well as other major shows in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The Stykalo family has also participated in the cattle show circuit with the Rimke family and is currently developing a sheep flock for showing as well.

Moreover, Batho Farms Ltd. has always been very conscious of land stewardship—so much so that they received a Conservation Award in 1994. Farming very light sandy land, Batho Farms Ltd. has embraced and developed exceptional management practices to prevent erosion, manage

soil moisture, and maintain exceptional grazing lands. They also have a wide variety of wildlife habitats under their care.

In addition to farming, all members of the Batho, Rimke, and Stykalo families have a deep-rooted sense of community. They have been involved with various organizations including several 4-H clubs; Manitoba and Canadian Hereford Associations; Douglas Bull Test Station; Manitoba Sheep Association; the Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba; Manitoba Youth Beef Roundup; Dauphin Ag Society; Dauphin Curling Club; Oak Lake Agricultural Society; Oak Lake Curling Club; Oak Lake Rodeo Association; Oak Lake United Church; student associations at University of Manitoba, Assiniboine Community College, University of Saskatchewan, and Olds College; and many other organizations.