

2019 BMO Farm Family Awards Biography Vallotton Farms

Vallotton Farms Ltd. is a second-generation grain operation located between Glenboro and Wawanesa, Manitoba. The farm was started in its current location by Pierre Vallotton, who has been farming in Canada for the past forty years, as well as in his native Switzerland. Pierre has been involved in a number of sectors of farming, including lumber, beef, and dairy. Pierre's son, Marcel Vallotton, took over daily operations of Vallotton Farms Ltd. in the early 2000s and has been steadily evolving the farming practices and land base since then. Currently, Marcel and Teresa Vallotton are the primary operators of Vallotton Farms Ltd., along with Pierre. Marcel and Teresa's two young daughters, Raquel and Alana, are also keen farm observers. Today, Vallotton Farms Ltd. is a crop farm with approximately 4300 acres of cereals, oils, and pulses.

Vallotton Farms Ltd. is committed to researching and utilizing cutting-edge technology and farm practices. Marcel is committed to using new equipment technologies and enjoys trying different seeding application combinations while Teresa has purchased and learned how to fly a drone. This year, Teresa primarily used the drone for aerial visuals; however, she is investigating other ag-specific drone applications and opportunities.

In addition to their farming operations, since 2010, Marcel and Teresa have worked to grow Vallotton Farms Ltd. into an educationally-focused operation. They have hosted over twenty international trainees through the International Rural Exchange. Marcel mentors these trainees, who live with the farm family and learn about farm life in Canada over an eight-month period. Teresa is also involved with the International Rural Exchange by serving as their Board Vice-President.

Moreover, in 2017, Teresa and her sister Karen (who is currently involved in Deer Creek Farms, on which she and Teresa were raised) began a business called FarmFemmes, with the specific mission of promoting agriculture to a wider audience. FarmFemmes is an online platform that includes daily blog posts and a consistent social media presence. Teresa and Karen are also involved in speaking engagements and in the Ag in the Classroom program in an effort to share their experiences as technology-oriented farm women. Teresa is also the Board Chair of the Wawanesa Day Care.

Regarding land stewardship, Vallotton Farms Ltd. is a zero-till or minimum-till operation, which preserves organic matter in the fields and acts as a water management strategy. Having a zero-till or minimum-till operation also reduces equipment hours and thus reduces fuel use and emissions. Vallotton Farms Ltd. also undergoes land improvement projects each year to increase equipment and labour efficiencies and thus reduce waste. Furthermore, Vallotton Farms Ltd. has adopted technologies such as variable rate and sectional controls to reduce redundancies in their seed and fertilizer application.

Going forward, Vallotton Farms Ltd. is committed to continuing to pursue sustainability, embrace technological change, and continually evolve their farming operation.