

## Media Release

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### **Larpent farmers named inaugural 'Legendairy Farmers of the Year'**

Mark and Sam Billings have been named the Legendairy Farmers of the year at the Great South West Dairy Awards.

The Larpent farmers were chosen from the winners in each section as the outstanding achievers amongst their peers, in what proved a tough competition for the dairy industry's vital Western district.

The announcement was made at a gala celebration in Colac last night, where judges said the quality of this year's nominees and finalists was outstanding.

WestVic Dairy Executive Officer Paula Doran congratulated all winners of the Awards and commended their dedication to the industry.

"The quality of this year's entries was not only exceptionally high, but a true reflection of the dedication and passion of the entire western Victorian region. What an incredible group of leaders we had on stage!"

Ms Doran said that the calibre of entrants were so high that it made it very difficult for the judges.

"All the judges commented on how close the applicants were and how hard it was to pick a winner! Their jobs would have been incredibly difficult this year."

"I think this shows how committed local dairy farmers are to improving the dairy industry."

The Hon Gayle Tierney, Member for Western Victoria (representing Hon Jaala Pulford Minister for Agriculture); mayors of Moyne, Glenelg, and Colac Otway Shires; as well as Dairy Australia's Managing Director Ian Halliday attended the night, which provided farmers with the opportunity to celebrate and socialise with other farmers and industry personnel.

Landline reporter Tim Lee announced the following winners in each category:

- **Glenelg Hopkins and Corangamite Catchment Management Authorities'** Natural Resource and Sustainability Manager Award, won by Daniel Croft.
- Employee of the Year sponsored by **Devondale Murray Goulburn**, won by Elsi Neave.
- Dairy Farm Photo, won by Terry Kavenagh with his photo titled 'The StickyBeaks'.
- **Gardiner Foundation** Employers of the Year, won by Mark and Sam Billing.
- Young Farm Leader sponsored by **Moyne Shire**, won by Michael Hawker.

- **Dairy Australia** Farm Business Managers, won by Mark and Sam Billing
- **Legendaairy** Farmers of the year won by Mark and Sam Billing

“It makes you very proud to be a part of an industry that exudes such passion, depth of skill, and commitment. Being able to share in a night that celebrates the industry and those who work within it to make it as successful as it is, is just an honour,” Ms Doran said.

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*WestVic Dairy is a not for profit regional development program (RDP) led by western Victorian dairy farmers. WestVic Dairy is funded by Dairy Australia and the Dairy Service levy and supported by regional stakeholders.*