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DICK FAMILY HONoured BY 2020 AWARD



It's coming up on two years since the Dick family was officially named Farm Family of the Year for Cypress County, but they've yet to step on a stage and bask in the limelight.

Jim picked up the plaque signifying the award from the county office just before Christmas. He declined a photo opportunity, knowing it wouldn't be right not to have everyone there with him.

"We didn't really think about it much, just kind of forgot about it," said the patriarch, who first started farming near Dunmore in 1974.

Following in the footsteps of other family award winners, they were supposed to be feted at the 2020 Calgary Stampede. The pandemic put a stop to that, and by the time the 2021 edition was set to go ahead the Dick clan couldn't get together for it.

It's been a long two years for everyone, but the family seems to have a good mindset which perhaps explains their success in farming over the years as well.

"We appreciate the recognition for sure," said Cheryl, picking up the phone conversation from Jim after tending to some chickens. "We control what we can do, we can't control what everybody else in the world is doing. So we keep pushing forward and hope that next year is a better year."

As the nomination form for the BMO Bank of Montreal Farm Family Awards notes, the objective of the award is to “recognize, on an annual basis, outstanding Southern Alberta farm families... who best typify the value of the family farmer to our rural communities and society in general.”

If perseverance and a look-forward attitude don’t typify families in this neck of the Prairies, nothing does.

“Keep on keeping on with the cattle everyday keeps you busy,” said Jim. “We’re always on the move.”

Jim started the family farm with his parents, Bev and Joyce. He says they were among the first in Canada to grow canola, and were on the leading edge using techniques such as straight combining in the 1980’s.

“Jim has been in the forefront of new developments in agriculture ranging from seed plots, varieties, chemical test plots, equipment upgrades to cattle handling upgrades,” wrote the person who nominated the family. “He has developed a crop rotation on their farm that has proven to be very valuable in today’s agricultural practices.”

Sons Jason and Cory originally flew the coop to work in the oilfield but returned home to buy land near the original farm. Daughter Angela is the only one not farming as she’s an occupational therapist in Calgary.

“The family has stayed together,” said Jim. “The boys went out in the real world just to see the grass wasn’t greener on the other side of the hill and the old man wasn’t such a tyrant. They came back and they’re taking over now, which is wonderful.”

Bev died three years ago but Joyce is now a great-grandmother five times over. They’d still like to get to Calgary for a proper ceremony but in lieu of that, they’ll keep doing what they always do.

“You have to celebrate each other and appreciate each other,” said Cheryl. “So these times are interesting when you’re not even getting to mix with your friends. Family is important.”

Nominations are still being accepted for the 2022 Farm Family of the Year award. No award was given in 2021.

