

First woman to be named Outstanding Young Farmer

Janet Parsons of Jimanon Farms, near North Bay, brought honor to her corner of Canada's farming community last fall when she became the first woman to hold the title of Canada's Outstanding Young Farmer.

The 39 year-old former school teacher was one of three winners named at the Outstanding Young Farmer program held in Calgary.

Janet, a member of Veuve River WI (Nipissing District), feels her strong points as a contender for the national title were her management style and the emphasis she places on farming as a business.

When Janet and her husband, John, bought the dairy farm in 1975, Jimanon's milk quota has been increased from 1,046 to 2,200 pounds through the use of a sound management strategy and innovative technology. The use of cold environment housing and a change to round bales are only two of the cost efficient modifications adopted.

In terms of investment, Janet is an equal partner with John, an accountant, in the operation of the 309-acre farm. But while he heads to the office every



morning, she stays to work on the farm.

"I'm the farmer here," she said. "Women are being increasingly recognized for their contributions in agriculture," explained Janet, but "I'm a farmer first and I don't look at it as a women's issue."

The mother of three said she was really surprised to be chosen as one of the winners of the competition. "All the competitors were extremely good and you didn't know really who was going to win at all," Janet said.

The highlight of the competition for her was "meeting other farmers and learning about their commodities and the problems that they have because of their location and their environment," she added.

Outstanding young farmers must be adept in many areas, including production management, erosion control, forestry control, community involvement, use of innovative technology as well as achievement in the individual's farming career. The two other national winners were Alain Laroche of Quebec and David Jeffries of Manitoba.

Although farming keeps Janet busy, she is also involved in other activities. Janet has been a member of the Farm Debt Review Board and has spoken to high school students through Open Doors, a provincial program geared at introducing female students to non-traditional careers. Janet was the chairman of the program committee for the FWIO 90th anniversary celebration in North Bay in 1987.

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Take the following precautions with children

Child Find, an organization to help locate missing children, was established in 1983. Today, Child Find has offices in seven Canadian provinces. In Ontario, write to 345 Lakeshore Road East, Suite 314, Oakville, L6J 1J5 or call 416-842-5353 or toll free 1-800-387-7962.

Here are some precautions to take with your children or grandchildren. Remember, the first step in the case of a missing child: contact the police.

1. Teach your child the facts of abduction early.

2. Define a stranger. An ice cream man seen every day is still a stranger.

3. Teach your child his/her full name, your full name, address and telephone number and area code.



4. Explain how to use the telephone. Include area codes, collect calls, pay phones, etc...

5. Teach your child that it is best to travel in groups and stay away from isolated places.

6. Never leave your child unattended in a car.

7. Keep your child in sight at all times or know with whom he/she is and where.

8. Establish strict procedures regarding who will pick up the child from school, etc. and be meticulously consistent. Establish a family code word.

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