



## **FIFTH GENERATION OUTSTANDING**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Cawston – January 27, 2013 – A fifth generation farmer and his wife have been named BC's Outstanding Young Farmers for 2013.

Thirty-year-old Troy Harker and his wife, Sara, also 30, of Cawston, the organic capital of Canada, received their award from BC Lieutenant Governor Judy Guichon and Canadian OYF president Derek Janzen in front of over 400 people at the annual BC Agriculture Gala in Abbotsford, Jan 23rd. It was a fitting presentation as Guichon is past president of the BC Cattlemen's Association while Janzen is a poultry producer and past BC Outstanding Young Farmer.

The Harkers run a family farm which also includes Troy's parents and sister. Based on a diverse 30-acre organic vegetable farm and orchard founded by Troy's great-great grandfather, William James Manery, in the 1880's, the farm's 48 full-time and seasonal workers also operate a fruit winery, on-farm retail store, restaurant program and wholesale distribution service under the banners: Harker Organics, Rustic Roots Winery, Farm to Fork Delivery and Harvest Moon Growers.

When Troy and Sara joined the operation in 2006, then comprising only an organic farm, retail market and small organic packing and distribution service, they "saw the need for diversification."

They responded by adding the restaurant delivery program, which now serves 25 restaurants in the Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys. Sara is also the winemaker for Rustic Roots, a new fruit winery which has given the Harkers and their fellow organic growers a rewarding outlet for their cull fruit. They are slowly converting their orchard to high-density plantings and now have two acres of Honeycrisp apple trees in a two foot by 10 foot super-spindle production system. Their wholesale packing business has also expanded and now distributes organic fruit and vegetables from 25 organic growers with a total of 550 acres of production.

The 2013 BC Outstanding Young Farmer award is one of a long list of awards the Harkers have received in recent years. In 2011, the BC Institute of Agrologists named them the Farming Family of the Year and the Canadian Wine Awards honored them for the Best Fruit Wine in Canada. Harker Organics has also been named one of BC's Top 5 Agrotourism Destinations and Eat Magazine's Best Okanagan Farm.

The BCOYF program is sponsored by BMO Bank of Montreal, BC Agriculture Council, BC Broiler Hatching Egg Commission, BC Egg Producers Association, BC Chicken Marketing Board, BC Milk Marketing Board, Bobcat Country Sales, Clearbrook Grain & Milling, Farm Credit Canada, Golden Valley Foods, Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC, Prairie Coast Equipment, Ritchie Smith Feeds, TD Canada Trust Agriculture Services, TerraLink Horticulture, and United Agri Systems.

The Harkers will represent BC at the national OYF competition in Saskatchewan in November. The national competition is sponsored by AdFarm, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Bayer Crop Science, the Canadian Farm Business Management Council, CIBC and John Deere.

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