



## **Gail Irvine Named 2018 Woman of Excellence in Agriculture Award Winner**

**TORONTO, October 15, 2018** – The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, in partnership with the Federated Women’s Institute of Ontario, has announced the winner of its Woman of Excellence in Agriculture Award for 2018. Retired sheep breeder Gail Irvine of Selwyn, Ontario, is this year’s winner.

“Gail has accomplished so much for the agriculture industry, her community and in people’s personal lives,” says Rita Saler and Evamary Bonner, Women’s Institute members who nominated Gail Irvine. “She has touched, taught and mentored many individuals young and old and has had such a positive impact and influence on all of them.”

A former teacher, Irvine and her late husband, Bob, began farming in 1972. They started out with beef cattle and soon turned their efforts to raising Dorset sheep at Rocky Lane Farm. The Irvines showed frequently at The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair and throughout their farming career, Irvine focused on continuous herd improvement, seeking out superior sheep genetics from across Canada and around the world. She also participated in industry initiatives with breed organizations as well as with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

In 2012, the Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency honoured the Irvines with a Long Service Award for their contribution to the industry. Irvine has long been involved in 4-H as well. She was a sheep club 4-H leader and she continues to support 4-H through award sponsorship and by providing lambs for club projects. Currently, Irvine has retired from farming but is still active within the community.

The Woman of Excellence in Agriculture Award began in 1996 to recognize the significant contributions made by women in agriculture. The 2018 winner will be honoured at the Excellence in Agriculture luncheon scheduled for Wednesday, November 7 at The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto.

“The Royal is proud to be associated with this prestigious award that honours exemplary women in Ontario agriculture,” says Charlie Johnstone, Chief Executive Officer of The Royal. “Gail Irvine is certainly a worthy recipient. We thank Gail for her decades of volunteer service to The Royal, 4-H and to the sheep sector.”

### **About The Federated Women’s Institute of Ontario**

For over 120 years, Women’s Institute members have actively worked together for family, home, community and country. The Federated Women’s Institutes of Ontario (FWIO) was organized in 1919, giving members a stronger voice by working together as a united group. Through education and support programs and services, FWIO’s original focus expanded to include personal growth opportunities, government lobbying and health and community wellness projects.

**About The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair**

Every year in November, more than 300,000 guests visit The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, which is the world's largest combined indoor agricultural and equestrian show in the world. Held at Exhibition Place in Toronto, the Fair showcases Canada's leaders in agricultural, food, and equine excellence. For more information or to purchase tickets to the event, visit: [www.royalfair.org](http://www.royalfair.org), follow @royalfair on [Facebook](#), @THERAWF on [Twitter](#), @theroyalfair on [Instagram](#), or subscribe to @royalhorseshow on [Youtube](#).

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