

Press Release

2024–2025 Sollio Next Generation Award **Birnam Orchards Ltd. in Arkona** **earned the top prize**

Montreal, March 6, 2025 – [Sollio Agriculture](#), the Agri-business Division of [Sollio Cooperative Group](#), would like to congratulate Birnam Orchards Ltd. in Arkona (Ont.), who earned the top prize in the Farm Succession category at its Sollio Next Generation Award gala on February 27, 2025.

“The Sollio Next Generation Award plays an important role not only in recognizing entrepreneurs who have successfully navigated a farm transition or launched a new agricultural enterprise, but also in showcasing innovative farming practices across Canada,” said Casper Kaastra, Chief Executive Officer of Sollio Agriculture. “Together with our partners from The Agromart Group, we are proud to celebrate the inspiring journeys of passion and determination of Birnam Orchards Ltd. Congratulations! When farmers share their best practices and success stories, the entire industry benefits.”

Birnam Orchards Ltd.

Birnam Orchards presently owns 200 acres of apples (a number that is still growing), as well as a few acres of peaches, sweet corn, pumpkins, gourds, and squash. The operation exemplifies successful farm succession, with cousins Jeremy Veens and Chris Geerts seamlessly taking over the orchard founded by their fathers in 1985. After exploring external careers, they returned to farming, drawn by its independence and fulfillment. Guided by their fathers’ expertise, they embrace innovation, from high-density planting to sustainable irrigation. The orchard’s long-term success is secured through a structured, forward-thinking approach, ensuring its resilience in a competitive and evolving industry. Their ability to integrate modern techniques while preserving family expertise makes Birnam Orchards a model of succession planning in Canadian agriculture. To learn more about their story, [check out this 5-minute video here](#).

About the Sollio Next Generation Award

For over 20 years, the Sollio Next Generation Award has recognized farming families in the Sollio Cooperative Group and Agromart Group cooperative network (a Sollio Agriculture partner) who have successfully transferred or established a farming business while ensuring its long term viability and success. Sollio Cooperative Group is a pan Canadian cooperative that seeks to provide farmer entrepreneurs with the opportunity to draw on the best local models for farm transfers and start ups. To learn more, visit sollio.coop/en/SollioNextGenAward

About Sollio Agriculture

Sollio Agriculture, the Agri-business Division of Sollio Cooperative Group, is a Canadian leader in the agriculture industry. It specializes in supplying farm inputs and providing value-added services to benefit farmers, cooperatives and partners. Its business model combines the strength of a local approach with the power of a national presence to offer innovative products and solutions, to support the adoption of sustainable farming practices, helping local farming families prosper. Present across the country, it has close to 1,200 employees and generated \$2.510 billion in revenue in 2024. For more information, visit sollio.ag

About The Agromart Group

The Agromart Group includes 23 independent agricultural retail businesses across Eastern Canada. Each Agromart is a 50:50 joint venture between Sollio Agriculture and local business owners/operators. The Agromart Group provides crop nutrients, crop protection products, seed, custom application and associated services to farmers. For more information, visit agromartgroup.com.

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Source:

Sollio Agriculture

For information:

Pierre Tessier

pierre.tessier@cominfrarouge.com

514-233-1636

Photo : From left to right: Normand Lapointe, Sollio Cooperative Group board director, Jean-Philippe Côté, Sollio Cooperative Group board director, Kelly Nesic, Horticulture Sales Specialist with Lakeside Agromart, Rita and Bert Veens, Ellen Brown, Debbie and Pete Geerts, conjointe de Chris - nom à venir, Richard Ferland, President of Sollio Cooperative Group, Casper Kaastra, Chief Executive Officer of Sollio Agriculture
In the front : Jeremy Veens, Chris Geerts

Photo credit: Sollio Agriculture