



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OIMP Gala 2015

The Academy Awards of the Ontario meat industry!

GUELPH, ON - October 27, 2015 - Ontario Independent Meat Processors came together for our Meat Industry Expo 2015 at the Scotiabank Convention Centre in Niagara Falls this past weekend. An impressive 225 guests attended the gala Saturday night at the conclusion of Expo, to celebrate member recognition, Ontario Finest Meat Competition™ awards, and the Ontario's Finest Butcher announcement.

The evening began with the recognition of Laurie Nicol for her 30 years of service to the OIMP. The five of Nicol's 'work husbands' (current and past presidents) that were present, lined the stage for a surprise celebration and took turns thanking Laurie for her dedication to the industry.

Jarvis Industries received their 25 year plaque, and Graham Dalziel was presented with the Lifetime Membership award as a strong advocate for industry with a positive attitude toward the endless possibilities.

"It is a privilege to recognize and commemorate our member accomplishments in a room of their peers. To take time away from their businesses to come together as a family and celebrate one another is a heartening experience," comments Laurie Nicol, OIMP executive director.

Forty-four awards were presented in the 2015 Ontario Finest Meat Competition™ crossing 14 categories with placing for Silver, Gold, and Platinum in each. The Ron Usborne Award of Excellence was presented for the third consecutive time to Halenda's Fine Foods for the most points accumulated in the competition. The brand new Diamond Award was presented to Paganelli's for producing the item with the top score across all products, Gentile Salami. (Watch the [Competition Judging](#) video, and see the complete list of [Award Winners](#).)

Peter Baarda from Lococo's, Stoney Creek, was surrounded by a table of family, friends, and co-workers when the announcement was made that he had successfully defended his title of Ontario's Finest Butcher, now holding the title a second year. Facing off in the final round that afternoon on the trade show floor against Damian Goriup from Florence Meats, and Joe Vercesi from Cataldi Fresh Market, all finalists received a whole chicken, veal outside round, and beef round, to prepare several incredible-looking display ready items in the short half hour they were given. A combined score from attendees and judges determined it was Peter that would carry the honour once again. (Watch the [Elimination Round](#) held in September.)

Between the live and silent auctions, OIMP raised over \$13,000 to be used toward the continuation of programs and services offered by OIMP to its members. OIMP would like to thank those that donated and bid on items, as well as our generous sponsors.

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About the Ontario Independent Meat Processors

Ontario Independent Meat Processors (OIMP) is the representative voice of the independent meat and poultry processor in Ontario, working closely with agricultural and commodity organizations and various levels of government for 35 years. The association's membership includes meat and poultry processors, retailers and wholesalers; industry suppliers, and not-for-profit organizations that support OIMP's objectives.

Ontario's meat and poultry sector:

- represents 23% (\$9 billion) of Ontario's \$39 billion food and beverage processing industry revenue;
- plays a critical role in the overall economic contribution of \$67 billion annually by food and beverage processors - the second largest manufacturing sector in Ontario; and
- employs 25% of Ontario's food and beverage processing industry - the single largest manufacturing employer in Ontario.