

# TESTIMONIALS



"This program gave me a new appreciation for the value of co-ops and for Gay Lea Foods, in particular. Learning how Gay Lea Foods operates was not only valuable as a member of the co-op, but has also helped shape the way I look at other co-ops and dairy businesses. Learning about the proper function of a board has continued to help me as I become involved in other agricultural organizations."

- CLP 2.0 participant

"I was honoured to participate in CLP 2.0 and highly recommend it! I loved learning more about Gay Lea Foods and the processing side of our dairy industry, as well as co-operative operations and how they serve communities locally and around the world. The training sessions were incredible and many of the lessons are applicable in other areas of our lives. It was great to meet and form lasting relationships with other Gay Lea Foods members, fellow farmers and staff. So thankful!"

- CLP 2.0 participant

"The Co-operative Leadership Program (CLP) is a powerful demonstration of Gay Lea Foods' commitment to education and training across our co-operative. The fifth class has the chance to build upon the successes of past classes and access the unique opportunity to gain knowledge and insight into our co-operative and the industry we work in. Many past graduates have gone on to take up leadership positions in our co-operative and across our industry. The leadership skills you will learn on this program and the networks you'll build will serve you well now and in the future."

- Rob Goodwill, Chair of Gay Lea Foods

# PROGRAM OUTLINE

**Session 1: Getting to know Gay Lea Foods**  
**Focus: Leadership, Communication, & Collaboration** | April 7-9, 2026 | Gay Lea Head Office, Toronto, ON

**Session 2: Sustainability Focus: On-farm Sustainability for Dairy** | July/August 2026 (TBD) | Virtual Session

**Session 3: Visit PEI / Amalgamated Dairies Ltd (ADL) Focus: Connection, Leadership, & Governance** | October 13-16, 2026 | Charlottetown, PEI

**Session 4: Attend Gay Lea Foods AGM & Training Focus: Governance, Operations, & Networking** | January 25-27, 2027 | Toronto, ON

**Session 5: Board Dynamics Focus: Collaborating, Strategy, & Board Service** | March 23-25, 2027 | Guelph, ON

**Session 6: Wrap-Up Session & Graduation Focus: Reflection, Growth, & Commitment** | September 27-28, 2027 | Gay Lea Head Office, Toronto, ON

# CONTACT US



**Ove Hansen Corporate Secretary & Director of Member Relations**  
Phone: 905.283.5226  
Email: [ohansen@gayleafoods.com](mailto:ohansen@gayleafoods.com)

**Deanne Reilly MR Business Coordinator & Assistant Corporate Secretary**  
Phone: 519.838.6268  
Email: [dreilly@gayleafoods.com](mailto:dreilly@gayleafoods.com)

**Kerr Smith Manager, Co-operative Engagement**  
Phone: 226.979.3605  
Email: [ksmith@gayleafoods.com](mailto:ksmith@gayleafoods.com)

*Gay Lea*



CLP

# CO-OPERATIVE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

**Preparing the Leaders of Tomorrow**





## A COMMITMENT TO CO-OPERATIVE PRINCIPLE #5: EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION.

With members on more than 1,300 dairy cow and goat farms in Ontario and Manitoba, Gay Lea Foods is Ontario's largest dairy cooperative — and we're proud of it!

Our story began in 1958, when a group of farmers came together with a common vision: to build a better future for themselves and their communities. Today, we still believe in building a strong legacy for future generations.

At Gay Lea Foods, we have long been committed to development, training and education: we work with our Directors and delegates to further their knowledge and skills; we provide scholarships to children of members who are pursuing post-secondary education in the agricultural sector; we support farm families through Ontario 4-H programs, and; we provide sponsorship and mentoring to teenagers at Co-operative Young Leaders camps.

Our Co-operative Leadership Program (CLP) was created in 2010 and has seen five successful cohorts of young leaders since the program began. We're proud to be building a strong foundation for the future while connecting future leaders.



## WHAT IS THE CO-OPERATIVE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM?

The Gay Lea Foods Co-operative Leadership Program (CLP) is a 16-day program designed to prepare young dairy farmers between the ages of 20 and 37 for leadership roles in the Canadian dairy co-operative sector. Over the course of 18 months, selected participants will attend learning workshops in Ontario and PEI, including a virtual session and special joint-sessions with participants from the dairy co-operative, Amalgamated Dairies Ltd. (ADL) - based in PEI. The final session will include a review of lessons learned and a graduation ceremony with the Gay Lea Foods Board of Directors.

### PROGRAM DETAILS:

Educate participants about co-operatives & co-operative principles.

- Familiarize participants with Gay Lea Foods, including finance, operations, governance structures, and sales and marketing.
- Foster and develop leadership and communication skills.
- Encourage producer members to become actively involved in local co-op organizations like Gay Lea Foods.
- Provide opportunities to learn about co-ops the dairy industry in Canada.



## WHO CAN ATTEND?

We're inviting young dairy farmers aged 20-37, who are members of Gay Lea Foods (or whose parents are producer-members), to participate in the program and increase their engagement in the Canadian dairy co-operative sector.

## HOW WILL PARTICIPANTS BE CHOSEN?

This year's group will be comprised of a maximum of 15 participants. Selection will be based on co-op and community involvement, location of the family farm (with 2-3 participants from each Gay Lea Foods' zone considered ideal) and involvement in the family farm. Application forms can be downloaded and submitted on the members' website at [gaylefoodsmembers.com](http://gaylefoodsmembers.com).

**Applications must be received by Thursday, January 29, 2026.**

## HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

All expenses, including sessions, food, accommodation and travel to PEI, will be covered by Gay Lea Foods. Participants are responsible for their own transportation costs to and from locations in Ontario.

*Gay Lea*

