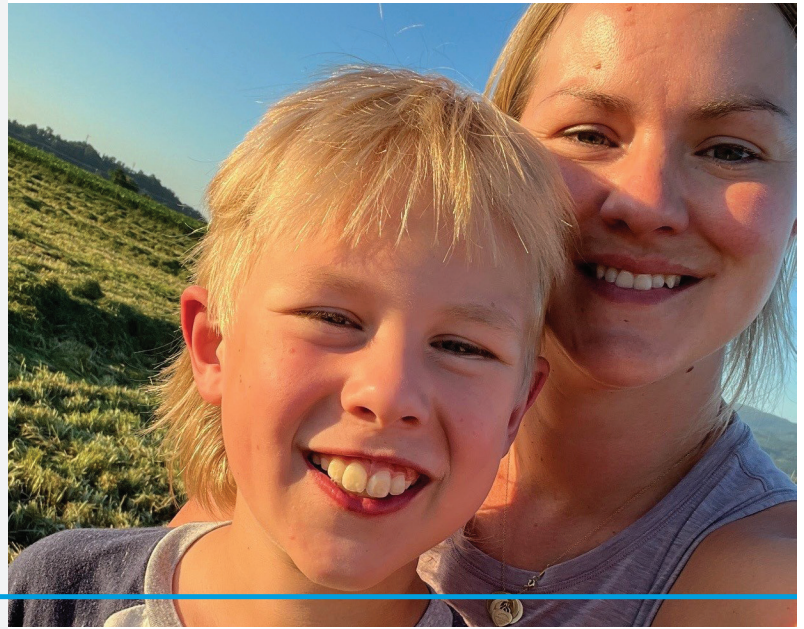


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# MEGAN KIELSTRA

**DRIESSEN DAIRY | ABBOTSFORD, BC**

For Megan Kielstra, dairy farming has never been just a job. It is a family legacy, a responsibility, and a way of life that began long before she was old enough to understand the impact it would have on her future.

Raised on the farm by her parents Tony and Tina Driessen, Megan is the second youngest of six children. Dairy farming has always been woven into her life. As a child she helped with chores, learning early what it meant to care for animals and contribute to the family operation.

As a teenager, Megan balanced her time between working evenings and weekends milking cows and holding a job at Abbotsford Veterinary Hospital in the small animal clinic. But when her mother's cancer returned, Megan made the decision that would shape her future.

"At the time my son Dominic was two years old," Megan recalls. "I came back to the farm full time to help while my mom went through treatments." She immediately stepped into major responsibilities, taking on full time milking and herd management. Her mother, Tina, had always been a cornerstone of the farm, raising six children while milking cows, feeding harvest crews, paying the bills, and dedicating herself to breeding Holstein cattle.

"My mom was an incredible woman," Megan says. "She did everything on the farm and never looked for recognition. She was passionate about breeding great cows and would have loved to earn a Master Breeder shield under our prefix, Dresler. That's something I'm working toward in her honour."

Tina passed away in 2010 after a long battle with cancer, but her influence continues to guide Megan every day. "Everything I do on the farm is inspired by her," Megan says. "Her legacy lives on through our farm, her six kids, 26 grandchildren, and my dad, who has kept everything together despite whatever hardships have come our way."

Today Megan works alongside her father Tony managing three dairy locations in Abbotsford. The operation traces its roots back to the early 1970s when Tony and Tina first began farming. The family later spent several years farming in southern Alberta before returning to British Columbia in 1992, purchasing the main farm on Wellsline Road. Since then the operation has grown to include multiple locations.

Megan's responsibilities now cover nearly every aspect of the dairy operation. She manages milking, calf care, breeding programs, herd health, employee training, scheduling, production oversight, organic certification at one location, and proaction across all three.

"No two days are the same," Megan explains. "I start my mornings getting the kids off to school, then begin my rounds at home checking cows, breeding, and doing herd health. After chores are wrapped up



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there, I move on to our other farms to check in with employees, work with the cows, do herd health checks, move animals, and handle data entry and scheduling.”

While she oversees the work across the farms, Megan remains very hands on. “You’ll almost never find me in a tractor,” she laughs. “But you will always find me working with the cows.” Caring for the animals is the responsibility she takes the most pride in.

***“The cows are everything. They make the milk and pay the bills.”***

That focus has paid off. Over the past five years, all three of the Driessen dairy herds have seen major improvements in production and performance, shipping more milk than ever before.

Megan is also raising the next generation on the farm with her husband Kevin. Together they have four children: Dominic (19), Addison (11), Walker (9), and Frieda (4). The kids are already part of

daily life on the farm, helping with chores and learning the responsibilities that come with it. Dominic now runs tractors during harvest season.

For Megan, farm life and family life are inseparable. “There really isn’t a balance,” she says. “Farm life and personal life just live hand in hand. Some of my best memories growing up were working alongside my siblings. Even though we fought sometimes, it was time spent together and those memories last forever. I hope my kids experience that too.”

Her husband Kevin also farms with his own family, meaning both of them understand the demands of agriculture. “Most people don’t realize we farm separately for our own families,” Megan explains. “But Kevin is very supportive of what I do.”

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Beyond the farm, Megan supports her children's local 4-H club, helping haul animals to fairs, hosting meetings, and storing equipment for the group.

Looking ahead, Megan is focused on continuing to improve the herd and the farm. "What excites me most about the future is continuing to grow, breeding better cows, and making more milk."

For young women considering agriculture, Megan offers simple advice. "Get into it. Get a job on a dairy farm and find a role model. Put the work in and you can do it. It's a great life to raise a family."

While being recognized as a Woman of the West is meaningful, Megan believes the recognition should also honour the women who came before her.

**"This is really about my mom. I wouldn't have this life without her."**

