

WestGen™

2026 WOMEN OF THE WEST



DANIELLE GROENENDIJK-WESTWOOD

GREENDIKE FARM | CHEMANIUS, BC

For Danielle Groenendijk-Westwood, dairy farming isn't just an occupation — it's the foundation of her upbringing, her education, and her future. Raised on her family's dairy farm on Vancouver Island, Greendike Farm, Danielle represents a new generation of women in agriculture: deeply rooted in tradition, driven by education, and inspired to lead with purpose.

Danielle's connection to agriculture began early. Growing up on the farm meant livestock, herd management, and hard work were simply part of everyday life. From helping with chores to participating in 4-H and WCC, she developed a strong appreciation for animal health and production agriculture. That early exposure shaped her path forward and ultimately led her to pursue a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine.

“From a young age, helping with chores and learning alongside my family sparked my passion for animal health and production agriculture.”

Her goal is clear: to support animal health while strengthening the agricultural industry she calls home.

When Danielle isn't in school, she is actively involved in the daily operations of the farm. Her responsibilities include milking, feeding, calf care, operating equipment, and closely monitoring herd health. She assists during herd health visits, helps implement treatment protocols, and supports breeding and reproductive performance.

Over time, her role has evolved from helping with basic tasks to contributing informed insights into herd health and management decisions. With her veterinary education, Danielle now brings a deeper understanding of disease prevention, treatment strategies, and animal welfare — making her a proactive and valued contributor to the farm's success.

“My family has been dairy farming on Vancouver Island since 1958, and I'm incredibly thankful I was able to grow up as part of that legacy.”

Danielle's family has been dairy farming on Vancouver Island since 1958, when her Oma and Opa purchased 140 acres of forest and swamp, living initially in a small two-room cabin. The first barn was built in 1960 using logs from the property, and cows were milked by hand before a parlour was added.



In 1993, Danielle's parents took over the operation and, by the early 2000s, began expanding with new barns and modern facilities. By 2006, the farm included a new milking parlour with automatic identification and milk recording technology. Danielle is deeply grateful to have grown up within this legacy and remains closely connected to the farm today.

Leadership has been a defining theme throughout Danielle's life. As a varsity volleyball captain and professional athlete in Norway, she developed strong communication, teamwork, and decision-making skills. Today, she continues to lead as an assistant coach for a women's varsity volleyball team.

Within agriculture, Danielle volunteers with the Cowichan 4-H Holstein Club, supporting youth through meetings and summer shows. She also helps organize educational experiences, sharing her passion for animal welfare and mentorship with the next generation.

"Volunteering with 4-H allows me to mentor youth and share my passion for animal welfare and agriculture."

One of the initiatives Danielle is most proud of is her family's commitment to sustainability. In 2021, the farm installed over 300 solar panels, harnessing full-day sunlight to generate renewable energy for their operation.

"It was exciting to see those panels go up. Knowing we're producing our own energy and thinking ahead for future generations means a lot."

Balancing school, farm life, and personal time is no small task, but Danielle embraces it. While school keeps her busy most of the year, returning home to the farm is something she genuinely looks forward to. Outside of farming, she enjoys dirt biking in the mountains, hiking, traveling, and exploring new cultures — often with her husband or family.

Her family's support has been unwavering, especially as she works toward becoming a veterinarian. They value her growing expertise and look forward to the expanded role she will play in animal health on the farm.

Beyond her local community, Danielle has also seen agriculture's global impact firsthand. In May 2025, she participated in a short-term mission trip to Pucallpa, Peru, with Christian Veterinary Mission, providing free veterinary care alongside local veterinarians. The experience reinforced her calling and highlighted how veterinary medicine can serve both animals and people across cultures.

Danielle is excited to complete her veterinary degree and contribute even more confidently to her family's operation. She looks forward to helping guide the farm through ongoing change, supporting innovation, and ensuring long-term success — while creating opportunities for her parents to enjoy more flexibility and well-earned time away.



“If you love it, don’t let anyone tell you that you can’t do it.”

Her message to young women considering a future in dairy is simple and powerful: go for it. “There’s a place for everyone in agriculture. Believe in your abilities — the dairy industry needs passionate, capable women to help shape its future.”

Being recognized during the International Year of the Woman Farmer holds deep meaning for Danielle. Farming has shaped who she is, and she is proud to stand alongside women whose dedication sustains farms and communities across Canada.

“This recognition highlights the important role women play in agriculture,” she reflects. “I’m thankful to be counted among the strong, hardworking women who help keep our farms thriving.”

