



## The Vander Zagg Family

Alliston, ON

### Farmer Profile – Ruth Vander Zaag, Alliston, ON

Being a woman in a male dominated farming industry has never been an issue for Alliston, Ontario's Ruth Vander Zaag. Like anyone, she's had to prove herself and has risen to every challenge thrown in her path. Being anything other than a farmer was never a question for Ruth, who comes from a family of five brothers and sisters. She is very much looking forward to being the one to take over the family business some day.

Originally from Holland with years of farming history in their blood, Vander Zaag's grandparents immigrated to Canada in the late 1940's and later bought a farm in Alliston. The Vander Zaag family quickly became avid potato farmers with Ruth's parents starting a farm in the early 1990's. Ruth's father, Peter, had previously worked as a consultant for the International Potato Centre and was stationed in the Philippines where Ruth was actually born. She came to Canada at the young age of five and has been hooked on farming ever since.

The Vander Zaag's have been supplying potatoes to Lay's for years. Ruth's grandfather worked closely with the brand and her parents quickly started a relationship upon arriving back in Alliston from the other side of the world. As a child, Ruth loved helping out on the farm and would even try to skip school so she could spend time riding on the tractors with her dad! She eventually went on to study business in college and has since chosen potato farming as her career path, something she now shares with her husband.

There's never a dull moment for Ruth, with a typical day on the farm involving everything from field work (when it's that time of year), to loading up the trailers that take the potatoes to the Lay's plant, to doing the paperwork that keeps the farm in order and running smoothly. What gets Ruth excited to get out of bed every day is the rewarding nature of potato farming. She loves seeing her hard work come to fruition – planting the potato seed, watching it grow and eventually shipping it off to Lay's to be produced into Canada's favourite potato chip brand.

Ruth's father is not only a farmer, but is involved with potato research. He is a potato breeder and develops new potato varieties that are better quality, bigger and last longer, you name it. Taking after her father, she might even try her hand at this someday as well. Needless to say, Ruth Vander Zaag has a very bright future ahead of her.

