



Department of  
Agriculture

John R. Kasich | Governor

David T. Daniels | Director

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**OHIO'S TOP CONSERVATION FARMERS HONORED**

*Winners Recognized during Farm Science Review*

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (Sep. 21, 2017) – The Ohio Department of Agriculture today recognized five families representing each region of the state as winners of the 2017 Conservation Farm Family Awards at the Farm Science Review in London. This was the 34th year of the awards program.

“Agriculture is a foundation on which our state was built, and conservation is an important key to maintaining this foundation,” said Ohio Department of Agriculture Director David Daniels. “Each of these award-winning families is doing their part not only to provide food, fiber and fuel for those around the world, but also to ensure their land can thrive and continue providing these necessities for generations to come.”

The five families honored were: The Rufenacht Family of Fulton County; Dale and Rita Daniels of Erie County; Wendell and Greg Waters of Coshocton County; Greg and Gary McGlinch of Darke County; and Jim and Denise Sherman of Delaware County.

“For 34 years we have been honoring families for their commendable work in conservation farming and each year we are amazed at the lengths to which they go on their farms,” said Kirk Hines, chief of the department’s Division of Soil and Water Conservation. “The best management practices these families have put into place benefit all Ohioans, and serve as an example of what individuals can do to protect our natural resources.”

Since 1984, the Conservation Farm Family Awards program has recognized 176 Ohio farm families for their exemplary efforts conserving soil, water, woodland, wildlife and other natural resources on the land they farm. Conservation farm families also host a variety of educational programs, opening their farms to schools, scout groups, farm organizations and others.

In addition to receiving \$400 each from the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, the families were also featured in the September issue of Ohio Farmer magazine and received plaques from ADS Hancor Inc. Ohio Farmer magazine has sponsored the Ohio Conservation Farm Family Awards since the program's inception. Nominations are sought annually between January and May, and Ohio farming families are encouraged to apply. For more information or to apply individuals can contact their local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD).

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***Photo Cutline: The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) recognized five Conservation Farm Family Awards winners at Farm Science Review on Thursday. Plaque winners (front row, left to right): Area 1 winner Rufenacht Family, Area 2 winner Daniels Family, Area 3 winner Waters Family, Area 4 winner McGlinch Family, Area 5 winner Sherman Family.***



*Serving Farmers and Protecting Consumers Since 1846*

***EDITORS NOTE: Profiles of the 2017 Conservation Farm Family Award Winners are below.***

**Area 1 Winner- The Rufenacht Family** owns 3,300 acres of row crops in Fulton and Henry counties, which includes the production of corn, soybeans and wheat and 3,200 head of Holstein beef. Conservation practices include the use of cover crops, filter strips, drainage water management and conservation tillage. The farm has been used to conduct county soil judging and has participated in on-farm research trials with OSU extension and Pioneer seeds. The farm has been host to OSU, Corn Growers International and local public officials. The Rufenacht Family has been cooperators with Fulton SWCD since 1991 and were named Cooperator of the year in 1991 and 2016.

**Area 2 Winner- Dale and Rita Daniels** have 300 acres in Huron and Erie counties used for the production of soybeans, wheat, corn and timber. Conservation practices include no-till, the use of cover crops, established filter strips between fields and systematically tilled 95 percent of farm ground. The farm has also been a certified tree farm for the past 25 years. The Daniels are two- time Erie County Cooperator and Stewardship award winners in 1990 and 2015. The Daniels Farm has hosted inner-city school students in an effort to teach about gardening. The farm has also been used for a variety of field days and educational events.

**Area 3 Winner- Wendell and Greg Waters** of WenMar Farms have more than 2,700 acres in Coshocton County. Major crops include corn and soybeans. WenMar Farms is home to a 3,500 sow-hog operation. The hog operation includes two sow facilities and a gilt development facility. WenMar Farms runs manure nutrient tests every year and tests soil every five years using a one acre grid system. WenMar Farms raises corn and soybeans using minimal tillage. They were named Coshocton Soil and Water Conservation Farmer of the Year award in 2007 and they have been cooperators with Coshocton SWCD for 47 years.

**Area 4 Winner- Greg and Gary McGlinch** have more than 450 acres in Darke County. Major crops include corn, soybeans, wheat and cereal rye. They also raise hogs, meat chickens and laying hens. The McGlinches use soil tests to monitor soil fertility and plan nutrient applications. The McGlinches have experimented with a variety of cover crops and have been cooperators with the Darke SWCD for 30 years. In addition to applying the manure from their own hogs and poultry, they work with nearby livestock producers to apply manure as fertilizer, keeping soil nutrient levels in the maintenance range.

**Area 5 Winner- Jim and Denise Sherman** farm 700 acres in Delaware and Morrow counties for the production of soybeans, corn, wheat and hay, plus pasture and woodlands. The farm includes a 22 head cow- calf herd and 177 acres have been accepted for the Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program under the Ohio Department of Agriculture. The farm is also registered as a Century Farm with the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Ohio Historic Family Farm program. Jim was a founding member of the Upper Big Creek Water Quality Partnership. Since 2004, USDA's Agricultural Research Service has been collecting water samples from drains on the farm as part of a long term study on water quality. In 2016, OSU researchers installed a woodchip bioreactor on the property. The Sherman family has cooperated with Delaware SWCD for over 41 years and in 2012 the family was named Outstanding cooperator of the year with the Delaware Soil and Water Conservation District.

