2019
YEAR IN REVIEW

Johnson Farms-South Dakota

Rominger Brothers Farms-California

LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD®
PRESENTED BY SAND COUNTY FOUNDATION

The farmers, ranchers and foresters who own and manage the majority of land in the United States hold the keys to meaningful environmental improvement. Sand County Foundation inspires and enables private landowners to exercise their individual responsibility to ethically manage the natural resources in their care.

In his book, *A Sand County Almanac,* renowned conservationist, landowner and scientist Aldo Leopold wrote, "the landscape of any farm is the owner's portrait of himself." Named in honor of Aldo Leopold, Sand County Foundation's Leopold Conservation Award Program recognizes farmers, ranchers, foresters and other landowners committed to improving natural resources while they produce food and fiber.

Working with partners and sponsors, Sand County Foundation presents the $10,000 award in settings that showcase landowners' conservation successes.

The award makes an impact by publicly recognizing extraordinary achievement in voluntary conservation. It inspires other landowners representing millions of acres, and influences the general public's understanding of the importance of private working land in conservation.

Their compelling stories become the basis for an active public information program that recognizes the environmental accomplishments of working farms, ranches and forests. These landowners truly encompass the American dream of creating a successful business while managing natural resources for the benefit of this and future generations.

Sand County Foundation and its many partners and sponsors actively seek others to become part of this important story. An award program of this stature could not exist without quality landowner nominees, and financial and in-kind contributions both large and small.

To learn more, visit www.leopoldconservationaward.org or contact Lance Irving at 608.729.1389, Lirving@sandcountyfoundation.org.

LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD®
PRESENTED BY SAND COUNTY FOUNDATION

Killam Duval County Ranch-Texas

"It is the individual farmer who must weave the greater part of the rug on which America stands." ***– Aldo Leopold***

Dear Friends,

A land ethic is the deeply held conviction that guides farmers, ranchers and foresters to do the right thing for soil, water and wildlife. It's a concept Aldo Leopold wrote about in *A Sand County Almanac*.

Sand County Foundation created the Leopold Conservation Award to recognize and celebrate a land ethic among landowners who are humbly aware that with each stroke of the axe they are writing their signature on the face of the land.

The diverse class of 2019 Leopold Conservation Award recipients demonstrates the many ways farmers, ranchers and foresters are benefitting the environment and their bottom line by embracing conservation practices.

But what exactly does a land ethic look like?

It's conserving water and soil while irrigating tomatoes in California. It's managing a forest in Connecticut. It's providing an oasis for birds and wildlife while grazing cattle in South Texas. A land ethic can be found in a fifth-generation rancher from Oklahoma and a self-described country doctor from Kentucky.

What's remarkable about these award-winning land stewards is that their impact doesn't stop at their property line. They host outreach events and mentor others who live down the road or overseas. Each recipient has achieved both economic and environmental success. That balancing act is what Sand County Foundation has been about for more than 50 years.

I'm proud to report that in 2019 we expanded the award program into Montana and the six states that make up New England. We'll recognize landowners in even more states in 2020, and will bring many of the 130 award alumni together at a symposium this August.

Your support deepens and expands the impact of this award program. Please join this movement by nominating a deserving family in your state, providing financial support, and sharing these stories with others.

Thank you,

Kevin McAleese
President and CEO
Sand County Foundation

LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD®
PRESENTED BY SAND COUNTY FOUNDATION

CALIFORNIA

ROMINGER BROTHERS FARMS

WINTERS, CALIFORNIA

▶ **Watch video of Rominger Brothers Farms**

Photos Paolo Vescia

Finalists

Burroughs Family Farms of Denair

Philip Verwey Farms of Hanford

Presented in Partnership with

Sustainable Conservation

California Farm Bureau Federation

Early adopters with can-do attitudes, Bruce and Rick Rominger are at the agricultural community's forefront when it comes to innovation and adaptability. They couple a willingness to take risks with a strong conservation ethic. In other words, these fifth-generation farmers are committed to growing crops and managing rangeland in ways that protect and enhance the environment.

The Romingers realize today's farm must be environmentally and economically sustainable. They achieve this balance while growing wine grapes, rice, wheat, processing tomatoes, safflower, corn, onions, sunflower, alfalfa and oat hay on 6,000 acres in Yolo County.

The Romingers understand the connection between improving their soil's health and feeding a growing planet. They build soil by planting cover crops, adding compost and utilizing crop residues. Cover crops are planted on hillside vineyards to minimize soil erosion and improve water quality. Sheep are grazed instead of using pesticides on some fields.

In addition to conserving water, they switched from surface irrigation to a buried drip system for their tomato crop to reduce soil erosion, produce fewer weeds, lower labor costs and increase yields. Tomatoes that yield 50 percent above average levels help fund other conservation practices.

To improve wildlife habitat, the Romingers have planted miles of hedgerows, and diverted irrigation water from rice fields to provide shorebird habitat. The hedgerows and a compost trial on processing tomatoes are monitored for research purposes.

With funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Romingers restored a 15-acre riparian corridor by planting native vegetation and installing fencing. A new cattle watering system, including a new well and solar-powered pump, provides wider distribution of drinking water for better grazing management on their rangeland.

The restored corridor connects a wetland with a blue oak woodland, a critical California habitat. More than 330 different wildlife species depend on oak woodlands to survive. The Romingers manage the area to reduce the threats of development, low survival of oak seedlings and Sudden Oak Death disease.

> "Just being an example for other people is important, so other farmers can come by and say, 'Look at what they planted at the edge of their field. I think that would be nice on my field too. I could do that.' "
>
> ***– Bruce Rominger***

The Romingers have also placed agriculture land easements on portions of the ranch to preserve forever their grazing and conservation values with the California Rangeland Trust and NRCS.

Bruce and Rick Rominger provide leadership to the farming community through one-on-one interaction with other growers, as presenters at workshops, and by hosting tours to diverse audiences, including youth. Both serve on various agriculture, water district and education boards.

Leopold Conservation Award®
Presented by Sand County Foundation

COLORADO

THE LIVINGSTON RANCH

STRATTON, COLORADO

▶ **Watch video of The Livingston Ranch**

Finalists

Off Ranches of Del Norte

Gregg, Chris and Brad Stults of Wray

Presented in Partnership with

Colorado Cattlemen's Association

Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Inc.

Agricultural conservation practices have given Mike and Julie Livingston and their land the resiliency to overcome adversity.

When Mike and Julie bought their ranch in 2003, its weed-filled landscape had been abused by years of over-grazing, severe erosion and drought. When rain did fall on barren spots of land, sediment would wash into nearby rivers.

"We had owned the property for three years, and each year we reduced our cow numbers because the grass wasn't recovering. What we were doing wasn't sustainable," Mike recalls.

Other challenges loomed on the ranch's horizon. In 2009 a multi-state lawsuit took away their access to water for irrigation, and three years later a historic drought took hold. Their backs against the wall, they enrolled in the Ranching for Profit School. Mike said the "life-changing experience" opened his mind to agricultural conservation practices like cover crops, no-till and planned grazing.

Not tilling the soil and keeping it covered year-round with specialty crops soon led to better rainwater utilization and less soil erosion and runoff. The soil's health rebounded as it retained organic matter left on the land as crop residue. This reduced the need for fertilizer, and resulted in higher yields from their wheat, milo, corn and hay fields.

Mike and Julie, along with their children Kari (Tyson) Reents and Justin (Kyla) Livingston, have also embraced conservation practices that benefit their beef cattle and create wildlife habitat.

They implemented a planned grazing system with assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Inefficient watering systems were replaced with 100,000 feet of new pipeline. Miles of new fencing replaced the configuration of 36 old pastures, with 136 pastures that are grazed less often. The extended rest period, coupled with planting cool season grasses meant two more months of green grass.

In addition to a 120-acre wildlife sanctuary the Livingstons created, hundreds of additional acres are left ungrazed from summer through winter to provide additional habitat for turkeys, prairie chickens, pheasants, bobcats, and herds of whitetail and mule deer. Hay fields are harvested with wildlife protection in mind, and cattle watering stations were designed for access and safety for birds, bats and other wildlife.

> "What makes this unique is Mike and Julie have embraced change to make a sustainable, profitable business by forming an alliance with Mother Nature."
>
> ***– Tyson Reents***

The Livingstons share what they've learned at their Kit Carson County ranch with fellow ranchers, academic researchers, business and youth groups.

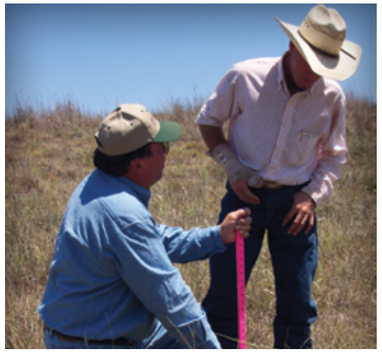
Through hard work, holistic management, and perseverance, the Livingstons have built a ranch that is sustainable for generations to come.

Leopold Conservation Award®
Presented by Sand County Foundation

KANSAS

TED ALEXANDER

SUN CITY, KANSAS



▶ Watch video of Ted Alexander

Finalists

Vance and Louise Ehmke of Healy

Dwane Roth of Manhattan

Z Bar Ranch of Lake City

Presented in Partnership with

Ted Alexander took over the Skinner Family Ranch in 1984. The young rancher was challenged with making a business out of overgrazed land covered with invasive Eastern Red Cedar trees.

His goal of maximizing production and maintaining economic viability while existing harmoniously with nature would guide him in making the ranch environmentally and economically sustainable.

Beef cattle were raised with a rotational grazing system and new piping delivered their drinking water. Thousands of acres of cedars were cut or burned. Such ideas were not widely embraced at the time. Yet his vision for the landscape not only took root, it flourished.

Rotational grazing allowed him to increase the size of his herd, while bolstering the sandy soil's ability to handle what Mother Nature threw at it. Fewer cedar trees meant less competition for water and sunlight, which stimulated the growth of desirable forages and improved water quality in creeks. With an improved water cycle, springs and intermittent streams that had been dry for decades began to flow again.

After attending a ranch management course, Ted developed and implemented one of the first written drought plans for a Kansas ranch. Today, his management style continues to evolve with his son, Brian. They've embraced conservation practices that help the ranch's profitability, soil health, water quality and wildlife habitat.

Nearly half of all known reptile and amphibian species in Kansas are found on the ranch, including the threatened red spotted toad. Rare species from pallid bats and Arkansas darters to Lesser Prairie-Chickens have all made a comeback on the ranch. Ecological diversity is thriving as well. Researchers have documented more than 160 plants on Alexander Ranch (compared to an average of 100 or fewer on other area ranches). Alexander Ranch has displayed resiliency since being scorched by a 2016 wildlife that burned 450,000 acres in Barber County.

> "We've demonstrated we can manage our fires for the betterment of the range. That's how this range developed, with periodic fire."
>
> ***– Ted Alexander***

Ted mentors university students and young ranchers, and was a founding member of the Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition and Kansas Prescribed Fire Council. He was instrumental in forming the rancher-led, Comanche Pool Prairie Resource Foundation, dedicated to the improvement of native prairies while maintaining the economic viability of ranches in the Red Hills. He received the National Private Lands Stewardship Award from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in 2011.

It is for his outreach efforts while successfully balancing the needs of the soil, water, livestock and wildlife in his care that he receives the Leopold Conservation Award.

LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD®
PRESENTED BY SAND COUNTY FOUNDATION

KENTUCKY

DR. JAMES W. MIDDLETON

MUNFORDVILLE, KENTUCKY

▶ Watch video of Dr. James W. Middleton

Finalists

F.L. Sipes Farm of Ekron

JRS Angus Farm of Lawrenceburg

Presented in Partnership with

"My whole life is centered around my love affair with Hart County. I have spent my life taking care of the people (as a country doctor) and the land (as a farmer)," says Dr. James W. Middleton.

In the five decades since he took the reins of his family farm, he has improved the health of thousands of highly-sensitive acres along the Green River. Successful farming and conservation along one of North America's most ecologically-important river corridors required an ability to adapt, experiment and innovate.

Embracing the conservation ethic passed down to him, in high school he took steps to address the farm's chestnut blight scourge. He utilized computer modeling to assess better uses for land at the dawn of that technology.

Reading the tea leaves of the farm economy, he exited the dairy business to begin raising Polled Hereford beef cattle on pastures. Likewise, Dr. Middleton decided to grow high-quality hardwood timber as tobacco's prominence as a cash crop faded.

He improved and expanded the timber plantings his parents began in the 1950s. New trees and native grasses provided erosion control on hillsides and the river banks.

Dr. Middleton says abandoning tobacco and other row crops, for pastures, forests and hay fields was the best thing he could do for his land and the Green River. He worked with conservation partners to stop the threat of invasive plant species, and reestablish rare and endangered species on land and in the water. He planted 220 acres with vegetation to attract pollinator insects, birds and wildlife.

The changes to the farm were environmentally and economically beneficial.

Timber sales from managed forests over the past 30 years have totaled more than 1.8 million board-feet. Hay is sold to other livestock owners. Fees from hunting leases net more revenues than his last tobacco crop did in 2005, and the hunters also help the local economy.

Dr. Middleton has donated conservation easements including five parcels of land that cover 115 acres and more than two miles of river frontage. Since then, he and farm employees help nurture the more than 100,000 hardwood trees that have been planted on the land.

"My whole life is centered around my love affair with Hart County. I have spent my life caring for the people and the land."

– Dr. James W. Middleton

When not improving his community's health as a physician, Dr. Middleton has made a mark with his commitment to farm conservation practices, water quality, wildlife habitat, and providing outdoor recreation opportunities for others.

The self-described country doctor is also a conservationist in the truest Leopold tradition.

MISSOURI

BRINKER FARMS

AUXVASSE, MISSOURI

Finalists

Oetting Homestead Farms of Concordia

Joshlin and Addie Yoder of Leonard

Presented in Partnership with

Missouri Farmers Care

Missouri Soybeans

USDA United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service

Brinker Farms shows how a modern pork and row-crop farm can protect the soil, water and air, while caring for livestock and wildlife.

The Brinkers were one of the nation's first farm families to adopt the National Pork Board's Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan program, but their conservation journey began long before.

When Kenny and his wife, Susan, relocated to a Callaway County farm in 1993 it presented an opportunity to design new hog facilities, but came with environmental challenges.

To protect water quality, funding from the federal Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) helped construct more than 40 grass waterways, 10 miles of terraces and tile outlets. Variable-rate technology reduces their risk of over applying crop nutrients and helps optimize plant uptake and prevent runoff. Their annual well tests for nitrates and other contaminants document a safe water supply for humans and hogs.

No-till practices on their corn and soybean fields also improved soil health and water quality. However, soil tests confirmed that some of their fields lacked the nutrients needed to grow crops. With EQIP funding for irrigation equipment, nutrients from a manure storage lagoon are distributed to hundreds of acres of cropland, reducing input costs for fertilizer.

When designing their hog facilities, the manure lagoon's storage capacity was built to safeguard against an excessively wet year. Timber stands surround the hog buildings to mitigate odor drift and provide wildlife habitat.

Cereal rye planted to provide year-round ground cover has improved the soil's infiltration rate. The Brinkers, who farm with their children, are working with the University of Missouri-Columbia and Montgomery County Extension on a study that examines soybean yield differences when planted into fields where the rye is standing, or recently terminated.

The abundance of rye is part of the reason the farm's deer population has flourished. The Brinkers developed a plan to enhance the quality of the whitetail deer herd with a state deer biologist. Their crop fields are bordered with more than 30 acres of warm season grasses, alfalfa and forbs. Another six acres of food plots of wheat, clover, sunflowers and grain crops are planted to provide habitat for quail and rabbits.

> "Once we started using the cover crops, we really noticed the increase in soil health and the absorption of the ground to hold water better, and the water infiltrates easier."
>
> ***– Kenny Brinker***

The farm once had a neglected wet area where 300 acres drained to one spot. The Brinkers worked with soil conservationists to design a dam that would replace the steep gully that had formed. It created a six-acre wetland that attracts beavers, muskrat, ducks and geese.

The Brinker's business model has a focus on their farrow-to-finish operation, Harrison Creek Farms, as well as processing and marketing Brinker Farms Pork.

The Brinkers welcome fellow pork producers from around the globe to demonstrate how technological advancements position modern pork production operations as a model for environmental stewardship.

Harrison Creek Farms received the National Pork Board/National Hog Farmer's Environmental Steward of the Year Award in 2006.

Leopold Conservation Award® Presented by Sand County Foundation

MONTANA

MILTON RANCH

ROUNDUP, MONTANA

Finalists

Doug Crabtree and
Anna Jones-Crabtree of Havre

Craig and Conni French of Malta

Presented in Partnership with

Bill and Dana Milton raise cattle on Montana's sagebrush plains. Together, they show their conservation ethic with land management practices that build their rangeland's resilience.

Bill studied conservation courses at the University of California - Berkeley under a professor and wildlife biologist named Starker Leopold, the son of Aldo Leopold. Today, raising Angus cattle on 15,000 acres, the Miltons have refined their conservation efforts since receiving the Montana Land Reliance Conservation Award in 1993. Their pastures are intensively grazed for a short amount of time, before allowing native plants to recover and go to seed. They have successfully advocated for holistic grazing techniques on federal lands.

Milton Ranch has participated in third party monitoring of the health of their grasslands for over 20 years. To preserve soil and vegetation during times of drought, they voluntarily reduce their herd's size. New water tanks and pipelines reduce disturbance to riparian areas and natural water sources. Innovative fencing and escape ramps in water troughs benefit wildlife.

"Bill and Dana are outstanding examples of the diversity that exists among the people who raise livestock in the American West," Dan Dagget wrote in his book, *Beyond the Rangeland Conflict: Toward a West that Works.* "At the same time, they're excellent examples of the diversity to be found among people who call themselves environmentalists. The Miltons have not only stood on both sides of that fence but they've also spent much of their adult lives trying to build bridges across it."

In 2005 the Miltons had the opportunity to purchase the remaining acreage of a ranch they had partially purchased in 1979. They sold their original ranch and moved their headquarters to the center of their acreage. They also made the switch from sheep to beef cattle, and joined a marketing cooperative that helps sell their hormone and antibiotic-free beef. Trained in facilitation, conflict resolution, and ranch succession planning, Bill began a consulting business informed by his experience in resiliency.

> "There's sort of a revolution going on that actually agriculture can play a huge role in carbon sequestration by improving what's going on under the ground."
>
> ***– Bill Milton***

Bill's facilitation of meetings for water users from the Musselshell River in the 1990s helped lead to the formation of the Musselshell Watershed Coalition, an ongoing partnership between irrigators, conservation districts, and state and federal agencies to serve water users while supporting the health of the river and its tributaries.

The Miltons work with local groups dedicated to enhancing the health of grass-based agriculture and rural communities. Bill also organized a group of 20 area residents who are passionate about improving their owned and leased land. Together they have conducted rangeland vegetation evaluations, soil testing and bird surveys.

Bill's environmental and community stewardship earned him the Western Landowners Alliance's Land and Livelihood Award in 2019.

NEBRASKA

BROKEN BOX RANCH

MOOREFIELD, NEBRASKA

▶ Watch video of Broken Box Ranch

Presented in Partnership with

I AM A FAN

The Nebraska Environmental Trust
preserving NATURAL NEBRASKA™ for future generations

Cargill

The Sundstroms are land stewards committed to productive, restorative and sustainable conservation practices on one of Nebraska's biologically unique landscapes. The native prairie rangelands, hardwood trees, flowering plants, and abundant wildlife found on their ranch in the Loess Canyons are testaments to their conservation ethic.

The soil beneath the scenic, hilly landscape is highly-erodible. However, their proactive use of prescribed burning and innovate grazing techniques have nursed back the once-tired pastures and cropland that they bought from others. Productive rangeland with diverse vegetation results in quality forage for their beef cattle, and provides an oasis for wildlife including more than 250 species of birds.

Not only has Russ removed hundreds of acres of invasive cedar trees from his Broken Box Ranch, but he and his brother, Neil, cooperate and educate neighbors on conservation land management issues. They volunteer with the Loess Canyons Prescribed Burn Association, a landowner-led effort to burn invasive species from the rugged canyon landscape.

Russ is a skillful grazing manager who uses an innovative style of rotational grazing of his beef cattle. He intensely grazes an area to rid it of invasive species. This welcomes native vegetation to return to the landscape during the year-long rest period that follows. Intensive grazing around an area designated for a burn also reduces the risk of fire escape.

When Broken Box Ranch was accepted recently as a Rangeland Health Demonstration Ranch, it was further evidence of Russ' leadership and innovation. He will be responsible for collecting data and monitoring effects of various management strategies and their impacts on wildlife, beef production, and soil and plant health. This community-driven landowner will then share his findings through public access and tours of the property.

> "His commitment to stewardship and his conservation ethic, from what I've seen as a private lands biologist, is second to none."
>
> ***– Andy Moore***
> ***Private Lands Wildlife Biologist,***
> ***Pheasants Forever***

Russ and wife Angela, and daughter Cheyenne, share large swaths of their ranch with the public through its enrollment in the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission's Open Fields and Waters Program. Public hunting access provides wildlife population management of turkey, deer, quail and elk, while other areas are managed for endangered species. In addition, they have established 20 acres of flowering pollinator habitat for bees and butterflies. Sometimes conservation success comes from what you don't do to the landscape. They do not aerially apply herbicides or insecticides out of concern that it will kill non-target species. Instead, they spot spray for noxious weeds.

Russ has a sharp pencil when it comes to knowing the economic impacts of his decisions on his business. His tireless devotion to leaving the landscape better than he found it is making a positive impact on his ranch and far beyond the Loess Canyons.

LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD®
PRESENTED BY SAND COUNTY FOUNDATION

NEW ENGLAND

HULL FOREST PRODUCTS

POMFRET CENTER, CONNECTICUT

Finalists

Guy Choiniere of Highgate Center, Vermont

Steve and Lora Goss of Pike, New Hampshire

Perry Raso of South Kingstown, Rhode Island

Linda Rinta of West Wareham, Massachusetts

Presented in Partnership with

75 YEARS NEW ENGLAND FORESTRY FOUNDATION

American Farmland Trust

Bill Hull showed an affinity for trees in his childhood Rhode Island backyard. By the age of 15 he convinced a local farmer to lend him the money to purchase a forest. He paid off the loan (with interest) two years later, and was on his way to becoming one of New England's leading foresters.

While earning a forestry degree at the University of New Hampshire, Hull got his start in the lumber business sawing white oaks into barrel staves on an old-fashioned circular sawmill. Despite market downturns and collapses, bankruptcy scares, and several devastating fires, he bootstrapped a tiny business into the largest sawmill in southern New England. Today, Hull Forest Products manufactures more than 10 million board feet of lumber into sustainable building materials each year.

With a business dependent on healthy, productive forests, he launched a woodland management division staffed with licensed foresters to help other landowners keep their woodlands intact by providing them a viable financial return.

He's acquired more than 27,000 acres of forestland with a single-minded dedication for conserving working forests that provide bird and wildlife habitat and biodiversity across New England.

Hull Forest Products is a family of forestland owner-investors working in the combined fields of forest management, timber harvesting, and wood products manufacturing and marketing.

Hull credits his rural background with teaching him that growing and harvesting trees helps the environment through increased wildlife habitat, improved air and water quality, and carbon sequestration. He has voluntarily placed conservation easements on 90 percent of his southern New England forests.

The Hull family has permanently protected 27,740 acres of forestland through their land trust, Hull Forestlands. By removing the possibility of development, it ensures that working forests will remain a source of timber for generations to come. These unique and environmentally important landscapes are home to wetlands, streams, and forests that sustain drinking water supplies for urban areas, and provide habitat for migratory waterfowl.

"Aldo Leopold pointed out in *A Sand County Almanac* the idea of cutting wood and slicing through the annual rings, cutting through time and memory. That's a really good analogy for our business. We are working every day with a resource that's only here because of the people who came before us, who created the conditions for these trees to grow and prosper."

– Mary Hull
Daughter and Co-Owner of Hull Forest Products

In 2000, Hull Forestlands participated in the largest private land protection project in Massachusetts history by permanently preserving more than 8,000 acres of working forestland.

LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD®
PRESENTED BY SAND COUNTY FOUNDATION

NORTH DAKOTA

GENE AND CHRISTINE GOVEN

TURTLE LAKE, NORTH DAKOTA

▶ **Watch video of Gene and Christine Goven**

Finalists

Joe and Patty Breker of Havana

HJ (Chip) and Ann Fischer of Rhame

Presented in Partnership with

When it comes to agricultural conservation, Gene Goven is a trailblazer.

He displayed courage in his convictions as he adopted regenerative farming and ranching practices -- decades before they were embraced by the mainstream.

His careful observations of the landscape, livestock and wildlife, informed his farming practices. Today, the positive results of his innovations are clear on the land he purchased in 1967. So is the impact his leadership has had on farmers, ranchers, researchers and educators near and far.

Gene credits his father and grandfather with teaching him the benefits of growing companion crops like clover to "retain armor on the soil." Companion cropping is seeding a mixture of cover crops with traditional cash crops. By keeping continuous cover on the ground, the soil is fed additional nutrients, erosion is reduced, water infiltration is increased, and beneficial insects are provided with habitat.

Even when such practices made him ineligible to receive crop insurance payments, he persevered. He also was an advocate for grazing livestock on public grasslands amid a growing movement against it. He convinced many wildlife managers that using livestock as a grassland management tool benefits wildlife.

As a founding member and past chair of the North Dakota Grazing Land Coalition, Gene calls grazing an art and science. As he embraced holistic ranch management in the 1980s, he saw that managing for healthy grasslands would provide his cattle the quality feed they need.

He installed cross fencing, watering systems, and planned grazing rotations that benefitted cattle and wildlife.

Goven Ranch is home to some of the best rangelands and prairie pothole wetlands in North America. As a result, he received financial assistance from Ducks Unlimited for installation of water pipeline and tanks, which kept cattle out of waterways.

Gene discovered grazing cattle on cover crops built his cropland's soil health while reducing his input costs, which increased his bottom line. For years he took the time to monitor regrowth rates of pastures, native grass and forb species diversity, infiltration rates and organic matter levels on rangeland and cropland. This led him to collaborate with North Dakota State University and other government and private research agencies to interpret and share the results of his observations.

> "I firmly believe we are no healthier than our soil is."
>
> ***– Gene Goven***

Gene and his wife Christine have engaged in extensive community outreach, including hosting an annual event on the ranch to help expose North Dakota youth to the importance of grasslands.

Gene provides guidance to others on the importance of soil health, and how cover crops and livestock play a vital role in cropping systems. Perhaps the only thing more impressive than their dedication to their land, is their commitment to sharing what they've learned on a 50-year journey in agricultural conservation.

LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD®
PRESENTED BY SAND COUNTY FOUNDATION

OKLAHOMA

CHUCK & RUTH COFFEY & FAMILY

SPRINGER, OKLAHOMA

Photos Rob Mattson

Finalist

Victor Ranch of Afton

Presented in Partnership with

Chuck and Ruth Coffey are a driving force behind Oklahoma's emerging land stewardship movement.

The fifth-generation ranchers, who obtained rangeland ecology degrees and married in 1986, share a desire to protect, conserve and regenerate natural resources for future generations. They settled in south central Oklahoma, where Chuck was Murray State College's Agriculture Director before accepting a position with what would become the Noble Research Institute. In addition to advising fellow ranchers and farmers on pasture and range issues, he co-authored two books on plant identification before retiring in 2013.

Chuck is described as a "fearless pioneer" in trying new things that will protect soil and grass, and is widely known for his generosity in sharing time and knowledge to benefit others.

The Coffey's three children, Aaron, Seth and Sarah, are involved in the family's 30,000-acre cattle ranch in the Arbuckle Mountains. Cooperating with state and local agencies on innovative grazing strategies has sped up the return of perennial grasses to their landscape. In addition to providing the forage for their herd of 800 to 1,000 beef cows, the ground cover provides wildlife habitat, adequate fuel for prescribed fires, and reduces soil erosion from wind and water. Their grazing strategies have improved the ranch's profitability by lowering labor, equipment, fuel and feed costs.

Coffey Ranch regularly hosts tours on soil health, brush control, wildlife management, water development and distribution, and how coupling grazing management and prescribed fires promotes biodiversity. The goal of the tours is to inspire others to see the importance of managing livestock, wildlife and environment as one big system.

Partnering on conservation projects with the Noble Research Institute, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and Oklahoma State University, allows the Coffeys to stay current with the latest agricultural innovations and technologies.

Passionate about improving Oklahoma's water quality and quantity issues, the Coffeys have developed 20 solar wells since the 2011 drought.

> "The grass is coming back really well, and I see lots of wildlife. The cattle are all doing well, so I feel like it's just a great sustainable environment."
>
> ***– Ruth Coffey***

Between 5,000 and 10,000 acres are burned annually to control the encroachment of juniper trees onto pastures of native grasses. Experiments with prescribed burnings during the summer have shown great promise of regenerating the land. The largest trees are left on the grasslands to create a savannah effect that provides shade for the cattle.

Chuck serves as chair of the National Cattlemen's Beef Board, and is a past director for the Oklahoma Society for Range Management. Ruth is president of the Oklahoma Cattlewomen's Association. Their children serve their community as well, including leadership roles with the Arbuckle Rangeland Restoration Association.

PENNSYLVANIA

MT-GLEN FARMS

COLUMBIA CROSS ROADS, PENNSYLVANIA

Finalists

Glen Cauffman of Millerstown

Troy Firth of Spartansburg

Presented in Partnership with

The Heinz Endowments
Howard Heinz Endowment
Vira I. Heinz Endowment

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau

When it comes to cows and conservation, Mt-Glen Farms is known for quality. Just as families of prized Holsteins have produced superior genetics, a strong conservation ethic has been passed down among the farm's owners.

Dean and Rebecca Jackson's herd of high-quality dairy cows is internationally known within the registered cattle industry. Sales of their offspring has benefited the farm's bottom line while improving the Holstein breed's bloodlines. Mt-Glen Farms is also a place where conservation and production agriculture have been inseparable for three generations.

Dean's grandfather, Scott Jackson, began farming amid the scenic hills of Bradford County in 1929. He practiced contour strip cropping, planted trees and hedgerows, built surface water diversions, and preserved habitat for wildlife after developing the farm's first conservation plan.

After Dean's father Ben took over the farm, he voluntarily constructed a manure storage facility that allowed him to efficiently use manure nutrients to grow crops while protecting water quality by limiting the need to spread manure during the winter. Like father like son, Dean built heifer housing with enough capacity to provide the same flexibility needed for proper manure management.

As he gained greater awareness of the importance of soil structure and the negative effects of compaction from tires, Dean began changing the way he farmed.

Motivated to farm in a way that mimics the natural system, he adopted a no-till system for crop production and implemented a rotational grazing system on 20 acres of pasture. Trees were planted on 40 acres near a creek. The riparian area provides habitat for wildlife and space for runoff to infiltrate. He says these changes have "made farming fun all over again."

Dean showed leadership by adopting a nutrient management plan in the 1990s, even though it was only required of Pennsylvania's largest livestock farms. Every crop field at Mt-Glen Farms is surrounded by a permanent grass border to prevent soil erosion, and is regularly soil sampled to evaluate its nutrient needs. In recent years, the Jacksons have planted rye grass as a cover crop into standing fields of corn and soybeans. This conservation tool improves soil health, prevents erosion and naturally controls weeds.

> "I want to give back somehow; try to mentor or tutor. Whatever I can do to help people catch the fever of conservation."
>
> ***– Dean Jackson***

Dean has been described as having a contagious enthusiasm for agricultural conservation. Last spring another 2,000 tree seedlings were planted on the farm. Two-thirds of the farm's energy needs come from a solar energy array on a machinery shed's roof.

All three of Dean and Rebecca's children are involved with the farm, including daughter Katie who is the full-time herd manager. The Jacksons regularly host groups from 4-H clubs to legislative leaders who want to learn how conservation can work alongside production agriculture. The family behind Mt-Glen Farms have emerged as conservation and dairy industry leaders who simply love what they do.

Leopold Conservation Award®
Presented by Sand County Foundation

SOUTH DAKOTA

JOHNSON FARMS

FRANKFORT, SOUTH DAKOTA

Finalists

Bien Ranch of Veblen

Blair Brothers Angus Ranch of Vale

Hefner Ranch of Whitewood

Presented in Partnership with

South Dakota Cattlemen's Association

South Dakota Grassland Coalition

Crop prices are uncertain, and available farmland is scarce. Agricultural conservation practices and raising cattle make the Johnsons more efficient, without buying more land.

Alan and Mickie Johnson, with their son Brian and his wife Jamie, farm 1,800 acres of cropland and 500 acres of grassland in Spink County. The farm's roots trace back to 160 acres that Alan's Swedish immigrant grandfather homesteaded more than a century ago. The Johnsons use a mix of old school practices and modern technology to leave the land in better shape for the next generation.

Alan adopted no-till farming practices in 1986. Back then, abandoning the plow, disk and cultivator was much against the norm. Despite what the neighbors thought, Alan saw that tilling a field to rid it of weeds was also depleting it of moisture. By mid-summer if rain was scarce, crops suffered.

By coupling no-till practices with cover crops, the Johnsons have improved water infiltration and soil health, making the land more productive than when homesteaders first broke it open.

The Johnsons also find that a diverse rotation of their corn, soybean, wheat, oat, and barley crops, and leaving crop residue in place, minimizes agricultural runoff, naturally eases pest management, and provides wildlife habitat. To further address soil erosion and salinity problems, the Johnsons enrolled land in the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service's Conservation Stewardship Program.

Realizing that different areas of each field have varying productivity, the Johnsons switched to a variable-rate fertilizer system in 2004. Applying the precise amount of nutrients on the soil saves time and natural resources, and delivers a better return on investment. Since the switch, the Johnsons have won a yield contest held by the South Dakota Soybean Association.

The Johnsons raise a herd of Angus beef cattle. Whenever possible, the herd is allowed to graze on mature cover crops and corn stubble creating a cooperative relationship between the cattle and the land. The cover crops provide feed, and the cattle naturally fertilize the soil with their waste.

> "We do what we do because it works for us, and we think it's sustainable and the right thing to do. We want to be able to pass it along and keep doing the right thing, learning as we go."
>
> ***– Brian Johnson***

Grazing used to mean turning the cattle out to pasture for the summer and bringing them home in the fall. It was easy, but it took a toll on the quality and variety of the grass. The Johnsons now rotationally graze their cattle and closely monitor grazing conditions and the timing of their calving season.

They admit that managing grass and cattle requires additional time, but the results are healthier land and a stronger bottom line.

Leopold Conservation Award® Presented by Sand County Foundation

TEXAS

KILLAM DUVAL COUNTY RANCH

FREER, TEXAS

▶ Watch video of Killam Duval County Ranch

Photos Chase A. Fountain

Presented in Partnership with

TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

Vision and hard work have transformed a once-abused rangeland into a profitable cattle ranch with a healthy ecosystem and flourishing wildlife populations.

David Killam purchased Killam Duval County Ranch in 1993. He implemented wildlife management strategies across its 125,000 acres straddling Duval and Webb counties. It's an area with less-productive soil, sensitive to drought and overgrazing. To recover from decades of heavy-continuous cattle grazing, the land was given a rest.

Killam hired David Kitner as the ranch manager in 2001. Bringing nearly three decades of experience, he instituted a detailed plan for the ranch that has benefited the landscape and wildlife, while maximizing economic returns.

As cattle returned to the ranch and business resumed, the health of the land continued to improve. The herd promoted healthy wildlife habitats and better range conditions by stimulating the ground as they grazed.

A rotational grazing system (with long periods of rest for the pastures) coupled with prescribed burns, mechanical treatments, and targeted chemical applications have turned once-bare, non-productive soils into thriving, diverse native plant communities.

The improved ground cover and a diversity of brush species, has improved wildlife habitat and water infiltration rates. Additional watering locations across the ranch benefit deer populations. To share these successes with others in the industry, the ranch hosts events for the South Texas Grazing Lands Coalition and other groups.

Deer hunting offers another source of ranch revenue. Harvest guidelines emphasize the taking of mature bucks and proper herd management based on Texas Parks and Wildlife Department recommendations. Detailed harvest data is collected and analyzed, with results presented to hunters at an annual wildlife seminar.

Home to many unique habitats, the Bordas Escarpment transects the ranch. Hundreds of miles south of their normal distribution, fiveminute grass, yellow stonecrop, evergreen sumac, and redberry juniper have been found there.

"This land is going to be here long after we're gone. To have a positive impact and carry it forward to future generations in better shape than it was when I got here is extremely important to me. I love it. That's part of my passion for the land."

– David Kitner
Ranch Manager

Native grasses were successfully planted near the pipelines and oilfields that dot the ranch.

The ranch has turned a profit for 18 years, with revenues derived from wildlife and cattle interests. All improvements to habitat and infrastructure were funded from wildlife and cattle income. All management decisions at Killam Duval County Ranch are made with economics in mind, but the health and quality of the range take precedent over short-term economic gains.

LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD®
PRESENTED BY SAND COUNTY FOUNDATION

UTAH

JY FERRY & SON, INC.

CORINNE, UTAH

▶ **Watch video of JY Ferry & Son, Inc.**

Finalists

Half Circle Cross Ranch of Coalville

Ferril and Dorothy Heaton Family LLC of Alton

Presented in Partnership with

Utah Farm Bureau Federation

WESTERN AgCredit

UTAH Cattlemen's Association — HEART OF THE WEST

The Ferry family's land ethic has conserved Utah's natural resources for more than a century.

John Y. Ferry came to northern Utah in 1900 and bought the land that would become JY Ferry & Son, Inc. The cattle-ranching family helped form the Bear River Valley's first drainage district in the early 1900s. Today, brothers John and Ben Ferry, and John's son Joel, embrace land management practices that improve soil health, water efficiency and wildlife habitat on 3,200 acres of irrigated farmland, 15,000 acres of wetlands and 20,000 acres of rangeland.

The Ferrys removed invasive species along the Bear River before contouring and re-vegetating its banks. They've fenced their cattle away from sensitive riparian areas, and relocated a riverside feed yard with capacity for 400 cattle away from the river. With assistance from the Utah Department of Environmental Quality, 600 feet of Bear River streambed has been restored.

To reduce erosion and improve water retention, they plant cover crops and use conservation tillage and no-till practices on their corn and wheat fields. Water efficiency has increased by laser-leveling more than 2,000 acres of farmland and pasture, and installing a new irrigation storage system with 15,000 feet of earthen irrigation ditches. They have also removed several hundred acres of saltcedar trees, which lower the water table and create large deposits of salt in the soil.

The Ferrys host Utah State University research on the impacts of grazing and cover crops on soil health. They have also demonstrated the environmental and economic benefits of grazing cattle on wetlands that become overrun by phragmites. They discovered their cattle will eat phragmites, a tall and dense invasive grass that crowds out beneficial native plants. Rather than burning or spraying the phragmites with chemicals, cattle naturally increase the diversity of desirable wetland plants and improve wildlife habitat by eating phragmites.

Federal and state agencies have observed the synergistic benefits of grazing wetlands, and for the past six years the Ferrys have grazed 1,200 head of cattle on public wetlands. This has led to a sustainable rehabilitation and improvement of thousands of acres of prime state and federal wetlands.

> "A farm and ranch's greatest resource is the land. If you take care of the land, the land will take care of you. As a manager of this resource, you have to be able to see what is the best use of the land. The land will tell you. All you have to do is listen."
>
> ***– John Ferry***

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) assisted the Ferrys with control structures that move their runoff water into restored wetlands. The family voluntarily placed 750 acres of wetland and upland under USFWS conservation easements. The Ferrys own, graze or farm on each of the multiple properties that make up 150,000 contiguous acres of prime wetlands under coordinated conservation management.

LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD®
PRESENTED BY SAND COUNTY FOUNDATION

WISCONSIN

LAKE FAMILY FARMS

BOYCEVILLE, WISCONSIN

▶ **Watch video of Lake Family Farms**

Finalists

Bill Ciolkosz of Thorp

John and Dorothy Priske of Fall River

Presented in Partnership with

Jeff Lake is sentimental about conservation.

He wants to preserve his "childhood luxury" of clean water to drink, swim and fish in. He's a self-described borrower: Borrowing Mother Nature's resources to make a living as a fifth-generation farmer, and borrowing his ancestors' land in hopes his children will farm it someday.

Lake Family Farm was a dairy farm until Jeff's father retired in 1999. Jeff and Kelly Lake and children, April and Jake, grow corn, soybeans and alfalfa to feed a small herd of beef cattle. By embracing innovative management and conservation practices, they are improving their soil's health, protecting water quality, and creating wildlife habitat, while bolstering the farm's bottom line.

Jeff's eyes were opened to modern land stewardship strategies at a local farmer-led watershed committee meeting. Farm biologists were promoting a software that identifies a farm's unprofitable and environmentally-sensitive areas, and helps guide decisions on alternative uses that can prevent erosion and cut costs. It made him look at his land differently.

Precision technology helps make each of his 1,500 acres the best it can be. Variable-rate planting and spraying have cut his seed and fertilizer costs. In addition to perennial borders that surround his fields, unprofitable areas now provide habitat for deer, pheasants, turkey, insect pollinators and Monarch butterflies. These efforts earned him the first Precision Ag Farmer of the Year Award presented at the National Pheasant and Quail Classic in 2018.

Lake has worked with conservation agencies to care for his farmland by installing buffer strips and adopting a no-till system.

He planted a diverse mix of cover crops on sandy soils that were prone to surface runoff and leaching. The ground cover maintains topsoil by preventing erosion from rain and wind. Cover crops also increase the soil's organic matter and capture leached nitrates before reaching ground water.

To improve water quality, especially in the nearby Hay River, Lake takes soil samples to ensure his limited use of fertilizer is appropriate. It's a strategy that is productive, profitable and environmentally responsible.

> "Jeff is an ag-vocate. He is spreading the word to his family, friends and neighbors. He has used his communication skills to get other guys to look at no-till, cover crops, and to increase the use of buffers."
>
> ***– John Sippl***
> ***District Conservationist, NRCS***

Lake lists the education of others as the most important conservation practice that he undertakes. He opens his farm to research by agencies and college students. The University of Wisconsin-River Falls has researched the nitrogen efficiency of his corn, and the UW Discovery Farms project has researched surface water phosphate levels. He has hosted events for his local farmer-led watershed committee to help the general public understand what farmers are doing to ensure safe food and a healthy environment.

LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD®
PRESENTED BY SAND COUNTY FOUNDATION

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Sustainable Conservation

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California LCA Recipient Alumni

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Colorado Cattlemen's Association

Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust

Tri-State Generation & Transmission Association

USDA NRCS

Gates Family Foundation

The Stanko Ranch

American AgCredit

McDonald's

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Kansas Association of Conservation Districts

Ranchland Trust of Kansas

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ITC Great Plains

Kansas Department of Agriculture's Division of Conservation

Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism

Kansas Forest Service

McDonald's

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USDA NRCS

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Kentucky Department of Agriculture

Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources

Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation

Kentucky Pork Producers

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Kentucky Tree Farm Committee

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MISSOURI

Missouri Farmers Care

Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council

Missouri Soybean Association

USDA NRCS

Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives

MFA, Inc.

Missouri Cattlemen's Association

Missouri Corn Merchandising Council

Missouri Department of Conservation

Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

McDonald's

Missouri Soil and Water Conservation Program

The Nature Conservancy in Missouri

MONTANA

Office of Governor Steve Bullock

Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation

Montana Rangeland Resources Committee

Montana Department of Agriculture

Sibanye Stillwater

USDA NRCS

World Wildlife Fund

Bayer Crop Science

Montana Farm Bureau Federation

Montana Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative

Montana Weed Control Association

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Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Society for Range Management, Northern Great Plains Section

The Wildlife Society of Montana

Western Landowners Alliance

NEBRASKA

Alliance for the Future of Agriculture in Nebraska

Cargill

Nebraska Environmental Trust

Farm Credit Services of America

Audubon Nebraska

Lyle Sittler Memorial Fund

McDonald's

Nebraska Department of Agriculture

Nebraska Land Trust

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Rainwater Basin Joint Venture

Sandhills Task Force

Tri-State Generation & Transmission Association

USDA NRCS

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

World Wildlife Fund – Northern Great Plains Program

Green Cover Seed

NEW ENGLAND

American Farmland Trust

New England Forestry Foundation

The Ida and Robert Gordon Family Foundation

The John Merck Fund

Whole Foods Market

Wildlands & Woodlands

David and Ann Ingram

Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies

NORTH DAKOTA

North Dakota Grazing Lands Coalition

North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts

North Dakota Stockmen's Association

Starion Bank

North Dakota Game and Fish Association

APEX Clean Energy

Audubon Dakota

Basin Electric Power Cooperative

Burleigh County Soil Conservation District

Cow Chip Ranch

Dakota Community Bank and Trust

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North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality

North Dakota Partners for Fish and Wildlife

North Dakota Natural Resources Trust

North Dakota State University Foundation

Pheasants Forever

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Slope Electric Cooperative

The Nature Conservancy in North Dakota

The Wildlife Society of North Dakota

USDA NRCS

OKLAHOMA

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ITC Great Plains

Noble Research Institute

Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association

Oklahoma Conservation Commission

Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture

USDA NRCS

McDonald's

Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts

Oklahoma State University

PENNSYLVANIA

The Heinz Endowments

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau

USDA NRCS

Center for Dairy Excellence

Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts

Pennsylvania Dairymen's Association

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

The Nature Conservancy in Pennsylvania

SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota Cattlemen's Association

South Dakota Grassland Coalition

First Dakota National Bank

South Dakota Department of Agriculture

South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources - Discovery Center

South Dakota Department of Game, Fish & Parks

South Dakota Farm Bureau Federation

South Dakota State University's College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences

USDA NRCS

Audubon Dakota

Bad River Ranches

Belle Fourche River Watershed Partnership

Daybreak Ranch

Ducks Unlimited

McDonald's

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North Central SARE - Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education

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South Dakota Soil Health Coalition

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Wagner Land & Livestock

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Dixon Water Foundation

McDonald's

UTAH

Utah Farm Bureau Federation

Western AgCredit

Utah Cattlemen's Association

Producers Livestock Marketing Association

The Nature Conservancy in Utah

Utah Association of Conservation Districts

Utah Department of Agriculture and Food

Utah Wool Growers Association

WISCONSIN

Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation

Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association

Compeer Financial

McDonald's

USDA NRCS

We Energies Foundation

Whole Foods Market

Wisconsin Corn Growers Association

Wisconsin Corn Promotion Board

Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association

Wisconsin Soybean Marketing Board

PAST RECIPIENTS:

CALIFORNIA

2018
Lundberg Family Farms

2017
Thomson International, Inc.
C. Jeff Thompson

2016
Lone Star Ranch
Mark and Dina Moore

2015
Prather Ranch
Jim and Mary Rickert

2014
Full Belly Farm
Andrew Brait, Paul Muller, Judith Redmond and Dru Rivers

2013
Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Co.
Bob, Karen, Diana, Lynn and Jill Giacomini

2012
Giacomazzi Dairy
Dino and Julie Giacomazzi

2011
Koopmann Ranch
Tim Koopmann

2010
Montna Farms
Al Montna

2009
Red Rock Ranch
John Diener

2008
Three Creeks Ranch
Chet Vogt

2007
Sierra Orchards
Craig and Julie McNamara

2006
Lange Twins Wine Estates
Brad and Randy Lange

COLORADO

2018
Beatty Canyon Ranch
Steve and Joy Wooten Family

2017
Rancho Largo Cattle Co.
Grady Grissom

2016
Stacked Lazy 3 Ranch
Keven and Sandi Turecek

2015
Flying Diamond Ranch
Johnson Family

2014
Turkey Creek Ranch
Walker Family

2013
Visintainer Sheep Co.
Dean and Gary Visintainer

2012
Wineinger-Davis Ranch
Russell and Tricia Davis

2011
Pipe Springs Ranch
McEndree Family

2010
Stanko Ranch
Jim and Jo Stanko

2009
Mesa De Maya Ranch
John and Carolyn Doherty

2008
Coleman Ranch
Jim, Frances, Tim and Teddi Coleman

2007
San Isabel Ranch
Mike and Sara Shields, Bet Kettle

2006
Bohart Ranch
Dick, Sandra and Nate Tanner

2005
McNeil Ranch
Mike and Cathy McNeil

2004
Rusk Hereford Ranch
Randy and Claricy Rusk

2003
Capps Ranch
Frankie and Sue Menegatti

KANSAS

2018
Hoeme Family Farm and Ranch
Stacy and Chaston Hoeme

2017
Lazy VJ Farms
The Vorhees Family

2016
2S Land & Cattle
Randy and Nicole Small

2015
Sproul Ranch
Sproul Family

KENTUCKY

2018
Trunnell Family Farm
Edward (Myrel) and Shirley Trunnell

2017
Tallow Creek Farm
Harry and Karen Pelle

2016
Turner Family Farms
Mark and June Turner

2015
West Wind Farm
Charlie Williams

2014
Springhill Farms
Peery Family

2013
Sherwood Acres Farms
Jon and Sylvia Bednarski

MISSOURI

2018
Scherder Farms
John and Sandy Scherder

2017
Uptown Farms
Matt and Kate Lambert

NEBRASKA

2018
RuJoDen Ranch
Jim and Lora O'Rourke Family

2017
K & W Farms
Kurt and Wayne Kaup

2016
Plum Thicket Farms
Rex and Nancy Peterson

2015
Shaw Family Farms
Shaw Family

2014
Pelster Angus Ranch
Pelster Family

2013
Beel Ranch
Beel Family

2012
Shovel Dot Ranch
Buell Family

2011
RGM Corporation
Mathewson Family

2010
Kalkowski Family Ranches
Kalkowski Family

2009
Bluestem Valley Farms
Lyle and Alice Sittler, Kristen and Todd Eggerling

2008
Calf Creek and 4-0 Ranches
A.B. Cox

2007
Christen Ranch
Rod and Amy Christen

2006
Wilson Ranch
Blaine and Bryan Wilson

NORTH DAKOTA

2018
The Wilson Family Farm
Jeremy and
Sarah Wilson

2017
Miller Ranch
Ken and Bonnie Miller

2016
Black Leg Ranch
Jerry and Renae Doan

OKLAHOMA

2018
Jackson Farms
Russ and Jani Jackson

2017
Emmons Farm
Jimmy and Ginger
Emmons

PENNSYLVANIA

2018
Harvest Home Farms
The DiFebo Family

SOUTH DAKOTA

2018
Cammack Ranch
Gary and
Amy Cammack

2017
Blue Bell Ranch
Hamann Family

2016
Cronin Farms
Mike and Monty Cronin

2015
Jorgensen Land and
Cattle Partnership
Jorgensen Family

2014
Rock Hills Ranch
Perman Family

2013
Guptill Angus
Guptill Family

2012
Kopriva Angus
Kopriva Family

2011
Mortenson Ranch
Mortenson Family

2010
Doud Ranch
Rick and Marlis Doud

TEXAS

2018
Laborcitas Creek Ranch
Berdon and
Rolanette Lawrence

2017
Dixon Water Foundation
Robert Potts

2016
Blue Mountain Peak
Ranch
Richard Taylor

2015
The Bigwoods on the
Trinity
Dr. Robert McFarlane

2014
Winston 8 Ranch
Winston Family

2013
Buckhollow and
Stockard-Sirianni
Ranches
Jack and Jan Cato

2012
Cook's Branch
Conservancy
Mitchell Family

2011
Temple Ranch
Buddy and Ellen Temple

2010
Anderson Ranch
Jim Bill Anderson

2009
Selah, Bamberger
Ranch Preserve
J. David Bamberger

2008
Llano Springs Ranch
Vandivier Family

2007
77 Ranch
Gary and Sue Price

2006
Treadwell Brady Ranch
John and Brian
Treadwell

2005
Richards Ranch
John and Brent Hackley

UTAH

2018
Ercanbrack Livestock
Ed and Dixie
Ercanbrack Family

2017
Circle Bar Ranch
Fred Thurston

2016
Jerrold Richins Ranch
Jerrold Richins

2015
W.F. Goring & Son, Inc.
Goring Family

2014
Johnson Mountain
Ranch LLC
Johnson Family

2013
H.A. Farms
Stowell Family

2012
Heaton Livestock
Company
Heaton Family

2011
Red Pine Land
and Livestock
Osguthorpe Family

2010
Della Ranches
Tanner Family

2009
Tavaputs Ranch
Butch and
Jeanie Jensen

2008
Johnson Ranch
Darrell and Carol
Johnson

2007
Harold Selman, Inc.
Fred and Laura Selman

WISCONSIN

2018
Gold Star Dairy
David Geiser

2017
Brickstead Dairy
Dan Brick and Family

2016
Brooks Farms
Brooks Family

2015
Meuer Farm
David and Leslie Meuer
Family

2014
Herricks Dairy Farm
Jack and Pat Herricks
Family

2013
Cates Family Farm
Dick and Kim Cates

2012
Hebbe Family Farm
Jim and Val Hebbe

2011
Koepke Farms Inc.
Koepke Family

2010
Bragger Family Dairy
Joe and Noel Bragger

2008
Terry Peters Logging
Terry Peters

2006
Gerry Mich

WYOMING

2017
Garrett Ranch
Pete and Ethel Garrett

2016
SR Cattle Company
Kane Family

2015
King Ranch
Eisele Family

2014
Ladder Ranch
O'Toole Family

2013
Padlock Ranch
Wayne and Judy
Fahsholtz and the Scott
Family

2012
Sommers Ranch
Sommers Family

2011
Fieldgrove Ranch
Ryan and Teresa
Fieldgrove

2010
7E Ranch
Ron and Linda Heward

2009
Foy Ranch
Rocky and Nancy Foy

2008
Pape Ranch
Norm and Barbara
Pape

2007
Golden Willow Ranch
Paul and Catherine
Kukowski

2006
Barlow Livestock, Inc.
Glenn and Joy Barlow

"Conservation can accomplish its objectives only when it springs from an impelling conviction on the part of private landowners."

– Aldo Leopold

Conservationist, landowner and author of *A Sand County Almanac*

SAND COUNTY FOUNDATION

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