Leopold Conservation Award®

PRESENTED BY SAND COUNTY FOUNDATION

2020

Blair Brothers Angus Ranch of South Dakota
Photo by ©Bill Krzyzanowski Photography

LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD®

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It was Aldo Leopold who wrote, "the landscape of any farm is the owner's portrait of himself."

In Leopold's influential book, *A Sand County Almanac,* the renowned conservationist, landowner and scientist called for an ethical relationship between people and the land they own and manage. His idea of a "land ethic" is alive and well today in thousands of American farmers, ranchers and forestland owners who improve soil health, water quality and wildlife habitat while they produce food and fiber.

For more than 50 years, Leopold's land ethic has guided Sand County Foundation's work to inspire and empower more landowners to recognize and embrace conservation opportunities on their land. Sand County Foundation launched the Leopold Conservation Award Program nearly 20 years ago in Colorado as a way to publicly celebrate leading land stewards who serve as examples to others.

Today, with dozens of partners and sponsors across the U.S., Sand County Foundation proudly presents the Leopold Conservation Award in 22 states to private landowners who exemplify the spirit of Leopold's land ethic.

The award program recognizes extraordinary achievement in voluntary conservation, inspires other landowners, and helps the general public understand the vital role private landowners play in conservation success.

An award program of this stature could not exist without quality landowner nominees and contributions both large and small. Sand County Foundation and its many partners and sponsors invite you to become part of this important story.

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

Craig and Conni French of Montana
Photo by Isaac Miller

Ward and Rosie Burroughs of California
Photo by Paolo Vescia

Dear Friends,

Sand County Foundation and our partners are especially proud to recognize the land stewards who make up the Leopold Conservation Award Class of 2020.

In a year dominated by challenges and changes, one thing remained the same. Another stellar and diverse group of farmers and ranchers was recognized for the land ethic they put to work every day. These landowners demonstrate how conservation practices can lead to more resilient, productive land and to improved water quality, soil health and wildlife habitat.

This group of leading land stewards extends across the country from organic olive and almond growers in California, to cattle ranchers in Kansas and dairy farmers in Pennsylvania. On the following pages, you'll be introduced to a cranberry grower in Massachusetts and a corn grower in Wisconsin who innovate ways to manage water. You'll learn about landowners creating pollinator habitat around Nebraska corn fields and on a vegetable farm on Long Island, and you'll no doubt be inspired by others leading the way as they adapt to drought, fire and flood while grazing cattle across the Great Plains and in the mountains of Utah.

I'm proud to report that in 2020 we expanded the Leopold Conservation Award program into New York State, and the award will come to New Mexico and other states in 2021. This August, award recipients will gather for our national conservation symposium in Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

Sand County Foundation has also begun a mentorship program to share the power and knowledge of this tremendous network of past award recipients with historically underserved farmers and ranchers. We know these individuals face many challenges, and being connected with someone to offer advice about a conservation practice can build confidence and have a lasting impact.

Your support deepens and expands the reach and influence 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®
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CALIFORNIA

WARD & ROSIE BURROUGHS • BURROUGHS FAMILY OF FARMS

DENAIR, CALIFORNIA

Photos by Paolo Vescia

Finalists

Stemple Creek Ranch of Tomales

Philip Verwey Farms of Hanford

Presented in Partnership with

American Farmland Trust

Sustainable Conservation

California Farm Bureau Federation

There are family farms, and there are farm families. Then there's the Burroughs Family of Farms.

"Family of farms" refers a unique business partnership of three siblings (and their spouses) working with their parents. These interconnected farms are co-managed by Ward and Rosie Burroughs with their children: Zeb and Meridith Burroughs, Christina and Brian Bylsma, and Benina and Heriberto Montes.

Ward and Rosie took over his father's conventional dairy and beef farm 45 years ago. Today, the Burroughs produce and market grass-based meats and eggs, organic olive oil, raw organic almonds and gouda style cheese made with organic milk. Using sustainable management strategies and conservation practices, they've thrived despite market challenges and growing pressures on California's natural resources.

One of the ways they protect and enhance the soil, air and water is by growing cover crops. Continuous ground cover with alternative crops suppresses weeds, improves soil structure, sequesters carbon and attracts beneficial insects and native pollinators. For organic crop production, it also provides nitrogen in lieu of chemical fertilizers.

The symbiotic relationship of soil, grass and animals is maximized on their three dairy farms through rotational grazing. Pastures are quickly grazed then given three weeks of rest. When cattle are responsible for "harvesting" their own feed, costs of labor, equipment and fuel are reduced. The Burroughs rotate cattle and chickens through orchards at specific times of the year to graze on cover crops rather than mowing or using chemicals. Applying their nutrient-rich manure directly to the soil is another benefit of this uncommon, but innovative practice.

Another way the Burroughs convert waste products into soil fertility is by creating compost for cropland from dairy manure and dried onion and garlic skins, which increase carbon in the compost.

French drains are installed in boggy areas of pastures to channel excess water into holding ponds. The water is later recycled to irrigate pastures during the summer. This reduces manure runoff from pastures during heavy rains. Erosion is also reduced by planting hedgerows of rosemary, lavender, butterfly bush and other native grasses around crops. The hedgerows also provide windbreaks, attract beneficial insects, and act as a barrier to keep out unwanted chemicals from neighboring farms.

The Burroughs' investments in conservation have bolstered biodiversity, renewable energy and wildlife habitat on their farms. They work with a biologist who collects native grass and wildflower seeds (including blue wild rye, pine bluegrass and California poppy) and assists with restoration plantings on their owned and leased land. Solar energy powers most of their irrigation for almond groves.

As the Burroughs Family of Farms transitions to its fourth generation, they credit conservation with buffering their diversified and thriving farms against the vagaries of climate change and water availability. As they work to replenish aquifers and improve ecosystem health, they are proud to promote the preservation of California's farmland.

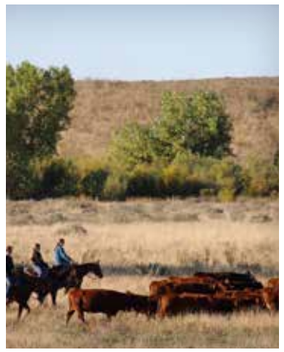
As they share their land ethic with their children and their customers, the Burroughs consider themselves blessed to be independent, yet collaborating with each other to create something larger than they could have created on their own.

Leopold Conservation Award®
Presented by Sand County Foundation

COLORADO

COLLINS RANCH

KIT CARSON, COLORADO



Photos by Sarah Dideriksen, Maggie Hanna, and Amy Johnson

Finalists

LK Ranch of Meeker

May Ranch of Lamar

Presented in Partnership with

American Farmland Trust

Colorado Cattlemen's Association — Advancing the Legacy

Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust

USDA United States Department of Agriculture — Natural Resources Conservation Service

TRI-STATE Generation and Transmission Association, Inc. — A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

Resiliency has defined Collins Ranch for more than a century. Under the same family's management, the ranch has weathered the Dust Bowl, crippling droughts, volatile commodity prices and sizeable prairie fires.

Today, the ranch's fragile grassland environment benefits from continued stewardship provided by Toby and Amy Johnson and their children: Brad, Haley, and Tess.

The Johnson's cow-calf ranch on Colorado's Eastern Plains consists mostly of shortgrass and sandsage prairie. The family believes they are grass farmers first and cattle ranchers second. They take pride in how well their grass grows in a s emi-arid region.

They know overgrazing during a drought, or overstocking their herd when beef prices are high, could have devastating consequences for this brittle rangeland.

Transitioning to a rotational grazing system from grazing an area all season long has improved their soil's health. Now each pasture is grazed for less than a week before the land gets a minimum of 100 days rest. Utilizing more, but smaller, pastures protects against overgrazing, allows for rapid range improvement, and achieves optimal nutrition for cattle.

By moving cattle to fields of corn stalks and wheat during the winter, native grasses and riparian areas have been protected. Likewise, switching the herd's calving season from late winter to May also proved beneficial to the health of cattle and grass.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service assisted Collins Ranch with 35 miles of underground pipelines to widely distribute water for livestock and wildlife. More than 50 water sources have been replaced or installed, with bird ramps placed in all water tanks. All water sources are located uphill to prevent erosion in meadows and riparian areas along creeks.

Among their other innovative conservation practices, the Johnsons released tens of thousands of beetles as a cost-effective and environmentally-friendly way to eradicate invasive and water-intensive tamarisk trees from riparian areas. They also work with Colorado Parks & Wildlife and a hunting outfitter to sustain the strong population of deer on their ranch, and they defer grazing and mark barbed wire fences to protect lesser prairie-chicken leks.

Tucked away on Colorado's Eastern Plains, Kit Carson (population 234) is what some would call flyover country. That compels the Johnsons to focus not only on the health of their ranch, but on the health of the community.

Amy is the chairperson of Kit Carson Rural Development, a nonprofit that works to fill the gaps that exist in a community without a department of public health, public housing, hospital, day care and recreational center. Since 2006 the group has built the town's only park and a business incubator, cleaned up a massive brownfield site, and created affordable housing for teachers and local families, by leveraging more than $2.7 million in grants and contributions. Likewise, Toby serves on the local school board, which successfully sought a grant to build a new school.

The Johnsons are doing more than their part to keep this small town thriving so future generations will continue ranching and caring for Colorado's landscape.

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KANSAS

FLYING W RANCH

CEDAR POINT, KANSAS

Watch video of Flying W Ranch

Photos by Dan Esaray, Colin McMillan, Johne Richardson and Doug Stremel

Finalists

Vance and Louise Ehmke of Healy

Dwane Roth of Manhattan

Presented in Partnership with

American Farmland Trust

OKACD Kansas Association of Conservation Districts

Ranchland Trust of Kansas, An affiliate of the Kansas Livestock Association

Unconventional ranching on protected prairie is how Josh and Gwen Hoy describe what they do on Flying W Ranch, a bison and beef cattle ranch on the tallgrass prairie of the Kansas Flint Hills.

Their peers call them visionaries for how they ranch in sync with nature, thanks to innovative conservation practices.

Josh and Gwen brought their own deep agricultural roots to create a productive and sustainable business on 7,000 acres. The Hoys take pleasure in understanding how livestock and wildlife can flourish while improving soil health and water quality. They are passing their intense awareness and appreciation of the land to their daughter, Josie.

After removing miles of fence within their ranch, they adopted an "instinctive migratory" grazing method for their livestock. It brings grass and forbs back to damaged areas, and protects riparian areas. In addition to grazing techniques, they control woody and invasive plants by patch burning and mechanical removal, instead of herbicides.

An Audubon Bird Friendly Ranch label may soon appear on the Hoy's beef to inform consumers that grazing practices were used that promote grassland stewardship.

With conservation easements on all land they own or manage, the Hoys' impact extends beyond their ranch gate. Collaboration with neighbors has put 4,000 contiguous acres of formerly-farmed ground in the Coyne Creek watershed back into native prairie or managed pasture.

Their advocacy has included holding unique events at the ranch. To promote the ecological benefits of controlled burns they've hosted a meal, live music and wagon rides before guests watch an evening prairie burn. The Kansas City Symphony has performed on their ranch at sundown to heighten appreciation of the tallgrass prairie.

Welcoming guests to the ranch is nothing new for the Hoys. For years they've welcomed guests to experience cowboy culture at the ranch. An authentic 1880s chuck wagon and a professional kitchen offers guests everything from rustic fare to gourmet dining. This 'guest ranching' agritourism business has allowed them to reduce debt, acquire land, educate the public, and invest in conservation. With the COVID-19 public health crisis forcing them to stop hosting guests, they'll refocus their efforts with more marketing of their sustainably-raised, grass-fed beef.

Resilience is the real story of Flying W Ranch.

Josh founded the ranch with his cousin Warren Kruse in 1996. Tragedy struck in 2004 when Warren and his mother (Josh's aunt) were killed in a plane crash. Hardship followed, as the unexpected loss set back many of the projects they were working on. The conservation easements that were placed on the property are the result of many years of effort and a testament to Warren's legacy and vision.

Late last year a wildfire spurred by high winds burned the Hoy's home and business records. Starting over after such a loss once again felt daunting. However, they have preserved and are using conservation principles while building their new house.

Just as the tallgrass prairie has the natural resiliency to come back after a controlled burn, it's clear that whatever comes their way, this family is committed to living their conservation ethic.

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KENTUCKY

JRS ANGUS FARM

LAWRENCEBURG, KENTUCKY

Finalists

F.L. Sipes Farm of Ekron

Graskop Farm of Nonesuch

Presented in Partnership with

Aldo Leopold observed, "The landscape of any farm is the owner's portrait of himself."

James R. "Buddy" Smith has been painting his portrait on Kentucky's Inner Bluegrass Region for more than 50 years. He and wife, Sandra, purchased a home and 189 acres in 1969. Acquiring three more tracts expanded their canvas to 385 acres near the border of Anderson and Franklin counties.

For 30 years Buddy would rise early to feed his beef cattle before leaving for his job as a transportation engineer in Frankfort. The Smiths and their three daughters (Vicki, Annette and Julie) grew a tobacco crop on the weekends. Today, working with his grandson Austin has re-energized Buddy's love of farming.

Much of his land is now pasture for their 100-head purebred Angus cow-calf herd. Bull and heifer calves are sold to other farmers. Processed beef is sold directly to local families and at a farmers' market. They sell hay from 30 acres of alfalfa to area horse farms, and grow about 5,000 pumpkins to be sold at a road-side stand. Diversification has been important, but Buddy says the farm's survival depends on passing his land ethic to the next generation.

Over the years Buddy has implemented conservation practices to reduce soil erosion and improve water quality. He developed a rotational grazing program with a watering system of pipeline to tanks instead of relying on ponds and streams. Cattle are moved to fresh pasture between 15 paddocks every three to four days. This system reduces overgrazing, builds soil organic matter, encourages greater plant biodiversity, and infiltrates more water making pastures more drought-resistant.

Whenever possible, Buddy schedules hay harvesting and pasture mowing to accommodate wildlife nesting periods. Such efforts earned him the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts' Outstanding Cooperator of the Year in 2017.

Grass filter strips are used as buffers around pastures and hay fields. Buddy uses the no-till method of planting corn to reduce soil loss and compaction. By grazing standing field corn in the fall, cattle naturally re-distributed on the field. Leaving corn residue on the fields reduces erosion during the winter.

With year-round grazing as a goal, hay is usually needed for feeding fewer than 60 days each winter. With assistance from the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, Buddy built a concrete pad where cattle are fed during the winter to protect soil and water from erosion. Stored manure from the winter feeding pad is applied each spring to reduce the amount of commercial fertilizer needed for crops.

JRS Angus Farm serves as model for the NRCS's recommended practices on farm productivity, manure management and no-till seeding methods for grasses and legumes.

Buddy credits attending the Cooperative Extension Service's Master Series courses on fencing and grazing for giving him the tools to leave his land better than he found it. The former student now makes his mark as the teacher by mentoring young farmers, hosting field days for landowners and lawmakers, and serving on boards for a variety of agricultural organizations.

MISSOURI

JOSHLIN AND ADDIE YODER

LEONARD, MISSOURI

Finalists

Cope Grass Farms of Truxton

Tim and Rhonda Luther of Lawson

Oetting Homestead Farms of Concordia

Peter Rost Jr. of New Madrid

Presented in Partnership with

American Farmland Trust

Missouri Farmers Care Foundation

Missouri Soybeans

USDA United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service

Joshlin Yoder recalls his dad's wise words that advances in crop technology will only get you so far. A farm's true potential comes in the quality of the soil that seeds are planted into. When Joshlin and his wife Addie left careers in Alabama and returned to the farm in 2008, they vowed to use conservation practices to make their land productive for their children.

Each growing season they evaluate how to improve their farm with science, data and agricultural practices that improve soil and water quality. The Yoders raise beef cattle and grow 1,100 acres of corn, soybeans and hay. They pool labor and equipment with Joshlin's father and brother who manage their own farms as well.

To prevent soil erosion and reduce compaction from tillage equipment, Joshlin has transitioned to a no-till system on soybean fields, and is experimenting on corn fields. Once skeptical of how cover crops would work on his fields, he now prefers seeding cereal rye into standing corn stalks. Rye's actively growing root system helps hold soil in place during winter and spring rains, and the added layer of biomass holds moisture during the summer.

The Yoders are participating in a five-year study of 120 Midwest farms conducted by the Soil Health Partnership (SHP). By gathering data from soil testing, weather monitoring and yield comparisons, SHP examines how cover crops impact soil health, crop yields and profitability. In addition to guiding their own decisions, the Yoders hope the results show other farmers the environmental and economic benefits of cover crops.

The Yoders take a long view when it comes to agricultural conservation. That mindset also applies to how they work with the people they rent farmland from. Every acre they farm, whether owned or rented, has been grid sampled by precision ag specialists and agronomists. This helps them incorporate the 4R concept of crop nutrient application (Right Source, Right Rate, Right Time, and Right Place) to maximize the efficiency. The Yoders explain the grid's detailed results and their conservation goals to the owners of the rented land.

In addition to their landlords and fellow farmers, the Yoders have a passion to advocate for agriculture with consumers and legislators. Addie shares their farm's story through public speaking events, podcasts, radio and social media. As a U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance ambassador and CommonGround volunteer, she has open conversations with non-farm women to bridge the communication gap on food issues and modern farming practices.

One issue of concern to the Yoders is the mental health of farmers. The challenges of farming, including extreme weather, shrinking margins and low commodity prices due to trade policies and the pandemic, can shake any farmer's faith and take a toll on a marriage. As a certified life coach, Addie encourages Joshlin to maintain a healthy lifestyle, keep a positive outlook, and take time away from the farm.

Just as they do on the land, the Yoders strive to strike the right balance. After all, a farm's resiliency is not just what's happening in the soil.

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MONTANA

C LAZY J LIVESTOCK

MALTA, MONTANA

Photos by Isaac Miller

Finalist

Pete and Meagan Lannan
of Livingston

Presented in Partnership with

Craig and Conni French always considered themselves good land stewards, but six years ago things really began to change. They came to see their cattle ranch's fate was tied to healthy soils and grasses.

Their introduction to holistic ranch management techniques called into question long-held, traditional ways of thinking. The drastic changes that followed required a leap of faith for the fourth-generation ranchers. They traded harvesting hay for grazing methods that let their cattle harvest the forage themselves. Such changes didn't happen overnight, and each came with its own risk and learning curve.

The use of cell grazing (a form of rotational grazing that moves a large herd frequently to new pastures) allows more recovery time for perennial vegetation to flourish on a semi-arid, brittle environment of short prairie grass. This results in better forage and wildlife habitat.

The Frenches make decisions not just with their cattle herd's health in mind, but also the impact on soil, insects and wildlife. Temporary electric fence has replaced permanent fencing to reduce conflicts with wildlife. Targeted grazing of non-native grasses has improved habitat for grassland birds and sage grouse.

With assistance from the NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program, they moved livestock water tanks and windbreaks away from a creek. Beaver Creek flows through three miles of the ranch and its health is a conservation priority for the French family. The return of willow trees along the creek's banks is a sign their efforts are paying off.

The Frenches collaborate with federal and state agencies, non-profits and other ranchers to achieve conservation success.

Their voluntary 30-year conservation lease with Montana's Fish, Wildlife, and Parks ensures their land's native grassland and sagebrush will remain uncultivated and undeveloped. Likewise, hunters are allowed access to their ranch's thriving wildlife populations through enrollment in the state's Block Management program.

The Frenches have also agreed to sustain and improve habitat for four species of imperiled grassland birds and sage-grouse, and have their numbers surveyed.

As long-time members of The Ranchers Stewardship Alliance, a rancher-led conservation group that aims to educate within and outside the ranch community, the Frenches share their experience with holistic management, cell grazing and other innovative conservation practices.

The Frenches, who farm with their three children, aren't ones to rest on their laurels. They plan to treat 320 acres of recently purchased farmland as a demonstration site for the soil health benefits of cover crops. As they steward a ranch homesteaded by Craig's great grandfather in 1910, the Frenches understand the importance of passing on a land ethic to the next generation.

NEBRASKA

ED AND LETA OLSON

CRAIG, NEBRASKA

Presented in Partnership with

American Farmland Trust · I AM A FAN · The Nebraska Environmental Trust · Cargill

Ed and Leta Olson epitomize what it means to be a steward of the land. When the Nebraska farmers were given a copy of A Sand County Almanac by a local wildlife biologist, they must have seen themselves in its pages.

Their land ethic is expressed by implementing agricultural conservation practices and connecting others with nature.

When many farmers were clearing trees and farming to their fence lines, the Olsons were doing whatever they could to create wildlife habitat, maintain soil health and improve water quality.

Of the 815 acres they farm in eastern Nebraska, 115 acres are enrolled in conservation programs to create filter strips, shelterbelts and pollinator habitat. The Olsons are firm believers that if every farmer took the least profitable 5-10 percent of their farm and used it for conservation, then all farmers would make more money while planting fewer acres.

"While he may not be the biggest farmer that we work with, he undoubtedly makes the largest impact," said Andy Bohnenkamp, District Conservationist.

Ed has adopted a variety of conservation practices to decrease erosion, protect water quality and increase soil health. Cover crops of grasses, small grains and legumes are planted in the off-season to increase the soil's ability to hold water and sediment. No-till has been used on his corn and soybean fields for more than 20 years. Terracing has made sloped farm fields more manageable.

In 2017 the Olsons were among the first landowners to participate in Nebraska's Corners for Wildlife program that established one to three-acre plots of pollinator habitat at rural intersections.

Sewn with wildflowers, these plantings benefit bees and butterflies, and they keep drivers safe during summer months when corn fields would otherwise limit visibility.

They have planted about 4,000 trees and shrubs to create windbreaks, and provide food sources and corridors for wildlife. Such efforts earned them a Legacy Award from Pheasants Forever, Quail Forever and the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 2015.

Off the farm, Ed has spent his entire adulthood fostering conservation ethics and a respect for the land among hunters and farmers. He co-founded the Burt County Pheasants Forever chapter and educates landowners on how to enhance pheasant habitat by planting natural food sources on abandoned farmsteads and fence lines. As owner of Olson Pearson Auctions & Realty, he donates his time auctioneering at conservation events.

His strongest passion is sharing his knowledge with youth. He teaches youth firearm safety and outdoor ethics as an instructor for the Nebraska Game & Parks Hunter Education Program, and as a volunteer with Pheasant Forever's Youth Mentor Hunt. As a former 4-H wildlife habitat team leader he provided hands-on experience to youth building goose nests and wood duck boxes.

Generations of local children have learned to fish in the Olson family pond. The youth he first mentored in the 1990s are returning to fish with kids of their own.

Ed and Leta strive to keep their farm as aligned as possible with nature, not only to support local wildlife, but to create a vibrant landscape for the community to enjoy.

LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD® PRESENTED BY SAND COUNTY FOUNDATION

NEW ENGLAND

LINDA RINTA & THE RINTA FAMILY FARM

WEST WAREHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

Presented in Partnership with

American Farmland Trust

NEW ENGLAND FORESTRY FOUNDATION

Wildlands & Woodlands
A Vision for the New England Landscape

Like Aldo Leopold, Linda Rinta sees herself as a "sand farmer."

She's a berry farmer and beekeeper with a keen interest in the natural world. Her career, on and off the farm, has advanced the cause of conservation and cranberries.

Linda brought a conservation ethic into her marriage to a third-generation cranberry grower, Paul Rinta. As cranberry farms faced new environmental regulations in the 1980s, Linda returned to college to study environmental science and public policy. She wanted to be part of the change that was affecting their livelihood.

Since then, local, state and national protections for wetlands have evolved. So has Linda's role as a leader and advocate for conservation farming. Through her work off the farm, and an elected post with the Plymouth County Conservation District, Linda has spent 35 years educating others about how farmers can protect the environment while using natural resources to grow a crop.

Cranberry growing is dependent on available clean water and the ability to store and move it efficiently. Water usage on her farm has been reduced through a renovated irrigation system. In addition, Linda's efforts led to the adoption of two of the most critical cranberry water-use conservation practices. Tailwater recovery ponds and bypass canals are now industry standards for efficient and conservation-focused cranberry farms.

Linda raises honey bees and has planted acres of habitat for native bees and insect pollinators. She has sought innovative ways to locate pollinator habitat around solar arrays and cranberry bogs, while protecting pollinators from pesticides.

She also grows Cape American Beach Grass as a nursery product on the farm's wetlands and sandy areas. The grass is used for restorations of sand dunes and other fragile coastal ecosystems.

Linda not only farms with a conservation ethic, but shows others how to do it. Part of her farm business includes a conservation planning service. It helps other growers document their management practices and those they plan to do to comply with environmental regulations.

She's at home in the cranberry bog and in meetings with politicians and environmental leaders. When speaking with fellow farmers about the importance of providing pollinator habitat next to cranberry bogs, she's well aware of what it takes to make a living off the land.

Two enormous challenges "hit our family farm like a tornado in 2018," according to Linda.

"My husband, the manager of our farm, the man who could and did fix everything, and supported and promoted all of my conservation efforts over the years, died without teaching us everything he knew," she said.

Linda says farming has never been for the faint of heart, but her husband's death coupled with a steep drop in cranberry prices put the farm's resilience to the test. One of their grown sons stepped up to manage the cranberry bogs.

Linda manages the property, grows and sells beach grass and will continue conservation planning work. Above all else, she embodies the Leopold land ethic with a commitment to responsible stewardship for the cranberry country she loves.

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NEW YORK

SANG LEE FARMS

PECONIC, NEW YORK

Photos courtesy of Sang Lee Farms

Finalists

Hemdale Farms and Greenhouses of Seneca Castle

Honorone Farm of Canajoharie

Presented in Partnership with

American Farmland Trust

AEM Agricultural Environmental Management

New York State of Opportunity. Agriculture and Markets

Cornell Cooperative Extension

The Ida and Robert Gordon Family Foundation

GOTHAM 12 E 12

Sang Lee Farms is one of Suffolk County's last large vegetable farms. Located in the heart of Long Island's wine country, it's a landmark for its beauty, uniqueness and diversity.

More than 100 varieties of specialty vegetables, including Chinese cabbages, greens and radishes, are organically grown with a hybrid approach that mixes age-old mechanical cultivation with forward-thinking technology.

The farm's management is transitioning from Fred Lee to his son William and his partner Lucy. The farm's story began when Fred's father and uncles began raising produce to supply New York City's Chinatown in the 1940s. They first farmed elsewhere on Long Island.

After the passing of some family members, Fred moved his operations to Peconic in 1987. He found eastern Long Island offered a moderate climate with an extended growing season, and fertile, well-drained sandy loam soils.

Some say the definition of organic farming is trial and error, success and failure. For more than 70 years, the Lees have strived to improve their farming and conservation practices with each growing season.

As early adopters of New York's Agricultural Environmental Management program, their creative use of cover crops has aided their quest for a better form of regenerative agriculture. It increases soil fertility, builds organic matter, suppresses weeds and eliminates erosion. While some growers question if cover crops are worth the cost of their seed, the Lees have planted cover crops on narrow wheel tracks and between rows of vegetables and flowers.

Each field at Sang Lee Farms is surrounded by a buffer zone of untilled cover crops. Half to 75 percent of every field is left uncultivated after each growing season. Longer rest periods can break the repopulation of certain weeds while restoring soil health.

Strips of cover crops also provided habitat for wildlife. Instead of using insecticide, the Lee family releases beneficial insects onto fields. Likewise, they encourage habitat for helpful predators by hanging bat houses, barn owl boxes and bluebird houses.

Most of their irrigation has been upgraded to a micro-drip system that conserves hundreds of thousands of gallons of water each growing season.

The Lees sell their produce and cut flowers via local farmers markets, a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, direct consumer marketing, a farm website and a fully stocked farm stand. In their on-site, certified organic kitchen, they produce a Sang Lee Farms line of dressings, dips, pestos, jellies, pickles, cooking sauces, prepared salads, vegan soups and fermented vegetables.

Sang Lee Farms donates to local food banks and hosts field days to demonstrate the benefits of reduced tillage and composting. The Lees offer mentorship assistance and advice to new and small farms on the successes and failures of organic practices and weed control.

The hard-working people who make up Sang Lee Farms respect the land, nature, their employees, their neighbors, and their community. What's most notable is how the Lee family's values are reflected in their land stewardship.

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NORTH DAKOTA

DOCKTER-JENSEN RANCH

DENHOFF, NORTH DAKOTA

Presented in Partnership with

Kerry Dockter believes you're never too old to learn.

As a result, his family's beef cattle ranch operates in a constant state of adaption and innovation thanks to his careful observation, openness to new perspectives, and ability to work with researchers and nature.

After college, Kerry returned home to ranch with his parents Theo and Norma. In the four decades since, Kerry and his wife Brenda have become land management innovators. They've tested ways to enhance wildlife and pollinator habitat while improving the ranch's bottom line. Utilizing cattle to improve the land for future generations is a practice they've come to know well.

The Dockters never lost sight of the fact that native grasslands are the backbone of their grazing operation. As a result, they developed rotational grazing systems to promote a diversity of native grasses. They've extended the grazing season while producing forage for the winter. Longer recovery periods between grazings allows the grass to stimulate root development while sequestering carbon.

When few ranchers in North Dakota were willing to try fire as a management tool, the Dockters used prescribed burns to enhance wildlife and pollinator habitat thanks to a strong working relationship with The Nature Conservancy.

The ranch sits in the heart of the Missouri Coteau (mixed-grass prairie) "Duck Factory" of Sheridan County. They've collaborated with the North Dakota State University and other researchers to demonstrate the compatibility of cattle grazing with waterfowl and grassland bird production. Haying now occurs after mid-July to allow grassland-nesting birds the time needed to hatch. Frequent dialogue with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and allowing hunters access to their land, further shows regulators and the public the compatibility of grass-based agriculture with vibrant wildlife populations.

The Dockters have been able to increase the stocking rate of their pastures, while protecting their soil thanks to embracing a suite of conservation practices. The Dockters have been able to increase the stocking rate of their pastures while protecting their soil, thanks to a suite of conservation practices they have embraced. Such efforts earned the family the Sheridan County Soil Conservation Achievement Award in 1994.

Much of the ranch's native grassland and wetlands are permanently protected by conservation easements that ensure future access for grass-based agricultural uses.

Dockter Ranch changed its name to Dockter-Jensen Ranch when one of their three daughters, Kristi and her husband Kyle Jensen, moved back to help, learn and someday take over the ranch. The family's concern for their land and community is genuine, as they have served on local school boards, township boards, fire departments and agricultural organizations.

LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD®
PRESENTED BY SAND COUNTY FOUNDATION

OKLAHOMA

THE VICTOR RANCH

AFTON, OKLAHOMA

Photos by Dustin Mielke, Oklahoma Farm Bureau

Presented in Partnership with

American Farmland Trust · Noble Research Institute · Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association · Oklahoma Department of Agriculture · ITC A Fortis Company · USDA United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service · Oklahoma Conservation Commission Our Land • Our Heritage • Our Future

"I can remember when I was a boy, my grandfather showed me an eroding field with muddy water running off the land. Then he showed me a field protected by grass, and how clean the water was coming off of it," recalls Grant Victor. "That was the start of my conservation training."

Grant and his wife Donna are passing a land ethic of voluntary conservation to their three sons. They know healthy soils store more moisture for plants, and a continuous cover of native vegetation helps protect Oklahoma's water.

The Victors raise 900 head of beef cattle on 2,500 acres, and grow wheat, oats, soybeans, grain sorghum and corn on another 1,200 acres. On what was once tribal land, their ranch was established as a result of the Dawes Act in 1892.

Grant's grandfather, James Victor was one of the first landowner cooperators with Ottawa County's Conservation District in 1946. Grant serves on the same board of directors today, and is dedicated to serving those who protect and conserve natural resources. His commitment to improving water and air for those downstream and downwind is unmatched.

Victor Ranch hosts water and soil quality research projects and agricultural educational events. Its diverse landscape is home to native pecan groves, grasslands and Little Horse Creek, which feeds into Grand Lake O' the Cherokees. To preserve the creek and watershed's health, the Victors installed more than 27,000 feet of fencing around 178 acres of riparian area. Expanding the pecan orchards with new trees is creating quality wildlife habitat and a new income stream.

Grant has reduced soil erosion from wind and water by combining cover crops with no-till farming practices since the 1980s. With 3,000 acres enrolled in the USDA's Conservation Stewardship Program, brush management and herbaceous weed control have helped improve wildlife habitat across the ranch. With technical and financial assistance from the Environmental Quality Incentive Program, the Victors have converted 600 acres of highly erodible cropland to pasture.

Through rotational grazing, their beef cattle herd mimics the natural patterns of bison, which graze intensely and move on quickly. The cattle benefit the prairie ecosystem by stimulating plant growth, pressing seeds into the soil with their hooves, and providing natural fertilizers with their waste. Moving cattle around the ranch is possible thanks to the installation of 15 water tanks and 20,000 feet of pipeline that diverts excess water from a pond dam. The Victors also manage their calving season to coincide with natural forage availability.

It's their appreciation of the symbiotic relationship between agricultural production and natural resources that earned Victor Ranch national recognition from the National Endowment for Soil & Water Conservation in 1986. All these years later they still believe, "If you listen to the land, it will tell you what it needs."

Fortunately for Oklahoma's natural resources, the Victors are still listening.

Leopold Conservation Award® Presented by Sand County Foundation

PENNSYLVANIA

SLATE RIDGE DAIRY FARM

ST. THOMAS, PENNSYLVANIA

Photos by Pennsylvania Farm Bureau

Finalists

Brubaker Farms of Mount Joy

Glen Kauffman of Millerstown

Presented in Partnership with

American Farmland Trust

The Heinz Endowments
Howard Heinz Endowment
Vira I. Heinz Endowment

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau

The Peckman family produces milk, but their dairy farm's foundation is its soil.

Slate Ridge Dairy Farm is located on shallow shale-based soils in a less-productive area of Franklin County, in south central Pennsylvania. Years ago, Ben Peckman discovered he could protect the environment and grow quality feed by working with the land's natural systems instead of against them.

Ben was an early adopter of no-till farming and cover crops. Both practices help reduce the amount of nutrient and sediment runoff reaching the Chesapeake Bay. They also improve his shallow, drought-prone soil's productivity and water-holding capacity.

However, being out front when it came to conservation practices wasn't always easy. Despite the potential benefits, new practices are often misunderstood by others, and run the risk of negatively affecting a farm's appearance.

Ben was the only farmer in Franklin County who wanted to use Penn State Extension's crop roller when he began experimenting with cover crops. He liked the results and never looked back. His corn planter is now equipped with a custom-made roller that allows him to "plant green" into a living cover crop with one pass of the tractor.

Ben also saw that leaving cover crops unharvested could increase the soil's organic matter, reduce erosion, retain nutrients and provide year-round food for beneficial insects and microscopic organisms.

Penn State Extension took notice of the great infiltration that cover crops and continuous no-till were providing his fields. Its researchers conducted an experiment that applied three inches of simulated rainfall to his land that showed zero runoff.

The Peckmans partnered again with Penn State Extension to study soil health benefits of grazing cover crops. Their dairy herd is not grazed, but that didn't stop them from fencing in some cropland, planting cover crops and buying some beef steers to conduct the research. Again, this was more about the soil than the cattle.

Another innovation the Peckmans invested in is a methane digester. The farm uses about a third of the energy it produces from their herd's manure, with the rest sold to their electric utility's power grid. It's an example of how the farm achieves sustainability and profitability with assistance from grants and cost-share programs. Solar panels, pollinator plots, manure storage facilities and a silage leachate collection system have also been installed at Slate Ridge Dairy Farm.

Not only was Ben a believer in regenerative agriculture before it was trendy, but he's put his beliefs into action. Crop scouting and research plots can verify that his fields are functioning as a living organism.

The Peckmans invite the conservation community to use their farm for events and demonstrations so other farmers can learn from their efforts to improve the landscape. Aside from their passionate drive to innovate, it's their willingness to mentor others that sets them apart from others.

Leopold Conservation Award®
Presented by Sand County Foundation

SOUTH DAKOTA

BLAIR BROTHERS ANGUS RANCH

STURGIS, SOUTH DAKOTA

Photos by Dede Long and Bill Krzyzanowski Photography

Presented in Partnership with

American Farmland Trust

South Dakota Cattlemen's Association

South Dakota Grassland Coalition

"Leave it better than you found it" is more than a familiar motto. It describes the land ethic that drives this South Dakota cattle ranching family.

Brothers Ed and Rich Blair, and their sons Chad and Britton are the namesakes of Blair Brothers Angus Ranch. The cow-calf, stocker and feed lot business spans 40,000 acres of deeded and leased rangeland near the Black Hills of western South Dakota. Embracing conservation practices that enhance soil, water, livestock and wildlife has allowed the ranch to evolve and grow with each generation since Enos Blair established it more than a century ago.

Today, in addition to providing leadership to livestock and general agriculture organizations, the family has formed working partnerships with local, state and national agencies and organizations to learn new conservation practices.

In an area that receives an average of just 14 inches of annual rainfall, the Blairs know that overgrazing would be detrimental to the soil, plants, livestock, wildlife, watershed and economics of their ranch. By coupling rotational grazing, cover crops and no-till practices on cropland, the Blairs have improved water infiltration and soil health.

As early adopters of rotational grazing in the 1980s, the Blairs rotated heifers through 700 acres divided into small pastures. They quickly saw an increase in their rangeland's resilience, especially during times of drought. Miles of water pipelines were installed to expand the benefits of rotational grazing. Shelterbelts were established in pastures, and more than 800 cropland acres were planted back to grass. Another innovative conservation practice they've adopted during drought to protect pasture productivity is weaning calves early and selling older cows.

When the Blairs bought a second ranch in neighboring Butte County in 2014 to bring the next generation into the business, they quickly added eight miles of cross fencing, 30,000 gallons of water storage, 23 miles of water pipeline and 50 water tanks to implement rotational grazing. Working with the NRCS and wildlife conservationists from the Sage Grouse Initiative, they established a grazing plan that promotes mating and nesting habitat for one of South Dakota's largest populations of Greater Sage Grouse.

A pilot project with state researchers established a cutting-edge vegetative treatment area next to their feed lot instead of a traditional manure lagoon. Its success convinced state regulators to allow other farms and ranches to utilize this practice.

By maintaining relationships with conservation and wildlife professionals, their improvements have benefitted habitat for deer, antelope, insect pollinators, pheasants and 17 other species of nesting birds.

The human side to the ranch's overall sustainability includes creating a succession plan, diversifying ranch assets, and sharing knowledge with the next generation and other ranchers. As a result of their dedication to conservation over the past four decades, the Blairs have seen their ranch change, grow and thrive.

Most importantly, they know that they are leaving things better for the next generation.

Leopold Conservation Award® Presented by Sand County Foundation

UTAH

HALF CIRCLE CROSS RANCH

COALVILLE, UTAH

Watch video of Half Circle Cross Ranch

Finalists

Myrin Ranch of Altamont

Yardley Cattle Company of Beaver

Presented in Partnership with

Growing a resilient landscape in the Wasatch Mountains requires adaptation to drought, fire and flood.

Thanks to the land ethic and workmanship of the Pace family, conservation practices are benefitting the soil, water, livestock and wildlife at their Half Circle Cross Ranch.

In pursuit of ecological resilience, the Paces partnered with state and federal agencies in designing and executing conservation plans that improve water quality, soil health, rangeland conditions and wildlife habitat on their owned and leased land.

Colby Pace is a third-generation cattle rancher who raises beef cattle with his wife McKenzie, and their sons McCoy and McKayson. His forward-thinking approach to livestock and wildlife management means getting creative with how beef cattle are grazed.

A rotational grazing program has tripled the forage production on their pastures, while eliminating the negative impacts of over-grazing by giving grass ample time to rest. The grazing intensity and schedule is managed in a way that reduces noxious weeds and increases the nesting density for waterfowl and shore birds.

Rotational grazing works best when drinking water is available at multiple locations. With financial and technical assistance from the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, and the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Paces are harnessing solar energy to make it happen.

Water is moved through 30 miles of pipeline from six solar pumps to holding tanks and troughs across the ranch.

In addition to their 2,700-acre ranch, the Paces lease, manage and graze cattle on tens of thousands of acres elsewhere, including 12,000 acres across Davis, Salt Lake and Tooele counties. These properties are critical wetlands and uplands within the Great Salt Lake ecosystem. The Paces also manage a 70,000-acre Cooperative Management Wildlife Unit in cooperation with the Utah Department of Wildlife Resources.

On 20,000 acres owned by The Nature Conservancy, the Paces are demonstrating how managed grazing of riparian areas can remove invasive Phragmites. The absence of this non-native plant opens up important nesting and migrating habitat for birds. The Nature Conservancy considers the partnership a model of success that shows what ranching and conservation working together can achieve.

As president of the Summit Soil Conservation District, Colby often shares how his no-till cropping system has reduced water runoff and soil erosion. Half Circle Cross Ranch hosts tours for Utah legislators to demonstrate how grant funding has improved grazing management, ranch profitability and rural development. Such efforts previously earned Colby the Utah Society for Range Management's Rancher of the Year Award.

WISCONSIN

JOHN AND MELISSA ERON

STEVENS POINT, WISCONSIN

John and Melissa's conservation story is one of innovation and ingenuity.

Their farm's heavy clay soils were often wet during the spring planting season, dry by summer, and wet again by fall. John devised a common sense (though untested) plan: he'd capture and store runoff water and use it later to irrigate crops.

After researching his idea, he got to work. John bought and renovated used excavation and irrigation equipment, a skill he'd learned from his father. He dug a series of strategically placed ponds in partnership with the Portage County Land Conservation Department, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Drain tiles were directed to the ponds. Any flooding from the ponds is directed via pipes to a woodchip bioreactor to remove nutrients.

John excavates sediment deposits in the ponds and recycles those nutrients back onto his fields, which reduces his need for fertilizer while boosting yields and profitability. The positive results have prompted the Erons to install similar water and nutrient recycling systems on other farms they've acquired.

This "closed system" the Erons created protects Mill Creek. This Wisconsin River tributary that runs through their farm has long been on a list of phosphorus-impaired waters. As president of the Farmers of Mill Creek Watershed Council, John leads farmer-led efforts to promote farming practices that ensure clean water and healthy soils. The council has accessed grants to fund on-farm research and installation of buffer strips next to the creek. The Erons have hosted many fields days and lunch-and-learn events to motivate other landowners to adopt conservation practices.

The Erons manage soil moisture and health through the use cover crops and no-till planting. They are growing fewer row crops by experimenting with raising alternative forages for area dairy farmers. This is another way to keep their fields in a continuous cover to prevent soil loss.

Field corners and other hard-to-farm areas are planted with native wildflowers and grasses to create pollinator and wildlife habitat. The Erons have worked with their county's conservation staff to develop a program that educates youth about native plants and the importance of pollinators. They understand that the future of agriculture must consider the environment, and future agriculturalists must be educated about it today.

John serves as the appointed Weed Commissioner for Portage and Wood counties, where he works with local and regional stake-holders to combat wild parsnip and other land-based invasive species. He also serves on the local school board and chairs the planning commission in his township. The Erons, who diversified their business by converting a former dairy barn into an event venue for weddings and other gatherings, are parents to two young children.

Their land ethic is expressed through their dedication to responsible land management, agricultural sustainability, education and outreach, innovation, and advocacy for constructive change.

Finalists

Mike Berg of Blanchardville

Charlie Hammer and Nancy Kavazanjian of Beaver Dam

Brian Maliszewski of Independence

John and Dorothy Priske of Fall River

Presented in Partnership with

American Farmland Trust

Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin

Wisconsin Farm Bureau®

Leopold Conservation Award®
Presented by Sand County Foundation

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Farm Credit

The Nature Conservancy in California

California LCA Recipient Alumni

McDonald's

COLORADO

American Farmland Trust

Colorado Cattlemen's Association

Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust

Tri-State Generation & Transmission Association

USDA NRCS

The Stanko Ranch

American AgCredit

McDonald's

The Bird Conservancy of the Rockies

The Nature Conservancy in Colorado

KANSAS

American Farmland Trust

Kansas Association of Conservation Districts

Ranchland Trust of Kansas

Evergy

Farm Credit Associations of Kansas

ITC Great Plains

Kansas Department of Agriculture's Division of Conservation

Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism

Kansas Forest Service

McDonald's

The Nature Conservancy in Kansas

USDA NRCS

A past Kansas LCA recipient

KENTUCKY

American Farmland Trust

Kentucky Agricultural Council

Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts

Kentucky State University, College of Agriculture, Community, and the Sciences, and Land Grant Program

USDA NRCS

AgriBusiness Association of Kentucky

Farm Credit Mid-America

Kentucky Cattlemen's Association

Kentucky Corn Growers Association

Kentucky Department of Agriculture

Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources

Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation

Kentucky Pork Producers

Kentucky Soybean Promotion Board

Kentucky Tree Farm Committee

Kentucky Woodland Owner's Association

University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture, Food and Environment

MISSOURI

American Farmland Trust

Missouri Farmers Care Foundation

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

Missouri Soil and Water Conservation Program

McDonald's

The Nature Conservancy in Missouri

MONTANA

American Farmland Trust

Office of Governor Steve Bullock

Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation

Montana Rangeland Resources Committee

Montana Department of Agriculture

Northwest Farm Credit Services

Sibanye Stillwater

USDA NRCS

World Wildlife Fund

McDonald's

Montana Farm Bureau Federation

Montana Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative

Ranchers Stewardship Alliance

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Society for Range Management, Northern Great Plains Section

Soil and Water Conservation Society

The Wildlife Society of Montana

NEBRASKA

American Farmland Trust

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

American Farmland Trust – New England Chapter

New England Forestry Foundation

Wildlands & Woodlands

David and Ann Ingram

Farm Credit East

Yale School of the Environment

Whole Foods Market

NEW YORK

(In partnership with Agricultural Environmental Management)

American Farmland Trust

Cornell Cooperative Extension

New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

The Ida and Robert Gordon Family Foundation

Gotham Bar & Grill

Farm Credit East

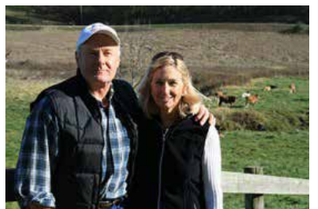
New York State Agribusiness Association

USDA NRCS








NORTH DAKOTA

American Farmland Trust

North Dakota Grazing Lands Coalition

North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts

North Dakota Stockmen's Association

Starion Bank

North Dakota Game and Fish

APEX Clean Energy

Audubon Dakota

Basin Electric Power Cooperative

Burleigh County Soil Conservation District

ConocoPhillips

Cow Chip Ranch

Delta Waterfowl

Ducks Unlimited

Emmons County Soil Conservation District

KEM Electric Cooperative

McDonald's

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative

North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality

North Dakota Partners for Fish and Wildlife

North Dakota Natural Resources Trust

Pheasants Forever

Roughrider Electric Cooperative

Slope Electric Cooperative

The Nature Conservancy in North Dakota

The Wildlife Society of North Dakota

USDA NRCS

OKLAHOMA

American Farmland Trust

ITC Great Plains

Noble Research Institute

Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association

Oklahoma Conservation Commission

Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture

USDA NRCS

McDonald's

Oklahoma State University

Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts

PENNSYLVANIA

American Farmland Trust

The Heinz Endowments

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau

USDA NRCS

Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

The Nature Conservancy in Pennsylvania

SOUTH DAKOTA

American Farmland Trust

South Dakota Cattlemen's Association

South Dakota Grasslands 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, College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences

USDA NRCS

Audubon Dakota

Bad River Ranches

Belle Fourche River Watershed Partnership

Daybreak Ranch

Ducks Unlimited

Kopriva Angus LLC of Raymond, South Dakota

McDonald's

Millborn Seeds, Inc.

North Central SARE - Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education

Pheasants Forever

Professional Alliance

South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts

South Dakota Soil Health Coalition

The Nature Conservancy in South Dakota

Todd Mortenson Family

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - Partners for Fish & Wildlife

Wagner Land & Livestock

TEXAS

American Farmland Trust

Texas Parks & Wildlife

Lee and Ramona Bass

The Cynthia & George Mitchell Foundation

Dixon Water Foundation

McDonald's

UTAH

American Farmland Trust

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

American Farmland Trust

Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation

Compeer Financial

Culver's

McDonald's

USDA NRCS

We Energies Foundation

Wisconsin Corn Growers Association

Wisconsin Corn Promotion Board

Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association

Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association









PAST RECIPIENTS:

CALIFORNIA

2019
Rominger Brothers Famrs
Bruce and Rick Rominger

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

2019
The Livingston Ranch
Mike and Julie Livingston

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

2019
Ted Alexander

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

2019
Dr. James W. Middleton

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

2019
Brinker Farms
Kenny and Susan Brinker Family

2018
Scherder Farms
John and Sandy Scherder

2017
Uptown Farms
Matt and Kate Lambert

MONTANA

2019
Milton Ranch
Bill and Dana Milton

NEBRASKA

2019
Broken Box Ranch
Russ and Angela Sundstrom

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








NEW ENGLAND

2019
Hull Forest Products
Bill Hull

NORTH DAKOTA

2019
Goven Ranch
Gene and Christine Goven

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

2019
The Chuck and Ruth Coffey Family

2018
Jackson Farms
Russ and Jani Jackson

2017
Emmons Farm
Jimmy and Ginger Emmons

PENNSYLVANIA

2019
Mt-Glen Farms
Dean and Rebecca Jackson

2018
Harvest Home Farms
The DiFebo Family

SOUTH DAKOTA

2019
Johnson Farms
Alan, Mickie, Brian and Jamie Johnson

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

2019
Killam Duval County Ranch
David Killam

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

2019
JY Ferry & Son, Inc.
John, Ben and Joel Ferry

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

2019
Lake Family Farms
Jeff Lake

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

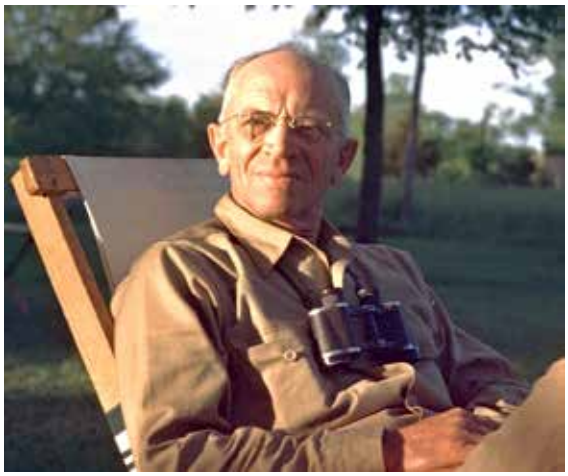
2006
Barlow Livestock, Inc.
Glenn and Joy Barlow











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

– Aldo Leopold

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

SAND COUNTY FOUNDATION

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