



**Monroe County farm takes top conservation honor, Mason and Morgan counties also rank**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Oct. 5, 2016

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SUTTON, W.Va. -- Canterbury Farm, a 660-acre beef cattle farm in Monroe County, was named the 2016 West Virginia Conservation Farm of the Year at the Virginia Conservation Partnership Conference Tuesday in Flatwoods.

In second place was Yauger Family Farm, a crop and cattle operation in Mason County. Taking third was Morgan County's Mock's Greenhouse and Farm, one of the state's largest hydroponic greenhouse operations that supplies produce to some of the nation's top grocers like Wegman's and Whole Foods. An awards banquet was held in honor of all the winners.

Bill Canterbury drove a lime delivery truck to farms around southern West Virginia for decades. He learned something new at each farm he saw, and eventually became a go-to man for area farmers who had questions about how to best manage their lands.

Now retired from truck driving, Bill focuses his attention on the farm he and wife Carolyn run in Monroe County. With the help of the Greenbrier Valley Conservation District (GVCD) and the West Virginia Conservation Agency (WVCA), the Canterburys have increased grass production by 25 percent on their land. This makes for healthier cows and soil. Other best management practices include 18 water troughs, 4,220 feet of pipeline, 5,126 feet of division fence and 1,833 feet of exclusion fence.

To be in the running for West Virginia Conservation Farm of the Year, each farm first had to win at the County, District and Area levels.

A panel of judges consisting of Agriculture Commissioner Walt Helmick and officials from WVCA, West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA), State Conservation Committee (SCC), West Virginia Division of Forestry (WVDORF), and the West Virginia University Extension Service and Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design toured each farm over the summer and ranked them based on the implementation of conservation plans and community-based services.

All three farms exemplify the best in conservation practices like grassland management, erosion and sediment control, nutrient management, stream protection and others, Helmick said.

Canterbury Farm will receive a \$1,000 check, a plaque and 200 hours use of a John Deere tractor from Middletown Tractor Sales in Fairmont.

Yauger Farm is located in Southside, W.Va., and is owned and operated by Raymond and Mollie Yauger. The farm has been in Raymond's family for 167 years. It consists of 745 owned acres and 305 rented acres and produces corn, wheat, soybeans, hay and beef cattle. Conservation practices include no-till, crop rotation, exclusion fencing, alternate water sources and other measures.

Mock's Greenhouse and Farm is located near Berkeley Springs and is owned and operated by Paul and Raynette Mock. They grow several varieties of lettuce, cherry tomatoes, heirloom tomatoes, beans, cantaloupes, cucumbers and other produce. Their operation has expanded dramatically in recent years, growing from just three greenhouses to 30 today.

Middletown Tractor of Fairmont, Marion County, will provide the tractor to the first place winner. In business more than 60 years, the locally owned company is the oldest John Deere dealer in West Virginia.