



NATIONAL CATTLEMEN'S BEEF ASSOCIATION

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For Immediate Release

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Pennsylvania Family Farm Wins Top Environmental Award Sunrise Club Calves are ESAP Region I Recipient

Washington, D.C. (July 18, 2007) – Paul and Beth Wingard, owners of Sunrise Club Calves of Shippenville, Pennsylvania, have been selected as regional winners of the 2007 Environmental Stewardship Award Program (ESAP). The Wingard family is one of this year's regional ESAP winners nationwide.

The prestigious award program recognizes cattle producers across the nation who utilize innovative and extensive environmental stewardship practices on their operations. The program, now its 17th year, is administered by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) and sponsored by Dow AgroSciences L.L.C. and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Sunrise Club Calves represents NCBA's Region I, which includes nine states spanning from Kentucky to New York. They were nominated by Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association. The cow/calf operation specializes in producing club calves, which are calves purchased to be shown as project animals.

"The Wingards are dedicated to environmental stewardship and educating the many youth groups within their region about the importance of conservation and sustainability," explains Dave Petty, Chairman of the selection committee. "This family has taken proactive steps to ensure an environmentally sustainable operation while educating the leaders of tomorrow through field days, tours and their annual sale. They demonstrate how environmentally friendly practices can also make for a profitable business by positioning their customers for success."

The farm has been in the family since 1942, when it was operated by Paul's parents. In 1978, Paul and Beth purchased the operation and began to implement innovative conservation practices. As of today, the farm dedicates around 125 acres for grazing and has 200 leased acres for hay production and 25 acres of woodlots. Seventy cow/calf pairs and about 10 yearlings graze on the 125 acres, which are intensively managed with a small herd of boer goats utilized for weed control.

"The family's innovative practices of using hog slats for river crossings and using boer goats for weed control and a source of additional income are excellent examples of stewardship that makes their operation sustainable," explains Petty. "More than 15,000 ft. of high textile fencing has been installed to promote rotational grazing and to keep the cattle off of the stream corridors."

The Wingards are currently participating in a Pennsylvania Growing Greener program that will help provide funding to stabilize areas where portable troughs are located by installing geotextile and crushed limestone. Sunrise Club Calves also partners with the PA Game Commission, the Farm/Game Project, which offers seedlings to be planted for wildlife food and cover and keeps the property open to public hunting and trapping.

“The environmental enhancements made throughout the many facets of their farm, make them a model for other farms and ranches to emulate,” says Petty.

The Wingard’s ongoing work with the Fish and Wildlife Service and the NRCS has allowed them to seek technical assistance planning and implementing water resources for both cattle and wildlife, reduce erosion, preserve pasture forage, woodland improvement, and animal waste management.

“A key point indicative of the Wingard’s commitment level is their endeavor to farm within the constraints imposed by nature rather than in spite of them,” says Timothy Elder, Grazing Specialist, NRCS.

The Wingards are actively involved in their local community and often open their farm to groups for educational tours. Paul and Beth are active in numerous associations and governing boards that assist in implementing sound environmental and conservation practices including the Pennsylvania Project Grass, Clarion County Graziers, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, and local 4-H Clubs.

“What is good for the environment is also good for the farmer, his cattle, his neighbors and the rest of the planet,” explains the Wingards. “The great part is that with management intensive grazing we can raise cattle in a low cost manner that is not too labor intensive. It is healthy for the cattle, good for the environment and enjoyable for us.”

“This environmental stewardship award program acknowledges cattlemen who have gone above and beyond in their efforts to preserve natural resources,” says Petty. “For this Pennsylvania family, conservation is a family affair that is being passed on to the next generation of agriculturalists.”

Sunrise Club Calves is being recognized at the 2007 Cattle Industry Summer Conference in Denver, Colorado on July 18, 2007. The national winner, selected from one of the regional winners, will be announced in February at the 2008 Cattle Industry Convention and Trade Show in Reno, Nevada. For additional information on the family or other regional winners, contact NCBA’s Washington D.C. office at 202-347-0228.

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The National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) is the largest organization representing America’s cattle industry. Initiated in 1898, NCBA is the industry leader in education, influencing public policy to improve producer profitability and in preserving the industry’s heritage and future. Efforts are made possible through membership contributions. To join, contact NCBA at 1-866-BEEF-USA or membership@beef.org.