



CARRUTH FARMS, INC., NAMED STATE'S OUTSTANDING CONSERVATIONISTS

Bloomington—Carruth Farms, Inc., Danvers, has been named the 2003 Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) Outstanding Conservationists.

Carruth Farms was nominated by the Swift County Soil and Water Conservation District for the family's efforts in conserving natural resources, their dedication to wildlife on their farm, and their willingness to adopt conservation practices and incorporate them into their normal routine.

The award was announced at the 67th annual MASWCD Convention, which was held Nov. 30-Dec. 2 at the Radisson Hotel South, Bloomington. The awards program recognizes farm families, individuals, conservation organizations, and other groups for their accomplishments in implementing conservation practices and improving Minnesota's natural resources. The program is sponsored by MASWCD, with support from The Farmer Magazine.

In the nomination materials for the award, it was noted that John and Elaine Carruth have raised 18 children on their farm in Westbank Township. The Carruths, and three of their children, John Jr., James, and Joseph, operate the business.

Carruth Farms operates about 4,000 acres with 3,500 acres of tillable land in cash grain. In addition to corn and soybeans, the Carruths own and operate 130 head of Holstein milk cows in their double 12 herringbone milk parlor.

One of the biggest changes over the years on the Carruth Farm is the use of conservation tillage, according to the Swift SWCD. When John Carruth's Sr. grandfather owned the farm more than 60 years ago, it had 240 acres of poorly drained, low-fertility ground that experienced a lot of erosion. Since then, the land has changed into fertile, well-drained soil.

John Carruth and his sons have been pioneers in no-till farming. In the 1950s and 1960s, the Carruths used strip farming to control erosion. They began using conservation tillage in the 1960s and 1970s on their highly erodible land. In 1976, they began using irrigation. In the 1980s and 1990s, they converted to a no-till program.

Recently, the Carruths have installed more than 31 acres of CRP filterstrips, more than 7 acres of CRP farmable wetland acres, and more than 17 CRP acres in the general sign-up. Additionally, the family has provided wildlife with food and cover with the use of no-till, the seeding of filter strips, and other CRP grass cover, and by leaving an area of corn stand along their CRP acres. Over the years, John Sr. and his family planted trees for wildlife and to reduce wind erosion on their fields.

In the nomination materials, the Swift County SWCD provided the following quote: "The Swift County Soil and Water Conservation District nominated Carruth Farms for their willingness to adopt conservation techniques and incorporate those ideas into their daily routine. The Carruths have been a cooperating family in many conservation practices and agreements, which proves the family's love for the outdoors."

Members of the state's SWCDs (including district staff and supervisors), along with conservation groups, state agencies, and other officials attended the meeting.