

NEWS RELEASE



MASWCD For immediate release

VANCE AND BONNIE HAUGEN RECEIVE 2008 MASWCD EDUCATION AWARD

St. Paul, Minn.—The Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) has awarded Vance and Bonnie Haugen, of Canton, Minn. with the 2008 MASWCD Education Award. The Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District nominated the Haugens for the award.

The award will be presented at the 72nd annual MASWCD Convention, which will be held Dec. 7-9 at the Crowne Plaza Riverfront, St. Paul, Minnesota. This award honors an individual or an organization for creating innovative conservation education activities reaching students and a variety of other audiences.

In materials provided in support of the nomination, the Fillmore SWCD referenced the Haugen's motto that, "Farming is Everybody's Bread, Butter and Water." They believe in farming sustainably for soil, plant, animal and human health.

In July 1993, they purchased 230 acres near Canton, Minn. named it Springside Farm, and converted it from corn/soybean stubble to mixed forages. It has been rotationally grazed ever since, and currently feeds a spring-freshening 120-head dairy herd, dry cows, heifers, chickens, pigs, and a donkey.

The whole farm is managed for intensive grazing with 30 grazing areas subdivided into smaller areas, qualifying it for Tier III of the federal Conservation Security Program (recently renamed the Conservation Stewardship Program). Their goal is maximizing stewardship of the water that falls on their land. Less soil and other pollutants from their farm result in cleaner water for us all in our streams and groundwater.

The Haugens' environmental education activities have included numerous pasture walks over the past 15 years, covering topics such as bird counts, grass management, and the impact of recent floods. The Haugens have been host to student groups as well as professional events and conferences. Their knowledge of grazing and operating a dairy is sought after around the country. They are regular contributors to *Graze* magazine and have been interviewed for magazine articles and books. The Haugens also take the time to mentor beginning farmers.

According to Fillmore SWCD Supervisor Richard O'Connor, "What's so remarkable about the Haugens is that not only do they exhibit a strong conservation ethic on their own farm, but they take things the next step and share that experience and that knowledge with others."

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