

Conservationist of the Year

Bill and Steve Bailey of Chatfield have been chosen as the **2010 Fillmore County Outstanding Conservationists of the Year**. The Bailey's operate 1,350 acres of crop ground in a corn-bean-hay rotation and pasture 250 head of beef cows and calves, finishing out 120 head and selling the rest as feeders.

Almost all their cropland acres are either no tilled or zone tilled, except the acres where the cows are over-wintered. Working with their co-op and consultant, they apply manure based on nutrient needs and apply variable rate fertilizer as recommended. The Bailey's have 83.6 acres in CRP some of which is on HEL land that borders woodlands, some buffers sinkholes and some that is in food plots. Over the years they have installed 5,485 feet of grassed waterways and several dry ponds to help control erosion and have a DNR approved Forest Stewardship Plan on 308 acres.

Bill and his wife, Mary, maintain and monitor sixty bluebird boxes on their property and are active in the Bluebird Recovery Program of Minnesota. Their home site has been a dedicated wildlife sanctuary for 18 years and managed for preservation and increased biodiversity, featuring different types of wetlands and over four miles of mowed trails.

The Bailey families are also active in their community, church, school and 4-H.



As outstanding conservationists, the Bailey's will be eligible to compete for Minnesota's Outstanding Conservationist Award, which will be announced at the 2010 Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts annual meeting set for December 5th-7th in St. Paul.

The Fillmore SWCD is proud to recognize Bill and Steve Bailey for their many years of practicing sound stewardship on their land.