

2012 Conservationist of the Year

Duschee Hills Dairy of Lanesboro, owned and operated by Pat and Chris Troendle and Ben and Darla Taylor, has been chosen as the 2012 Fillmore County Outstanding Conservationists. As local winners, the Troendles and Taylors will compete for the title of State Outstanding Conservationist. They will be recognized at a luncheon held during the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) annual convention scheduled for December 2nd - 4th at the



Doubletree by Hilton Hotel Bloomington - Minneapolis South. 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.

Duschee Hills Dairy, a fourth generation farm, milks 200 cows and has 200 head of young stock. Seven groups of heifers and dry cows are rotated

between 18 paddocks on 70-80 acres of land based on stubble height, weather conditions and the condition of the cattle.

They farm 530 acres in 92 fields, most of which are less than six acres. Three hundred acres has a greater than 6% slope and nearly 80 acres are in the flood plan. Another 50 acres of rented ground is organic utilizing manure as a fertilizer source. Minimum tillage is used on all acres. Soil tests and manure tests are taken regularly, using those results to apply only needed nutrients to their crop ground. Fifty foot buffers are maintained along Duschee Creek and an extensive waterway system connects about 300 acres of hay strips.

A Woodland Stewardship Plan has been approved by the DNR on over 100 acres of woods which includes practices for improving walnut growth and controlling buckthorn. They also have three ponds which help to stabilize gullies. Several water breaks and dams installed by the CCC are still maintained.

The families are active in their community, with 4-H and FFA, and in their church. The farm hosts the second grade class from Lanesboro every year for their spring field trip and also hosts the Lanesboro Ag class to help them learn about careers in agriculture. They have hosted Dairy Night on the Farm as well as other tours that allow them to tell the story and the value of agriculture.

The Fillmore SWCD is proud to honor Duschee Hills Dairy. They exemplify good stewardship of the land and the family ethic that benefits the entire community.