

Date: February 13, 2013  
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-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

## **Pennsylvania Certified Organic Honors Outstanding Organic Farmers and Agricultural Professionals**

Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO) recognized and thanked organic producers and educators for their exceptional contributions to the organic community during its 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting on February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013 in State College, Pennsylvania.

**Kreamer Feed** was given the **Outstanding Organic Producer Award** for their exceptional commitment to high quality organic production, promoting organic products and supporting the integrity of organic goods in the marketplace.

Kreamer Feed was founded by George Robinson in 1947. From deliveries on the back of an old pickup truck to thousands of tons a year in bulk feed trucks, Kreamer Feed has grown to become a highly respected name in the feed industry. In the late '90's Kreamer Feed began producing bulk organic layer feed. Since then, they have expanded their organic operation to manufacture a line of bagged feed for poultry, cattle, sheep, goats, and swine. Nature's Best Organic bagged feed is sold primarily on the east coast, but can be found as far west as Utah.

Now under third generation management, the company looks forward to continuing expansion of sales nationwide. Kreamer Feed manufactures approximately 1,000 tons of organic feed a week in a feed mill used exclusively for organic. In a separate mill, Kreamer Feed manufactures bulk conventional feed, including specialty feed for antibiotic-free programs. Their fleet of eight bulk trucks delivers feed to farms in the area. Due to the extensive growth of organic, Kreamer Feed is in the process of constructing a new organic feed mill, scheduled to be fully operational in the summer of 2013.

**Melissa Piper-Nelson** was given the **Organic Research and Education Award** for furthering the cause of organic farming through research and education.

"New research and techniques continue to improve best management practices for the organic community. Bridging the gap between research and actual on-farm success is a critical role for the organic transitionist and educator," says Melissa Piper Nelson. For the past two years, Melissa served as the organic transitionist with Lewistown-based Community Partnerships Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) providing outreach and transitional technical assistance to Central Pennsylvania's organic community.

Through workshops, farmer meetings and mentoring, Melissa worked with both farmers and agricultural professionals to link conservation practices with organic production including the NRCS Organic Programs. Melissa developed a number of producer workshops that included information on rotational pastures, organic dairy transition, soil sustainability, organic no-till, high tunnels and organic vegetable production and marketing. In cooperation with Pennsylvania Certified Organic, the Rodale Institute, and several state RC&D Councils, she helped produce two videos on organic transition and assisted in developing organic training for state soil conservationists.

Melissa grew up on a crop and livestock farm in Columbia County near Benton, PA, and was active in 4-H. She received her undergraduate degree in Agriculture and Journalism, Pennsylvania Economic Development Training and a graduate certificate in Community and Economic Development from Penn State. Her award-winning monthly newspaper column for farmers, "Today's Marketing Objective" has been published by Country Folks Grower since 2003.

Other Award Winners were: Cliff and Maggie Hawbaker, Outstanding New Organic Producer Award; Bob and Lois Keller, Going the Extra Acre Award; Edwin and Esther Brubacher, Inspector's Choice Award; Roy, Hope and Debra Brubaker, Sustainability Award; Evan and Judith Showalter, Staff's Choice Award; Forrest Stricker, PCO 2012 Hall of Fame Award; and The Batdorf Family, Most Outstanding Volunteer Award.

**Cliff and Maggie Hawbaker** were given the **Outstanding New Organic Producer Award** for attentiveness throughout the certification process, innovative management and dedication toward creating and maintaining a successful organic plan. Cliff and Maggie own and operate Hamilton Heights Dairy Farm and Emerald Valley Farm in South Central Pennsylvania. Their certified organic dairies consist of 689 acres of pasture and hay crop with an additional 140 acres rented land.

**Bob and Lois Keller**, of **Penn Valley Farms**, received the **Going the Extra Acre Award** for sharing knowledge and expertise with fellow farmers and the organic community. Bob farms 95-acres of family owned land along with 30 acres of rented land with the help of his wife Lois, their daughters Karen and Stephanie, and their son Jonathan. Together they raise organic crops, primarily alfalfa, corn, soybeans and wheat; 24,000 laying hens; along with cover crop feedstocks for their humus composting operation.

**Edwin and Esther Brubacher** were given the **Inspector's Choice Award** for excellent management, thorough records, positive attitude towards the inspection process and exceptional effort in creating and maintaining a successful organic plan. Edwin and Esther operate a 68-acre 2nd-generation dairy farm in Narvon, Pennsylvania. Their dairy consists of about 40 purebred registered Holsteins and 35 young stock.

**Roy, Hope and Debra Brubaker**, of **Village Acres Farm**, received the **Sustainability Award** for furthering the sustainability of farms, families, communities, and the environment. Celebrating 30 years of farming, 20 years of Organic certification and 15 years of serving the community through a CSA model, Village Acres operates as a diversified system, integrating vegetables, berries and pastured livestock.

**Evan and Judith Showalter**, of **Portwood Acres**, received the **Staff's Choice Award** for special dedication to the organic certification process and use of innovative practices. Evan farms 150 acres of hay, forage and pasture in Port Republic, Virginia. While originally certified for crops in 2009, Evan received organic certification for dairy in 2011 and is very passionate about his 100% grassfed herd of 50 crossbred Jersey/Normandy and Holstein/Swedish Red cows and the nutrient-dense milk they produce.

**Forrest Stricker**, of **Spring Creek Farms**, was given the **2012 PCO Hall of Fame Award** for continuous, extraordinary dedication of time and energy to furthering the mission of PCO. Forrest and his wife, Barbara, and his son Greg and his wife, Stacy, their 2 wives farm 320 acres, primarily as a grass-based certified organic dairy farm, in Berks County, PA. The Stricker family has been farming their land for 5 generations and for the past 10 years, they have been expanding from wholesale dairy to retail grass-fed beef, poultry, eggs, value added dairy products, and raw milk.

The **Batdorf Family**, of **Hollow Brook Dairy**, received the **Most Outstanding Volunteer Award** for outstanding efforts that have strengthened PCO and have contributed to the support of PCO's mission to ensure the integrity of organic products in the marketplace. The Batdorf family, Andrew and Saraetta Batdorf and their four children, Timothy 17, Mary 16, Matthew 14, and Emanuel 12, have worked closely together to run Hollow Brook Dairy in Mifflin County, PA since 2003. Their dairy farm consists of 710 family owned acres along with an additional 80 acres of rented land. Roughly half the acreage is crops while the other half is pasture.

*Pennsylvania Certified Organic is a non-profit organization that educates and certifies organic growers and handlers in Pennsylvania and the surrounding region. PCO certifies more than 500 farming and food production operations, including produce, field crops, herbs, wild crops, dairy products, poultry products, value-added products, livestock, mushrooms, maple, snack foods, coffee, tea, cosmetics, and more.*

*To learn more about PCO or to apply for organic certification, call 814-422-0251 or visit our website at [www.paorganic.org](http://www.paorganic.org).*

Captions:

Lee Rinehart, Pennsylvania Certified Organic's Education and Outreach Director, congratulates Melissa Piper-Nelson for winning PCO's 2012 Organic Research and Education Award.

Adam Seitz, Pennsylvania Certified Organic's Certification Specialist, congratulates Kreamer Feed representative Staci Loop for winning PCO's 2012 Outstanding Organic Producer Award.