

## **Conservation Farm Family Program**

*The North Carolina Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, in partnership with the NC State Grange, announces the Conservation Farm Family Program for this year. The program recognizes farmers/farm families who have achieved a high level of natural resource stewardship by applying and maintaining innovative and cost-effective conservation practices, are actively involved in conservation education, and have demonstrated strong community involvement.*

**Participant Eligibility:** *Each soil and water conservation district is eligible to nominate one individual or group of individuals involved in a single farming operation. This program is open to all farmers, including district supervisors. Nominees must derive a substantial portion of their income from their farm business. “Substantial” is defined as more than 50%.*

**Procedures:** *Entries for this award recognition will be judged on the Area, Regional, and State levels as follows.*

- **Area** – *Districts will submit nominations to their respective Area Chair by April 1. The Area Chair will arrange for judging of the nominations and all judging should be complete by April 30. A judging team selected by the Area Chair should be comprised of 3 to 5 individuals with a makeup as follows: at least one supervisor and subject matter experts from conservation partnership agencies and organizations who are knowledgeable in the areas of conservation planning, BMP installation and maintenance, crop and livestock production, conservation education, and general farming operations. The nomination for the winning farm in each area will be forwarded to the office of the NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts by May 1.*
- **Regional** – *after judging is completed at the area level, judging will take place at the regional level in order to select three regional Outstanding Conservation Farm Families, one each for the mountain, piedmont, and coastal plain regions. The Association will arrange for the regional judging teams which will be made up of individuals who are subject matter experts from within that region. Suggestions include district supervisors, NCDAs regional agronomists, NRCS technical staff from area offices, Cooperative Extension specialists, and others.*
- **State** – *a state judging team will judge all farms recognized as region winners and will be responsible for selecting the State’s Outstanding Conservation Farm Family. As in the past, state judges, when possible, will include representatives from the following: NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, NRCS, NCDACS, Grange, NC State University, and Farm Bureau. Judging will be complete by June 15.*
- **Judging Criteria and Nomination Forms:** *The program will use the same criteria as listed in the current “Contests, Workshops, & Awards Handbook” which can be found at <http://www.ncagr.gov/SWC/educational/contests.html>*

- **Awards, Recognition, and Funding:** Monetary cash awards will be presented to the Outstanding Conservation Farm Families as follows: State Outstanding Conservation Farm Family -- \$1000; each of the remaining 2 regional winners -- \$500. All three winners will be recognized at the Association's annual meeting and the Association will provide complimentary accommodations per current policy.
- A celebration on the farm of the State Outstanding Conservation Farm Family will be organized and conducted by the respective local soil and water conservation district. Target date for this celebration is late summer to early fall. Funding, provided jointly by the Association and the NC State Grange, will be made available to the winning district to help offset the expense of the celebration as follows: \$1,500 startup funds, immediately available after state winner selection and upon request by the district. \$3,000 additional funding upon certification that the local district has raised \$1,500.
- Questions regarding the program may be directed to the Association office at 919.715.6104 or [ncaswcd@gmail.com](mailto:ncaswcd@gmail.com).