



St. Thomas Township's Meyers Brothers Dairy named Conservation Farmer of the Year

By JIM HOOK Senior writer

Meyers Brothers Dairy in St. Thomas Township has been named Conservation Farmer of the Year.

The award was presented to the Meyers family Thursday at the Franklin County Conservation District annual banquet and meeting in the Kauffman Community Center, New Franklin. The award recognizes continued efforts to reduce erosion and to prevent runoff of plant nutrients into streams.

Two Meyers brothers, Bob Jr. and Ed, and Bob's son Steve manage about 850 acres, including 325 acres of rented land, on four farms. They have 210 milk cows, 170 heifers and 20 calves. They grow alfalfa hay, corn, soybeans and small grains and manage 90 acres of pasture.

Conservation practices included on the farm include:

- A manure pit with a concrete barnyard.
- A concrete stacking pad for manure at the heifer barn.

- A concrete septic tank for waste water from the milk house.

- A volunteer nutrient management plan.

They also practice conservation in the field:

- The farm has a contract with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service to plant cover crops on 160 acres producing soybeans and corn silage.

- They installed contour stripcropping and grassy waterways.

- The fields have been managed as no-till for 25 years.

- Fencing along a tributary of Campbells Run and a grassy buffer provide wildlife areas.

The Meyers' improved their milking efficiency 6 years ago when they upgraded from a double-6 herringbone system to a double-10 herringbone with rapid exit. The parlor holds 20 cows per milking. Each session takes about three hours.

The three men divide the farm chores. Ed and Bob conduct the fieldwork. Steve and part-time workers do the milking. All handle the feeding. Julia, Bob's wife, and Diana, Ed's wife, handle the bookkeeping.

The Meyers family has been farming the same land since 1963 when Bob and Ed's father, the late J. Robert Meyers Sr., started operations. The family's farming history goes back another

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generation when their grandfather worked on a farm in Lemasters.

Meyers Brothers have hosted educational tours of farm pasture.

The farm was enrolled into the Agricultural Land Preservation Program in 2006 and was recently named a Dairy of Distinction.

Also at the annual banquet, Andrew Fitz, who recently resigned as a farmer director with the Conservation District after 25 years of service, was presented a clock for his contributions.

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