

2000's Distinguished Service Awardees

Raymond L. Bollaert, Brown City

Distinguished Service Awards - Agriculture and Natural Resources Week, 2000

The primary focus of his adult life has been serving others through his profession, along with effective leadership in youth development programs in Michigan. He is respected by his peers for his leadership in rural development in Michigan's thumb and is broadly recognized for his initiative to develop and secure support for many innovative educational opportunities in Agriscience, FFA and 4-H through MSU and related educational organizations.

Henry & Martha Miller, Constantine

Distinguished Service Awards - Agriculture and Natural Resources Week, 2000

They distinguished themselves by diligent stewardship of their agricultural lands and innovative leadership in farm production practices. Their soil and water management acumen is enhanced by a decade-old cooperative research effort with MSU's Department of Crop and Soil Sciences and Kellogg Biological Station to increase sustainable agriculture practices in Michigan. They are also active in numerous local community organizations and humanitarian programs.

Alvin J. Thelen, St. Johns

Distinguished Service Awards - Agriculture and Natural Resources Week, 2000

He pioneered in the early 1950s the development of computerized dairy records that replaced hand calculations made by Dairy Herd Improvement Association testers. Consequently, Michigan DHIA and Provo DHIA in Utah were the first in the world to use computerized dairy record systems that monitored milk production. A national DHIA leader in computer technology to benefit the dairy industry, he ardently supported MSU research, Extension and the agricultural community.

Gary C. Voogt, Marne

Distinguished Service Awards - Agriculture and Natural Resources Week, 2001

An innovative cattleman producing superior purebred Polled Hereford and Angus, he also is a leader in the beef industry at local, state and national levels. With family help on the farm, he combined production with leadership in the Michigan Cattlemen's Association and the Michigan Beef Industry Commission and their national counterparts. A supporter of Michigan State University and a client of its services, he helped form the Animal Industry Initiative and make the case for the new Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory. Farming is his second career; he is a graduate civil engineer, majority stockholder and president of an engineering firm employing 65 people.

Ben Kudwa, Grand Ledge

Distinguished Service Awards - Agriculture and Natural Resources Week, 2001

As executive director of the Michigan Potato Industry Commission since 1986, he provided creative leadership during the Michigan industry's transition from fresh market and french fries to become the leading potato chip producer in the U.S. Under his leadership, the industry works closely with Michigan State University on variety development, pesticide issues and Integrated Pest Management, proper storage and implementing the MSU plant initiative Project GREEN. A leader on both the state and national stage, he also played a leading role establishing the Michigan Seed Potato Association.

Rebecca Humphries, Lowell

Distinguished Service Awards - Agriculture and Natural Resources Week, 2001

During a career with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources that began in 1978, she has worked as a wildlife biologist, management unit supervisor and deputy director, responsible for coordinating several resource divisions. Currently, she is the chief of the DNR's Wildlife Division and administers a staff of 170 employees charged with managing Michigan's Wildlife. She is dedicated to the application of science-based solutions to contentious wildlife issues, including bovine tuberculosis in the state's deer herd. She has consistently provided leadership in the integration of diverse interests such as agriculture and natural resources in finding effective and acceptable solutions. She led the development of regulations for the captive cervid industry and has played a key role in developing protocols for an integrated, ecosystem-based approach to natural resource planning and management.

Sam Hines, Holt

Distinguished Service Award for Agriculture and Natural Resources, 2002

Sam Hines' commitment to agriculture began long before he became executive vice president of the Michigan Pork Producers Association in 1986. This former Ohio farm boy has made important contributions in his home state, with the National Pork Producers Council and in Michigan, where he influenced the Michigan Right-to-Farm Act's Generally Accepted Agriculture Management Practices and the Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program. Hines was also instrumental in establishing the Michigan Pork Alliance and has worked with other commodity organization leaders, Michigan State University, and governmental agencies and elected officials to resolve environmental issues and other challenges facing Michigan farmers.

Keith Reinholt, Reese

Distinguished Service Award for Agriculture and Natural Resources, 2002

Keith Reinholt's contributions to Michigan agriculture span the entire state and reach across several commodities. As executive director of Michigan Soybean Committee, he has championed research, education, demonstration and Extension programs to benefit the soybean industry. His advice was instrumental in helping develop the corn check-off program, now known as the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan, and he was Michigan's representative in the development of the highly successful North Central Soybean Research Program. Reinholt has served as the director for three different associations of Farm Credit Services in Michigan and continues working on behalf of farmers as an adviser to Michigan State University and the Michigan Department of Agriculture in an effort to create support for and in the development of value-added cooperatives.

Robert Patterson, Big Rapids

Distinguished Service Award for Agriculture and Natural Resources, 2002

Robert Patterson is devoted to three of Michigan's most important resources: natural resources, managed resources and young people. Patterson is an award-winning florist who has received recognition and respect at the state and national levels. Many MSU students have garnered invaluable experience as interns at Patterson's Flowers, Incorporated. Patterson has devoted much of his free time to working with young people through the 4-H youth program. He has provided leadership to the Michigan 4-H Great Lakes and Natural Resources Camp, and through this involvement, he has influenced more than 400 young people, many of whom have pursued careers in natural resources. Patterson has also been a leader in his community, volunteering with local business development groups and charities such as the Mecosta-Osceola Association Rehabilitation Center and the Mecosta County Council of the Arts.

Chris Goddard, Ann Arbor

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Resources Citations, 2003

Chris Goddard is a champion for Great Lakes fisheries. He's held multiple positions at the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and has worked with both the U.S. and Canadian governments as the executive secretary for the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. Goddard's efforts have contributed to sea lamprey suppression in the Great Lakes and resulted in better coordinated fisheries management and aquatic research programs and Great Lakes law enforcement. His commitment to science has resulted in improved fisheries research conducted jointly by the United States and Canada, and the development of the Partnership for Ecosystem Research and Management.

John Kronemeyer, Pickford

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Resources Citations, 2003

John Kronemeyer is equal parts family man, businessman and dairyman. This Easter Upper Peninsula dairy farmer displays integrity and efficiency in every aspect of his work and life. Kronemeyer has served in leadership positions with the Michigan Agriculture Commission, Michigan DHIA, the Upper Peninsula Fair Board, the Michigan Holstein Association and Michigan Milk Producers Association. Closer to home, he has been actively involved as a church deacon and elder, a member of the Chippewa County Farm Bureau, and as a Marquette Township assessor and supervisor. Kronemeyer also played a vital role in helping to secure new facilities and staff at the Upper Peninsula Experiment Station in Chatham, Michigan.

Barry Mumby, Fulton

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Resources Citations, 2003

Barry Mumby's innovative thinking and devotion to agriculture have benefitted farmers throughout Michigan, the United States and abroad. As a member of the Michigan Soybean Board, he served on the National Soybean Development Foundation's National Voluntary Soybean Check-off Board. The U.S. secretary of agriculture appointed Mumby to the United Soybean Board. He traveled to 25 countries while serving as its chairman. As a cash crop farmer and early irrigation adopter, Mumby worked with his peers to form the Mendon Seed Growers Corporation and later developed a business to provide farmers with marketing assistance. Mumby has also served on the Glen Oaks Community College board of directors, has been an active 4-H leader and developed the St. Joseph County 4-H commodity marketing project.

Velmar Green, Elsie

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Resources Award - 2004

When brothers Duane and Velmar Green joined their father, Merle, as partners in Green Meadows Farms in 1954, their herd comprised 250 cows. By 1985, Green Meadows Farms had expanded to 17,000 cows. Throughout their careers, the Greens have been early adapters of new technologies in dairy herd management. They have adapted and experimented with new milking, manure handling and labor management systems. The Greens enjoy a close relationship with the MSU College of Veterinary Medicine and have relied on assistance from MSU throughout each of their expansions. These relationships have benefitted both Green Meadows Farms and MSU. They open their farm to MSU faculty members for hand-on teaching in a farm setting, provide internship opportunities for veterinary students and provide an excellent setting for field research. MSU researchers have conducted projects at Green Meadows Farms in virtually every aspect of dairy herd management, including the milking parlor, feed nutrition, agricultural engineering, animal health, sire performance and manure management. Duane and Velmar Green are active in state and national organizations supporting the dairy industry. Duane has served as a national board member, vice president and president of the Holstein Association USA. Velmar is treasurer of the Michigan Milk Producers Association.

Dennis Grinold, Grand Haven

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Resources Award - 2004

A stalwart supporter of Michigan's charter boating and fishing industries, Dennis Grinold has fished out of every port on Michigan's west coast. Since 1983, he has been a charter boat owner and operator and is the captain of Fish 'N Grin Charter Service of Grand Haven, Michigan. He is a strong advocate of Michigan State University fisheries research and has hosted, supported and mentored MSU graduate students conducting fishery research on the Great Lakes. Dennis often provides the voice of reason when discussing issues such as bag limits and other regulations affecting commercial fishermen and recreational anglers. From 1985 to 1989, he served as vice president of the Michigan Charter Boat Association, a non-profit organization serving more than 300 charter boat captains in Michigan. Today, his extensive involvement in the industry includes serving as U.S. adviser to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission; chairman of the Lake Michigan Task Force; external adviser of Michigan Sea Grant College Program; and a member of the Michigan DNR Lake Michigan Task Force.

Amy Frankmann, DeWitt

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Resources Award - 2004

Amy Frankmann, executive director of the Michigan Nursery and Landscape Association, began her 15-year career with the MNLA as an office manager and quickly moved up to vice president for education and expositions. Under her leadership, attendance records were set at the Great Lakes Trade Exposition in 2002 and 2003. She became interim director of MNLA in 1998, and was named executive director following a national search. Amy provides a strong voice for Michigan's "green industry." She has advocated industry funding for research, education and market development under PA 232 to ensure the future of the state's nursery and landscape businesses. She has helped students find internships and permanent employment by creating the MNLA student program and the industry placement session. She has also served on the FFA Foundation Board of Directors, where she is credited with gaining numerous scholarships for FFA career development opportunities. Through her contacts, she has promoted FFA programs throughout the nursery and landscape industry.

Herman Geers, Lansing***Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Resources Award - 2005***

Herman Geers, founder and president of Michigan Agricultural Commodities, understands the food distribution system better than many. In addition to his great business acumen in grain handling, he understands the profound societal need to ensure that everyone has adequate access to food. Geers coordinates the Food Resource Bank, a food relief program that aids areas around the world that have been hit by famine. Rather than shipping commodities overseas, the group sells donated grain and forwards the funds to agencies working in the affected area, thereby helping local economies and ensuring that the food gets to the locations most affected by hunger. This rational approach to problem-solving has also served Geers well in his business. Geers, a graduate of the elevator and farm supply management and agricultural economics programs at Michigan State University, founded Michigan Agricultural Commodities (MAC) in 1976. Under his leadership, it grew into Michigan's largest grain handling company. With nine Michigan locations serving every state east of the Mississippi River and one in Ontario, Canada, the company is one of Michigan's premier agribusinesses. Geers is a respected and sought after leader in the industry. He has served the Michigan Agri-Business Association in multiple capacities, including president. He has also served on the National Grain and Feed Membership Committee, and Michigan FFA Board of Directors. His dedication, professionalism and strategic insight earned him recognition as the Michigan Agri-Businessman of the Year in 1996, and an Honorary Degree from the Michigan FFA in 2004.

Dave Trinka, South Haven***Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Resources Award - 2005***

Dave Trinka is "Mr. Blueberry." As the director of horticulture for the Michigan Blueberry Growers Association, the nation's leading blueberry producer, Trinka represents more than 45 percent of the state's blueberry acreage. Since joining the MBG in 1991, Trinka has developed a reputation as an elite expert on blueberry culture. He has served as a stakeholder and representative voice of Michigan blueberry growers in various venues with the Michigan Department of Agriculture, Environmental Protection Agency and the United States Department of Agriculture. From locating suitable sites for on-farm research to conducting experiments himself, Trinka is committed to advancing the blueberry industry through research and development. His understanding of issues blueberry growers face and his ability to translate them into practical questions help MSU researchers focus their efforts. Trinka has been a strong supporter of research within the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station and Project GREEN, the state's plant agriculture initiative at MSU. By serving on the advisory committee for the Trevor Nichols Research Complex in Fennville, he has helped the station expand into a leading research and Extension facility. Trinka's extensive knowledge, problem-solving skills and leadership capabilities allow blueberry growers to stay on the cutting edge of production and profitability.

David Woods, Britton***Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Resources Award - 2005***

Both tradition and innovation marked David Woods' career at Woods Seed Farm. He was the fourth to head the five-generation family farm, managing the operation from 1960 until his son, Jason, took over in 2000. He is also the second generation in his family to be recognized with the Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Resources Award; his father, Stanley, received the honor in 1968. Under David's management, Woods Seed Farm grew to approximately 2,000 acres with seed production increasing from 750 to 1,000 acres. Woods has kept the farm on the cutting edge of the seed industry by implementing new technology for processing and storage, such as an automated bagging and handling system. His forward thinking earned him first place in the National Corn Growers Association national competition for corn yield in 1986 - with 215 bushels per acre. A key leader in Michigan's seed industry, Woods has worked with MSU researchers to conduct wheat and soybean research plots, as well as corn variety trials. He has also partnered with MSU Extension agents to host corn, soybean and wheat educational programs and field days. Woods helped guide the Michigan Crop Improvement Association through more than 45 years of change by serving in various leadership positions and was a Foundation Seed Producer of the association for many years. He has also been involved with the Michigan Corn Growers Association, the Michigan Soybean Association and the Deerfield Cooperative. As a member of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency of Lenawee County, Woods has helped administer federal farm programs on a local level.

Edward "Ed" Powell, Portland***Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Resources Award - 2006***

Ed Powell has spent more than 35 years helping Michigan farmers to access, develop and expand domestic and international markets for their crops, as manager of the Michigan Elevator Exchange division of Farm Bureau Services and later as vice president and assistant secretary of Farm Bureau Services. Powell began his service with MEE in 1950, and was instrumental in developing and managing a terminal elevator system that gave Michigan farmers access to world markets. His expertise was called into service in many parts of the world. In 1972, he was a member of the U.S. Grain Cooperative marketing team that visited Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia. In 1978, he was part of a U.S. trade mission to Cuba, and was also a delegate to the 1979 U.S.-European Community Cooperative Conference in Belgium. He retired from MEE in 1985 but continued working to open markets for Michigan products. In 1987, he assisted the Michigan Potato Commission in restructuring markets following the closing of a potato processing facility. He joined Volunteers for Overseas Cooperative Assistance (VOCA) and helped to restructure the former Soviet Union's mismanaged state farms into locally owned and managed cooperatives. Powell has also been an active contributor to his community and church. He served as a member of the Portland City Planning Commission and the Portland Lions Club, and in his local Boy Scout troop. (Three of his sons attained the rank of Eagle Scout). Within the Grand Ledge Baptist Church, he has served in many roles. Powell's has been a life of service -- to his community, his church and Michigan agriculture.

Marvin Ray, Perronville***Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Resources Award - 2006***

In his nearly 60 years in agriculture in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, Marvin Ray has developed a pretty good idea of what it takes to succeed. He raised crops, livestock and dairy cows on his Perronville farm from 1948 to 1961. At the same time, he established a feed mill, first on the farm, and then he moved it to Bark River in 1962, where Ray's Feed Mill continues to operate today. A second location was opened in Norway, Michigan, as Ray's grew to become the Upper Peninsula's largest farm supply store. Ray's Feed Mill provides a full-service agribusiness supplier to the farms of the far north of Michigan. Ray's full-service commitment is well known to farmers, who have benefitted from his support at the times they needed it most, such as when they were short of seed to finish a field in the middle of the night. For Ray, every customer is valuable, even those that are not especially profitable. A strong supporter of U.P. agriculture, Ray has helped many financially struggling farmers. His strong relationship with MSU Extension further helps to support the needs of U.P. farmers. An ardent supporter of 4-H, he was recognized as the Delta County 4-H Partner of the Year. In 1991, he was recognized by the Growing Upper Peninsula Agricultural Association (GUPAA) with the group's Service to U.P. Agriculture Award. For Ray, success has less to do with the profitability of his business than it does with supporting the farmers of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. He and his family business have succeeded admirably in both regards.

Karl Guenther, Kalamazoo***Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Resources Award - 2007***

Karl Guenther has been called "the most recognizable voice in western Michigan" thanks to his many years on-air at WKZO radio in Kalamazoo. Guenther has been a longtime member of the media, predominantly with radio and, since 1995, as a columnist for the Kalamazoo Gazette. He worked for WKZO for more than 38 years, including 26 years directly related to agricultural reporting. Karl developed a special relationship with agricultural organizations, including Farm Bureau, USDA, and especially, Michigan State University Extension, and he earned a reputation as a knowledgeable and accurate interviewer. Guenther, nationally certified as an auctioneer, often provided his talents pro bono to 4-H livestock auctions and nonprofit fundraisers. He has also served as a speaker and M.C. at many community events and judged innumerable FFA and 4-H events. He is a tireless promoter of agriculture and a staunch supporter of MSU Extension and the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station. He has been a regular participant at many field days, Ag Action Day educational programs, conferences, winter meetings and integrated pest management breakfasts. He served for three years as chair of the Kalamazoo County Extension Council and recently assisted in the issues identification process to provide community input to future programming needs. His excellence has been recognized with numerous awards and citations, including the Michigan Farm Bureau Communicator of the Year in 1975, 1976, and 1980. Through his long and storied career, Karl Guenther has used the power of mass media to tell agriculture's story. His efforts have played a major role in promoting a positive image of MSU among the people of southwestern Michigan.

Douglas Lewis, Milan***Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Resources Award - 2007***

At first glance, you wouldn't think that Douglas Lewis, an attorney and director of Student Legal Services at the University of Michigan, would have much to do with agriculture, natural resources or Michigan State University. At one time, he may have agreed with you. But that was before a client offered to pay for his services with either money or a horse -- and Lewis chose the horse. Today, Lewis' love of horses and history have led him to become the volunteer director of the African American West Project, a group that seeks to educate students across the country through reenactments and authentic period costumes that reflect the historic role of African Americans in settling the American West. He is also an active member of the Buckskin Horse Association of Michigan, serves on the State 4-H Trail Ride Committee, is past president of Therapeutic Riding, Inc., and has been active in the Washtenaw County 4-H Horse Leaders' Association. Lewis has become a staunch supporter of MSU. He has been a member of the Washtenaw County MSU Extension Council for the past three years and has served as a member of the Council for Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching (CARET) since 2004. In this role he has traveled to Washington, D.C., to speak with legislators as an eloquent advocate on behalf of the CANR, MSUE and MAES. Lewis is a graduate of the University of Michigan and the Thomas M. Cooley Law School. He is past president of the Washtenaw County Bar Association. His family also owns a farm near Milan. "I tell people I'm a full-time lawyer and a part-time cowboy that would really love to turn that around," he says.

Clifford Vennix, Auburn***Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Resources Award - 2007***

As the owner of Auburn Bean and Grain Company, Clifford Vennix has made the financial well-being of his customers the guiding principle of all his business endeavors. His reputation for honesty and his business acumen have allowed his business not only to survive but to thrive in this highly competitive field. During his 36-year tenure with Auburn Bean and Grain, Vennix built the business to encompass locations in Oakley, Hemlock, Saginaw and Auburn, Michigan, with a combined storage of 13 million bushels. Vennix grew up on a farm in the Saginaw Valley and began his career with the Frutchey Bean Company in 1955. He purchased Auburn Bean and Grain in 1970 and has been a leader in business innovation ever since. He became president of the Michigan Agri-Dealers Association in 1983 and was named director of the National Grain and Feed Association in 1988. He has served as chair of the Michigan Agri-Business Association (MABA) and president of the Michigan Bean Shippers Association, and he was a member of the committee charged with writing the Michigan Grain Dealers Act. He has served on many local boards and community programs and currently serves on the Board of Michigan Millers Mutual Insurance Company. Vennix has supported MSU Extension and the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station in local educational programs and regional research. Through his agribusiness operation, he has participated in dozens of field research trials. Among his honors, Vennix was named the 1981 City of Auburn Citizen of the Year and the MABA 1988 Agri-Business Member of the Year, and he received a special tribute from the Michigan Legislature in 1995 commemorating his years of service.

Donald Gibbs, Onondaga***Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Resources Award - 2008***

Donald Gibbs has grown his Onondaga acreage into one of the largest berry farms in Michigan over the past 38 years. He has also provided invaluable aid to Michigan State University research programs as a grower cooperater for more than 20 years. Born and raised on an apple farm in West Branch, Michigan, Gibbs first came to MSU to attend a horticulture short course, then received a bachelor's degree in cop science in 1964. He then worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service as a soil survey mapper from 1964 to 1974 before returning to farming full-time. Gibbs purchased his first 128 acres in 1970 and has gradually added to his land over the years; his Ingham County farm now comprises 284 acres. Today, Gibbs Berry Farm grows strawberries for U-pick buyers and farmers' markets, as well as asparagus, apples, blackberries and black raspberries. He also supplies raspberries and strawberries to Sandhill Crane Winery in Jackson, where award-winning wines have been produced from his harvest. Gibbs has provided plots to MSU researchers in the departments of Horticulture, Plant Pathology and Entomology for more than two decades. He has had up to three CANR researchers conducting trials at his facilities at any one time. Gibbs has been a steadfast partner in MSU research programs that depend on grower sites to conduct field research. The partnership of grower cooperators such as Gibbs and their excellent stewardship of research plots make possible important strides in research. Gibbs, who plans to retire after this year, has been married to his wife, Josephine, since 1967. All three of their children are MSU graduates.

Paul R. Rood Jr., Covert***Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Resources Award - 2008***

Paul J. Rood, Jr., of Covert, is owner and operator of Paul Rood Orchards, a centennial farm specializing in tree fruits. A major producer of pears in the eastern United States, he also produces and markets plums and apples. A three-degree graduate of Michigan State, with B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in horticulture, Rood has managed the family fruit farm since 1956, following three years as a horticulturist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in California. Throughout his career, he has been a strong supporter of the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station (MAES), MSU Extension and the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. "Michigan State University, and in particular our college, has been the benefactor of this talented and devoted alumnus," said Martin Bukovac, university distinguished professor emeritus. "He gave generously of his time in supporting and advisory roles, in directing industry support to our research and Extension faculty, in encouraging legislative action when most needed, and in sharing his orchards for research and Extension activities." Rood has participated in a wide range of MAES research, volunteering his orchards for work on new fruit varieties, seedling studies, insecticide studies and pre-harvest apple drop, among other research projects. He has also been active within the industry and is noted for having developed a program to provide pears to farm markets in the Midwest instead of sending them to processors out of state. Rood is a member of the Michigan State Horticultural Society, the Michigan Pear Research Association and the Michigan Apple Research Committee. In 2005, he was appointed to the Michigan Plum Advisory Board by Governor Granholm. Rood and his wife, Gerry, have been married since 1950 and have four grown children.

Donald and Robert Gregory, Cherry Bay Orchards

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Resources Award - 2009

Donald and Robert Gregory own Cherry Bay Orchards, one of the largest processed cherry-producing operations in the world. This vertically integrated operation includes all aspects of production, processing, product development and marketing of cherries. Today, the more than 2,000-acre operation produces both tart and sweet cherries, apples and other fall fruits, with cherry processing and manufacturing plants in Antrim, Grand Traverse and Oceana counties and farming operations in Leelanau County and southwestern Michigan. The Gregory's are visionary leaders in the fruit industry and strong partners in MSU research and Extension activities in northwestern Michigan. They have hosted countless projects by Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station (MAES) researchers on their farms and provide a key stop on tours to demonstrate innovative farm operations. Bob Gregory has served for many years on the board of the Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Foundation., and both brothers have held many top leadership positions in key industry organizations, including the Michigan State Horticultural Society (MSHS), the U.S. Cherry Industry Administrative Board (CIAB), the national Cherry Marketing Institute (CMI), the Michigan Cherry Committee (MCC) and many other important state and national industry organizations.

Kathleen Hawkins, Mason

Distinguished Service to Agriculture and Natural Resources Award - 2009

Kathleen Hawkins is executive director of the Michigan Beef Industry Commission (MBIC) and executive vice president of the Michigan Cattlemen's Association (MCA). She has been an outspoken advocate for Michigan's beef industry for more than 20 years, developing promotions and consumer information for the MBIC and ensuring that Michigan's 14,600 cattle operations are represented by the MCA whenever their interests are at stake. Ms. Hawkins has led many successful initiatives for the betterment of the industry, including the 1985 passage of the Beef Checkoff and the 2007 implementation of a statewide radio frequency identification (RFID) program. Under her leadership of the MCA, Michigan became the first state in the country to implement a RFID program to track cattle movement. She has also served on many industry boards and committees at the state and national levels, including the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP), the Michigan Beef Alliance, the Five-State Beef Initiative and the Michigan Quality Beef Producer program, and has held numerous committee appointments within the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and its predecessor, the National Livestock and Meat Board. She has been instrumental in leveraging cooperation between the industry, government agencies and university resources, and has provided leadership to many joint programs with MSU, including the Performance Bull Test and the Preconditioned and Graded Feeder Calf Sale. She has also provided direction to MSU Extension (MSUE) and Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station (MAES) priorities as a member of the MSUE/MAES State Advisory Council and, in 2006, was instrumental in establishing the MSU Beef Cattle Endowment Fund to provide financial support to MSU animal science programs in perpetuity.