



YEAR IN REVIEW



What happens on private agricultural land affects us all. Farmers, ranchers and foresters who are good stewards of the land provide not only healthy food for our table, but clean, abundant water, healthy soil and thriving wildlife.

Sand County Foundation's dedication to the cause of private landowner conservation leadership is inspired by the writings and committed land stewardship of renowned author, scientist and conservationist Aldo Leopold. In his famous *A Sand County Almanac*, Leopold wrote, "the landscape of any farm is the owner's portrait of himself." Sand County Foundation's Leopold Conservation Awards honor outstanding landowners who believe in and live by the tenets of Leopold's land ethic. That is, a land ethic changes the role of people from conquerors of the land-community to members and citizens of it. "It implies respect for his fellow-members and also respect for the community as such," Leopold wrote.

The Leopold Conservation Award™ Program recognizes and celebrates extraordinary achievement in voluntary conservation by private landowners who inspire others by their examples. It provides a platform to elevate leading agricultural families as conservation ambassadors to citizens outside of agriculture. In addition, the program builds bridges between agriculture, government, environmental organizations, industry and academia to help advance the cause of private lands conservation.

Working with prominent state conservation partners in nine states, Sand County Foundation presents the \$10,000 award and a crystal depicting Aldo Leopold, in settings that publicly showcase the landowners' achievements.

Sand County Foundation and its many partners and sponsors actively seek others to become part of this important story. An award program of this stature could not exist without quality landowner nominees or sustainable funding.

Leopold Conservation Award Program sponsors are proud to be affiliated with a program that gives exceptional stewards of natural resources the recognition they deserve.

For more information, please visit: www.leopoldconservationaward.org

Stories Of Innovators On The Land



Late 2013 gave us batches of cold and generally miserable weather in most of the United States. However, spirits were warm where Sand County Foundation and our agricultural and environmental partner

organizations celebrated the year's Leopold Conservation Award families.

Whether it was in Monterey, California or Kearney, Nebraska, hundreds of farmers, ranchers, agricultural industry leaders and environmentalists recognized, thanked and honored their state's 2013 Leopold Conservation Award recipients.

Earlier in the year, in Lincoln, Nebraska, Sand County Foundation and its partners brought together award winning landowner conservationists to exchange ideas about innovation on the land. The stories they shared inspire us all to continually advance conservation practices that are good for both business and our environment.

Each recipient, profiled in the following pages, has a compelling story of voluntary conservation. Like the Giacomini family of Marin County, California who carry on a tradition of conservation passed down through generations. Others, for instance the Bednarskis of Kentucky, are relatively new to agriculture and also fully committed to environmental improvement on the land.

These landowners produce crops ranging from grass fed beef to artisanal cheese. Yet common among these uncommon farm and ranch families are a land ethic, innovative leadership in monitoring and management, outreach and engagement with their communities and profitability. These notable people embody principles Sand County Foundation carries forth in all of its programs.

When Sand County Foundation created the Leopold Conservation Awards we did so to say "thank you" to exemplary farm and ranch families. Now we hope you will join us to honor those who deeply believe they must leave their land better than they found it.

Sincerely,

Brent M. Haglund, Ph.D.

President

CALIFORNIA

★ GIACOMINI DAIRY

Bob, Karen, Diana, Lynn and Jill Giacomini

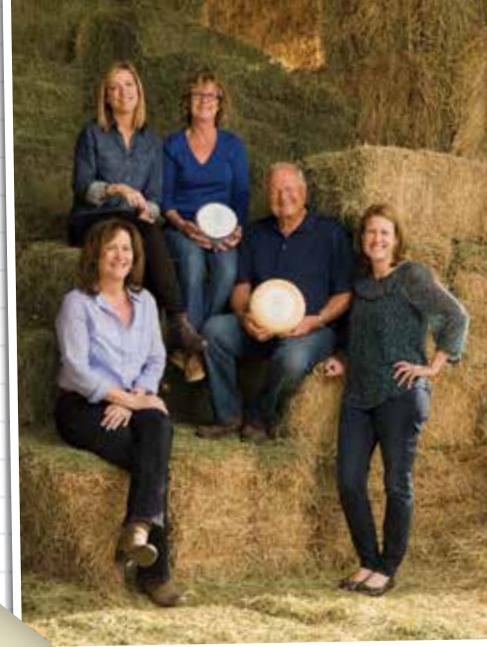


Photo credit: Paolo Vescia

★ PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



★ GIACOMINI DAIRY
Marin County, California



★ PAST CALIFORNIA RECIPIENTS

★ 2012
GIACOMAZZI DAIRY
Dino and Julie Giacomazzi

★ 2011
KOOPMANN RANCH
Tim Koopmann

★ 2010
MONTNA FARMS
Al Montna

★ 2009
RED ROCK RANCH
John Diener

★ 2008
THREE CREEKS RANCH
Chet Vogt

★ 2007
SIERRA ORCHARDS
Craig and Julie McNamara

★ 2006
LANGETWINS WINE ESTATES
Brad and Randy Lange

BOB AND DEAN GIACOMINI purchased a dairy from Bob's father and ran their fluid milk business while raising four daughters on the farm in coastal Marin County.

Forty years later, as Bob considered the need to diversify the business, his daughters came home to be part of the re-invented Robert Giacomini Dairy. They launched an artisan farmstead cheese business that not only sustained the farm, but became a model and example for others.

For Dean, who passed away in 2012, one of her greatest joys was that all four daughters returned to the farm to be part of the family business. Today, Bob operates Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Company with daughters Karen, Diana, Lynn and Jill. They produce Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese and operate The Fork, a culinary center focused on education and entertainment for visitors to the farm. The venue hosts meetings of agricultural organizations, culinary students, fellow artisan cheesemakers and others interested in environmental stewardship.

The picturesque 720-acre dairy is a showcase operation where the Giacominis craft award-winning cheeses

and demonstrate exemplary land stewardship through their dedication to voluntary, sustainable farming practices and animal care.

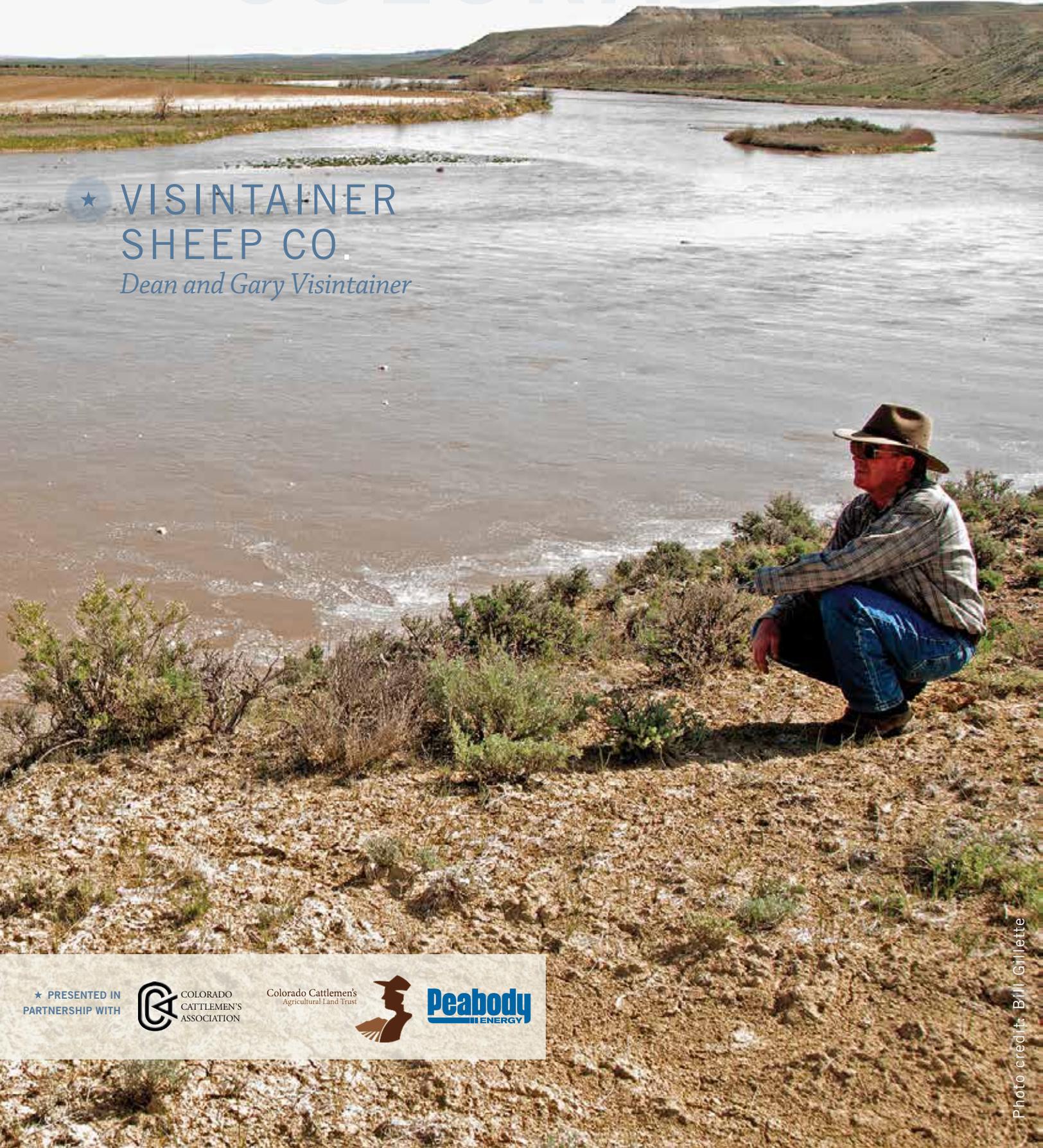
The family was one of the first participants in the NRCS's Conservation Stewardship Program and one of the first dairies to install a methane digester to harvest methane and convert it into clean, renewable energy to power the dairy and cheese facilities.

Rotational grazing of their cows keeps soils healthy and helps prevent harmful erosion into Tomales Bay. Steep slopes are densely vegetated with trees and shrubs to manage erosion, and a comprehensive nutrient management plan was implement to ensure there is no runoff of nutrients that could harm coastal wetlands.

"The Robert Giacomini Dairy is a model of a successful family business adopting land management practices that are environmentally sustainable and repeatable," wrote Marin County Ag Commissioner Stacy Carlsen in a nomination letter. "For over 50 years, this dairy has evolved into the finest family-run and operated dairy business in the Western United States."

COLORADO

★ VISINTAINER SHEEP CO.
Dean and Gary Visintainer



★ VISINTAINER SHEEP CO.
Moffatt County, Colorado

LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD

★ PAST COLORADO RECIPIENTS

- ★ 2012 WINEINGER-DAVIS RANCH
Russell and Tricia Davis
- ★ 2011 PIPE SPRINGS RANCH
McEndree Family
- ★ 2010 STANKO RANCH
Jim and Jo Stanko
- ★ 2009 MESA DE MAYA RANCH
John and Carolyn Doherty
- ★ 2008 COLEMAN RANCH
Jim, Frances, Tim and Teddi Coleman
- ★ 2007 SAN ISABEL RANCH
Mike and Sara Shields, Bet Kettle
- ★ 2006 BOHART RANCH
Dick and Sandra Tanner
- ★ 2005 MCNEIL RANCH
Mike and Cathy McNeil
- ★ 2004 RUSK HEREFORD RANCH
Randy and Claricy Rusk
- ★ 2003 CAPPS RANCH
Frankie and Sue Menegatti

A deep passion for the land entrusted to them, and a willingness to embrace and adapt to change, has kept the Visintainers at the forefront of innovative ranch management.

DEAN VISINTAINER AND HIS SON GARY jointly run the Visintainer Sheep Co., where concern for the land has always been essential to their management.

Decades of monitoring and observation, coupled with their move from production-based management to “forage-based” management to improve range health, has led to diversification of livestock to both sheep and cattle, while maintaining an emphasis on wildlife.

Species including deer, elk, pronghorn, greater sage-grouse, and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse are found on their land. Today, their ranch is a true refuge for wildlife.

After a catastrophic wildfire in the fall of 2010, the Visintainers partnered with the Natural Resources Conservation Service Sage-grouse Initiative, in conjunction with the Rocky Mountain Bird

Observatory, Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the US Fish and Wildlife Service - Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, to restore and rehabilitate lost sage-grouse habitat and rangelands.

Due to the intensity of the fire, no plants remained to hold the topsoil. Wind blew soil and ash into dunes that piled along fence lines. A threat of cheat grass invasion also existed upwind from a nearby previous fire. The Visintainers combatted these threats with an aerial application of a native seed mix sown the following spring.

The Visintainers are lauded by Colorado conservationists as “true pioneers” as they help pave the way for fellow ranchers and land managers who continue to learn from their experience.

“Many partners in conservation, neighboring landowners, and resource professionals have learned from the Visintainers’ observations and management techniques across their range, and have adapted those ideas elsewhere throughout Colorado,” said NRCS Private Lands Wildlife Biologist, Brandon Miller, in his nomination of the Visintainer Sheep Co.

Photo credit: Bill Gillette

★ PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

KENTUCKY

INAUGURAL AWARD

★ SHERWOOD
ACRES FARMS
Jon & Sylvia Bednarski



Thirteen years ago, with no real farming experience, **JON AND SYLVIA BEDNARSKI** purchased 35 acres at the headwater of Harrods Creek in LaGrange, Kentucky. Having grown up in rural America, Jon and Sylvia had a dream that their own children would share that lifestyle and grow up in similar fashion.

From the beginning, the Bednarskis had conservation foremost on their minds. With intentions of building a house and horse barn and starting a life on the farm, they mapped out plans to protect and enhance the natural resources in their care. They consulted with a county conservation agent, a state fish and wildlife biologist and the Kentucky Division of Forestry and began the hard work of cleaning up the land that had been neglected and overgrown for years.

Invasive trees and vines were removed, pastures for cattle and horses were created and a pond was constructed. Jon spent his spare time learning how to manage a beef herd through the University of Kentucky Master Cattleman and Master Grazer programs.

Along the way, Jon and Sylvia added a shallow stream-crossing, winter feeding pads, rotational grazing practices and prescribed grazing. They introduced better quality grasses and adopted other practices to keep the cattle happy and healthy.

Through their stewardship and good management practices, the Bednarskis took tired, unproductive land and transformed it into the foundation of a profitable cattle operation. By mid 2005, their hard work started to pay off. The family began to direct market their Belted Galloway beef through a number of farmer's markets, and later, through a chain of four stores, multiple restaurants, online sales and a retail store.

The Bednarskis added 15 acres to their farm and purchased another 100 acres in Henry County where their conservation practices carried on. With a mix of woods, water and open areas, the land is now teeming with wildlife including wild turkeys, songbirds and white-tailed deer – living proof that the once overgrown land has healed.

Away from the farm, Jon Bednarski serves on the Oldham County Conservation District, on the Cooperative Extension Council and in other industry leadership roles.

“Those responsibilities as well as working on my own farm have made me more aware of how important environmental stewardship is,” Bednarski wrote in their Leopold Conservation Award application. “I believe more than ever before that what happens on my farm and other farms has a great impact on our neighbors, our community and beyond.”

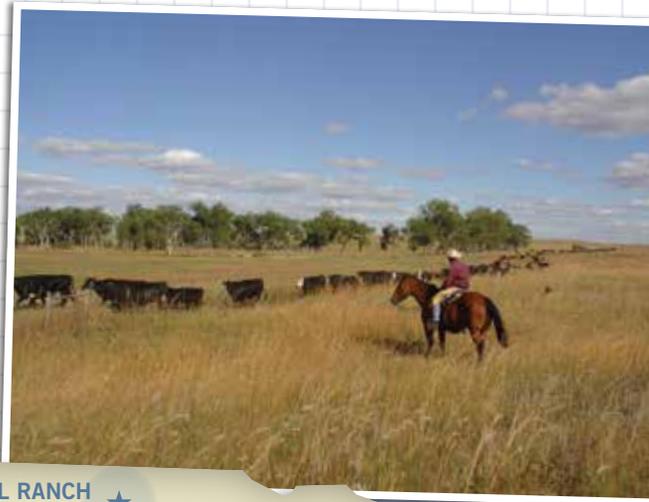
★ PRESENTED IN
PARTNERSHIP WITH



NEBRASKA

★ BEEL RANCH

Beel Family



In 1937, Henry O. Beel purchased land on the Brown and Cherry County line in the Sandhills of Nebraska. His son, Henry C. Beel, joined him 23 years later, and a legacy was born. In 1990, the third generation of Beels assumed stewardship of the nearly 22,000-acre cattle operation. Celebrating 75 years on the ranch, the Beels take pride in looking back on the progress they have made, and look forward to what lies ahead for future generations.

Owned and operated by brothers Frank, Henry and Adam, along with their wives Jennifer, Mary and Jenny, the **BEEL RANCH** was handed down by their father and grandfather who instilled in them the importance of treating the land with care. Today, they make it a priority to teach their own children the importance of maintaining and caring for our natural environment.

Ranch records indicate that in 1945, Henry O. Beel entered into the first of many conservation plans for the ranch. It developed a soil and water plan allowing for rotational grazing, weed mowing, seeding of wheat and more thoughtful well placement.

Almost seven decades later, conservation and range management continues to play a crucial role in the management of the Beel Ranch. Participating in cost sharing programs through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), the brothers spent numerous hours planning, designing and coordinating the installation of 32 miles of pipeline including: 89 hydrants, 6 wells and 45 new tanks across the ranch.

With the existing 67 windmills and tanks there is adequate supply of water in every pasture on the ranch allowing the brothers to successfully match their integrated rotational grazing plan to the environment and climate. Over the years these improvements have allowed the land to be better utilized through an efficient rotational grazing system. Habitat for upland bird species, raptors and large game has increased at the same time.

In 2004, a 10-year agreement was signed with the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission, Sandhills Task Force and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services to participate in a wildlife management program. Wildlife sanctuaries, created voluntarily, now offer exceptional viewing of birds and other wildlife on the ranch. Grouse, pheasants, bald eagles, prairie chickens, falcons and hawks are numerous year-round. The Beels also take advantage of opportunities to host and educate people who otherwise may not be exposed to life on the ranch.

“The Beel family has always been and always will be excellent stewards of the natural resources that they are entrusted with,” wrote Dennis Bauer of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Cooperative Extension in a letter of support.

“You get that sense any time you converse with them about rations, mineral nutrition, weed control or wildlife concerns. You can feel the sense of pride and dedication they have in caring for the land and animals.”

★ PAST NEBRASKA RECIPIENTS

★ 2012
SHOVEL DOT RANCH
Buell Family

★ 2011
RGM Corporation
Mathewson Family

★ 2010
KALKOWSKI FAMILY RANCHES
Kalkowski Family

★ 2009
BLUESTEM VALLEY FARMS
Lyle and Alice Sittler, Kristen and Todd Eggerling

★ 2008
CALF CREEK AND 4-O RANCHES
A.B.Cox

★ 2007
CHRISTEN RANCH
Rod and Amy Christen

★ 2006
WILSON RANCH
Blaine and Bryan Wilson

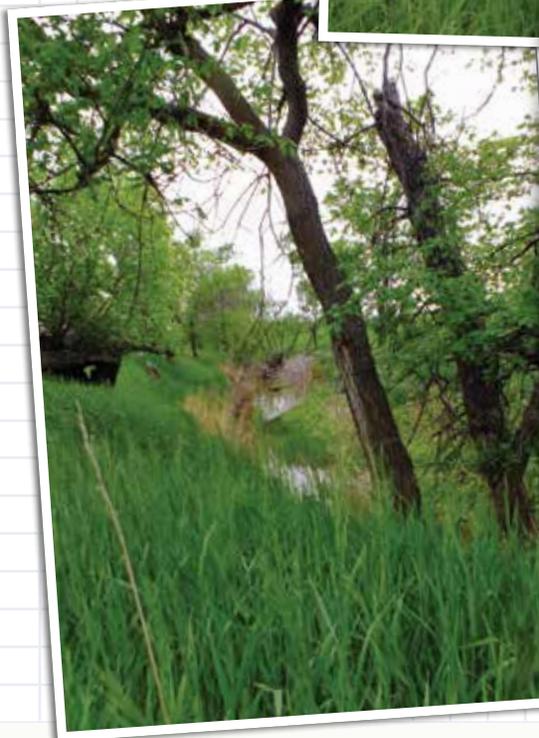
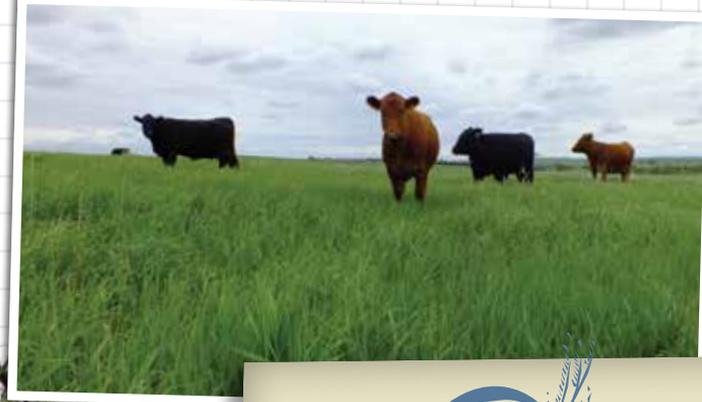


Photo credit: Jennifer Beel

SOUTH DAKOTA

★ GUPTILL RANCH

Guptill Family



GUPTILL RANCH
Pennington County, South Dakota



★ PAST ★ SOUTH DAKOTA ★ RECIPIENTS

★ 2012
KOPRIVA ANGUS
Kopriva Family

★ 2011
MORTENSON RANCH
Mortenson Family

★ 2010
DOUD RANCH
Rick and Marlis Doud

GUPTILL RANCH is a 7,000-acre cattle operation that Pat and Mary Lou Guptill have owned and managed for the past 25 years. With their five children, they are caretakers of this special landscape in western South Dakota. The area features grasslands with rolling hills and a wooded creek running through the ranch.

In 2000, as their children grew older, the Guptills decided to make some important changes in their land and resources management to lower production costs, enhance the health of the land and bring their family home.

They transitioned from calving in March to May, began focusing on grass-fed cattle, utilized low-stress stockmanship techniques, implemented intensive custom grazing, eliminated the use of chemicals on their land and in their livestock and monitored the land daily to protect the soil.

With a goal of making the land better for future generations, innovation and change have been beneficial to the operation in the form of improvements to rangeland, cattle health and profitability.

The Guptills also pay special attention to wildlife on the ranch. Wildlife population and diversity have expanded as grassland health has improved. On Guptill Ranch you may see golden eagles, bald eagles, bobcats, ducks, geese, sharp-tailed grouse, white-tailed deer and sandhill cranes.

An important part of their wildlife management is deferred grazing on their wooded creek during the nesting season and throughout most of the year.

“Many ranchers have adopted new conservation practices to protect their natural resources,” wrote NRCS District Conservationist, Nina Pekron, in her nomination letter.

“Pat and Mary Lou have taken that one step further – they share their knowledge so others may follow in their footsteps.”

Photo credit: Colette Kessler, NRCS

★ PRESENTED IN
PARTNERSHIP WITH



TEXAS

★ BUCKHOLLOW AND STOCKARD-SIRIANNI RANCHES

Jack and Jan Cato



★ PAST TEXAS RECIPIENTS

- ★ 2012
COOK'S BRANCH CONSERVANCY
Mitchell Family
- ★ 2011
TEMPLE RANCH
Buddy & Ellen Temple
- ★ 2010
ANDERSON RANCH
Jim Bill Anderson
- ★ 2009
SELAH, BAMBERGER RANCH PRESERVE
J. David Bamberger
- ★ 2008
LLANO SPRINGS RANCH
The Vandivier Family
- ★ 2007
77 RANCH
Gary and Sue Price
- ★ 2006
TREADWELL BRADY RANCH
John and Brian Treadwell
- ★ 2005
RICHARDS RANCH
John and Brent Hackley

For more than three decades, JACK AND JAN CATO have tirelessly pursued revitalization efforts on two ranches in two different ecological regions of Texas. Their Buckhollow Ranch is located in Uvalde and Real counties on the Edwards Plateau and the Stockard-Sirianni Ranch is in Frio County in the South Texas Plains eco region.

Given their investment of time and personal sacrifice to reach wildlife and habitat management goals, the Catos have been honored twice with regional Lone Star Land Steward awards, and now with the Leopold Conservation Award, Texas's highest honor for private land conservation. This accomplishment, rarely if ever achieved in Texas, is a testament to their dedication to land stewardship.

On Buckhollow Ranch, due to wildlife and habitat management plan goals and the fragile condition of the habitat (thin escarpment soils), livestock are no longer a part of the management scheme on this ranch. Income is derived from leasing of hunting rights and exotic sales.

The emphasis is on improving native habitat through proper range and wildlife management, and to maintain healthy, native wildlife populations – with a focus on non-game, threatened, and endangered species.

On Stockard-Sirianni, where livestock continue as the primary source of revenue, their goals are to maintain as healthy an ecosystem as possible, while allowing and maintaining maximum biodiversity through innovative habitat management.

Jack and Jan Cato are generous in sharing their properties with others—including local individuals, neighbors, conservation groups, universities, and state and federal agencies. They are both openminded and innovative regarding land management tools that would benefit the natural resources in their care for generations to come.

“Perhaps the most dramatic demonstration of the Catos’s longterm commitment to conservation is the recent placing of the Buckhollow Ranch under a perpetual conservation easement with The Nature Conservancy,” said retired Texas Parks and Wildlife Department biologist Richard B. Taylor in his nomination of the Catos. “The sole purpose of this is to preserve the natural beauty and habitat of the ranch for future generations.”

★ PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Photo credit: Chase Fountain

UTAH

★ H.A. FARMS *Stowell Family*



★ PAST ★ UTAH ★ RECIPIENTS

★ 2012
HEATON LIVESTOCK
COMPANY
Heaton Family

★ 2011
RED PINE LAND
AND LIVESTOCK
Osguthorpe Family

★ 2010
DELLA RANCHES
Tanner Family

★ 2009
TAVAPUTS RANCH
Butch and Jeanie Jensen

★ 2008
JOHNSON RANCH
Darrell and Carol Johnson

★ 2007
HAROLD SELMAN, INC.
Fred and Laura Selman

Dennis Stowell was president and CEO of **H.A. FARMS INC.** from 1980 until 2011. The sheep and cattle operation totals nearly 3,000 acres of private land and is also comprised of forest and BLM permits for sheep and cattle in Parowan, Utah. Dennis and his wife Marilee took over the business from Marilee's father, Harvey Adams, for whom the operation is named.

The family's roots run deep in this part of Utah. Ancestors started ranching in Parowan in the 1850s, and descendants have been farming and ranching in the same valley ever since.

Dennis Stowell served in the Utah State Senate and chaired the Senate Natural Resources Committee until his passing in 2011. He is described as a model public servant, exemplifying what is best in one who serves selflessly, devotedly and intelligently. "Dennis knew and understood rural Utah as well as anyone, and he was the ultimate defender and protector of conservation, our rural lands and way of life," said former Utah Lieutenant Governor Greg Bell. "Dennis not only fought for and was a voice for conservation measures, but he also practiced conservation in all aspects of his life – in his agriculture business and throughout his public service."

On land that had been damaged by overgrazing in the past, Dennis embraced the process of improving it through reseeded existing pastures, fencing them and making each pasture self sufficient by piping water to it. His dedication to wildlife habitat and management of all natural resources was lauded by those who knew him.

Dennis was tireless in his pursuit of farming innovation leading to his development of a patented real-time hay moisture tester that is now an industry standard in modern equipment.

Dennis effectively utilized conservation management ideas enabling him to enlarge the size of his herds and increase productivity with pasture and crops. He appreciated, supported and lived an agricultural way of life and loved to see rural communities prosper and thrive.

Dennis left behind a legacy of environmental improvement, and he left H.A. Farms in the very capable hands of Marilee and their sons, Coy and Kelly. They continue ranching this special land as the sixth generation of agricultural producers in the Adams family.

★ PRESENTED IN
PARTNERSHIP WITH



WISCONSIN

★ CATES FAMILY FARM

Dick & Kim Cates



★ CATES FAMILY FARM
Iowa County,
Wisconsin



★ PAST WISCONSIN RECIPIENTS

★ 2012
HEBBE FAMILY FARM
Jim & Val Hebbe

★ 2011
BRAGGER FAMILY DAIRY
Joe & Noel Bragger

★ 2011
KOEPKER FARMS INC.
Koepke Family

★ 2008
TERRY PETERS*

★ 2006
GERRY MICH*

** Presented in partnership with the Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association*

When Dick Cates' father purchased the family's Iowa County farm in the 1960's, it consisted of a few small tilled fields and largely unmanaged pastures. Today, it is a model of how to farm in a manner that is good for the business and good for the land.

Dick and Kim Cates operate **CATES FAMILY FARM**, a grass-fed beef enterprise that included, at its height, 700 acres of managed grazing land and 200 acres of managed forest. They direct-market their pasture-raised steers to grocery stores, restaurants, cafeterias and households around southern Wisconsin and Chicago.

Since 1987, the Cates have worked to make the family farm more environmentally sound and profitable. They adopted rotational grazing practices and created a managed grazing system, added fencing and created stream crossings for livestock.

They encourage the revitalization of a native oak savanna and care for Lowery Creek, a Class 2 trout stream that runs through the grazing acreage. The stream supports a healthy population of native brown and brook trout and introduced rainbow trout.

Dick's passion for land conservation and environmental improvement led to his involvement in planning the first Wisconsin grazing workshop in 1990, which grew into the state grazing conference, one of the premier grazing events in the Midwest.

Dick is Senior Lecturer in the Dept. of Soil Science at the University of Wisconsin – Madison and Director of the UW Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems – Wisconsin School for Beginning Dairy & Livestock Farmers where he has mentored students for twenty years.

“For me, conservation became not just a set of constraints, but a very positive part of my life that involved skill and learning to understand what the land could handle,” he said. “So I encourage the young farmers I’ve been training to look at their land as a portrait and a statement of themselves, and try to understand how you and the land together as partners can do better. And that’s an uplifting way to farm. I think all of us want to do that, it’s a process of finding our way.”

Dick and Kim love and respect the land and have this community sense about them,” wrote UW Extension Grazing Specialist Rhonda Gildersleeve in a nomination letter. “They have found the middle ground where a profitable farming system can co-exist with excellent conservation and positive environmental impacts.”

★ PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



WYOMING

★ PADLOCK RANCH

Wayne & Judy Fahsholtz
& the Scott Family



★ PAST WYOMING RECIPIENTS

- ★ 2012 SOMMERS RANCH
Sommers Family
- ★ 2011 FIELDGROVE RANCH
Ryan & Teresa Fieldgrove
- ★ 2010 7E RANCH
Ron and Linda Heward
- ★ 2009 FOY RANCH
Rocky and Nancy Foy
- ★ 2008 PAPE RANCH
Norm and Barbara Pape
- ★ 2007 GOLDEN WILLOW RANCH
Paul and Catherine Kukowski
- ★ 2006 BARLOW LIVESTOCK, INC.
Glenn and Joy Barlow

Homer and Mildred Scott started **PADLOCK RANCH** in 1943 with 300 cows and 3,000 acres purchased in the Dayton, Wyoming area. Little did they know the ranch would grow to run 11,000 head of cattle on approximately 475,000 acres straddling the Wyoming/Montana state line.

The Scott family is still actively involved in management of Padlock Ranch. Homer's eldest son, Dan Scott, who passed away in April 2013, is remembered for decades of outstanding leadership while serving as President/CEO from 1969-2002. Today, the operation is led by Wayne Fahsholtz, who takes great care in managing the resources and assets of the ranch for long-term sustainability, while conserving and improving the environment.

Through the years, the ranch has grown with additional land purchases and leased lands on the Crow Indian Reservation in Bighorn County, Montana. Three parcels have been placed in Wyoming Stock Growers Agricultural Land Trust easements for perpetuity. These easements protect land around and adjacent to the Tongue River on which improvements have been made by removing rip-rap and re-channelizing a two-mile reach of the river.

In addition to being a highly successful and sustainable cattle ranch raising natural beef, Padlock offers vacationing guests an opportunity to share in the authentic Western lifestyle through working ranch, hunting and fishing, and photography vacations. Visitors experience an unparalleled range of plants, animals and landscapes thanks to careful management of the land.

A hallmark of the ranch is good grazing management, which translates to good water management. Grazing plans are designed to leave litter on the soil surface, helping to reduce soil temperature and maintain a higher level of moisture.

"We believe that if we can graze in a manner that protects habitat...and if the wildlife species that should be here are here, then we are doing the job we set out to do," Wayne Fahsholtz noted.

The Padlock Ranch sets a standard of stewardship by protecting and nourishing the environment, natural resources, and wildlife for generations to come.

Photo credit: Padlock Ranch

★ PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH





The 2013 Leopold Conservation Award was made possible through the generous support of:

★ NATIONAL ★

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The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation
Truax Company

★ CALIFORNIA ★

PLATINUM
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The Nature Conservancy

★ COLORADO ★

PLATINUM
Peabody Energy

★ KENTUCKY ★

GOLD
Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation
SILVER
Kentucky Department of Agriculture
Alltech

★ NEBRASKA ★

PLATINUM
Cargill
Nebraska Cattlemen
Nebraska Environmental Trust

SILVER
Farm Credit Services of America
Nebraska Cattlemen Research & Education Foundation
Rainwater Basin Joint Venture
Sandhills Taskforce
World Wildlife Fund

★ SOUTH DAKOTA ★

GOLD
South Dakota Department of Environment & Natural Resources
Discovery Center
South Dakota Department of Game, Fish & Parks
South Dakota Farm Bureau Federation
South Dakota Grassland Coalition
South Dakota State University Foundation
SILVER
American State Bank
Daybreak Ranch
Ducks Unlimited
Millborn Seeds
Mortenson Family
Professional Alliance
South Dakota's Conservation Districts
The Nature Conservancy
US Fish & Wildlife Service
World Wildlife Fund Northern Great Plains

★ TEXAS ★

PLATINUM
Lee and Ramona Bass Foundation

★ UTAH ★

PLATINUM
Western AgCredit
SILVER
The Nature Conservancy
Trout Unlimited
Utah Farm Bureau Federation
Utah Wool Growers Association

★ WISCONSIN ★

GOLD
American Transmission Company (ATC)
Rural Mutual Insurance Company
Wisconsin Corn Growers Association
Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation
SILVER
Alliant Energy Foundation
We Energies

★ WYOMING ★

PLATINUM
Peabody Energy
GOLD
Monaghan Management
SILVER
First Interstate Bank

Sand County Foundation Stories that Inspire: “On the Land”

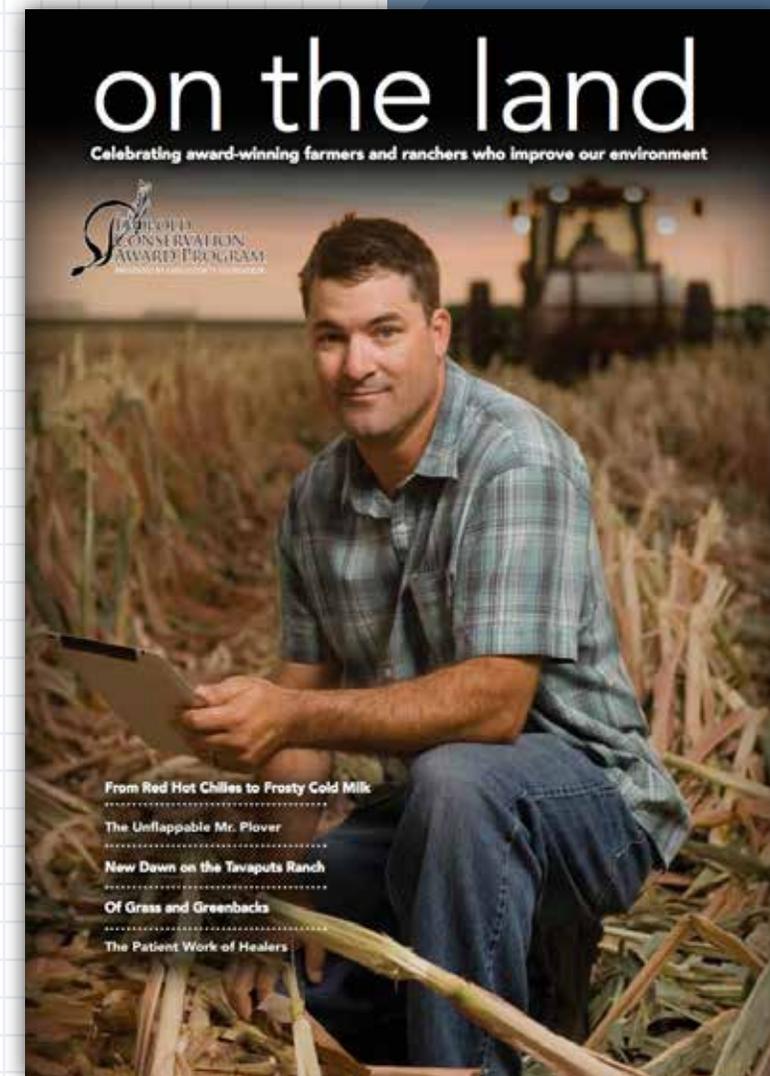
Land. We need it to grow the crops and animals that nourish our bodies. But the great bounty of the land, with its wildlife and open spaces, is also food for the human intellect and spirit. Aldo Leopold, the celebrated 20th century conservationist and author, saw no contradiction in the idea of land providing harvests for both body and mind.

Leopold wrote often, throughout the '20s and '30s, of how tilling, grazing, and logging were practiced with little regard for how these activities affected nature's health. And while his timely criticisms of reckless land use fueled the modern conservation movement, Leopold's environmental classic *A Sand County Almanac* likewise asserted the idea that using land to produce what we need to live—food, fiber, timber—could be done with respect and sensitivity.

As custodians of Leopold's written legacy, we at Sand County Foundation are dedicated to sharing this ethic by introducing people like you to farmers, ranchers, and other producers whose stewardship on the land embodies Leopold's ideals.

In our special publication “On the Land,” you will read stories of five **Leopold Conservation Award recipients**. The individuals and families, chronicled by the talented writer Andy Rieber, stand out not only for having built successful businesses focused on producing food, but also for their personal aspiration to leave the land better than they found it for their families, for their communities, and for us.

Take a moment to download “On the Land” by visiting www.leopoldconservationaward.org. Or request a copy by contacting us at info@sandcounty.net.





Sand County Foundation's mission is to advance the use of ethical and scientifically sound land management practices and partnerships for the benefit of people and the ecological landscape.

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