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Boeckman Farms Receives National Family Farm Environmental Excellence Award

COLUMBUS – Boeckman Farms, of Celina, Ohio in Mercer County, received the 2009 Family Farm Environmental Excellence Award at the 61st International Poultry Expo. The award is given by the U.S. Poultry and Egg Association in recognition of exemplary environmental stewardship by family farmers engaged in poultry and egg production. Boeckman Farms was selected as the winner from the Northeast region, one of six regions from which winners were chosen.

Neil and Gina Boeckman, contract turkey producers for Cooper Farms, have grown turkeys for 12 years and hogs for 11 years. They have demonstrated that their commitment to quality extends not only to the turkeys and hogs they raise, but also to the environmental and conservation practices they implement daily on their farm.

“We recognize that our farm must not only be a good steward of the environment, but also must be a responsible animal caretaker, environmental innovator, community leader, civic volunteer and contributor,” said Neil Boeckman. He said choices about the farm’s manure and mortality management programs are made not only on the basis of what makes good economic sense, but also what makes good sense for the community as a whole, particularly for those neighbors with whom the farm shares a property line.

Boeckman Farms uses no-till practices to reduce erosion. Additionally, the farm has adopted and implemented an environmentally sound approach to mortality management. The Boeckmans use composting practices that reduce odors and further protect water quality. They also recycle the turkey litter and use it as a fertilizer. Manure application is properly timed and efforts are always made to obtain approval from the farm’s neighbors.

Boeckman Farms also recently received the Ohio Poultry Association’s (OPA) Environmental Stewardship Award. “Boeckman Farms is an exemplary representation of the goals the Ohio Poultry Association has for all of its members,” said Jim Chakeres, OPA executive vice president. “Ohio poultry farmers continue to refine their techniques and are creating a solid record of environmental stewardship.” He said Boeckman Farms’ award is a further testament to the positive environmental programs implemented by Ohio’s egg and poultry producers.

Boeckman Farms also is the recipient of the 2008 Environmental Stewardship Award from the Ohio Livestock Coalition. This award recognizes the many accomplishments made by family farmers to protect the environment and conserve natural resources.

This is the sixth year an Ohio poultry farm has received the U.S. Poultry and Egg Association award. Boeckman Farms was chosen as one among nine other farms in the Northeast region to receive this award. Applicants were rated in several categories, including dry litter or liquid manure management, nutrient management planning, community involvement, wildlife enhancement techniques, innovative nutrient management techniques, and participation in educational or outreach programs.

To learn more about Ohio's poultry producers and their commitment to responsible environmental management, animal well-being, and the production of safe, nutritious and affordable food, please visit www.ohiopoultry.org.

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