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Ohio Poultry Association Announces 2015 Award Recipients

Four individuals honored for their dedication to Ohio's egg, chicken and turkey communities

COLUMBUS, Ohio – The Ohio Poultry Association (OPA) recently announced its 2015 award recipients during the organization's annual meeting and banquet in Columbus. This year, there were three awards which honored four individuals who have made a significant contribution to Ohio's egg, chicken and turkey communities.

“Every year we seek individuals whose work and accomplishments promote the goals of our poultry community to provide Ohioans safe, affordable food,” said Jim Chakeres, OPA executive vice president. “I am honored to work with so many talented individuals, farms and businesses who continually go above and beyond what is expected of them – and this year's award winners are no exception.”

Awards and recipients at the 30th Annual OPA Banquet included:

Golden Egg Award: Tom Hertzfeld II

The Golden Egg Award recognizes an individual who is committed to advancing the mission and values of the state's egg, chicken and turkey farmers. This year's honor was presented to Tom Hertzfeld II, of Grand Rapids, Ohio. Hertzfeld serves as the president of Hertzfeld Poultry Farms. Through the years, he has proudly worked in every aspect of the egg business and has held leadership positions on both the state and national levels in the poultry community. Hertzfeld continually gives back to his local community and has a strong, hard-working ethic. He has played an integral role in the egg farming community for his entire life, serving as the OPA president from 2008 to 2010 and currently holds an officer position on the United Egg Producers' Board of Directors.

Golden Feather Award: Ohio Senator Cliff Hite

The Feathered Friend award is given annually to an individual who has distinguished himself or herself as a champion of livestock agriculture or poultry issues. This year, OPA presented the award to Ohio Senator Cliff Hite of Findlay, Ohio. Senator Hite is currently serving in his second General Assembly as a member of the Ohio Senate, representing the 1st Senate District, which encompasses an 11-county region of Northwest Ohio. He presides as the chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Agriculture and oversees state policy for the agriculture industry. A true advocate for agriculture who recognizes the essential role the farm community plays in providing jobs and economic benefit to Ohio, Senator Hite has stood beside OPA's farmer-members in addressing the many challenges facing the state's Ohio egg, chicken and turkey sectors.

Meritorious Service Award: Dr. Tony Forshey and Dr. Susan Skorupski

The Meritorious Service Award is given annually to someone in the academic field who has contributed to the egg and poultry communities. This year, OPA presented two Meritorious awards to Dr. Tony Forshey of Granville, Ohio, and Dr. Susan Skorupski of Orient, Ohio.

Forshey is currently the State Veterinarian and the chief of the Division of Animal Health for the Ohio Department of Agriculture. He is charged with protecting and promoting the health of Ohio's livestock industries, including Ohio's poultry farmers. Forshey's passion for animal agriculture has had a positive impact on Ohio's egg, chicken and turkey farmers and producers across the country. He has provided valuable counsel and support to the poultry communities in the shaping of standards for poultry well-being, in food safety regulations, and in animal health and disease prevention programs.

Skorupski currently serves as the assistant district director for District 3 for the USDA in the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service program of Veterinary Services. Her passion for the doing the right thing for producers and advancing the agriculture industry have been her guiding principles throughout her career. She previously served as area epidemiologist and field veterinary medical officer in Ohio. Prior to government service, Dr. Skorupski worked in a mixed animal practice in Holmes and Wayne counties where she primarily worked with dairy cattle.

Ohio's egg, chicken and turkey farms are significant contributors to the success of the state's economy. Ohio ranks number-two in the nation in egg production and produces more than 8 billion eggs per year with a retail value of more than \$574 million. Ohio is also ninth in the nation for turkey production and produces more than 219 million pounds of Ohio chicken annually. Ohio's egg, chicken and turkey farms create more than 14,071 jobs generating \$427 million in earnings to the state's economy.

For more information, visit the OPA website at www.ohiopoultry.org.

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