

## NewsWatch

# State fair honors ag families

**F**IVE Nebraska farm and ranch families have been honored as the 2010 Nebraska State Fair Ag Family of the Day in the fourth year of a partnership between Nebraska Farm Bureau and the Nebraska State Fair.

"Ag Family of the Day is a way to both recognize an individual family for its contributions and to show the strength and diversity of Nebraska agriculture," says Cheryl Stubbendieck of Nebraska Farm Bureau.

Recipients were chosen for their contributions to agriculture, their community and the state. Farm Bureau membership is not a criterion for selection.

"Our honored families have many different types of farming and ranching operations, but they share a commitment to making agriculture and Nebraska better," Stubbendieck adds.

Honored families were selected by a committee of representatives of Farm Bureau, the state fair board, state fair staff and the state fair 1868 Foundation. Any Nebraskan can nominate a farm or ranch family, online or by mail, for the annual recognition program.

Each family was honored at a ceremony in the state fair's new large livestock arena, hosted at a reception and featured in the daily fair parade. They also receive gate and midway passes, lodging, a plaque and other prizes.

These are the honored families:

■ Andy and Tannie Daniels family,

Daniels' Produce, Columbus. The Danielses grow 700 acres of fresh market sweet corn, 250 acres of pumpkins and other fresh produce on their farm.

■ Steven and Jeffrey Wallinger families, Wallinger Farms, Stuart. The Wallinger brothers took over the family farm in 1983 when Steve and Jeffrey were only 19 and 20 years old. They grew the farm from 500 acres of pasture and one truck to a 6,000-acre corn and soybean operation and a five-truck fleet. The families also have 3,000 acres of pasture and hay meadows, custom-farm more than 15,000 acres and have a cow-calf operation.

■ Mark R. Spurgin and daughter, MaKenzi Spurgin, Spurgin Inc., Paxton. Spurgin operates Spurgin Inc., a diversified farm that grows irrigated corn, wheat, edible beans, soybeans, popcorn and feed crops, and dryland wheat and ecofallow corn. It also includes a small feedlot, with the farm supplying most of the feed for more than 5,000 head of cattle. The farm was among the first in the area to employ strip tillage, which maintains most of the residue from the previous crop on top of the soil. All of the wheat and the ecofallow corn are no-till. Spurgin uses wasps to control flies in the feedlot to greatly reduce the need for insecticides. MaKenzi Spurgin owns and operates a photography business and gift shop in Ogallala in addition to assisting on the farm. She formerly

chaired the Nebraska Beef Council's Youth Ambassador program.

■ LeRoy Pieper family of Mitchell. The multigeneration LeRoy Pieper family is currently celebrating the 100th year of their family farm. LeRoy's son, Tim, purchased the farm in 2009. Tim's son, Jeff, lives on the farm, and LeRoy's stepson, Kendall Busch, does the farming. The farming and ranching operation has included sugarbeets, dry edible beans, corn and alfalfa, and fat cattle and sheep.

■ Clifford and David Obbink families, Prairieland Dairy, Firth. The Obbink brothers are the fourth generation of



their family to farm. The brothers are partners in Prairieland Dairy, which includes nine families in total. Today, Prairieland Dairy has 550 acres (mostly corn) and milks 1,500 cows twice a day. Prairieland employs 23 full-time workers.

More information about the Ag Family of the Day program is available at [www.nebraskaagfamily.org](http://www.nebraskaagfamily.org).

## 2 Nebraska corn growers elected to national boards

**J**ON Holzfaster and Alan Tiemann, both Nebraska Corn Board directors, have been elected to separate national board positions.

Holzfaster of Paxton was elected to the National Corn Board during Corn Congress in Washington, D.C. He was one of four new members elected to the board, which oversees the National Corn Growers Association.

Holzfaster grows corn, popcorn, soybeans, dry edible beans, wheat and alfalfa. He also operates a 1,000-head feedlot. He is the third generation to own and operate the family farm, working alongside his dad and brother. He also serves as chairman of the National Corn Growers Association's Ethanol Committee and is involved in other NCGA activities.

Tiemann, who farms near Seward, was re-elected to serve on the board of the U.S. Grains Council, an organization he has been involved with since 1998. The council is a partnership of farmers and agribusinesses committed to building and expanding international markets for U.S. corn, barley, grain sor-



ALAN TIEMANN

ghum and their products, including distillers grains.

He has been involved in the family farm since 1978, producing corn, wheat, soybeans, grain sorghum and livestock over the years, although corn and corn-soybean rotations are the focus today. He is currently chairman of the Nebraska Corn Board.



JON HOLZFASTER

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