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Agricultural News Release

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Hardin County Agriculture Hall of Fame Winners Named

by Mark Badertscher, OSU Extension Educator

Ohio State University Extension, Hardin County – The Hardin County Agriculture Hall of Fame has announced the 2013 winners, to be inducted at the eleventh annual Agriculture Hall of Fame recognition banquet. The 2013 inductees include: Franklin Garmon, Laurie Laird, Rex & Joan Sullinger, and Bernard & Virginia Williams. The banquet will be held on Tuesday, December 3rd, beginning at 6:30 pm at St. Johns United Church of Christ on East Carrol Street in Kenton. The public is invited to come to honor these inductees and their families, and to recognize their many accomplishments.

The purpose of the county Agriculture Hall of Fame is to recognize outstanding agricultural contributions by Hardin County people and to honor those who have brought distinction to themselves and the agricultural industry. Shannon (Wilcox) Donnelly will present the keynote address. Shannon, a former Upper Scioto Valley High School student and graduate of The Ohio State University, has served as both a state and national FFA officer. She has worked for John Deere, was an intervention specialist and taught agricultural education/FFA at Riverdale High School. Currently, she is a homemaker and keeps the books for WD Land & Livestock in Hardin County.

Franklin Garmon was born and raised on a farm in the Dola area where he attended the Dola School. He was a full-time farmer for 50 years and raised registered Shropshire sheep. He served as president of the Ohio Shropshire Sheep Association, showing and judging sheep throughout Ohio and many other states. Garmon's herd was known worldwide, as he sold Shropshire sheep to other countries. He was one of the original planners of the Hardin County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), serving on that board for seven years. Garmon was a township trustee and Hardin County Commissioner. He helped start the Hardin County Sheep Improvement Association with a few other members. A member of Walnut Grove United Methodist Church, Garmon was the owner and operator of a grocery store at Blanchard Station. He joined his wife Ruth and two other families to start Simon Kenton School, Harco Industries, and the Hardin County Board of Developmental Disabilities. Over the years, Franklin Garmon helped many Hardin County 4-H members with their sheep projects before passing away in 1975.

Laurie J. Laird graduated from Hardin Northern High School. She attended The Ohio State University Landscape Design Short Courses to prepare her for her professional career. Laird started in the industry in 1972 with a lawn care/landscape business. She is the sole owner of New Leaf Landscape and Garden Center, with stores both in Ada and Kenton. Along with providing people in Hardin County with gardening and landscaping needs, she has employed many other people over the years in the industry. Actively involved in St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Laird regularly gives back to communities with donations to fund raisers, school projects, and other events. She participates yearly in continuing education to stay current on gardening and landscape issues to provide customers with up-to-date information. In addition to running her business, Laird also helped various townships with tree selections in parks and cemeteries. Her stores hold educational seminars and she made several presentations at various garden clubs and other organizations, both in Hardin County as well as other neighboring counties. A member of the Ohio Nursery and Landscape Association, she is always willing to share her plant knowledge with anyone who has questions.

Rex and Joan Sullinger are being inducted as husband and wife. Rex graduated from Byhalia High School and then served in the U.S. Navy. Joan graduated from North Union High School and then Otterbein College. The Sullingers were married in 1973, and lived on a dairy farm that they managed and later purchased. In 1975, the farm evolved into a field crops and beef cattle operation. Joan has been an elementary teacher at Benjamin Logan Local Schools, while recently Rex has worked at Silver Creek Supply. Members of Silver Creek United Methodist Church, Rex and Joan have been active in Hardin County agriculture. Rex has served on many committee and boards, including the Taylor Creek

Township Zoning Board, Rural Electric Association, and the Regional Planning Board. He has testified before the Ohio Senate and House on agricultural issues, served as a member of the Ohio Cattlemen's Association Board, and Hardin County Fair with involvement in both the beef and dairy departments. Rex has also served as president on both the Ohio and American Murray Grey beef cattle association boards. In addition, he also participated in the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) land stewardship programs, which was highlighted during an OSU Extension Twilight Tour.

Both Rex and Joan Sullinger have been active in the Hardin County Cattle Producers Board of Directors for many years. Joan has served as secretary, where she instituted a newsletter to disseminate information about the group's activities. She has also been active in the Hardin County Fair, serving on several committees, most recently the Antiques committee and has been involved in planting and maintaining flowers at the fairgrounds. Joan currently serves as the secretary of the Ohio Cattlewomen's Association, has served on the Ways and Means committee, and is the editor of their newsletter. She maintains membership rolls as a service to the membership committee, and has been on the Ohio Queen of Beef Committee. She is also a member of the American National Cattlewomen, Ohio and American Murray Grey Associations. Both Joan and Rex have served as advisors to the Taylor Creek Lads & Lassies 4-H Club, received the Honorary Chapter Farmer Degree from the Ridgemont FFA, and are members of the Hardin County Farm Bureau, where they have served on the board and council.

Bernard and Virginia Williams are also being inducted as husband and wife. Both Bernard and Virginia Williams graduated from Mt. Victory School. Bernard joined the Army Air Force and served during World War II in the South Pacific as a member of the '7th Airdrome Squadron.' Together, Bernard and Virginia have been involved with a beef cattle and crop operation for 68 years. They formerly raised hogs as part of the family operation, and Bernard worked for a short time for the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) measuring acreage. Both Bernard and Virginia have served as Sunday school teachers at Otterbein Church and advisors to the Hardin County Grange Youth. They are members of the Painter Creek Grange, where Bernard was Worthy Master and Virginia was Worthy Secretary.

Bernard was a member of the Ridgemont School Board, Hardin County Farm Bureau Board, and served over 20 years on the Mid-Ohio Electric Board. Known as a soil conservationist, he never fall plowed, always rotated crops and planted clover after wheat to prevent soil erosion, build soil nutrients and soil tilth. He always kept 25-30% of his farm in hay and pasture for erosion control. In addition, Bernard was a member of the Hardin County Pork Producers and the Hardin County Pomona Grange. Both

Bernard and Virginia always put in a hard day's work to improve their farm, took the faithful to Painter Creek Grange and Otterbein Church, and were known for taking good care of their land and animals.

Tickets for the Hardin County Agriculture Hall of Fame Banquet must be purchased in advance. Tickets are \$12, and available at the Hardin County Extension office (419-674-2297), or from the committee members: Andrew Flinn, Robert McBride, John Messmer, Kerry Oberlitner, Paul Ralston, Don Spar, Luke Underwood, Robert Wood, and Mark Badertscher. The deadline for ticket sales is November 25th.