

Hardin County Extension News Release

For Further Information Contact:

Mark Badertscher

Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Educator

Phone – 419-674-2297

E-Mail – badertscher.4@osu.edu

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Ag Hall of Fame to Induct New Members

Hardin County – The Hardin County Agriculture Hall of Fame has announced the 2018 honorees to be inducted at the sixteenth annual Agriculture Hall of Fame recognition banquet. The 2018 inductees include: Jan Layman, Sanford and Paul McCurdy, Gary and Carol Oates, and Gary Shick. The banquet will be held on Tuesday, December 4th, beginning at 6:30 pm at St. John's Evangelical Church on East Carrol Street in Kenton. The public is invited 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.

Dr. Stephen Baertsche will be the guest speaker. Baertsche is a previous Hardin County Agriculture Hall of Fame honoree. A graduate of Hardin Northern High School and later both Ohio State and Michigan State University, he has held positions with both MSU and OSU. Baertsche has served as an Extension sheep specialist and more recently, the Assistant Director/Program Leader of Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension at The Ohio State University.

Jan Layman graduated from Kenton High School in 1979. He earned an Associate Degree in Business with a major in Auto-Diesel Technology from Northwestern Business College in 1981. After marrying his wife Cindy in 1982, they purchased their first 200 acres to start Layman Farms LLP. Their focus has been to preserve the land through environmentally responsible practices, while striving to increase yields through efficient use of modern technology and science. There are four segments to their business model which includes the farming operation and excavation/drainage business, custom dry fertilizer application, seed and chemical sales, and auction service including real estate sales. Layman has contributed to Hardin County agriculture by hosting a multitude of events such as Twilight Tours and pond clinics, serves as the Lynn Township rainfall reporter, and was one of the originators of the Hardin County Ag Society Consignment Sale. He has been an active member in several organizations, including the Hardin County Farm Bureau, Cattle Producers, and Pork Producers.

Layman has served as Lynn Township Trustee, Hardin County Ag Society Director, and Upper Scioto Conservancy District Board Member. Locally, he has been a member of BKP Board, Elks Lodge, Moose Lodge, and the National Rifle Association. Statewide, Layman has served on the Ohio Soybean Council where he served as treasurer, Ohio No-Till Council where he currently is the president, and the Ohio Land Improvement Contractors Association. His statewide involvement has led to national involvement in the National Biodiesel Board, American Soybean Association, as well as the American Corn and Wheat Growers Association. Layman has been awarded the Hardin Soil and Water Conservation District Goodyear Award in 1995, Indian Lake Watershed Project Outstanding Ag Producer in 2002, Eastern Region Winner of the American Soybean Association and Monsanto/Soybean Digest Conservation Legacy Award in 2003, Ohio Conservation Farm Family in 2005, and the Ohio Master Farmer in 2016.

Sanford McCurdy and his son Paul are being inducted into the Hardin County Agriculture Hall of Fame as Pioneers in Agriculture. They were partners of McCurdy Steel Products, which was located in Ada for 57 years. The business held U.S. and Canadian patents used to manufacture famous McCurdy farm elevators and gravity-flow grain boxes, as well as other quality farm equipment and sold them through a dealer network. Being a manufacturer of superior farm equipment, McCurdy Steel Products employed many people from Hardin County and beyond. The firm was founded by Sanford McCurdy in 1915 as a second-hand equipment farm. The manufacturing company was organized and a plant was built in 1927. During the depression years, McCurdy and his son Paul formed a partnership. Young McCurdy started as a salesman for his father's firm in 1929 and assumed active management in 1945. The partnership was dissolved in 1955 and Sanford McCurdy died in 1961. Paul McCurdy later passed away in 1972.

Paul McCurdy graduated from Ada High School, attended Ohio Northern University and later graduated from The Ohio State University. He was a member of the Ada Masonic Lodge, Kenton Commandery, and the Kenton Elks Lodge. He was also a member of the First United Methodist Church of Ada and the Franklin-Scioto Consistory of Columbus. He formerly worked in Lima as methods and industrial engineer for Westinghouse Electric Corporation before becoming involved with the family business. Paul McCurdy was in a band and was an accomplished pianist. He was president of McCurdy Steel Products from 1945-1972. No further information is available for Sanford McCurdy except that he was the inventor of the McCurdy Gravity-Flow Grain Box with patent #US2827204A issued March 18, 1958.

Gary and Carol Oates are being inducted into the Hardin County Agriculture Hall of Fame as husband and wife. Gary graduated from Kenton High School in 1963 and later earned a Bachelor Degree from The Ohio State University in 1967. He is a farmer, operating 1600 acres of corn and soybean crops with Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land and timber. He milked cows for over 40 years, and now does payroll, taxes, and repair work at Oates Veterinary Clinic. He served for over 27 years on the Upper Scioto Drainage and Conservancy Board where he was president, and has worked with the wildlife tent at the Hardin County Fair for 38 years. Gary served as a volunteer and board member of the Sportsman's Alliance for 43 years. He has been president of the Ohioans for Wildlife Conservation in Hardin County, and also held membership in both the Rushcreek Sportsman's Club and Farm Bureau.

He served the U.S. as a sergeant in the army from 1967-69, has been a member of many different wildlife conservation organizations. He was recognized by Outdoor Life magazine as “Someone Making a Difference.”

Carol Oates graduated from Fairborn High School in 1964. She earned a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from The Ohio State University in 1971. She has been owner and veterinarian at Oates Veterinary Clinic for the past 47 years, directly involved with agriculture for 28 of those years. For many years, Dr. Oates worked 60-80 hours a week traveling hundreds of miles to treat emergencies, sick animals, and provide preventative medicine for the agricultural community. She was one of the Hardin County Fair veterinarians for about 20 years. She conducted a veterinary science 4-H club at her clinic for several years. She also has been a member of many organizations including, but not limited to president of the Scioto River Watch, Pheasants Forever, Quality Deer Management, Ohio and National Woodlot Owners Associations, and the National Rifle Association. She has kept active with raptor and wildlife rehabilitation. Professionally, she has been a member of both the Ohio and American Veterinary Medical Association and the National Federation of Independent Business.

Gary Shick was born in 1947 and is a graduate of Ben Logan High School. He and his wife Darlene own and operate Shick Farms, Inc. Gary has farmed for over 52 years while being very active in the community, very willing to help others, while sharing and learning information. In school he was both a member of 4-H and FFA. Later he served as a member of the Hardin Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board. He was recognized for having the best conventional soybean field for Hapi-O, otherwise known as Harmony Agricultural Products in Ohio. An Indian Lake Watershed participant, Shick has received the Goodyear Conservation Award of Merit for outstanding accomplishment in resource conservation. A recipient of the Hardin SWCD Conservation Award in 1980, he was also awarded the Conservation Farmer Award in 1986. In 1995, he was recognized as the Ohio No-Till Farmer of the Year, followed by the Environmental Stewardship Award in 2005, and more recently the Ohio Master Farmer in 2018.

Shick is a member of the Indian Lake Community Church and a contributor to the Indian Lake Watershed. He has been described as an outstanding farmer in no-till conservation, very willing to help others by sharing both his successes and failures. As a producer, he is willing to try new things being very open to technology and all that it has to offer. He is known to his family as a great father and grandfather, instilling the love of farming for generations to come. Gary Shick’s claim to fame is “being first in the area to no-till and support it, but willing to make adjustments when needed for soil types and the environment in order to sustain a better crop and environment.”

Tickets for the Hardin County Agriculture Hall of Fame Banquet must be purchased in advance through November 26. Tickets are \$12, and can be reserved by calling the Hardin County Extension office (419-674-2297) or purchased from the committee members: Dustin McCullough, Robert McBride, Ruth Oates, Kerry Oberlitner, Gary Harpster, Steve Poling, Luke Underwood, Robert Wood, and Mark Badertscher.