



# News Release

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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### **Okray Farms Presented with NPC's 2015 Environmental Stewardship Award**

**Washington, D.C.** – Mike and Marge Finnessy and Mark and Shannon Finnessy of Okray Family Farms in Plover, Wisconsin, were named the recipients of the prestigious 2015 Environmental Stewardship Award during the National Potato Council's (NPC) 2016 Annual Meeting, held January 14 in Las Vegas, Nevada. The award is a component of the Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program, a partnership between NPC and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to protect the environment and promote the safe and effective use of pesticides. NPC is grateful to primary sponsor DuPont Crop Protection for making this award possible.

Okray Family Farms, a member of the University of Wisconsin's healthy grown potatoes program, has demonstrated its commitment to stewardship of the land and protection of the shared environment. By being good stewards of the land, they preserve their farm and the rural landscape for generations to come, while producing high-quality potatoes. As former President of the Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association and Chairman of the Research Committee, Jim Okray is dedicated to agricultural policies and practices that conserve environmental resources, promote food safety, protect human health and preserve the family farm.

"We are extremely honored to receive this award. Being recognized for our efforts helps ensure that others see the value in what we do. Agriculture is in a really good position where we can use technologies to fine tune how things are grown and help save the environment. We are proud to be a part of that," said Jim Okray.

Okray Family Farms was recognized for its outstanding achievement in reducing the risk of pesticides on the farm without compromising potato yield or quality. Beneficial species are encouraged and supported in the growing areas through the planting of multi-species windbreaks. Since 2000, they have worked with Central Wisconsin Windshed Partnership Group to plant over 25 miles of windbreaks around the fields to aid in the reduction of wind erosion. Okray Family Farms also has a strong commitment to research; pest-resistant plant cultivars are studied and reviewed annually and leading candidates are given strong consideration for adoption. In a pilot program with the Wisconsin Institute

for Sustainable Technology, the farm has also planted grapes to extract resveratrol, which shows promise for cancer-fighting abilities.

A video of the farm's sustainability practices was created through the generous sponsorship of DuPont Crop Protection. The videos are used by schools, agricultural organizations and civic groups to demonstrate the potato industry's commitment to sound environmental stewardship. Watch the video online at <https://youtu.be/C0lgqTLe1KM>. Complimentary DVD copies are available by calling the NPC Office at (202) 682-9456.

The deadline to submit nomination's for NPC's 2016 Environmental Stewardship Award is Thursday, March 31. The selection will be made by the NPC Executive Committee and presented at the 2017 NPC Annual Meeting.

*The National Potato Council is the advocate for the economic well-being of U.S. potato growers on federal legislative, regulatory, environmental, and trade issues. NPC supports the U.S. potato industry by monitoring issues affecting the strength and viability of the potato industry, influencing regulators and legislators on issues crucial to the industry's long term success, ensuring fair market access for potatoes and potato products, and bringing the unique issues and interests of diverse growing regions in the U.S. together on a national level.*

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