

Farm Bureau gathers for annual meeting



Joe Cornely, director of media relations for the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, was the key-note speaker at the annual Van Wert County Farm Bureau meeting Sept. 15.

Mike Heffelfinger (left) and Tom Evans received the Star (Standard Achievement Award) for their efforts heading up the local membership campaign. Van Wert County Farm Bureau President Mike Schumm presented the award to them.

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Improving rural standards of living, increasing net farm income and protecting personal property rights has been the motto of the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation (OFBF) for a number of years.

At the Annual 1998 Van Wert County Farm Bureau (VWCFB) meeting Sept. 15, Joe Cornely, director of media relations at OFBF, challenged local members to take the motto a step further. "Farmers today not only have to feed the world, but now they are expected to be public-relations specialists," he said.

He noted that Farm Bureau members had the awesome task of informing the general public and the media what the farm community is all about. By doing this, he felt the general public would become more knowledgeable about the challenges farmers face and political leaders would place greater weight on the organization's voice relating to issues that affect farmers and rural communities.

According to Kendra Lopshire, VWCFB organization director, the local Farm Bureau has a few goals including, looking out for rural residents and farmers by promoting lobbying of legislation; trying to preserve the traditional way of life; promoting agriculture throughout the county and promoting safety especially during planting and harvest seasons.

"The local Farm Bureau currently has 1,260 members and 75 percent of these are active farm-devoted members," Lopshire noted, adding that each year county Farm Bureaus across the state are recognized for their program accomplishments. Out of nine categories, Van Wert County received seven Star (Standard of Achievement) Awards this year.

Those receiving Star Awards were Lloyd Etzler for his public affairs program; Bill Weldy, for his safety program; Mary Allmandinger, information program; Tom Evans and Mike Heffelfinger, membership program; Robin Schumm, women's program; Ryan Adam, promotion and education program and Dennis Cox, mar-

keting program.

Lopshire presented the 1998 Outstanding Young Farm Couple Award to Dave and Mary Allmandinger while Terry and Amy Weck received the Runner-Up Young Farm Couple Award.

VWCFB also held its election for County Board of Trustees. Those elected were Shawn Gerdeman, Washington Township; Ron Schumm, Union Township; Mike Heffelfinger, District IV; Floyd Lehman, Hoaglin Township, and Floyd Jones, Tully Township.

Dennis Cox, Duane Poling, Fred Schumm and Dave Allmandinger were selected as Van Wert County Farm Bureau Delegates to the 1999 Annual Meeting of the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation.

Lloyd Etzler, policy development chairman, presented 1999 policy resolutions for VWCFB which were approved. Local policy resolutions were:

- > Farmers are encouraged to use the Spencerville-Elgin Railroad to enhance markets and other developments.

- > Homeowners and landowners