



Stearns County Soil & Water Conservation District

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2019 Outstanding Conservationist: Galen Wilczek

Each year the Stearns County Soil & Water Conservation District recognizes an individual(s) or organizations for outstanding accomplishments in implementing conservation practices and improving Minnesota's natural resources.



Wilczek began farming in Stearns County in 1992 where he currently operates 370 acres of corn, soybeans, and alfalfa along with raising poultry. He began using conservation on his farm in 2015 when a grassed waterway, a terrace, and a water and sediment control basin were constructed on the west side of the farm. It was determined that a grassed waterway and terrace were the best practices to redirect the water towards the ditch to avoid the formation of gullies.

With the success of the 2015 projects, Wilczek installed a 42-ft by 110-ft stacking slab with 6-ft walls for the poultry manure. This facility allows for long-term storage as Wilczek applies manure in the spring and fall. Additionally, Wilczek enjoys wildlife and loves to hunt and fish, so he worked closed with the Stearns County Chapter of Pheasants Forever on the planning and development of his seven acres of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land. “If you take care of your land, it will take care of the rest,” said Wilczek

Wilczek also became certified in the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) in 2017 by seeding a 30-ft buffer, continue to implement the U of MN

management guidelines, continue to implement Integrated Pest Management practices, and continue soil sampling every 3-4 years. The MAWCQP was developed to recognize and inspire conservation efforts and connect farmers with resources to continue enhancing their water-quality practices.