

2011 Outstanding Conservationist

Dan and Jolene Schlangen

Dan and Jolene Schlangen were recently honored as Outstanding Conservationists of the year at the 75th Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts, December 6, 2011 in Bloomington, Minnesota. In addition, they were recognized as one of eight Area Finalists in the Outstanding Conservationist Award Program.

The Schlangens, who own and operate a dairy farm near Eden Valley, were selected by the Stearns County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) for the award. Each year, Minnesota SWCDs recognize individuals and organizations for outstanding accomplishments in implementing conservation practices and improving Minnesota's natural resources. The award program is conducted with support from *The Farmer* magazine and MN Corn Growers Association.



Following is a summary of some of the reasons why the Schlangen's were chosen: Along with their four children, they operate a dairy farm consisting of 70 milk cows and 300 acres where they grow corn, alfalfa, wheat and oats. In 2009, they completed an Animal Manure Storage Structure project to bring their feedlot into compliance by reconstructing an unpermitted manure basin along with constructing a concrete stacking slab for solid manure. This system allows them to incorporate their manure immediately after application, which reduces the potential for nutrient runoff. In cooperation with a neighbor, they installed a grassed waterway in 2010 to address a major gully erosion problem. The Schlangens have installed many other conservation practices over the years including: farmstead shelterbelts, nutrient management, pest management and residue management.

We're proud of Dan and Jolene for what they have done for conservation in Stearns County," said Chuck Uphoff, chairperson of the Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District. "On their farm, they have provided a wonderful example to other landowners by installing many conservation practices over the years to protect and enhance our natural resources."