



Clear Creek Farms Receives Award in Recognition of Environmental Stewardship The Environmental Stewardship Award 2017 Recipients

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 22, 2017 (Toronto, ON) – The Beef Farmers of Ontario is pleased to announce that Chris Knight and family and his brother Carl, owners of Clear Creek Farms in Highgate, Ontario, are the 2017 winners of The Environmental Stewardship Award (TESAward), sponsored by the RBC Royal Bank. The award was presented to Chris and his wife Julie at the Beef Farmers of Ontario Annual General Meeting in Toronto this afternoon.

Clear Creek Farms, located in the southeast corner of Chatham-Kent, is a family-run cow-calf to finish beef operation that markets its beef direct to consumers. While farming in an area dominated by grain and vegetable crops, the Knights have been successful in establishing a cow herd of 65 Angus cows on intensively managed pastures. The Knights have demonstrated their commitment to the environment by focusing on water and soil health, managing grasslands, and protecting wildlife habitat.

Much of the Knights environmental management begins with their intensive rotational grazing system. The continual movement of cattle on their farm allows for their pastures to recover. Clover, trefoil and alfalfa have time to reach the flowering stage, which provides a food source for wild bees and other pollinators, and nesting areas for grassland birds. Rotational grazing also increases the soil organic matter, which is important for the sandy soils that lie beneath.

"The benefits of rotational grazing have allowed us to raise a cow-calf pair on 1.5 acres in an average year," shares Chris. "This is a very positive story for the beef industry because it means that by managing pastures effectively, we can raise more pounds of beef per acre and help regenerate soil health."

Over the years, Clear Creek Farms has been successful in receiving support for their environmental projects through a number of cost-share programs offered by organizations such as the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association, Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority, and Ducks Unlimited. The family has built a wetland complex, planted trees, fenced buffer strips on creek banks to control erosion and planted tall prairie grasses to improve their soil health.

"Landowners like the Knights, who are willing to take part in conservation and stewardship projects on their land, are a community asset and create a better environment for us all," explains Greg Van Every, Environmental Project Coordinator with the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority.

*TESAward recognizes the outstanding environmental stewardship of an Ontario beef farmer.
Special consideration is given to farmers who have taken innovative approaches to
environmentally sustainable beef production.*

-30-

For more information:

Chris and Julie Knight, Clear Creek Farms: 519.784.6651
LeaAnne Wuermli, Beef Farmers of Ontario: 519.824.0334

Award sponsored by:



**RBC
Royal Bank**



NEWS RELEASE