



Sandra Vos Receives Award in Recognition of Environmental Stewardship

The 2018 Environmental Stewardship Award Recipient

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 22, 2018 (Toronto, Ont.) – The Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO) is pleased to announce that Sandra Vos, owner of a grass-fed beef operation in Paris, Ontario, is the 2018 winner of The Environmental Stewardship Award (TESAward), sponsored by the RBC Royal Bank. The award was presented to Sandra at BFO's 56th Annual General Meeting in Toronto this morning.

As the sole operator and owner of a cow-calf operation in Brant County, Sandra has worked hard to find what works best for her operation while continuing to pursue and implement new ideas to further the sustainability and efficiency of her farm. Sandra has demonstrated her commitment to the environment by focusing on pasture management, caring for waterways, and protecting wildlife habitat.

A great deal of Sandra's environmental management begins with her well-maintained rotational grazing system. With 80 acres of land to work with, moving the cattle regularly enables her to maximize the potential of her limited land-base by allowing adequate recovery time for each section of pasture. The installation of aboveground water lines has improved Sandra's grazing system by providing easy access to water for the cattle, while simultaneously enabling her to fence off the creek to keep the cattle out of the waterway. Fencing off the bush area has provided a space for deer and birds, while piling any downed trees and scrub in some of the pastures serves as both a habitat for wildlife and a natural scratching post for the cattle.

"In 2001, the farm consisted of bare land, no driveways, two entrances on two roads to maneuver the creek, and a farmer [me] who knew nothing about farming," shares Sandra. "I recognized early on that 80 acres was pretty small compared to the neighbouring farms. My overall goals were to take care of the land so it would take care of me, and build a business around my capabilities."

Over the years, Sandra has been successful in receiving support for her environmental projects through a number of programs and organizations. One such example is the Canada Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem (COA) through which she received funding and staff support to build a bridge to allow the cattle and farm equipment to cross the creek. Recently, two pieces of the farm have also been decreed Provincial Significant Wetlands.

"Sandra has a keen devotion to ensuring her cattle are not impacting the waterways – her farm is significant as part of the Fairchild Creek Sub-watershed," says Theresa McClenaghan, Executive Director and Counsel, Canadian Environmental Law Association. "I have appreciated Sandra's hard work on many projects in the community with a range of agricultural and environmental partners."

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.

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