

Deere Honors Young Farmers

MOLINE, Ill. — The familiar color of John Deere-green was a welcome mid-winter respite for farmers from across America who convened in Moline for The United States Junior Chamber of Commerce 36th National Out-

standing Young Farmer (NOYF) Awards Congress.

The NOYF award is given annually to four of the nation's top farmers ages 21-35.

Deere & Company, manufactur-

er of John Deere equipment and implements, has sponsored the program 16 years. The U.S. Junior Chamber administers the program.

The 1992 NOYF winners are:

- Philip Nelson, 34, of Seneca, Ill., who began farming in high school when his father gave him two sows. He now oversees a herd of 1,600. Nelson is a former American Farm Bureau Federation national outstanding farmer.

- Eddie Velarde, 31, of Velarde, N.M., who is sole proprietor of a 37-acre fruit operation. He farms land which has been in his family since 1598. Velarde pioneered the

use of windmills in his area.

- Gregg Swanson, 34, of Hoople, N.D., who is vice president of his family's 6,080 acre potato, sugarbeet, and wheat operation. He was named 1990 Red River Valley Frito Lay "Grower of the Year." He also developed a 24-row rotary hoe, which weeds in or between rows.

- Scott Sechler, 32, of Straustown, Pa., who owns a major poultry operation. He began farming and raising chickens in 1972 with FFA projects on the family farm. He produces a Natural Chicken brand — chicken grown

without the use of by-products, antibiotics, chemicals, or growth promoters.

Master of ceremonies for the event was WGN-TV's "U.S. Farm Report" host Orion Samuelson. He joined U.S. Junior Chamber President Greg Thomes and Deere & Company President David Stowe Jr. to present the awards.

State Jaycee organizations select one nominee after a lengthy judging process. Winners need not be Jaycees. They are selected for their progress in agricultural career, conservation practices, and contributions to community.

Check Conservation Plan Now

CHAMBERSBURG (Franklin Co.) — The beginning of a new year signals that spring planting is near.

John Akers, district conservationist for the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in Franklin County, said the winter months are the ideal time for farmers to check their conservation plan to decide which practices must be installed this year.

Under the 1985 and 1990 Farm Bills, farmers must implement their conservation plan by January 1, 1995 to remain eligible for most U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) farm program benefits.

"Staying in compliance means staying on schedule," said Akers. "It means applying the practices that are called for in the conservation plan each year."

Most conservation plans outline a specific crop rotation or crop residue management method designed to reduce soil erosion on highly erodible cropland. If the farmer does not follow the plan, he or she may lose benefits such as commodity price supports, agricultural conservation program payments, disaster payments, and Farmers Home Administration loans.

Crop residue management and cover cropping are practices that require planning, Akers said. This winter is the best time for farmers to evaluate their tillage plans for spring. The type of tillage equipment and sequence of tillage operations will affect the amount of surface residue left at planting. Farmers may also want to consid-

er the purchase or lease of special tillage or planting equipment to be used this spring.

A brochure, entitled "Reap Profits from Residue," contains residue management tips that could be useful to Franklin County farmers. This brochure is available from SCS field offices.

Akers said about 95 percent of the conservation plans in the county include crop residue management.

Robert Heidecker, state resource conservationist for SCS in Harrisburg, said farmers who have difficulty implementing their plan because of special circumstances such as weather conditions, changes in the farm operations or increased herd size, should contact SCS.

"There may be alternatives for farmers who need to change planned conservation practices, but they need to check with SCS beforehand so they don't jeopardize their eligibility," he said.

In addition, SCS is checking five percent of the conservation compliance plans each year to ensure farms are staying on schedule.

Farmers who want to install practices on their own should consult with SCS personnel. Find out SCS' standards and specifications for the practices before applying them.

Contact your local Soil Conservation Service office early for an appointment to review your plan and schedule assistance. The Franklin County office is at 550 Cleveland Avenue, Chambersburg, Pa. 17201, (717) 264-7013.

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