



Calvert County NEWS

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Board of County Commissioners Honors Winners of Calvert County Sustainable Agriculture Awards

PRINCE FREDERICK, Md. – October 20, 2010 – To recognize the contributions that local agriculture makes toward a more sustainable community, the Calvert County Sustainable Agriculture Workgroup presented the first annual Sustainable Agriculture Awards at the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners meeting October 19.

The Sustainable Agriculture Awards were presented in three categories. The **Sustainable Farmer of the Year** award went to Swann's Farm in Owings, operated by seventh-generation farmers J. Allen and Jody Swann. The nearly 400-acre farm is an active supplier of local grocers and restaurants with crops including corn, wheat, soybeans, pumpkins, tomatoes, fruit and flowers. The farm has a protected chemical mixing area and a Soil Conservation Plan in place.

Other nominees for Sustainable Farmer of the Year were Spider Hall Farm in Prince Frederick, The Lamb's Quarter in Owings and American Chestnut Land Trust (ACLT) in Prince Frederick. Spider Hall Farm, run by David and Susan Cox, was once a traditional tobacco farm that has diversified and now produces grain and produce. The farm has hosted the Calvert Farm Bureau Agriculture Awareness event and has been a stop on the annual Calvert County Farm Tour for the past several years.

The Lamb's Quarter, a 145-acre farm owned by James and Patrice Bourne, produces healthy, organically managed food. The farm operates a very successful community-supported agriculture

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(CSA) program. In a CSA, shareholders buy in to a type of farm subscription service for weekly allotments of vegetables, eggs and meats derived from the farm. The farm has been in the Bourne family since 1690 and offers CSA members opportunities to tour and work on the site.

The American Chestnut Land Trust was nominated for operations on its Double Oak Farm, which features a crop variety including everything from arugula to zinnias. ACLT has worked with the Calvert County Soil Conservation District to provide a cover crop program on the farm that is integrated with its crop rotation plan. Managers plant crops to attract beneficial insects and minimize the application of pesticides. In addition to the farmland, the trust protects wetlands and forest for a total of over 3,000 acres in preserved land.

Bowen's Grocery of Huntingtown was named the **Green Grocer of the Year** for buying, selling and promoting local products when in season. Proprietors Gordon and Grace Bowen sell very little nonlocal produce and prominently advertise locally sourced items in the store. Bowen's recycles, supports local livestock sales and regularly features hard-to-find items alongside a full deli and meat market.

Chesapeake's Bounty, a family-run farm stand and nursery in St. Leonard, was also a nominee in the category. Owned by William Kreamer, Chesapeake's Bounty offers a wide selection of local products including seasonal produce, plants, local seafood and other products like firewood, straw, local canned goods and free-range chicken eggs. Additionally, local crops such as rye and kale are grown on the property.

The **Buy Local Restaurant of the Year** award was presented to Dream Weaver Events and Catering of Prince Frederick. Owner Trish Weaver was lauded for using local eggs, beef and produce in her dishes and for adjusting the menu to accommodate the supply of local goods. Menus regularly feature locally grown squash, onions, tomatoes, herbs, potatoes, sweet potatoes, peaches and salad greens, along with locally raised meat when possible. Famous for her fresh-baked goods, Trish uses locally grown blueberries and pumpkins for muffins, cakes and pies. She has even found a supplier for local shiitake mushrooms. The business is a member of Calvert Eats Local and donates leftover food to Project ECHO, an agency providing homeless assistance, and the Safe Harbor shelter for abused persons.

Other nominees in the category were Bilvil, a Beaches Café of North Beach and Saphron, a

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Prince Frederick restaurant. Bil and Sandi Shockley, owners of Bilvil, a Beaches Café on 7th Street in North Beach, purchase produce regularly from Swann’s Farm. The café’s appetizer, entrée and dessert menus are changed according to crops that are in season and the menu features Calvert County wines.

Owned by Charleen Obal, Saphron recently moved to the former Old Field Inn location on Main Street in Prince Frederick. After renovating and decorating the building, Obal adapted her low country menu to include the many offerings of Calvert County farmers markets. The restaurant also utilizes the region’s steady supply of seafood, features rockfish when in season and pairs dishes with local wine selections.

Nominees in all three categories were judged by a selection committee comprised of representatives from Calvert Eats Local, the Calvert County Agriculture Commission and the University of Maryland Extension.

Established in 2008, the Calvert County Sustainable Agriculture Workgroup includes members from the county departments of Planning & Zoning, Economic Development and General Services along with representatives from the Calvert County Health Department, the Calvert County Soil Conservation District, Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission and Maryland Cooperative Extension. The group’s purpose is to facilitate revenue opportunities for farmers; facilitate market opportunities for farmers and consumers; help the community understand the importance of farming; and build a more sustainable community that is better insulated from price fluctuations and unsafe foods.

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Calvert County is Maryland’s smallest county in land area with 213 square miles. It is home to approximately 90,000 people and has one of the highest standards of living in Maryland. There are more than 5,000 businesses in the County and a labor force of at least 1.8 million resides within a one-hour drive. Major industries include defense contracting, information technology, tourism, utilities, light manufacturing and administrative services.