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**Stearns County
Soil & Water
Conservation District**

Press Release

Earl and Darlene Felling Honored as Stearns SWCD Conservationists of the Year

Waite Park, April 5, 2011: Earl & Darlene Felling of rural Albany were honored at the Stearns County Pheasants Forever Banquet for being named 2010 Outstanding Conservationists by the Stearns County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD). The Fellings were selected by the Stearns County SWCD for the award for their efforts in implementing conservation practices on their land and improving Minnesota's natural resources.

According to Stearns County SWCD chairperson, Chuck Uphoff, the Fellings were recognized for a variety of reasons. "Earl and Darlene have implemented many conservation practices that conserve our natural resources and improve their operation," Uphoff said.

The Fellings operate a dairy farm near Albany, consisting of 70 milk cows and 70 head of youngstock. Crops grown on their 260 acres of cropland are corn, alfalfa, small grains, soybeans, and grass hay. The Fellings have completed numerous conservation practices over the years, including a livestock waste management system, farmstead shelterbelt, and grassed waterways. They also established a pasture and hay planting to reduce soil erosion along an intermittent stream near their feedlot, and installed a fence to exclude the feedlot from the stream. Cropland adjacent to the intermittent stream was planted to perennial grasses and alfalfa to filter runoff and provide habitat for wildlife. In addition to implementing numerous energy conservation measures on their farm, the Fellings follow a nutrient management plan, which involves soil testing, manure testing, and applying manure and fertilizer within agronomic rates, to minimize adverse effects on the environment. They have adopted pest management practices which utilize crop scouting and economic thresholds to help determine the best methods to control pests and weeds. Mulch tillage is used on cropland acres to help reduce soil erosion. The Fellings also participate in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) for cropland, pastureland, and forestland. One of the CSP enhancements they have implemented is the development of brush piles in forestland to improve wildlife habitat. The Fellings were awarded "5 Star Dairy"

status in 2006 from the Minnesota Milk Producers Association for their commitment to excellence in environmental stewardship.

The Fellings received statewide recognition, along with outstanding conservationists from around the State at the Minnesota Soil and Water Conservation District convention held in St. Paul.

“It is a great honor to recognize farmers, like the Fellings, and what they are doing to protect and enhance our natural resources”, said Uphoff.

All programs and services of the Stearns County SWCD are available without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or familial status.

Photo ID: (left to right) : Brad Cobb, Public Relations Director, Stearns County Pheasants Forever, Earl & Darlene Felling, 2010 Outstanding Conservationists, and Dennis Fuchs, Stearns County SWCD Administrator, at the 2011 Stearns County Pheasants Forever banquet.

