

Faces & Places

Friends and colleagues celebrate Class of '09

By JOSH FLINT

IN many ways, the Master Farmer Awards program feels like a cross between a family reunion and a homecoming celebration.

More than 100 guests welcomed the 2009 class of Master Farmers during a March 4 luncheon in Springfield. Guests included past Master Farmers, friends of agribusiness, members of the academic community and governmental leaders.

Some folks showed up early to enjoy a cup of coffee and chat with old friends. Others stayed late to welcome the new class, which includes Doug and Tom Block, Randy Lambdin, Rick Nelson and Kent Schleich.



CONGRATS RICK: Mike Hennenfert (Class of 1996) and Growmark board secretary Chet Esther (center) congratulate Rick Nelson (right) on becoming a Master Farmer.



COFFEE BREAK: Past Master Farmers came early to enjoy a cup of coffee. (From left) Bertha Jean Herrmann, Harry Herrmann (Class of 1988) and Stan Blunier (Class of 2004).



WELCOME BACK: Duane (Class of 1998) and Terecia Torrance enjoyed the Master Farmer luncheon. They make an effort to attend the awards program each year.

TOP HONORS: Illinois Department of Agriculture Director Tom Jennings congratulated the new class of Master Farmers. He also thanked the group for their commitment to Illinois agriculture. (Photo by Frank Holdmeyer)



MASTER E-MAIL: Virgil Rosendale (Class of 1983) adds his e-mail address to the Master Farmer list. In the future, *Prairie Farmer* will e-mail news and announcements regarding the Master Farmer program to all class members.



YOUNG FARMERS: Mark and Sherri Kannmacher represented the young farmer group from Cultivating Master Farmers. CMF pairs Master Farmer couples with young farmer couples in a unique idea sharing and mentoring experience.



KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Gary Ash, president and CEO of 1st Farm Credit Services, delivered the keynote address. Ash discussed the financially turbulent times. Near the end, he reminded farmers to discuss their opinions and viewpoints with their governmental leaders. (Photo by Frank Holdmeyer)



VETERAN MASTER: Neil (Class of 1987) and Eleanor Pistorius were on hand to welcome the newest class of Master Farmers.