

What it takes to be a Master

By **FRANK HOLDMEYER**

FOUR Iowa farm families are being recognized this month with the Iowa Master Farmer Award.

Henry A. Wallace, editor of *Wallaces Farmer* from 1921-33, initiated the Iowa Master Farmer Award in 1926 to call attention to Iowa farmers who not only demonstrate outstanding management in their farming operations, but also provide leadership in local, state and national organizations. It is the longest-running farmer recognition program in the country.

Wallace made it clear from the beginning that the award was about more than farming, also encompassing involvement in family and community affairs. So in 1926, when *Wallaces Farmer* instituted the Iowa Master Farmer Award, it made perfect sense to use the magazine's motto — "Good Farming, Clear Thinking, Right Living" — as the basis for judging Master Farmer Award nominations.

This precept for farmers' conduct holds nominees to a higher standard of ethics, requiring that Iowa Master Farmers not only skillfully manage their farms and market their products, but also invest time and resources in the pursuit of a successful family and community life.

As you read about the 2009 Iowa Master Farmers in this issue, you will see they all exemplify Henry A. Wallace's concept of a "Master Farmer." These folks are out-of-the-box thinkers when it comes to managing their farming operations. They have taken on leadership roles in their communities, the state and nationally.

Recipients in 2009 are Russ and Phyllis Brandes, Hancock; Brad and Joyce Moeckly, Elkart; Thurman and Geraldine Gaskill, Corwith; and Rob and Jean Stout, Washington.

This group marks the 73rd class recognized by *Wallaces Farmer*, bringing the total to 420 Iowa farm families who have been honored since the program began in 1926. (The Master Farmer awards program was not held from 1932-37 during the Great Depression, and from 1942-45 during World War II and in 1962.)

Nominations accepted

So, what is a Master Farmer and how are they selected? Master Farmers exhibit outstanding farm management skills; provide exceptional leadership to their community and to agriculture; and show devotion to God, family and country.

Judges consider operation and management of the farm: how the nominee got started, how they've grown the operation while demonstrating sound financial management. Those who are good stewards of the land and give proper care to livestock receive high marks. An interest in farm organizations — not only in membership, but leadership, as well — is part of the makeup of a Master Farmer.



Church activities aren't required, but you'll rarely find a Master Farmer who isn't an active supporter of some church.

Note that this is a family award. Farming is a true partnership between husband and wife. All members of

the family contribute to the success of the operation.

Anyone can nominate a Master Farmer: father, spouse, neighbor, children, Extension, etc. Letters of support from community leaders, pastors, co-op managers, etc., help strengthen an individual's nomination.

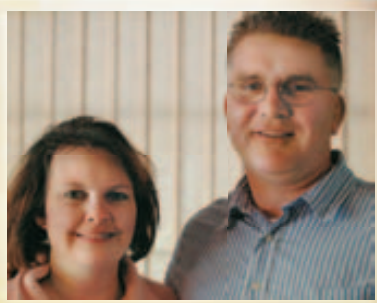
Deadline for nominations for the 2010

awards is Sept. 1. For a nomination form, write to *Wallaces Farmer*, 6200 Aurora Ave., Suite 609E, Urbandale, Iowa 50322. You can also call the *Wallaces* office at 515-278-7780.

■ **Nomination forms in both PDF and Word format are available online at www.WallacesFarmer.com.**



*E. Thurman and Geraldine Gaskill
Corwith, Iowa*



*Brad and Joyce Moeckly
Elkhart, Iowa*



*Russell and Phyllis Brandes
Hancock, Iowa*



*Rob and Jean Stout
Washington, Iowa*

**IN RURAL AMERICA,
IT'S THE INVESTMENT
WE MAKE IN EACH OTHER
THAT HELPS US GROW.**

**Congratulations to the 2009
Master Farmer Award winners.**

Master Farmers represent the best of rural America — people who invest their time and energy in their communities and agriculture to make them better, help them succeed and provide opportunities for others.

Their efforts make rural America better for us all. Farm Credit Services of America is proud to serve the 2009 Master Farmers as their lender.

www.fcsamerica.com



**Farm Credit Services
of America**