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Middle Republican Natural Resources District

For Immediate Release

Middle Republican NRD Family Receives Recognition at State Conference

Curtis – The John and Donna Sullivan Family from Wallace was honored last Monday at the annual Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD) Fall Conference Banquet in Kearney. Other family members include their sons Mike and his wife Terri and Doug and his wife Michelle.

The Sullivans, who received the Middle Republican NRD Honor Conservation Award for 2003, were honored as Master Conservationists in Production Agriculture for District D. Since 1983, the Omaha World-Herald and the University of Nebraska have sponsored the Master Conservationist Awards to recognize Nebraska conservationists for their dedication to soil and water conservation and wise use of natural resources in farming, ranching, gardening and landscaping.

Six generations of the Sullivan family have been farming in southwest Nebraska for nearly 120 years, beginning with homesteader John L. Sullivan in 1886, who was John Sullivan's great-grandfather. The Sullivans farm over 5,000 acres in southern Lincoln County and northern Hayes County. They have certified 2,152.2 acres of irrigated cropland, growing primarily corn, and over 2,800 acres are of dryland, growing mostly wheat and soybeans. They have also grown castor beans, millet, and safflower on occasion.

Natural resources conservation has always been in the forefront of their operation since then and has been passed on from generation to generation. In the past four drought-plagued years these farming techniques have become important conservation tools. The Sullivans have implemented



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many conservation practices throughout the years, including building and enlarging terraces, tree planting prescribed burning and grass seeding and tree planting through the NRCS continuous CRP and CRP programs. According to district records, tree planting numbers add up to over 2,100 trees. No-till practices control both wind and water erosion.

When asked if his conservation efforts have made any difference on his farm, John replied, “Of course our farming expenses are less than they would be had we not incorporated many of these conservation practices into our operation.” Less water is pumped, less electricity and fuel used, there is little water runoff, more wildlife has been observed, soil and wind erosion is minimal and better crops are grown because they take advantage of moisture in the soil, especially during these dry times.

The Sullivan family actively educates others in their community about conservation. They have hosted several no-till and ecofallow training and demonstrations and regularly invite the Wallace FFA Chapter and local 4-H groups to observe their farming operation and equipment.

Most impressive about the Sullivan family’s operation is the fact that everyone works together. All members of the family are an active part of the operation and those that are able are put to work. This is an accomplishment many families cannot claim.

In his typical community-minded fashion, when asked what receiving such an award means to them, John answered, “We appreciate receiving this award. But we didn’t achieve it alone. We are grateful for the tremendous amount of assistance we received over the years from the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA), and the Natural Resources Districts.”

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