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### **Berkeley County Farm Named West Virginia Conservation Farm of the Year**

**FLATWOODS, W.Va.** – The West Virginia Conservation Partnership is proud to announce that Butler Farms, located in Berkeley County, is the recipient of the 2014 West Virginia Conservation Farm of the Year Award. The farm, owned and operated by Bill Butler and his son Todd, was deemed the top farm in the Mountain State for its outstanding practices in the field of conservation of natural resources.

West Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture Walt Helmick presented the Butler's with an award plaque and a \$1,000 check, on Tuesday, October 28 at the 2014 West Virginia Conservation Awards and Recognition Banquet in Flatwoods.

"Congratulations to Bill and Todd Butler, and their entire family for being chosen as the 2014 West Virginia Conservation Farm of the Year," said Commissioner Helmick. "The Butler Farms operation in Berkeley County, and the other two farms selected as this year's finalists—Swift Level Farm in Greenbrier County and Clearview Farm in Brooke County—are all shining examples of how farming can be performed while protecting and conserving West Virginia's soil, land and water."

Butler Farms has been in operation for 95 years with Todd Butler being the fourth generation of his family to farm this land. The farm has seen immense growth throughout the years, evolving from a sustainable farm for the family, to a dairy, to the diversified operation it is today.

The 913 acre farm, located in Inwood, has three components that make up the operation. They raise 174 head of cattle, have a very successful sportsmen hunting operation and maintain a large apple orchard.

"This really is a great honor," said Bill Butler. "I wish the rest of the family could be here to see this. I'd just like to thank everyone that made this possible."

In addition to the award plaque and check, Steve Cronin, Agricultural Specialist with Middletown Tractor Sales of Fairmont presented the Butler's with 200 hours or four months use of a brand new John Deere tractor.

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The award was given after a statewide judging team, which recognized and evaluated the conservation efforts of three farms in West Virginia, named Butler Farms the 2014 West Virginia Conservation Farm of the Year. This was no easy task, as the judging team evaluated the farms according to such criteria as Conservation Farm Plans, Best Management Practices, farm land use and farm family involvement in the community.

Swift Level Land & Cattle, of Greenbrier County, was awarded second place and presented with a plaque and a \$500 check. Clearview Farm, located in Brooke County, came in third place and was awarded a plaque and a check for \$250.

The West Virginia Conservation Farm of the Year competition occurred successively on four levels: county, conservation district, area and state. The judges for the West Virginia Conservation Farm of the Year competition were representatives of the following agencies: West Virginia Association of Conservation Districts; West Virginia Conservation Agency; West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection; West Virginia Department of Agriculture; West Virginia Division of Forestry; WVU Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry and Consumer Sciences; WVU Extension Services; USDA Farm Service Agency; and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

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