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Ohio Poultry Association Announces 2009 Award Recipients, Celebrates Six Decades of Achievements

Individuals, businesses honored for dedication to Ohio's egg and poultry industries

COLUMBUS – The Ohio Poultry Association (OPA) recently celebrated its 60th anniversary and announced its 2009 poultry award recipients, named each year at the organization's annual banquet in Columbus. These awards honor businesses and individuals who have made significant contributions to Ohio's egg and poultry industries.

“As the Association marks 60 years of success and advancements, I am grateful for all of the hard work that everyone puts into the industry – from producers and retailers to elected officials and restaurateurs,” said Jim Chakeres, OPA executive vice president. “While we cannot honor every person or business, I am proud to work side by side with these individuals, who every day provide consumers in Ohio and across the United States with safe, wholesome, nutritious eggs, chicken and turkey.” Awards and recipients included:

Meritorious Service Award: Dr. Sandra Velleman

The OPA award for Meritorious Service is given annually to an individual in the academic field who has contributed to the egg and poultry industries. This year's recipient is Dr. Sandra Velleman, a professor of animal sciences at The Ohio State University. Velleman has provided nearly 15 years of leadership and service to poultry research programs in Wooster.

Environmental Stewardship Award: New Day Farms

The OPA's Environmental Stewardship Award is given each year in recognition of a producer's commitment to the farm's neighbors and to the environment as a whole. This year's recipient is New Day Farms, LLC, a third-generation family farm located in Raymond, Ohio. The farm has taken a number of actions to make their operation more environmentally friendly. Some of these projects include the addition of field buffer strips, stream restorations, storm water wetlands, and land application of process water. New Day Farms is the first poultry operation under the Ohio Department of Agriculture's (ODA) jurisdiction to compost 100 percent of its manure products.

Ohio Poultry Partner Award: Ohio Farm Bureau Federation

The Ohio Poultry Partner Award honors organizations that support the poultry industry. This year's recipient, Ohio Farm Bureau Federation (OFBF), was nominated by the OPA Executive Committee for the association's longtime support of the state's egg, turkey and chicken industries. The organization was established in 1985 to further initiatives that improve the quality of life in all of Ohio's agricultural communities. OFBF addresses a variety of issues, including legislation concerning the environment, taxes, trade, regulation, livestock, land use, health and safety, property rights and wildlife. The organization also develops and promotes various education campaigns and programs.

Posthumous Award: Robin Burton

A special Posthumous Award was presented to Robin Burton, who passed away in September 2008 after devoting more than 25 years of her life to the agriculture and poultry industries. Burton was employed with the Ohio Department of Agriculture since 1983, 16 years of which were spent with the Division of Animal Industry as the administrative assistant to the state veterinarian. Through her tenure, she worked closely with the state veterinarian in program development and implementation in such areas as animal diseases, emergency management and the National Premise and Animal Identification Program implementation.

The egg and poultry industries are big contributors to the success of Ohio's economy. Ohio ranks number two in the nation in egg production - second only to Iowa – and produces more than seven billion eggs per year with a retail value of more than \$483 million. Ohio is also 11th in the nation for turkey production and produces almost 274 million pounds of Ohio chicken annually. More than 5,000 people are employed in the poultry industry, with payrolls of more than \$50 million.

For more information, visit the OPA Web site at www.ohiopoultry.org.

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