



THE COUNTY OF CHESTER



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Chester County Commissioners present agricultural awards

WEST CHESTER, Pa. – The Chester County Board of Commissioners, along with the Agricultural Development Council (Ag Council), presented three agricultural awards at the Commissioners’ Meeting October 8.

This year, The Farmer of the Year award was presented to two co-winners: the team behind Seven Stars Farm in Phoenixville, Pa. and Lewis Wilkinson of West Grove, Pa.

Seven Stars Farm, represented by Farm Manager Steve Dunphy at the meeting, operates on approximately 350 acres of preserved land leased from the Kimberton Waldorf School, with whom they share a strong reciprocal relationship. Both the school and the farm follow the teachings of Rudolf Steiner, meaning that the farm is certified biodynamic and that the plants, soil, and animals are treated as an interconnected system. Seven Stars Farm is widely celebrated for their organic, European style yogurt which is carried in markets nationwide. The team does everything on site from field work, to running the dairy, processing the yogurt and even sales and marketing. They credit much of their success to the strong partnerships they enjoy with the family members, friends and employees who help run the farm, as well as the several organically-certified farms that supply additional milk needed to meet the ever-growing consumer demand for their yogurt.

The other Farmer of the Year co-winner, Lewis Wilkinson, is a crop farmer who farms over 1,000 acres between his own property and several large parcels he manages under various management agreements. He runs a flourishing custom farming business from his headquarters in West Grove, Pa., where he and his small staff are responsible for planting and harvesting a wide variety of crops including hay, soy and corn. The hay he harvests goes towards supporting two of the county’s most important agricultural industries: dairy (as feed) and mushroom (as composted growing materials). Wilkinson cites advances in agricultural technology, in both sophisticated precision farming equipment and genetic engineering, as the key factors allowing him to increase productivity and scale over his 38 years of farming. His shining rows of large, valuable farm equipment are a testament to his strong faith in the profitable future of agriculture in the county.

“On the face of it, Lewis Wilkinson’s operation and Seven Stars Farm appear to have little in common,” said Ag Council Director Hillary Krummrich. “However, both family-run operations play vital economic roles in the county and are the products of farmers who care deeply for the land and natural resources in their care. We are fortunate to have such a diversity of successful farm businesses here in Chester County.”

The Distinguished Agricultural Service award was given to Howard and Janet Robinson, active Chester Delaware County Farm Bureau members since 1968. Both Howard and Janet have held long term leadership positions in the

chapter and its various subcommittees, encouraging members to become active in their local governments and educating residents about the importance of supporting local agriculture. They are also very active members of their local grange organization, school board and the creation of the Oxford Village Market, which has helped revitalize the downtown Oxford area. Synonymous with the Chester Delaware Farm Bureau chapter and local agriculture in general, these two dedicated individuals have worked tirelessly over the years to serve as proud advocates for farmers like themselves and all of us who depend on farmers each and every day.

The Chester County Farmer of the Year Award is presented to a deserving individual or family who exemplifies outstanding farm practices, has an innovative operation and keen business sense, and who runs a well-maintained farm.

The Distinguished Agricultural Service award is given to an individual who has made significant contributions to, and provided exceptional service for the Chester County agricultural community.

About the Chester County Agricultural Development Council

The Chester County Agricultural Development Council promotes agriculture in Chester County by raising awareness on issues regarding the viability of local agriculture and promoting agricultural excellence and farming. For more information, visit us at www.chesco.org/agdev, [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages.

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