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ASA Celebrating 2024 Conservation Legacy Award Winners

2024

Conservation LEGACY AWARDS



St. Louis, Mo., Feb. 27, 2024. The American Soybean Association congratulates this year's regional winners of the 2024 Conservation Legacy Award.

- **Brad and Joyce Doyle, Weiner, Arkansas (Southern Region)**
- **Jacob Kaderly, Monticello, Wisconsin (Upper Midwest Region)**
- **Donald Morse, Birch Run, Michigan (Northeast Region)**
- **Chris Von Holten, Walnut, Illinois (Midwest Region)**

These impressive winners will be recognized at the annual ASA Awards Celebration during Commodity Classic on March 1, 2024. During the event, one of the regional winners will be announced as the national winner.

The Conservation Legacy Award is a national program designed to recognize the outstanding environmental achievements of soybean farmers, which help produce more sustainable U.S. soybeans.

A national selection committee, composed of soybean farmers, conservationists, agronomists and natural resource professionals, evaluated nominees based on their on-farm environmental and economic plans and contributions to the conservation community. The program is sponsored by ASA, BASF, Bayer, Nutrien, the United Soybean Board/Soy Checkoff and Valent USA.

Brad and Joyce Doyle, Weiner, Arkansas (Southern Region)

The conservation story of Brad and Joyce Doyle's Arkansas farm, which began with water management and reservoir construction, is far from its final chapter. With sustainability efforts evident throughout the farm, the Doyles want their work to prosper for the next generation.

Brad Doyle was two generations removed from farming before he married Joyce, but the agronomist and crop consultant fit right in with the Berger family's multi-faceted farm business. Joyce, a third-generation farmer, brought her husband back home to Northeast Arkansas, where they joined the family operation.

Together with Joyce's brother, the Doyles continue Joyce's family legacy and farm soybeans, rice and wheat in the Mississippi River Delta. There, they work to increase the conservation efforts that were started by Joyce's father and grandfather. As an irrigated operation, the Doyles face unique challenges.

"At the end of the day, we must make good, wise management decisions to be profitable," Brad says. "I think conservation can be a part of that on most farms."

But that doesn't stop the Doyles from going above and beyond on their farm and in their community.

"As we have learned, it is possible to improve the soil, attract more animals, save water and watch the yields climb," Brad points out. "We want to make it easy for the next generation to be profitable and happy." [Read more.](#)

Jacob Kaderly, Monticello, Wisconsin (Upper Midwest Region)

Jacob Kaderly credits his passion for land stewardship to his father's management practices on the family farm and his service on the Wisconsin State Conservation Board during the 1970s.

Today, no-till and cover crops are the foundation of Kaderly's conservation legacy on his south-central Wisconsin farm.

"Every trip across the field costs you; it's not good for the soil, and it's expensive," Kaderly says.

With a background as a certified crop adviser, Kaderly has the expertise to create a unique strategy of diverse practices to maximize long-term profitability and productivity on his farm. A fertility-focused approach has helped him reap the benefits of his efforts.

"I have seen better water infiltration, less erosion and better soil health," Kaderly says of his practices. "Conservation and land stewardship are important for the future to produce high-quality food and to preserve the ability of the land to keep producing high-yielding crops." [Read more.](#)

Donald Morse, Birch Run, Michigan (Northeast Region)

In 1975, Michigan farmer Don Morse put conservation tillage to the test on his 3,100 acres. With a keen interest in getting out of the soil what he put into it, Morse had one clear goal: to leave the land better and more sustainable for the future.

Raised in a household where conservation was the conversation, the veteran farmer continues to make that his mission today.

Morse's resiliency and foresight are what led his daughter, Allison, to nominate him for the Conservation Legacy Award.

"Farming is constantly evolving," Allison says. "He is always looking and learning about new developments in the ag industry and trying to find ways to implement them on his farm."

While Morse has always had conservation and soil preservation at heart, he admits fine-tuning no-till farming has been a process. From different planters and attachments to herbicide programs and cover crop selection, his stewardship strategy has evolved over the years.

"How does it affect your bottom line?" Morse remarks about his farming practice decisions. "If you can raise your organic matter in the soil, you're increasing water-holding capacity, you're increasing the amount of organic nitrogen that gets released, which means you don't have to buy as much synthetic fertilizer." [Read more.](#)

Chris Von Holten, Walnut, Illinois (Midwest Region)

In the 1980s, teenager Chris Von Holten watched as heavy rains washed away precious soil on his family farm and later as a drought reduced yields. These events inspired Von Holten's farming management to focus intensely on soil preservation.

"I think that's the key to why we started going no-till and cover crops, to try and prevent that kind of damage again," Von Holten explains.

With between eight and 10 soil types on most of the fields Von Holten farms, he says cover crops have helped raise performance levels on some of the poorer soils he farms. Variable fertility rates and seeding capabilities also aid Von Holten in managing wide variations in productivity.

"Only time will tell if we made the right choices," Von Holten says, "but I think we are on the right path to making our farm and our rented farms better for the next generation." [Read more.](#)

Watch for a special insert about this year's winners in the February issue of *Farm Journal* or click [here](#) to see videos and articles on each farmer's operation.

[Learn more](#)

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The American Soybean Association (ASA) represents U.S. soybean farmers on domestic and international policy issues important to the soybean industry. ASA has 26 affiliated state associations representing 30 soybean-producing states and more than 500,000 soybean farmers.

For more information contact:

Maria Brockamp, mbrockamp@soy.org

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