

Olsons Selected as 2002 Outstanding Conservation Cooperators

Ron & Carolyn Olson of Linden Township and Oscar and Dorothy Olson of Madelia will share the 2002 Outstanding Conservation Cooperator title. The honor is awarded by the Brown Soil and Water Conservation District.



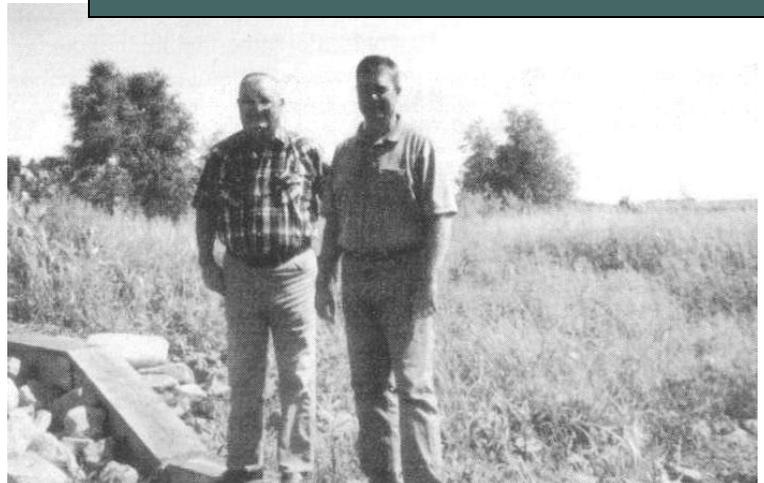
Ron started farming in 1975 and operates 720 acres in Brown and Blue Earth County raising corn and soybeans. Conservation tillage is practiced on his cropland. A DMI disk ripper is used on the corn ground leaving corn residue for erosion control.

The soybean ground generally remains untouched after harvest. A new farm grove, established in 1983, borders the farm site.

Oscar, Ron's uncle, began his farming career in 1958. In 1993, Oscar enrolled 40 acres in the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Program. Oscar has since retired and he and Dorothy are "enjoying the good life" spending a portion of the summers in a trailer new Mille Lacs Lake and winters in Alamo, Texas. Oscar is also a part-time driver for the House of Print in Madelia.

Oscar, Ron and their wives were enthusiastic when they learned about the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Their love of nature and wildlife enticed them to enroll 111.4 acres in the program in 1999. A 41.7 acre wetland restoration was completed in June of 2001. The balance of the area was seeded to native vegetation and wildflowers. Ron's family is already enjoying the sight of ducks, geese and whitetail deer that wander the area.

Oscar & Ron standing on top of the sheet pile weir structure which controls the water level of the restored wetlands





Canadian geese enjoying the newly created wetland on the Olson CREP easement

There are generations of Olsons to enjoy the legacy. Oscar and Dorothy have five married children, 14 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren. Ron and Carolyn have a son, RJ, age 18, and a daughter Nichole, age 21.

The Ron Olson family is busy beyond farming. Carolyn is a 4th grade teacher in Madelia and is actively involved in the SNAP

Program, a nature based program for high school and elementary students. Both she and RJ teach Sunday school in Butternut. Nichole is a senior at Southwest State College in Marshall and Ron enjoys riding motorcycle in his spare time.

Ron, Carol, Oscar and Dorothy were recognized, along with the state's other 2002 Conservation Cooperators, at the Minnesota Association of Conservation District Annual Convention in December at the Radisson Riverfront Hotel in St. Paul.