

No More Dust Bowl

By Joshua Dixon
Sleepy Eye Herald Dispatch

When Keith Lendt's grandfather bought the family farm southeast of Sleepy eye in the 1930s, the land went by another name; "dust bowl".

"If you plan on farming for a while, you don't want your topsoil eroding away," said Lendt this week. "In the dust bowl days, a lot of today's environmental programs came into effect."



Today Lendt manages the farm with his parents, Chuck and LeAnn. To ensure the land stays productive for future generations, he recently had 40 acres of a field terraced to prevent erosion.

As a result, Lendt and his wife Sarah were recently named the 2007 Outstanding Conservation Cooperators by the Brown Soil & Water Conservation District.

The Lendts and their two young children, Carmen and Isaac, live on the family farm in Stark Township where Keith was born and raised.

His interest in agriculture led him to be an active former Future Farmer of America member during his high school years. Keith and Sarah now farm 550 acres in a corn and soybean rotation. They also finish approximately 500 hogs every year.

In 2006, Keith enrolled 250 crop acres into the mulch till practice under the Federal EQIP program. In cooperation with the Brown SWCD and the NRCS, he also installed 1600 feet of tile outlet terraces and an additional 95 acres of mulch tillage.

"It was a big priority; in spring, you don't want your land to blow away," Lendt said. The hillside terraces protect about 40 of 90 acres of one field. Mathiowetz Construction Co. did the actual work of reshaping the land.



In addition to his conservation efforts, Keith has many other interests. He is a district sales manager for Midwest Seed Genetics. He serves as president of the Brown County Corn and Soybean Growers Association and is a member of the Sleepy Eye Jaycees.

Conservation Cooperator families were recognized at the Minnesota Association of Conservation District's Annual Convention held in Rochester.