

News – For Immediate Release

Date: February 25, 2015

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Local students and farm family awarded at annual Banquet

On February 24th, several local students were honored for their participation in the annual Catawba Soil & Water Conservation District education contests. Every year elementary, middle and high school children across the county prepare posters, speeches, slide shows or even digital posters correlating to a rotating theme. This year's theme was Wetlands are Wonderful.

Students who will be going on to the 13 county area competition in March are Katie Starns from Tuttle Elementary for the 5th grade poster category, Ellen Williams from Newton-Middle School for the 6th grade Slide show category, Carter Greene from Jacobs Fork Middle School for the 7th grade speech category.

Also recognized at the banquet was a local farm family for their conservation practices. Russell and Tara Hedrick were awarded the 3rd annual Catawba Soil & Water Conservation District Farm Family of the Year Award. Russell is a 1st generation farmer who has received the innovative farmer of the year award, has been a speaker at no-till conferences, and is becoming an advocate for conservation and best management practices here in our community.

Russell is walking the talk by implementing practices such as: no-till to increase organic matter, cover crops to reduce the amount of herbicide and fungicide, keeping a living root to assist with year-round nutrient cycling, contour farming, crop rotation, GPS guidance and grid soil samples to reduce chemical usage.

Russell has a connection to the land and is a true steward. He also advocates for conservation practices to help other farmers, and has hosted field days bringing out professionals from all over the state, assisted local farmers, and has traveled the state working with other local Soil & Water Conservation Districts to promote conservation = economics. Russell is using this formula in new ventures, and has paired with local Foothills Distillery on better ways to manage and maximize resources, using rerun mash to help feed steers on his farm.

Congrats to JRH Grains Farms, LLC and thank you for all that you do for Catawba County.

For more information on how to you can participate in our programs or to nominate someone for one of our programs please visit <http://www.catawbacountync.gov/SoilWater/> or contact us at 828-465-8950

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