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K-State Research and Extension Wildcat District and Natural Resource Conservation Service Crawford County would like to congratulate these following Banker's Soil Conservation, Continuing Conservation, and Grassland Award winners. Each of the winners are residents of Crawford County and have shown excellent environmental stewardship. These awards are made possible by our local bank sponsor, **Community National Bank**.

Banker's Soil Conversation Award: Dale and Bernadette Coomes

Dale Coomes is a relatively new farmer in Crawford County, purchasing the current farmstead in 2013 from Pete and Jane DeLange. However, he was the CEO of Heartland Rural Electric Cooperative for 30 years. His wife, Bernadette, was the secretary of Girard High School for 14 years. Needless to say, the Coomes family is well known in the community where they grew up. Dale and Bernadette have four sons, who are engineers and agronomists, and 13 grandchildren. The Coomes exclusively no-till their 600 acres and frequently grow cover crops whenever possible. The Coomes have their own tile plow and have not only tiled some of their own farm ground but have also installed tile for others. Dale says conservation is important to improve the soil and leave the land in better condition for the next generation, by using healthy and sustainable practices.

Continuing Conservation Award: Alan and Brenda Egbert

Alan Egbert began farming as soon as he could walk. He grew up on a farm in Crawford County, Kansas and learned from his father and grandfathers how to implement irrigation and conservation practices. Alan purchased his first farm while attending college and irrigated with a traveling gun, which gradually progressed to nearly 600 acres of irrigated farm land with pivot systems. Water sources for irrigation are from strip pits and three different reservoirs that Alan built with much appreciated assistance from NRCS with engineering rules & regulations. He also has several hundred acres of owned and rented dry land acres, most terraced with waterways, and practices no-till and minimal till when possible. Alan and his wife Brenda & their two boys grew up working together on their farm and now Caleb & his wife Jordan have joined the farm operation after they both graduated from K-State. Tyler has pursued his interest as an ER Doctor. Alan's dad Vernon and Brother Clark also have their own farm operations nearby and are available to assist each other when necessary.

Alan is passionate about farming & believes conservation is required to make a living off the land but also important to improve it for future generations.

Grassland Award: Doug and Kim Harris

Doug Harris grew up in Crawford County and him and his wife, Kim, farm near Hepler with a part row crop and part cow/calf operation. The Harris's are well known in the area as Doug's siblings, nephews, and kids all farm nearby. Doug and Kim also have grandkids in 4-H, creating a multi-generational, very family orientated operation. The Harris cow/calf herd is 50 percent purebred Charolais cattle and 50 percent crossbred, grazing on a mixture of native and fescue pastures. The Harris' work hard to keep the pastures and fence lines clear of weeds like sericea lespedeza, but also commonly overseed with beneficial legumes and clovers. The Harris operation focuses on proper cattle stocking rates in an effort to keep weed pressure low and to keep the grass growing with a full fertilizer plan. Doug says his view on conservation is like life, the only thing you take with you is what you give while you're here.

Congratulations to this year's Bankers Conservation Awards winners and thank you for doing your part to help preserve our most valuable natural resources.

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