

VanOostrum named as Farm Environmental Steward for 2009



TRURO- Andrew VanOostrum has fond memories of childhood summer days spent fishing for trout in a brook that crosses his farm in Grafton, near Berwick in the Annapolis Valley. Such memories have galvanized his efforts to be an effective and committed environmental steward. “I wanted to make changes in the way we operate our farm so that my children can enjoy the brook and ponds and the wildlife on our property as they grow up,” he says. The second-generation producer raises beef cattle and grows soybeans, wheat, corn and forage crops on his acreage, which curves down the base of the North Mountain and borders on the headwaters of the Cornwallis River.



VanOostrum is the first winner of the Farm Environmental Stewardship Award. This award was established to highlight producers who make good land, water and habitat stewardship a significant part of their farm operations. VanOostrum will be able to make further environmental improvements to his farm with the award, which was announced during the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture’s annual banquet on November 24th.

VanOostrum was one of the first farmers in Nova Scotia to have an Agricultural Biodiversity Conservation Plan done for his farm. He has implemented a number of the plan recommendations on his operation, with particular focus on improving the health of waterways that cross his property. He’s also gone beyond those recommendations, constantly striving to improve his management practices. “Improving our farm management and the health of the natural environment isn’t an overnight job,” he says. “But the benefits are long-term, too.”

"Andrew VanOostrum is ensuring the waterways surrounding his farm are as healthy as they were when he was a child," says Minister of Agriculture John MacDonell. "With his eye on the past, he had a focus on the future, and a strong plan to protect the environment for future generations to enjoy as he did."

Richard Melvin, President of Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture says, “Andrew and his family have demonstrated a high regard for the environment and are an example to all Nova Scotians of farmer’s commitment sustainability.”

The Farm Environmental Stewardship Award is a part of the Environmental Farm Plan Program. It was created through a partnership of the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the NS Environmental Farm Plan Team and the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture. The Environmental Farm Plan Program is an initiative under the Canada-Nova Scotia Growing Forward Agreement.