

OUTSTANDING CONSERVATIONISTS FOR 2018

The Elsenpeter family has been farming on their original Chatham Township homestead since 1869. Brothers Dan and Luke are fifth generation dairy farmers and the first to be certified “organic” twelve years ago. These innovative farmers operate 600 acres, 400 of which are cropped with the remaining acreage in pasture. Currently, the brothers milk 150 cows twice a day with an additional 37 dry cows. They became “organic” because they believe the less chemical application the better for the health of all concerned whether it is their family, the consumer, the herd and/or the environment. Additionally, to them, “organic” seems to have more sustainability for the future.

Also important to the Elsenpeter brothers is conservation on the farm they call “Valley View”. In the past, Dan and Luke participated in the Natural Resource Conservation Service’s (NRCS) EQIP program which enabled them to build a free stall barn and an ag waste pit to contain herd manure. Their two basic long-range goals are to continue to improve their soils health and ensure their soil stays on the field so that future generations can continue to do what they currently do. To help obtain these goals, future farm plans include diversification to plant a wider variety of crops with the incorporation of cover crops. Cover crops will help with weed suppression and the reduction of soil pests while improving soil health and increasing the soils’ organic matter with the added benefit of cattle forage. The Wright Soil and Water Conservation District is proud to have the Elsenpeter family represent them this year with the title of “Outstanding Conservationists for 2018”.



Dan and Luke in their new free stall barn