

## Marties named “Outstanding Conservationists for 2015”

By

### Wright Soil and Water Conservation District

The recipient of the “Outstanding Conservationist” award is selected by the local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board and awarded by “The Farmer” magazine at the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation District’s annual meeting in early December. This is an important recognition because it acknowledges the accomplishments and efforts of a local cooperater in the area of soil and water protection and conservation. The 2015 award recipients selected by the Wright Soil and Water Conservation District are Russell and Sharon Martie of Hasty, MN.

The Marties have been farming for 43 years. They own 240 acres and farm about 400 acres on which they grow corn,



Russ and Sharon Martie

alfalfa and teff grass. They utilize the conservation practices of cover crop planting, minimum tillage, subsurface irrigation and tree planting. In combination, these practices reduce erosion and provide many other benefits which include saving and preserving energy and water and improving soil health. Russ is enrolled in the federal Natural Resource Conservation Service's Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). As participants of that program, the Marties selected the following enhancements: Energy, Multi-species native perennials for biomass/wildlife habitat, Soil Quality, Water Quality and Wildlife friendly fencing.

Russ has always been an innovator producing his own biodiesel and modifying equipment to his specific needs. He even built some of the equipment used to install his SDI system. A SDI system irrigates below the soil's surface; thereby, allowing all of the water to be absorbed and not be evaporated by summer's heat or washed away in a rain event. Fertilizer and oxygen can also be injected (as needed by the plant) through this type of irrigation system allowing full plant utilization. The Marties hosted and promoted the SDI system through a field day held at their farm in June.



This shed controls the Marties' SDI system

Cover crops are used on all of the Marties' fields to further improve the soil health and reduce erosion on his sandy soils. Teff grass has also been added to expand his rotation.

The Wright SWCD would like to congratulate **Russ and Sharon Martie** for their continued efforts towards farming with the environment in mind.