

# Michigan

# Agri-Weekly

*Agriculture, Sustainability and the Environment*

Agri-Weekly is a weekly news article produced by the Michigan Agri-Business Association to address timely topics in agriculture and rural living. This is a free service for journalists interested in reporting on timely agricultural news. Articles appearing in this release are not copyrighted and can be reproduced at no cost. To have this service sent to a friend, or to be removed from this list, e-mail your request to [maba@miagbiz.org](mailto:maba@miagbiz.org).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE 2-4-2010

**PHOTO:** Download a high-resolution photo at [www.miagbiz.org](http://www.miagbiz.org) or e-mail a request to [jvincent@farmprogress.com](mailto:jvincent@farmprogress.com)

## Top producers honored as 2010 Michigan Master Farmers

For the 6th year *Michigan Farmer* magazine, Michigan Agri-Business Association and Michigan Farm Radio Network recently presented the Michigan Master Farmer awards to three outstanding producers. All were nominated by peers and were chosen by a committee of agriculture industry leaders based on farm management, innovation, conservation, leadership and community involvement.

The 2010 Master Farmers are fruit grower Paul Rood of Covert, corn and soybean farmer Jeffery Sandborn of Portland and seed corn grower Carl Moore of Cedar Springs.

The award is named the same year that it's given because it acknowledges a lifetime of achievement and not a single year.

Master Farmers receive a plaque and pin from *Michigan Farmer* and a Carhartt jacket, donated by Carhartt. They also receive a \$1,000 check, made possible by sponsors Mosaic, Greenstone Farm Credit Services and Great Lakes Hybrids, Inc.

### PAUL ROOD

John Wise and Michael Haas of the Michigan State University Trevor Nichols Research Complex cited Paul Rood's unique combination of modesty and ingenuity in nominating him as a 2010 Master Farmer.

In 1956, Rood returned to his family's farm after a three-year stint in California as a research scientist for USDA. While out West, he used his three degrees from MSU—a PhD in horticulture and bachelors' and masters' degrees in soil sciences—to help determine peak picking and shipping requirements for fresh fruit to meet the exploding demand of post-war American markets.

But, Rood's USDA appointment was temporary and the farm needed him, so he returned to Michigan.

John Wise credits Rood for keeping young scientists "on their toes" as they wind their way through the complex fruit industry.

Todd DeKryger, senior scientist for Gerber, spent many hours on Rood's farm conducting research. DeKryger calls Rood a leader in adopting cutting-edge horticultural techniques in his orchards and one of the leaders in the area of responsible pest management and Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

Rood's commitment to research is further underlined by his \$1,000 Master Farmer award donation to the Trevor Nichols Research Complex.

Michael Haas says Rood looks at his options, is willing to try new ideas and take on risk to improve efficiency. One example is the raised platform pruner Rood fabricated from surplus hydraulics, scrap metal and 2x4s.

He has held several offices in the Michigan State Horticultural Society; Michigan Pear Research Association; Michigan Apple Committee, the International Fruit Tree Association and the South Haven Casco Pomological Society, and several others.



**2010 MASTER FARMERS** – *Michigan Farmer*, Michigan Agri-Business Association and Michigan Farm Radio Network are proud to honor Paul Rood of Covert, Jeffery Sandborn of Portland and Carl Moore of Cedar Springs as 2010 Master Farmers. Pictured, left to right, are Jim Nowak of GreenStone Farm Credit Services, Annette Weston from Michigan Farm Radio Network, Sandborn, Rood, Moore, Jennifer Vincent of *Michigan Farmer* and Doug Perry of Great Lakes Hybrids.

Today he farms 125 acres of pears, plums and apples with the help of three full time employees and seasonal help.

### **JEFF SANDBORN**

Jeff Sandborn's interest in farming was initially fostered by his father, Jeff Sr., who was a third-generation farmer. But, it was through his own ambitions he's built a successful, commercial farm enterprise that strongly incorporates technology and environmentally conscience facilities and practices.

The 43-year-old Portland corn and soybean farmer was nominated by his neighbor Charles Leik, who notes his high level of organization, attention to detail and adoption of technology.

Sandborn took over the operation of the family farm after the unexpected death of his father.

He slowly bought the equipment from his mother in the mid 1990s and acquired the land base in 1995.

Much of his agricultural wisdom is self-taught with the aid of today's technology. But, like most good farmers, Sandborn also turned to those with experience, like John Lich, who owned the John Deere dealership in Portland for 36 years.

Lich says Sandborn asked a lot of questions and was an early adaptor, noting that he failed from time to time, learned from it and moved on.

In the early 1990s, Sandborn began using yield monitors. In the past five years he's been soil sampling by type and variable rate applying lime. He now farms and shares equipment with his cousin, Josh Sandborn

In 1999, he installed a 100,000 bushel grain handling system, which has since been expanded to handle another 50,000 bushels. The Sandborns now also raise soybeans for seed and have installed four smaller bins and special equipment to handle the seed.

In 2004, Sandborn went to auto steer and he also built an 80x40 foot enclosed containment building for fertilizer and chemicals. Trucks can drive through the building to be loaded and unloaded and any spill or leak is contained.

Last cropping season, Sandborn made a switch from 30-inch corn and 15-inch soys to all 20-inch rows using a single track planter.

Sandborn has served on numerous leadership boards and committees and was part of the first class to graduate from the Great Lakes Leadership Academy. He was also part of an educational trip abroad to Australia sponsored by Michigan Farm Bureau.

Jeff has been married to Kelly for 10 years and now farms 1,900 acres of corn and soybeans for seed, as well as some custom planting and combining.

### **CARL MOORE**

It takes a whole lot of hands to create and maintain a successful seed farm operation. Carl and Ellen Moore can certainly attest.

Family, friends and employees form a tight-knit bond at Pine Border Farm Inc, which is owned by Carl and his brother, Calvin, near Cedar Springs in Kent County.

Exceptional work in seed production throughout its 38-year history and constant vigilance in land stewardship are trademarks both of the farm operation and Moore.

Kylee Zdunic, who works at Great Lakes Hybrids and nominated Moore for the Master Farmer award, calls him an outstanding and dedicated leader whose knowledge and love of agriculture run deep in his blood.

Carl and Calvin purchased the farm's first 300 acres in 1971. It is now more than 1,300 acres.

In 1984-85, the Moores built a large drying system to dry all their own seed and some from other growers.

Vegetables played a part in the Moore's initial farm plan, primarily cucumbers, until 2001, when the focus turned more to seed corn.

About two-thirds of the farm's acreage is planted in up to 10 different varieties of seed corn with the remaining acres planted in soybeans.

Minimum tillage, grass waterways and windbreaks are part of Moore's stewardship legacy, as is the proper use and containment of dry and liquid fertilizers, pesticides and fuel.

Even the 400 to 600 tons of corn cobs that remain after harvest are sold for use in a variety of "recycled" products.

The farm's 14 center-pivot irrigation systems help jump start young plants.

Surprisingly, the labor-intensive job of detasseling has become a favorite part of the harvest schedule for the Moore family. It's become a tradition for family and friends and up to 100 seasonal workers – mostly young people.

Carl has served on boards for the Kent County Farm Bureau, American Seed Trade Association., Great Lakes Hybrids and several others.

###

Brought to you by *Michigan Agri-Business Association*

Contact: *Jim Byrum, MABA Presiden t(517) 336-0223, e-mail: jim@miagbiz.org*