

A SALUTE TO AGRICULTURE

Sherman couple honored as Master Farmers

By Greg Stover

The Goodland Star-News

Gerry and Linda Franklin, of Edson, are one of six couples named Kansas Master Farmers and Master Farm Homemakers for 2003 by Kansas State University Research and Extension, and will be honored tonight at a banquet in Manhattan.

The couples are being recognized for their contributions to agriculture, the environment and their community. The couples were nominated by the various Extension councils and districts. A committee selects one couple from each of the four Extension areas and two others at large.

The Franklins manage about 4,500 acres of farm land about six miles southeast of Goodland near Edson where they grow wheat, grain sorghum, corn and sunflowers. From 1986 to 1999 they fed cattle for market on their land, but stopped to focus more on growing corn. The Franklins said they are considering getting back into cattle.

The Franklins were named the 10th District Farm Family of the Year in 2001 by the Kansas Farm Bureau. Linda's parents, Harlan and Freda House, were named Kansas Master Farmers and Master Farm Homemakers in 1983.

One of the reasons the Franklins were nominated was their farm management practices that have resulted in farming methods that save time and money, and conserves the environment at the same time. Some of the things they have done is convert to ridge tillage which increased crop yields and cut



Linda and Gerald Franklin are one of six couples in Kansas who are being honored as Master Farmers and Master Farm Homemakers during National Ag Week, and at a special banquet tonight in Manhattan.

the amount of water used and install a low energy precision application sprinkler nozzle system that in-

creased efficiency and also curbed water use.

The Franklins made a two-year

commitment to farming in 1981, after several years of returning home to help with the harvest. Gerry, who previously was the director of special education for the Hutchinson school district, said he would find himself sitting at his desk wondering what was happening on the farm.

He said although farming is hard work, it was an opportunity to work for themselves, and to raise their children on a farm where they could be close to family. Now, 23 years later, the Franklins are recognized leaders in agriculture in northwest Kansas.

The Franklins are charter members of the 21st Century Alliance, a farmer-owned cooperative enterprise formed to develop agriculture-based business ventures. They are also participating in a three-year pilot program for irrigation water management.

Gerry said they use genetics to help with crop rotation. He said they planted Clearfield wheat to help with a grass problem in their winter wheat fields, used certified seed to protect against Karnal bunt and used Round-Up Ready soybeans and corn in field where weeds are a problem.

Franklin served on the Goodland school board for eight years, serving two 4-year terms, from 1993 to 2001.

"It's really critical that we have a good school system," he said. "I think everyone should care about good schools."

The Franklins have three children: Kyle, Sarah and Timothy. Kyle and Sarah both graduated from Kansas State, as did their mother. Timothy is a junior there studying milling science and management. Gerry earned his Ph.D at Kansas State.

Ag Week, March 16-20
National Ag Day,
Saturday, March 20

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