



For Immediate Release

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Mary, Al Nichol receive National DHIA Distinguished Leadership Award

ST. PETE BEACH, Fla. (March 15, 2010) – Mary and Al Nichol, Deckerville, Mich., received the National Dairy Herd Information Association's (DHIA) H. Victor Joachim Distinguished Leadership Award March 11, in St. Pete Beach, Fla., in conjunction with the association's annual meeting. The H. Victor Joachim Distinguished Leadership Award goes to a DHI dairy producer and/or spouse who has held a leadership position in DHIA or the dairy industry, and rendered outstanding and unselfish service for many years, along with a notable contribution to advancing DHIA in the United States.

From 2003-2007, Mary chaired the National DHIA Scholarship Committee, which annually provides up to 25 \$500 scholarships to worthy students. Mary has also taken an active role in several cooperatives, serving as NorthStar DHI Services Advisory Committee vice president, Universal Lab Services Board president and vice president, Sanilac County DHIA board member, Sanilac County Farm Bureau board member and Michigan Milk Producers Association delegate.

Up until last fall, Mary and Al milked 80 cows and cropped 300 acres of alfalfa, corn, soybeans and wheat. They nurtured their land and crops, and jointly managed and operated their dairy farm for more than 40 years. Al suffered a ruptured aorta in the spring of 2009, and last fall Mary and Al made the difficult decision to put a bid in for the Cooperatives Working Together (CWT) buyout program. Their CWT bid was accepted. Today, they continue to grow crops and raise heifers, utilizing the PCDART (Personal Computer Direct Access to Records by Telephone) program for heifer management.

In 2009, Mary earned the Excellence in Dairy Promotion Award for her unending dairy promotion efforts. Each month, callers getting the duo's answering machine hear a new dairy promotion message, such as, "Spring has sprung, and Al and I are out in the field having fun, so while you're waiting for us to call you back, enjoy an ice cold glass of chocolate milk, and help us celebrate June Dairy Month." She has worked with the media, library, women's shelter and county fair, promoting dairy foods and livestock agriculture. When communicating with students, Mary emphasizes that most farmers take really good care of their animals, and what is shown on TV is often misleading. Reaching children who have no farm background is very important to Mary.

National DHIA, a trade association for the dairy records industry, serves the best interests of its members and the dairy industry by maintaining the integrity of dairy records and advancing dairy information systems.

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To receive a photo of Mary and Al Nichol with their award, send request to: jdsattler@dhia.org