



NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Indiana, Ohio farmers take home top Red Gold Stewardship Award

ELWOOD, Ind. (Aug. 14, 2017) – Red Gold and the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) are proud to present Harold and Tom Parker of H&T Parker Farms, located in LaPorte, Ind., and Chris McDonnell of McDonnell Farms, located in Delta, Ohio, with the 2017 Red Gold Stewardship Award. Currently in its ninth year, the award was established to showcase the conservation efforts of Red Gold growers and to recognize those going above and beyond in their farming operations. Parker and McDonnell were recognized during a ceremony held at Red Gold's corporate headquarters in Elwood.

"Taking care of the land continues to be a priority for Red Gold and farmers across the Midwest," said Ted McKinney, ISDA Director. "I commend Harold, Tom and Chris for being leaders in conservation and, by their example, encouraging others to do so as well."

Tom Parker graduated from Purdue University in 2001 and soon after joined the family farming operation, H&T Parker Farms. He uses the latest technology to grow his crops and is currently producing corn, seed corn and tomatoes.

Parker has been with Red Gold since 2012 and grows tomatoes on a five year or more rotation. Making conservation part of his farm management, he has restored wetlands, installed grass filter strips on open ditches and put in place water sediment control basins, just to name a few.

Two of the main reasons Parker received the stewardship award include switching from conventional to vertical tillage and adding cover crops to five out of the six years of their typical rotation.

"The ground is going to give back what you put into it, so you have to make sure that everything is healthy in order to have a sustainable future," Parker said. "The practices we have put in place show that we are environmentally conscious, and it's an honor to receive this award and get recognized for that work."

Located in Delta, Ohio, McDonnell is a fifth generation farmer and owner and operator of McDonnell Farms. Along with corn and soybeans, he has been growing tomatoes on a five year rotation for 55 years – 23 of those with Red Gold.

In addition to planting cover crops, McDonnell incorporates the following conservation practices into his farm management; grass buffers around tile-risers, grass waterways, grass filter strips on open ditches, and water and sediment control basins. Additionally, he has constructed his own strip-tiller for reducing soil disturbance while planting tomatoes.

"Being in charge of a farming operation means doing the best you can with the ground you are using,

so it means a lot to be recognized for that,” McDonnall said. “We are a fifth generation farm and would like to continue our operation, and taking care of our resources plays a critical role in that.”

The Red Gold Stewardship Award program is driven by Red Gold’s desire to demonstrate their companywide commitment to good stewardship practices. The company encourages their tomato producers, who are located in Indiana, Michigan and Ohio, to adopt good conservation practices and has instilled an atmosphere of continuous improvement.

As the top winner, Parker received a \$1,000 scholarship plus the option of shipping an extra truck load of tomatoes per day during harvest season. Taking second place, McDonnall received a \$500 scholarship and an extra half truck load of tomatoes per day during harvest.

ISDA’s role in the competition is to serve as an independent evaluator, which includes judging and scoring. The winners were selected based on their conservation practices and efforts.

For more information about the Red Gold Stewardship Award, or Red Gold in general, visit www.redgold.com. For more information about ISDA, visit www.isda.in.gov.

ABOUT ISDA

The Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) was established as a separate state agency by the Legislature in 2005. The Director is appointed by the Governor and is a member of the Governor’s Cabinet. Administratively, ISDA reports to Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch, who also serves as Indiana’s Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development. Major responsibilities include advocacy for Indiana agriculture at the local, state and federal level, managing soil conservation programs, promoting economic development and agricultural innovation, serving as a regulatory ombudsman for agricultural businesses, and licensing grain firms throughout the state.

About Red Gold, Inc.

Four generations of the Reichart family have been producing Red Gold premium quality tomato products since 1942, when it began producing tomato products for the soldiers overseas. Red Gold partners with 50 family farms across Indiana, southern Michigan, and Northwest Ohio to sustainably produce premium quality canned tomatoes, ketchup, and tomato-based products for the retail, foodservice, private brand, and club channels of distribution. Exceptional quality and operational excellence are the shared values that contributed to the employee-created mission statement: "To produce the freshest, best tasting tomato products in the world." Visit the award winning website RedGoldTomatoes.com for great recipes, tips and culinary inspiration!

Red Gold. Grown By Families. Enjoyed By Families. ®

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Note to the press: The photo below (from left to right) is of Meg Leader, Director of Soil Health for the Indiana State Department of Agriculture, presenting Tom Parker and his wife, Jenna, with the Red Gold Stewardship Award.



The picture below is of H&T Parker Farms.



The picture below is of McDonnall Farms.



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