

## **Thunder Bay Cattlemen win prestigious Environmental Award**

February 20 (Toronto) – Bruce and Valve Forrest of Thunder Bay were presented with the 2003 Environmental Stewardship Award at the annual meeting of the Ontario Cattlemen’s Association (OCA) today in Toronto. This is the first time that the award, sponsored by the Royal Bank of Canada and OCA, has gone to farmers from Northern Ontario. The Forrests raise 50 cows and their offspring on 270 acres of land.

The Forrests have continually showed initiative when it comes to making environmental improvements to their property. In 1994, they were among the first in their area to take the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) course. They then took the recommendations from that program and made significant changes to their farming operation. Improvements included the construction of lagoons to contain runoff, the cementing of their feedlot and corral and the fencing cattle out of their creek, bush and wind breaks.

They’ve also made improvements to water wells at their barn and house and to their pesticide and fuel storage areas. They regularly test their water supply and they use eavestroughs on their buildings to divert water away from livestock yards. Regular soil sampling has also helped to reduce the amount of chemical fertilizer that they need to use on their land.

Bruce said that the changes they made benefited both the environment and the comfort level of their cattle.

The Forrests are active members of their community. They regularly open their farm for tours by school groups, the general public and by farmers. They have held many producer workshops on their farm and have participated in the Thunder Bay Soil and Crop Association, the local Agricultural Awareness Committee and the Thunder Bay Cattlemen’s Association. Bruce is also a member of the EFP district peer review committee and is involved with the local fall fair and 4-H programs.

In a letter supporting the Forrests’ nomination, area farmer Ron Moore wrote that the Forrests’ expertise is shared freely with other producers. He said that both Bruce and Valve have had a “positive influence on many local farming operations” and added, “Forrest Farm is always a step ahead in implementing changes which lessen the environmental impact of producing beef.”

The Forrests will go on to represent Ontario at the National Environmental Stewardship Award competition to be held next August in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan.

The deadline for applications for the 2004 Environmental Stewardship Award is November 14. For details visit the OCA website at [www.cattle.guelph.on.ca](http://www.cattle.guelph.on.ca)

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For further information contact:

Kelly Daynard, Ontario Cattlemen’s Association, 519-824-0334  
Bruce and Valve Forrest (807)-473-9609