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Northumberland County Beef Farmer Wins 2008 Ontario Pasture Award

February 21, 2008 (Toronto) - The sponsors of the Ontario Pasture Award - the Ontario Cattlemen's Association (OCA), MAPLESEED and the Ontario Forage Council (OFC) - are pleased to announce that Scott Honey of Loyal Farms at RR 5 Warkworth, in Northumberland County, is the winner of the 2008 Pasture Award. The award was presented today at the OCA Annual General Meeting. For his environmental and pasture improvements and management, Scott will receive a cash award of \$750 and a bag of forage seed.

Scott Honey is the fifth generation to farm the lands at Loyal Farms. The operation consists of a cow/calf operation of 85 beef cows. About 2000 acres is cash cropped and consists of corn, soybeans, wheat and hay. Much of the hay is exported to the United States for the horse market. In addition to the work on their own operation, they are involved in working about another 1500 acres of custom planting and harvesting in the local area.

The farm has gone through many changes, and in the past 14 years, Scott has increased the beef cow numbers from 35 to 85. A good rotational pasture management system is the key to the success of the pasturing operation. As Scott says, "Every time I subdivide a pasture field into more paddocks, it increases production."

The pastures consist mainly of an alfalfa/orchard grass mix, and are over-seeded in the spring using a mix of Red Clover, Orchard Grass and Ladino Clover.

The livestock are restricted from a woodlot on the property as well as the springs and swamp areas of the farm. The pasture area is divided into 18 paddocks, which allows an adequate rest period for each paddock after being grazed.

"I believe the intensive rotational pasture system, combined with clean water that is closely accessible at all times, has contributed greatly to improved herd health and improved daily gain," Scott comments. Scott has also had a major focus on extending grazing days by using a variety of different crops to greatly minimize his costs.

Steve Bent, Sales Manager with MAPLESEED, thinks Scott Honey is an ideal candidate for the 2007 award, because of the innovation he has demonstrated in his farming operation and his willingness to share ideas, for the benefit of agriculture and the industry in general.

Ray Robertson, Manager of the Ontario Forage Council, said that as producers try to cope with challenging times, they will look to practical and sustainable management practices like these to maximize their net returns.

The deadline for applications for the 2009 Ontario Pasture Award is November 21/08.

For details, call the Ontario Forage Council at 1-877-892-8663 or visit either the Ontario Forage Council's Web site at www.ontarioforagecouncil.com or the Ontario Cattlemen's Association Web site at www.cattle.guelph.on.ca.

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