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Madison County Conservation District – Cooperators Meeting

The Madison County Conservation District (CD) Cooperators Meeting was held on March 25, 2010 at the Cooperative Extension Service Building on Duncannon Lane. Cooperators, guests and government officials celebrated conservation accomplishments for the year.

Recognition was given individuals and groups for their efforts in completing conservation practices to protect and enhance Madison County's natural resources. Bruce Pratt, director of the ECU Craft project spoke concerning bio-energy. The opportunities for Madison county and Kentucky landowners to potentially produce warm season (native grasses) that could be harvested annually to be converted to energy is significant. Proper conservation measures would be an important part of that production.

Mose Bush Hill was presented the Master Conservationist Award for completing over 90% of planned conservation measures. Hill operates a 125 acre farm in the College Hill area. Rotational grazing is used to graze feeder cattle. Pipeline and tanks have been installed to provide livestock watering for the system. Soils were tested with needed fertilizer and lime applied during incorporation of legumes in pastures. Management of soil nutrients is another key to productive rotational grazing.

The district honored William and Allison Harrison as Cooperators of the year, based upon recent completion of conservation practices. Fence has been installed to fence off ponds and subdivide fields for rotational grazing. Renovation of pasture has included orchard grass, red clover and Korean lespedeza. Springs are being developed and water tanks installed to improve their rotational grazing system.

Leadership of Women in Conservation and Agriculture is recognized in Madison County by the CD. This year's recipient, **Margery Baldwin**, is a fulltime farmer producing pumpkins, vegetables, Christmas trees, wood products, hay and straw. In 1982, she began growing Christmas trees and today manages 16 acres of Christmas and landscaping trees. Since 1985, the farm has been utilizing a custom saw mill for products such as picnic tables, vegetable stakes and small orders of furniture lumber. In 2002, she began growing pumpkins and now grows 9 acres of pumpkins and gourds. She is also growing 2 acres of sweet corn and 1,000 tomato plants.

Her farm is a gathering place of many school field trips, parties, retreats, and weddings. Throughout the year, products ranging from pumpkins to fresh herbs, zinnias to picnic tables and local honey to salsa can be found on her farm. Many families annually pick their Halloween pumpkins and cut a Christmas tree. Conservation is part of her everyday life.

Jimmy Marcum, conservation education liaison, provided a 2009 update of activities. The CD continued to provide leadership in the Madison County Clothesline of Quilts Project. Working with Madison County Farm Bureau, City of Richmond, Madison County Fiscal Court, Cooperative Extension Service, Madison County Quilts and Homemakers and many local citizens, approximately 60 quilt squares are found throughout the county.