

Governor Michael R. Pence  
Lt. Governor Sue Ellspermann  
Director Ted A. McKinney

Office of Communications  
One North Capitol Avenue, Suite 600, Indianapolis, IN 46204  
Phone: (317) 232-8770 · Fax: (317) 232-1362  
[www.in.gov/isda](http://www.in.gov/isda) · [communications@isda.in.gov](mailto:communications@isda.in.gov)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 21, 2014

**2014 Red Gold Stewardship Award Winners Announced**

INDIANAPOLIS – Meg Leader, Agricultural and Environmental Affairs Program Manager for the Division of Soil Conservation (DSC) within the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA), was at the Red Gold Growers' Field Day on August 5 to announce the 2014 winners of the Red Gold Stewardship Award. The Field Day took place at Red Gold's corporate headquarters in Elwood, IN.

The Red Gold Stewardship Award Program was established to showcase the conservation efforts employed by Red Gold Growers. The goal of this award program was to highlight the practices already undertaken by conservation minded-growers and stimulate a proactive approach among all of Red Gold growers to evaluate their farm management practices and make improvements.

This program is driven by Red Gold's desire to demonstrate their companywide commitment to good stewardship practices. Red Gold encourages their tomato producers to adopt good conservation practices and has instilled an atmosphere of continuous improvement.

The award program examines a whole farm and systems approach to conservation. As a result, there is a strong emphasis on complete integration of stewardship of natural resources. While each conservation measure is beneficial, the true impact is realized when the measures taken are systematic

All Red Gold growers are encouraged to participate in the Stewardship Award program by completing an initial application. From the initial group of 19 applicants in 2009, this year's applicant pool reached an all time high of 36 participants. The expansion of good conservation practices can be measured by the increase in average application scores, with this year marking the closest difference in score between first and second place, and even third, yet seen.

Nathan Gage and McKillip Farms of Wabash, IN, was the 2014 2<sup>nd</sup> place winner. McKillip Farms received a \$500 scholarship and an extra half truck load of tomatoes per day during harvest. McKillip Farms uses a five-year rotation on his land planted in tomatoes and participates in many conservation programs.

Mike Schutle and Schutle's Produce, LLC, of Pandora, OH was the 2014 Red Gold Stewardship winner. Schutle's Produce received a \$1,000 scholarship and an extra full truck load of tomatoes per day during harvest. Mike uses a four-year crop rotation which includes no-till every year on acres that are not planted in tomatoes. He is the second generation of his family to use cover crops, and uses them with every year of his rotation.

## **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 Sue Ellspermann, who also serves as Indiana's Secretary of Agriculture. 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.

# # #

Media Contact:

Ben Kenney

[bkenney@isda.in.gov](mailto:bkenney@isda.in.gov)

317-690-3303