

MEDIA RELEASE

Stratford Perth Museum Agriculture Wall of Fame

Roger and Elaine Cook 2018 inductees

The Stratford Perth Museum Agriculture Wall of Fame announced its 2018 inductees at the Stratford Rotary Club's Rural-Urban night in April.

This is the fifth year for the Agriculture Wall of Fame, which recognizes contributions to agriculture in Perth County.

This year the Wall of Fame honoured a North Easthope couple, **Roger and Elaine Cook**. They bought the family farm in 1970 and were in the dairy industry for 27 years but their real love has always been as stewards of the land.

That came honestly as Roger's parents restricted the access of livestock to the waterways on the farm and there was zero exposure to the spring fed stream on the property from both livestock and equipment.

The Cooks also developed many practices which helped to improve stream and ground water quality for humans as well as for fish and wildlife health and habitat. That included 100% retention of liquid and solid nutrient waste.

You cannot talk about the Cooks and their contributions to Perth County without praising their initiatives regarding trees and woodlots.

Tree planting started in the Cooks' early years and they have planted over 12,000 trees on their farm as windbreaks, shelterbelts, stream buffers and block plantations. Tree planting is an annual event for the Cooks and is a cornerstone of their environmental awareness.

This has led to three decades of community tree plantings and stream restoration initiatives with well over 30 neighbouring families and friends as part of the Upper Avon Conservation Club. This group has partnered with the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority and Roger is the lead scout for these tree planting projects.

This passion for forest health, productivity and profitability has led to Roger's involvement with the Huron/Perth chapter of the Ontario Woodlot Association. Roger is a long-time director, has been president for several years and he was chair of this spring's two-day conference in Shakespeare.

Roger is on the steering committee for the Fryfogel Tavern arboretum and nature preserve initiative and is the caretaker of the trees and trails.

Roger and Elaine were on the early steering committee for the Ellice/Gadshill Swamp management plan with UTRCA and have been directors and caretakers of the Brocksden School Museum with the Easthope Historical group for over 40 years.

They have also been volunteers and are still members of the Stratford Perth Museum, the Thames Talbot Land Trust, Roger is steward for the McTavish Tract and he and Elaine are also members of the Stratford Field Naturalists.

Other organizations that have benefitted from their time



and expertise are 4-H clubs, Girl Guides, nature groups, the Avon Trail, Perth County Milk Committee, Perth County Federation of Agriculture, the Woodland Towers store and many schools.

Roger has also helped with the Stratford and District Agricultural Society, the Mitchell Pioneer Club and area plowing matches with sawmill and cross cut displays.

The Cooks bought, moved and restored the Amulree circular sawmill to the farm and have made it available to friends and neighbours for the making of such things as toys, canoe paddles and tools.

It's hard to imagine that they have any time for hobbies but they enjoy canoeing, hiking, curling, pickleball, lawn-bowling and square dancing.

The Wall of Fame is open to current or former residents of Perth County who have made outstanding contributions to agriculture in Perth County. Nominations are solicited from the public and a committee determines the honourees.

The Wall of Fame is supported by the Grain Farmers of Ontario – Perth County, Perth County Federation of Agriculture, Perth County Pork Producers, Zone 6 Egg Producers and Perth Dairy Producers Committee.

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