



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 27, 2019

Contact: Danielle Endvick, 715-471-0398 or [dendvick@wisconsinfarmersunion.com](mailto:dendvick@wisconsinfarmersunion.com)

# **Farmers Union members honored at convention**

**APPLETON** – Wisconsin Farmers Union members Tom and Helen Quinn were honored for their dedication to the family farm organization at the 88th annual Wisconsin Farmers Union State Convention Jan. 25-27 in Appleton. The Dunn County couple received the Builders Award, which recognizes outstanding commitment to building Farmers Union through county involvement, leadership development and member recruitment.

Tom and Helen have been pillars within Wisconsin Farmers Union in their decades of involvement. Both Tom and Helen have been active in many Farmers Union roles at the local, state and national level. Tom has a long history in organizing for food system and agrarian movements. Early on, he helped establish the Twin Cities' first co-op grocery store, North Country Cooperative. The Quinns were one of three young Wisconsin farm couples chosen to participate in the American Farm Project, an effort by National Farmers Union to connect young farmers from around the country in shared learning about the history of farm policy and rural culture. Tom and Helen carried that experience forward through lifelong efforts on behalf of family farms and rural Wisconsin.

The Quinns became part of a close-knit community of farmers while dairy farming in northwestern Wisconsin. Helen worked on faculty at UW-Stout while Tom worked as a farmer, logger, feed mill worker and organizer. Inspired by the writings of rural author Wendell Berry and historical farmer movements, Tom and Helen were keen to do their part to better their corner of rural Wisconsin. They have done that, serving as strong voices on many agricultural issues.

Tom has served on the WFU Foundation board of directors and served as WFU Executive Director from 2011-2018, during which time he strengthened the family farm organization's voice, programming, and organizing efforts. He also previously worked as executive director of the National League of Rural Voters and the Wisconsin Farmland Conservancy and with West CAP, helping rural cooperatives with business development. He remains active on the Dunn County Board of Supervisors. The Quinns reside in Downing.

"We are very proud to recognize the Quinns' longtime commitment to Farmers Union," said WFU President Darin Von Ruden. "They have certainly left their mark on the organization throughout the years, and we are grateful for their contributions on behalf of family farmers."

## **Membership Awards**

Lisa Soyring of the Amnicon-Douglas Farmers Union received the Go-Getter Award at the convention. This award recognizes youth program recruitment efforts that help Wisconsin Farmers Union involve more members and youth, increase volunteer engagement, and develop greater leadership.

Mary Dougherty of Bayfield was honored for her work in building membership within the newly formed Ashland-Bayfield Farmers Union. Three Wisconsin Farmers Union chapters also received recognition for excelling in membership growth in 2018. They included the Chippewa, St. Croix and Wood-Portage-Waupaca chapters.

"Active local, county and district units are vital to Farmers Union's grassroots structure," Von Ruden said. "It's thrilling to see these chapters' eagerness to bring farmers together and to speak up on the issues that matter to family farmers and our rural communities."

###

117 West Spring St. • Chippewa Falls, WI 54729 • Phone: 715-723-5561 or 800-272-5531 • Fax: 715-723-7011

Email: [info@wisconsinfarmersunion.com](mailto:info@wisconsinfarmersunion.com) • Website: [www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com](http://www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com)

Madison Office: 108 S. Webster St., Suite 201 • Madison, WI 53703 • Phone: 608-514-4541