



John R. Kasich | Governor

Department of
Agriculture

David T. Daniels | Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**OHIO FIRST LADY AND OHIO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ANNOUNCE 2014 OHIO
AGRICULTURE WOMEN OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNERS**

Three recipients honored at the Ohio Governor's Residence and Heritage Garden

BEXLEY, OH (March 5, 2015) – Ohio First Lady Karen W. Kasich and Ohio Agriculture Director David T. Daniels today announced three 2014 Ohio Agriculture Women of the Year Award winners during a reception at the Ohio Governor's Residence and Heritage Garden.

"I am pleased to honor these exceptional Ohio women for their role in shaping our state's most important industry," said Mrs. Kasich. "Their leadership and forward-thinking influence have made a remarkable impact not only on their local communities, but also on the state as a whole."

Eddie Lou Meimer (Mt. Gilead)

Meimer is a dairy farmer-turned maple syrup producer. She and her husband, John, operate Pleiades Maple Products on their farm in Mt. Gilead, producing over 2500 gallons of syrup annually. Meimer is responsible for all of the marketing, both retail and bulk, through direct marketing and farmers markets. Meimer's passion and commitment to agriculture are evident through her many awards and distinctions, including receiving the Pioneer Service Award from the Ohio Jersey Breeder's Association and the Distinguished Service Award from the Morrow County Farm Bureau. She has been a 4-H advisor for over 20 years, chairs the Morrow County Extension Advisory Committee and serves as the Northwest Women's Trustee for the Ohio Farm Bureau.

Opal Holfinger (Troy)

Holfinger has been a leader in agriculture and her community for many years, with dedicated involvement in the Ohio Cattlemen's Association, 4-H and serving in several different capacities both with the Miami County Farm Bureau and Ohio Farm Bureau. She served as the chair of the Ohio Expositions Commission and was a member of the commission for 10 years. During that time, many agriculture improvements were implemented for the betterment of the state fair, which helped contribute to her induction into the Ohio State Fair Hall of Fame in 2010.

Lucille Hastings (Big Prairie)

Hastings has been actively engaged in the Ohio agriculture community for over 40 years, often as the first woman in positions of leadership. As a recognized advocate of farmland preservation, she has served as a member of the Ohio Farmland Preservation Advisory Board for over a decade. Hastings has also served Holmes County Farm Bureau in a number of positions including board trustee and president. When barn fires set by arsonists became an issue in Holmes County, she helped organize a regional campaign and personally raised thousands of dollars to help with the arrest and conviction of those responsible. In addition to her service on numerous boards and commissions, she has acted as a manager of her own family farm for over a decade.



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Each awardee will receive her name engraved on a plaque for permanent display at the Ohio Department of Agriculture and a commendation from the Governor and First Lady. Recipients may also serve as members of the selection committee the following year.

The award program is administered through the Ohio Department of Agriculture and the Office of the First Lady. Nominations were reviewed by a diverse committee of industry leaders. Winners were selected on the basis of their outstanding contributions to Ohio agriculture, leadership and advocacy in the agricultural community and significant impact on the agriculture industry as a whole.

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