

## Cooperators of the Year Lee and Jennifer Ruff “End of the Road Farm”

Lee and Jennifer Ruff were married in 2010. Just seven years and four children later, their 21 acres at the very west edge of Fletcher has become an idyllic concoction of gardens, high tunnels, pasture, chickens, cattle, pigs, piles of reclaimed wood, brick and stone, gorgeous antique equipment, perfect little play areas, and an evolving home and outbuildings.

The Ruff Family was chosen as COOPERATORS OF THE YEAR for their participation in practices and programs encouraged by this office that include EQIP for a seasonal high tunnel and irrigation management practices and CSP to help reduce invasive species, improve grazing utilization and improve cropland acres on their farm.

The Ruff Family are true STEWARDS OF THE LAND, dedicated to having as little impact on the land as possible. End of the Road Farm has achieved Certified Naturally Grown status, relying on cover crops, a six-year crop rotation plan, companion plantings, intensive grazing, and old fashioned hand weeding and hoeing. They forego any synthetic pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizers, or GMOs, and grow the feed for their heritage breed livestock. They specialize in squeezing and cooking down the sorghum and grinding the spelt grown right on End of the Road Farm. A more serene place may be hard to find.

You may have seen Lee and Jennifer if you've attended Piqua's Farmers Market on Thursday evenings. We had to go to press before the Annual Meeting, but perhaps you were among the audience when we honored the Ruffs during our 13<sup>th</sup> Annual All Ag Meeting and Banquet on August 24<sup>th</sup>. At the banquet, in addition to our thanks, they will have received a plaque and sign relaying their achievement as well as clothing relaying their accomplishment in embroidery.

Other aspects scheduled to take place at the banquet include hearing from Fred Yoder, Chair of North America Climate Smart Agriculture Alliance and member of President Trump's Agriculture Advisory Committee and naming Amanda Bennett with OSU-Extension Miami County as Educator of the Year.

