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## SPA GROWER RECEIVES ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: ROCKEY FARMS WINS SOIL CONSERVATION AWARD



by Rockey Farms

Posted: Thursday, October 20, 2011 at 12:05PM EDT

Center, CO. – Rockey Farms, a founding member of the Specialty Potato Alliance (SPA) won “Conservationist of the Year” for 2011. The award was presented by the Rio Grande Watershed Association of Conservation Districts Farming Division and was announced August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at the association’s annual meeting in Alamosa. This is the second form of recognition for the Rockey family, as they were awarded the Center, CO Conservation District award earlier this year.

Rockey Farms was selected from hundreds of applicants and this award is a result of more than two decades of work. Rockey Farms will be considered along with thirteen other watersheds for the State of Colorado award later this month. The winner of the state award will be announced at a November ceremony.

“This could not come at a better time”, reported Brendon Rockey, who is in charge of field operations for Rockey Farms. “With water and transportation prices on the rise, using less water and fewer chemicals helps us keep our costs in line.” Sheldon Rockey, Brendon’s brother and operations manager for the farm agrees; “Our cleaner, greener farming gives us better yields, more consistent sizing and great color. That means a better product and a happier customer.”

Both Brendon and Sheldon are second generation growers, continuing the tradition their father Warren and their uncle Verlin Rockey began over four decades ago. It was Verlin whose vision began the transition from the then flooded market on russets to specialties, focusing on the fingerlings. Warren Rockey developed specialized equipment to harvest and process these specialty potatoes. Improved land management and new varieties are the results of their vision. “We are stewards of the land”, commented Brendon, “and the more we naturally replenish the soil to keep it healthy, the less we have to worry about treating the crop. Good for the consumer and good for the earth.” As a farm that is also known for certified seed production, Sheldon Rockey knows that seed customers seek out their potatoes to ascertain a strong crop.

Leaders of soil and resource management in the San Luis Valley, Rockey Farms is proud of how they are restoring and maintaining their soil and they openly share their practices with neighboring farmers and other growers throughout the state. “Agriculture needs this”, noted Brendon. “Receiving the award is a nice acknowledgement of our two decades of hard work, but each harvest tells us that the soil is properly fertile.”

Rockey Farms is a founding member of the Specialty Potato Alliance. SPA is a dedicated group of growers and shippers committed to providing the best specialty potatoes available. SPA’s family of products, proprietary varieties and year round availability has made them trend setters in the potato category. For more information about Rockey Farms or Specialty Potato Alliance please contact Richard Leibowitz or Sheldon Rockey at the corporate headquarters. (Source: Rockey Farms)

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