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**Minnesota Crop Improvement Association
Presents Premier Seed Grower Award to Merle Schwenzfeier and Roger Schwenzfeier**

ST. CLOUD, MINNESOTA, January 24, 2024 Minnesota Crop Improvement Association (MCIA) today recognized Merle Schwenzfeier and Roger Schwenzfeier, of Hallock, with the Premier Seed Grower Award. The award, presented annually since 1928, recognizes individuals or partners involved in quality seed production, active in MCIA, and who provide excellent service to the seed industry.

The Schwenzfeier brothers were honored, along with fellow Premier Seed Grower awardees, Scott Lee and Larry Riopelle, during the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association's 121st Annual Meeting. The event was hosted at the Holiday Inn and Suites in St. Cloud, Minnesota, January 24, 2024.

Brothers Merle and Roger Schwenzfeier grew up near Orleans, Minnesota, raising livestock and producing crops. They often helped their neighbors farm when needed and enjoyed 4-H, school activities, and building projects.

After graduating from Hallock High School, Roger studied agriculture education at the University of Minnesota. He met his wife, Phyllis, and they both taught school for three years. Roger taught agriculture and industrial arts and Phyllis taught elementary. Roger was then offered an opportunity to farm 300 acres near Hallock from their neighbor. Roger started farming with an 806 International and 18' Vibrashank cultivator.

Roger and Phyllis have been married for 50 years and have three children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. Their son, Ryan, and his family have farmed their acres alongside Roger and Merle for 23 years.

Roger has served on many boards and committees including the elevator and church board. Phyllis has been active in church and on the food pantry board. Roger has always enjoyed carpentry and projects around the farm and home. They have retired from farming but work daily on the farm and enjoy taking care of the yard, doing projects at their church, and seeing their family.

Merle studied agriculture engineering at the University of Minnesota Crookston. He met Renae; they married and settled down near Hallock. Merle started farming with his brother, Roger, after college. Renae worked at a local bank for a few years as they started their family and farm. They have been married for 43 years and have four children and eleven grandchildren. They love it when their grandchildren have time to stay and help on the farm.

Merle has enjoyed growing a variety of crops and working on farm projects in the winter. He has served on local boards including the school, church, and two elevators. Merle and Renae continue to actively farm their acres and enjoy spending time at the lake and with their family.

Today the Schwenzfeiers grow wheat, soybeans, and sugar beets. They grow certified wheat seed every year and have been active seed producing members of MCIA for over 40 years. The farm continues to grow, and the next generation is active and enjoys helping on the farm.

At the ceremony, Roger Schwenzfeier accepted the award on behalf of himself and his brother, expressing his thanks to MCIA for the honor.

Since 1903, Minnesota Crop Improvement Association (MCIA) has provided programs and services to meet the needs of an ever-changing agricultural world. These services include seed certification, organic certification, foundation seed production, and a variety of customized third-party verification programs for seed and identity-preserved grains. MCIA operates from facilities on the University of Minnesota's St. Paul campus with field staff located throughout Minnesota.

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If you would like more information on this topic, please contact Kris Folland at 218-791-2156 or kris.folland@mncia.org.