

# Press Release



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## **Schuyler County vineyard owners receive environmental awards**

### **Road-side signs highlight conservation commitment**

HECTOR, July 25, 2013 – Hazlitt 1852 Vineyards, owned by Doug Hazlitt and Leigh Hazlitt Triner, and Atwater Estate Vineyards, owned by Ted Marks, were each presented with an Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) "Farmers Partnering to Protect Our Environment" road-side sign recognizing their exemplary conservation of natural resources and commitment to environmental protection.

The Schuyler County Soil and Water Conservation District presented the sign awards during the Schuyler County Farm Bureau summer picnic attended by over 200 people and held at Atwater Vineyards. Elaine Dalrymple, Conservation District Field Manager, thanked the farmers for their stewardship efforts that exemplify the value of family farms to our environment, local economy and community. She said, for farmers, the rural landscape "is not just a place, it's who we are."

**Hazlitt 1852 Vineyards**, located in the Town of Hector, has been an active farm in Schuyler County for over 160 years with 140 acres of vineyards presently in production along both Seneca and Canandaigua Lakes. Hazlitt 1852 is known for its efforts to prevent erosion and enhance soil organic matter through the use of permanent sod, cover crops, mulch, and compost in vineyard row middles and through protection of headlands. They use integrated pest management, regularly scouting for pests and use an on-farm weather station to monitor conditions to avoid unneeded pesticide applications and they use pesticide spray reduction equipment. They have installed an ag. mixing facility to contain any potential spills and have evaluated pesticides for leaching and runoff potential. They also use nutrient management practices such as soil and petiole testing to

reduce the use of fertilizers. "The AEM program helped us install many of the best management practices that we use and we will continue to participate since the program promotes the environmental protection goals that keep our farm viable," said Doug Hazlitt. In accepting their award, both Leigh and Doug said that it is John Santos, their vineyard manager, who has spearheaded the environmental protection efforts in their vineyards and deserves most of the credit. Hazlitt and Triner also operate one of the largest wineries in New York State.

**Atwater Estate Vineyards** is also located in the Town of Hector and has been in the family since 1999. They have 50 acres in grape production growing 16 different varieties. They also use permanent sod and mulch in their row middles to prevent erosion and keep headland areas vegetated; they use integrated pest management and pesticide spray reduction equipment; and they soil and petiole test for proper fertilization rates. Atwater has also participated in the Vine Balance program to assess environmental issues on the farm and have installed diversion ditches with outlet stabilization, culvert crossings, lined waterways and access road improvements to reduce erosion. In accepting the award for Atwater, Ted thanked the Farm Bureau and other farmers for their support. "I did not know anything about farming when I started 14 years ago and without the help of my neighbors, I would not have made it." He added, "Seneca Lake is our lifeblood, most vineyard operators know this and do all they can to protect the lake. Farms are the major land use in our county and protecting water quality ensures that they remain a vital part of life here." Katie Marks, Ted's daughter, operates the successful winery on the farm and Chaz Coney is the vineyard manager. Also recognized were Bob Tamborelli and Mike Betts who help manage the vineyards.

The Schuyler County Farm Bureau and the Schuyler County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board are co-sponsors of the awards with the Conservation District. AEM is a statewide program with over 10,000 farms voluntarily participating. To learn more about the AEM program in Schuyler County visit [www.schuylerswcd.com](http://www.schuylerswcd.com) or call the Schuyler County Soil and Water Conservation District at 535-0878.



*Hazlitt 1852 Vineyards and Atwater Estate Vineyards owners and managers with their AEM sign awards. From l to r: Bob Tamborelli, vineyard crew, Atwater Vineyards; Mike Betts, vineyard crew, Atwater; Doug Hazlitt, and Leigh Hazlitt Triner, owners Hazlitt 1852 Vineyards; John Santos, vineyard manager, Hazlitt 1852; Ted Marks, owner of Atwater Estate Vineyards; Chaz Coney, vineyard manager, Atwater; and Katie Marks, winery manager, Atwater.*