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Coos County’s Sharon and Charlie Waterman Inducted Into Oregon Farm Bureau Hall of Fame

Dec. 22, 2017, PENDLETON, OREGON: OFB 1st Vice President Sharon Waterman and Charlie Waterman, both members of Coos-Curry County Farm Bureau, were inducted into the Oregon Farm Bureau Hall of Fame on December 7 during the 85th Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) Annual Meeting in Pendleton.

“For nearly four decades, Sharon and Charlie Waterman have been extraordinary, dedicated leaders within Farm Bureau, both at the county and state level. They have also made true, positive change for Oregon agriculture and their community in Coos County. We’re grateful for their dedication and service, and we’re honored to induct Sharon and Charlie into Oregon Farm Bureau Hall of Fame,” said OFB President Barry Bushue.

The Hall of Fame, established in 1996, is the highest honor given by Oregon Farm Bureau. To be eligible, candidates must be nominated by their County Farm Bureau and must have at least 35 years of active involvement in the organization. Sharon and Charlie Waterman are the 32nd and 33rd members to be inducted into the prestigious OFB Hall of Fame.

“It is such an honor to be inducted into the OFB Hall of Fame,” said Sharon Waterman, OFB 1st Vice President. “Oregon Farm Bureau is the grassroots organization that has provided Charlie and me with the contacts and procedures needed to pass legislation; work on agriculture issues at the county, state, and federal levels; and stay abreast of rules and regulations that directly affect our ranch and Oregon agriculture as a whole.”

Both Sharon and Charlie were raised in agriculture, and both attended Oregon State University, where they met and fell in love. They married, moved to Charlie’s family ranch in Bandon, and together built the ranch into the thriving cattle and sheep operation it is today. This year Waterman Ranch achieved Oregon Century Ranch status for maintaining this successful business for over 100 years.

In Farm Bureau, few have been more active at both the county and state levels. Charlie currently serves as vice president of Coos-Curry County Farm Bureau – while Sharon is 1st Vice President of Oregon Farm Bureau, after having served as an OFB Board rep for her county for 14 years. She also serves on the OFB Women’s Advisory Council and does much to keep Coos-Curry County Farm Bureau organized and energized.
Sharon and Charlie have served on numerous OFB issue advisory committees, including in the areas of livestock, public lands, and fill-and-removal. Sharon is currently chair of the OFB Governmental Affairs Committee and has made numerous trips to Washington D.C. to advocate for Oregon farm and ranch families.

In 2013, Sharon spearheaded a local grassroots campaign to save productive farmground in the Coquille Valley from being turned into wetlands by federal, state, and non-governmental entities. The effort included posting “Save Family Farms/No Wetlands” signs in the Coquille Valley, an informational meeting that aired on public television, the development of a legislative concept for the land-planning process with local lawmakers, and testifying at the Oregon State Capitol on behalf of local farmers.

This effort was so effective that in 2013, the American Farm Bureau honored Coos-Curry County Farm Bureau with a national County Activity of Excellence Award.

Beyond Farm Bureau, Charlie and Sharon have been undisputed leaders in agriculture for decades.

Sharon served as chair, and Charlie as a member, of the Coos County Animal Damage Control Advisory Committee. With support from OFB, the committee was able to get legislation passed that created the Coos County Predator Damage Control District. This project funds predation control for local agriculture and timber lands.

Charlie has also served on the board of the Coos Forest Protective Association for over 24 years, including a term as chair; was appointed to the Oregon Sheep Commission in the 1980s and served as chair; and currently serves on the Coos County Planning Commission.

Both served on the Coos County Weed Board.

Charlie also served as president of the Coos County Livestock Association, and both are members of Oregon Cattlemen’s Association.

Both have served on the Coos Soil & Water Conservation District, including terms as chair. The Conservation District honored the Watermans with a Cooperators of the Year Award, and they also received Watershed Friendly Stewardship Awards.

Over the years, Sharon has been a member of the Coos County Small Grant Team and Farm Service Agency County Committee – while Charlie has been a member of the Northwest Farm Credit Services Advisory Committee, Coos BLM RAC, and the Farm Service Agency County Committee.

Charlie served as chair of the Coaledo Drainage District for years, while Sharon handled the secretarial work and bookkeeping for over a decade.

Both have worked with agencies to promote an easier process for drainage districts to maintain drainage and infrastructure.

Both have been instrumental in the writing and passing of crucial bills in the legislature that directly benefit Oregon’s natural resource community.

“Simply put, Farm Bureau and Oregon agriculture as a whole have been forever strengthened and improved by the tremendous dedication, outspoken advocacy, and inspirational leadership of Sharon and Charlie Waterman,” said OFB President Barry Bushue. “We are proud to add them into the OFB Hall of Fame.”
PHOTO: Sharon and Charlie Waterman (center) of Coos-Curry County Farm Bureau were inducted into the OFB Hall of Fame, the organization's highest honor, by OFB President Barry Bushue (left) and EVP Dave Dillon (right).

See press releases of all awards given at the 2017 OFB Annual Meeting: http://bit.ly/2CXEoMx

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* Note to Editors: “Farm Bureau” is a registered trademark; please capitalize in all cases

Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) is a grassroots, nonpartisan, nonprofit, general farm organization representing the interests of farming and ranching families in the public and policymaking arenas. First established in Oregon in 1919, Farm Bureau is organized in all 36 counties and has 7,000 farm and ranch family members.

Oregon Farm Bureau President Barry Bushue is a third-generation farmer raising pumpkins, u-pick produce, and flowering baskets at a nearly century-old farm near Boring. He is OFB’s 15th president.