



Media Release

For Immediate Release

10 May 2018

**Richards Family Farm, Gary and Lynn Richards awarded the
2018 Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds Stewardship Award**

Garry, his wife Lynn, and their three children, Rebekah, Evan and Caroline have a mixed grain and cattle farm near Bangor, southeast of Yorkton. The family farm was homesteaded in 1902 by Garry's grandfather, passed down to and farmed by Garry's parents, then onto Garry and Lynn when they returned to the family farm in 2000. Upon their return, the farm was strictly a grain operation. But in 2002, they chose to diversify into a mixed farming operation by adding cattle.

In 2003, Garry and Lynn took a Holistic Management Course. This sparked a long term effort to integrate livestock and grain production to mimic nature in the production systems on the farm. In order to be sustainable, the Richards realized they needed to firstly rejuvenate the land, view the farm as an ecosystem, and steward each aspect of it as a whole system.

The major components of the rejuvenation process involved growing polycultures to increase biodiversity above and below the ground, and to graze cattle in an intensive, planned manner. Very diverse blends of grass and legume species were seeded down for pasture, electric fence was built, water pipeline was plowed in, and temporary fence was erected to graze herds of cattle, using them as a tool to rejuvenate the land.

In 2009, the Richards began to grow cover crop to improve soil health. These crops are usually grazed by the cow herd in the summer or used to provide winter feed. After two years of cover crops, grain crops are grown and harvested for two years, completing a four year rotation. Healthy soils produce healthy plants that can withstand disease, weeds, and pests, and are able to weather stressors more effectively. Therefore, minimal synthetic chemicals are needed. Intercropping is also an important part of the Richards family farming practice.

The Richards family has worked closely with the Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association for guidance and accessing cost-shared project funding through the Ministry of Agriculture Farm Stewardship Programming and Alternate Land Use Services (ALUS).

As quoted by Gary, "As we continue on we hope to educate our children to steward the land well and love it, so the next generation will view farming as an exciting vocation, a good business enterprise, and a wonderful life. We believe this is a very important part of sustainability".

Congratulations, to the Richards Family on being awarded the 2018 SAW Stewardship Award and taking a proactive approach in integrating stewardship with agricultural production.

Media Contact
Bridget Andrews, Executive Director
info@saskwatersheds.ca