

MEDIA RELEASE

Embargo until October 17, 2012



Tom Van Arsdall tva@pollinator.org t: 703 509 4746
Lindsay Kwong bb@pollinator.org t: 415.362.1137

International Recognition for Pollinator Paradise at Sunrise Farm (Killam, AB)

Washington, D.C. (Wednesday, October 17, 2011)

The Canadian Farmer-Rancher Pollinator Award recognizes individuals who have contributed significantly to pollinator protection, conservation, and issue outreach resulting in increased awareness of the importance of pollinators and pollination within the agricultural community. The Pollinator Partnership and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture recognize the connections between pollinators and agricultural livelihoods. This special award, presented for the first time this year, sheds light on the contributions of Canadian farmers to natural and cultural resource preservation.

The Ruzicka's have been practicing sustainable farming since the mid 90's, long before organic agriculture and ecologically functional farmscapes were popularized. Pollinators became a solid part of their conservation focus when cases of CCD started appearing south of the boarder in the United States and they became aware of the critical roles that pollinators play in agricultural systems. This plugged Don and Marie into the connection that all members of the agricultural community have with pollinators.



The Pollinator Advocate Award designed by acclaimed artist James Randolf.



A bumble bee visits roses at Sunrise Farm in Killam, AB.

Don and Marie are leading in the science of sustainable farming as well. A partnership research project with the Science and Technology Branch of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is establishing alternative shelterbelt designs across their pastures and assessing the effects on pollinator populations. The goal is to optimize the pollinator landscape management technologies in real scenarios and to provide evidence of successful stewardship projects that will encourage others to adopt similar techniques.

The Ruzicka's achievements will be celebrated at a VIP reception held at the Canadian Embassy in Washington DC on October 17, 2012. They will share the evening spotlight

with the 2012 US Farmer-Rancher award winner Mark Wagoner of Wagoner Touchet Farms in Touchet, WA and with 2012 Tri-National Pollinator Advocate Award Winners. Carol Dunk (Canada) is being recognized for her efforts to transform roadsides in Ontario in to pollinator habitats, Isabella Rossellini (USA) is being recognized for her short film series that demystifies the lives of honey bees and advocates for the conservation of all pollinators, and Dr. Rodrigo Medellin (Mexico) is being recognized for over two decades of work in bat conservation and advocacy.

Without pollinators we would lose one third of our diet, nearly all of our high-nutrient food, most terrestrial ecosystems would collapse, important plant species that provide the raw materials for medicines would die out, and the biosphere would stop filtering air and freshwater for us and other wildlife. Factors such as uncontrolled development, agricultural intensification, chemical misuse, and pathogen introduction are decimating their populations.

###

NAPPC is a collaborative effort of over 120 organizations in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico whose common goal is to promote awareness of the essential role that pollinators play in food systems and ecosystems, and to provide the public with simple, effective ways to engage in environmental stewardship.

The **Pollinator Partnership**, the largest organization in the world dedicated to the protection and promotion of pollinators and their ecosystems, is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization headquartered in San Francisco. Pollinator Partnership has offices and activities in Washington D.C., Louisiana, Nebraska, Iowa, Montana, Ohio, Arizona, Washington, and Canada.



The **Canadian Federation of Agriculture** (CFA) is the nonprofit organization that was formed in 1935 to act as the national voice of Canadian farmers. CFA Canada's largest farmers' organization, representing provincial general farm organizations as well as national and interprovincial commodity organizations from every province - over 200,000 Canadian farmers and farm families. To learn more about the NAPPC and the Pollinator Partnership visit www.pollinator.org or contact info@pollinator.org for more information or call 415-362-1137.