

**VERNA PETERSON
IS THE 2008 MASWCD
OUTSTANDING CONSERVATIONIST**

In August when Verna Peterson of Farwell was selected by the Douglas SWCD as the 2008 Outstanding Conservationist for Douglas County, little did she know that award would turn into an even bigger one! Verna was one of 8 finalists for the MASWCD Outstanding Conservationist Award when she traveled to the MN Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) Annual Meeting held in early December in St. Paul. Each of the County winners throughout the State were featured in a slide show portraying their accomplishments. The tension was building when it came time to announce the State winner and the winner was....Verna Peterson from Douglas County! Verna received an engraved Terry Redlin print for her award.

Verna's parents started on the family farm in 1920 and Verna started farming herself in 1955 with rented land. She purchased the family farm in 1973 and has continued farming ever since while also taking part in conservation programs through the SWCD, NRCS, and taking Continuing Education classes through the Alexandria Technical College to improve her farming and business management skills. That's "53" years of successful farming! Verna holds an EQIP Contract with no-till alfalfa into small grain, residue management through disk/chisel on corn ground, spring tillage only on bean ground and does a rotation of corn, soybeans, oats and alfalfa. She has completed the 3-year requirements for EQIP in nutrient and pest management and will continue because she sees the benefits. Verna farms 250 acres, milks 32 dairy cows and has a 45 beef cow/calf herd, utilizing 30 acres of pastureland. Verna plants trees every year and has installed a cattle exclusion from her wetlands. She plants an annual wildlife food plot for the West Central Hunters for Habitat. Verna is an active member of the Holmes City Trinity Lutheran Church and the Farm Bureau and has gained the respect of her friends and neighbors through her hard work, installing conservation methods and continuing to learn about new techniques and programs. The Douglas SWCD Board of Supervisors feels that Verna exemplifies all that is associated with being a true conservationist who never feels the need to stop learning. She is a hard worker who stands as an equal with Douglas County's finest conservation farmers.



**(L.to R.) Ken Pederson, MASWCD President, Verna Peterson,
and Paula Mohr, Editor of "The Farmer" magazine**