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## Central Valley dairy farmer given coveted Leopold Conservation Award

HANFORD

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- **Practices conservation tillage**
- **“Committed himself to the production of not only quality dairy products but also quality soil, water and air”**

Dairy farmer Dino Giacomazzi of Hanford has been selected as the 2012 recipient of the Leopold Conservation Award in California.

The seventh annual Leopold Conservation Award for California will be presented Dec. 3 at the California Farm Bureau Federation’s Annual Meeting in Pasadena.

The \$10,000 Leopold Conservation Award is presented annually in eight states to private landowners who practice exemplary land stewardship and management.

“Dino Giacomazzi has committed himself to the production of not only quality dairy products but also quality soil, water and air,” says Brent Haglund, president of Sand County Foundation, which helps sponsor the award along with California Farm Bureau Federation and Sustainable Conservation.

“He is also representative of a new breed of producers who believe strongly in the power of the story of farming, choosing to promote agriculture and conservation through traditional and modern communications methods.”

Mr. Giacomazzi is a fourth-generation dairy farmer whose farm is comprised of 900 dairy cows on 900 acres. He participated in one of the first conservation tillage projects in California, which has proven to enhance soil, water and, especially, air quality in an area that typically experiences high air pollution levels.

“Ever since I started thinking about conservation as a practice, I have been seeking a reward,” Mr. Giacomazzi says. “The reward of leaving this farm for my son in better condition than my father left it for me. It isn’t as much of a desire as an obligation since my father, grandfather and great-grandfather had done that for me. Conservation farming is really the only way I know how to do it ... adapt to change, preserve the land, try to make money and move the family farm forward.”

Mr. Giacomazzi was joined by the other finalists for the 2012 Leopold Conservation Award: third-generation farmers Ward and Rosie Burroughs, who farm 4,400 acres just outside of Modesto, and High Ground Organics, owned by Stephen Pedersen and Jeanne Byrne, which produces fruits, vegetables and flowers on 50 acres in Santa Cruz County and 23 acres in north Monterey County.

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