

## West Marin ranch receives Leopold Conservation Award

By Mark Prado

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A view of the Robert Giacomini Dairy in Pt. Reyes Station. The dairy was honored with Leopold conservation award. (Special to the IJ/Jocelyn Knight) Jocelyn Knight

A West Marin dairy has been named as the recipient of the prestigious California Leopold Conservation Award.

The Robert Giacomini Dairy, home to the Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Co., was given the award by the Sand County Foundation, the California Farm Bureau Federation and Sustainable Conservation. It honors private landowner achievement in the stewardship and management of natural resources.

"The Giacomini family is a shining example of how landowners in California can have a huge impact on healthy landscapes, clean waterways and a clean-energy future," said Ashley Boren, executive director of Sustainable Conservation.

Boren cited the ranch's practice of rotational grazing of cows, which keeps soils healthy and helps prevent harmful erosion into Tomales Bay and the Point Reyes National Seashore. The ranch also uses a methane digester to convert cow manure into clean, renewable energy that powers their dairy and cheese facility.

The award is given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold. Revered today by many as the father of the American wilderness, Leopold was a young U.S. Forest Service ranger from the Midwest when he developed his thoughts about human interaction with the natural world, which were revolutionary for his time.



He died in 1948 at the age of 61. His book, "A Sand County Almanac," was published a year after his death and introduced the "land ethic," a philosophy for humans to consider impacts when they use or change land. The writings have been lauded for

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Giacomini Dairy honored with Leopold conservation award.  
(Photo by Kodiak Greenwood) Kodiak Greenwood

helping new generations grasp the roles of environmentalism and conservation and connected people and land.

Bob Giacomini and daughters Karen, Diana, Lynn and Jill own and operate Robert Giacomini Dairy, which the Marin Agricultural Land Trust permanently protected as farmland in 2005.

"Selling our easement to MALT gave us peace of mind that the land we continually work hard to protect will thrive in agriculture in perpetuity," said Lynn Giacomini Stray, who serves on the MALT Board of Directors.

The family started the Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Co. in 2000, which produces Point Reyes Original Blue, Bay Blue, Toma and fresh mozzarella cheeses.

"A walk around the Giacomini dairy is a lesson in inspired management of people, animals and natural resources," said Jamison Watts, MALT's executive director. "There is a palatable sense of pride, innovation and industry around every corner."

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