## George Bird is Halton's outstanding farmer

In swell of emotion, local farmer George Bird thanked his wife Verna and his four children, Marilyn, Charles, David and Ronald during a heartfelt speech he gave Saturday after being selected as Halton's 1989 outstanding farmer.

He told over 300 people at the Acton Legion that when he took over his father's farm in 1968 he wanted to model it after his idea of an ideal farm which just happened to be next door.

Mrs. Bird said after the speech, "we're proud the farming community has recognized us for what we're doing; but we're not done yet."

The president of the Halton Federation of Agriculture, Harry Brander, presented Mr. Bird and his wife with a plaque. The couple also received a letter of recognition from the province presented by North Halton MPP Walt Elliot. Mr. Bird also received letters of recognition from Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Halton MP Garth Turner

The Birds' farm is located on the Eighth Line in Georgetown. The couple operate a dairy and cash crop farm on 100 acres and rent out an additional 350 acres to grow crops.

They have 85 holsteins, each of which produced on average 7,833 kg of milk, 290 kilograms of fat and 256 kilograms of protein in 1988. They grow 140 acres of alfalfa hay, 110 acres of mixed grain, 20 acres

of silage corn, 130 acres of soybeans and 30 acres of wheat.

The Birds' ability to improve the classification of their dairy herd was one of the reasons Mr. Bird was chosen, says the federation.

Mr. Bird increased his dairy herd's breed classification average from 108-102 in 1964 to 161-160-166 in 1988. The BCA is determined after a milk tester takes the weight of the milk produced by cows and compares it against the weights of milk produced by the other cows of same age throughout Canada

The figures stand for milk, fat and protein levels produced by the Birds' holsteins compared to comparable cows across Canada. Phyllis MacMaster says the average output of milk, fat and protein is a BCA level of about 145 across the board. This means Mr. Bird's cows are producing well above average amounts of milk, fat and protein compared to other cows. The federation has been only recording protein levels during the last five years. Mr. Bird credits the improvement to the use of plus proven A-1 sires which have enhanced the genetic potential of herd replacements.

The Birds have not only taken steps over the years to improve milk production. The couple has also successfully used soil conservation practices such as crop rotation, soil sampling and tile drainage to increase crop yields

and soil fertility levels. They also grow experimental plots of new crop alternatives.

Besides running a successful farm, Mr. Bird has also found the

time to serve on several farmingrelated committees. He is currently a director of the federation and the Halton Holstein Glub. In the

Halton Milk Committee and president and counsellor for the Halton Holstein Club. He was also one of the first members of the Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee.



The Halton Federation of Agriculture named Georgetown farmer George Bird (second from the left) as Halton's 1989 outstanding farmer. North Halton MPP Walt Elliot, (left) was on hand to present

Mr. Bird with a letter of recognition for his outstanding achievements. Mr. Bird is seen here with his wife Verna and the president of the federation, Harry Brander. (Herald photo)

