

Akis Gialopos
Acting Commissioner

www.DNR.Alaska.Gov



**Department of
Natural Resources**

Anchorage, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: August 11, 2022

Martha Merry, Amy Seitz, & Jane Conway are Alaska's 2022 Farm Family

(Palmer, AK) – Alaska's 2022 Farm Family of the Year title goes to Martha Merry, Amy Seitz, and Jane Conway of Soldotna who own and operate Lancashire Farm. The family farm raises sheep and lambs for meat and 4-H kids, meat and layer chickens, ducks, timothy hay, berries, vegetables, and fiber from sheep for wool and yarn.

"Lancashire Farm is the perfect example of what sustainable agriculture in Alaska looks like," said **Governor Mike Dunleavy**. "I applaud the efforts of Martha Merry, Amy Seitz, and Jane Conway to continue improving and modernizing traditional farming practices and sharing that knowledge with the agriculture community. They are helping Alaskans across the state achieve food security now and in the future."

Lancashire Farm was homesteaded on the Kenai Peninsula in 1948 by Rusty and Larry Lancashire, Martha's parents and Amy's grandparents, and has been in production for more than 70 years. Martha oversees the garden and produce, Jane manages the fiber sheep and wool products, and Amy directs the livestock, hay, and general operations. Martha, Amy, and Jane are always learning and improving their skills to discover more efficient ways to plant, grow, and harvest veggies, improve animal nutrition, modernize mechanics, streamline building, and more. The family enjoys finding new crop varieties that thrive in Alaska's climate, educating people on new items, networking, and forging a sense of community among farmer and agriculture supporters. They appreciate farming in Alaska because it is a beautiful state with pristine, untapped land and lots of potential for agricultural growth.

"It's a great feeling to be part of filling a need," said **Amy Seitz**. "Alaska needs more in-state production of food and other agriculture products. While there are plenty of challenges to farming in Alaska, we would rather take on the challenges here compared to what other states face."

The family is active in the local community and works with many groups and individuals to promote agriculture in Alaska. Amy is also the Executive Director of the Alaska Farm

Bureau. The family are active participants in the Fireweed Fiber Guild and the Alaska Food Hub (an online farm marketplace), and are supporters of 4-H, the Kenai Local Food Connection, and the Alaska Food Policy Council.

Lancashire Farm has been a vendor at the Soldotna Saturday Farmer's Market for many years. They also sell direct to individuals from the farm, to Odie's Deli in Soldotna, and to yarn shops around the Peninsula when they have a surplus of wool products. Martha, Amy, Jane, and their family would like to thank all those who are involved in agriculture, from those who eat and utilize their products to the Farm Bureau and other organizations and agencies who support agriculture in Alaska.

"Congratulations to the Lancashire Farm's Martha Merry, Amy Seitz, Jane Conway, and their family," said **Division of Agriculture Interim Director Mia Kirk**. "Their multigenerational farm family demonstrates exceptional resilience to farming in Alaska. Lancashire Farm's community involvement and dedication to agriculture industry organizations epitomizes the spirit of the industry. We thank the family for their many contributions to agriculture in Alaska."

The Farm Family of the Year award was established in 2000 by the Alaska Division of Agriculture and the Alaska State Fair with the intent to honor an Alaska farm family that best epitomizes the spirit of the industry that year, and to show appreciation for the hard-working Alaskans committed to agriculture.

The Alaska Farm Family of the Year for 2021 was Allie Barker and Jed Workman of Chickaloon, owners and operators of Chugach Farm. Previous winners include the Bates of Halibut Cove, St. Pierres of Ester, Olsons of Soldotna, and the McCollums and Pinklemans of Delta Junction. For the complete list of past recipients please visit: http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_FFY.htm.

Media Contact: Amanda Swanson, 907-761-3869, amanda.swanson@alaska.gov

###

STAY CONNECTED:

DNR Newsroom: http://dnr.alaska.gov/commis/dnr_newsroom.htm

DNR on Social Media: http://dnr.alaska.gov/commis/social_media.htm

DNR Public Information Center: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/commis/pic/>