

# State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources



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## McCollums and Pinkelmans named Farm Family of the Year

(Palmer, AK) – The McCollum and Pinkelman families of Delta Junction have been selected by the Alaska agriculture community as the 2017 Alaska State Fair Farm Family of the Year. They will be honored at the Alaska State Fair on Thursday, August 24.

Doug and Cathie McCollum and their daughter and son-in-law Jeannie and Russ Pinkelman operate both their farm, Northwest Land & Livestock, and their processing plant, Delta Meat & Sausage, Inc. The farm began in 1984, when Doug and Cathie purchased 17 heifers and a Galloway Bull from a farm in South Dakota. Today they raise between 400 and 500 head of Galloway/Angus cattle and 350 pigs. Delta Meat & Sausage, Inc. was established in 1997, and is a full-service slaughter and meat processing facility. They market beef, pork, buffalo, yak, elk and reindeer from local farmer, and process specialty game from local big game hunters.

The McCollums have lived in Alaska for 49 years, and currently three generations of the family work on their farm in Delta Junction. Doug and Russ work on the farm, with Doug doing the mechanical maintenance and Russ managing the livestock and building. Cathie and Jeannie run the plant, and Doug and Cathie's grandchildren Quinn and Lincoln help with chores on the farm. They also hire part-time help. Their future farming plans are to continue business as usual, and to maintain the quality that the local communities have been getting from them for years.

While not working their businesses, both families sponsor many local non-profit kid's events, little league, youth hockey, and local 4-H kids. The families say they love farming because they love the soil, the fresh air, the animals, and the satisfaction that at the end of the day you have worked hard and have a sense of accomplishment. "It's doing something that we love to do, and being able to make a successful business from our hard-earned endeavors," Jeannie said.

The Farm Family of the Year award, sponsored by the Matanuska Valley Federal Credit Union, was established by the Alaska State Fair in 2000 to honor an Alaska farming family and show appreciation for all the hardworking Alaskans committed to agriculture. After reviewing nominations, an awards committee chaired by the Alaska Division of Agriculture selects the winning family based on production of quality Alaska Grown products, community and agricultural organization involvement, and overall image.

"Alaskan agriculture is an endeavor that takes a lot of hard work, perseverance and dedication. Due to our isolated location and our short growing season, many aspects of agriculture here take unusual measures and creative thinking. To that end, we congratulate all the Alaskan farmers and especially the McCollum and Pinkelman families of Delta Junction," said Jerome Hertel, the fair's general manager.

Recent Farm Family of the Year winners include the Plagerman Family of Scott Plagerman Farms (2016), the Pettit Family of Little Pitchfork Ranch (2015), and the Williams Family of EagleSong Family Peony Farm (2014).

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