

## News Release

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### WVDA HONORS FOUR “WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE” AT RECENT STATE FAIR OF WV

Four more deserving women were recognized as West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) “Women in Agriculture” at a ceremony during the recent State Fair of WV. This year’s inductees included: Mida Peterson (beef cattle farmer), Helen Hardman (beef cattle farmer/educator), Evelyn McGlothlin (agribusiness operator), and Cathy Bowyer (former WVDA assistant director, deceased).

Induction is granted to those women who have made significant contributions to the establishment, development, advancement or improvement of West Virginia agriculture, forestry or specialty crops in the Mountain State.

Commissioner Helmick noted the vital role of women in agriculture - past, present and future.

“This program provides recognition for a very deserving group of people,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Walt Helmick. “Where would we be without the many women who have contributed to agriculture over the years? I extend my congratulations to this year’s new members. They have all demonstrated a lifetime of dedication to agriculture in West Virginia and urge the younger generation of women to stay involved and be our next generation of “women in agriculture.”

This year’s inductees are:

**Mida Peterson** – has been a fixture at the WV Beef Expo for many years. She has been the chair of the Beef Queen Contest for the past 23 years, and has managed the Angus sale at the Expo for the past 24 years. She is reporter for the WV Angus Association and vice president of the WV Cattlewomen’s Association. She helped organize the state Junior Angus Association and has been its advisor for 20 years. In 1983, she was named the organization’s national advisor of the year. The WV Cattleman’s Association honored her with its service award in 2008. She and her husband are the first married couple to be enshrined in the West Virginia Agriculture and Forestry Hall of Fame. Together, they operate a 520-acre registered Angus farm in Lewis and Upshur counties.

**Helen Hardman** – and husband Terry operate a 400-acre cow/calf farm in Lewis County. She worked for the WVU Extension Service for 17 years before joining the WV Farm Bureau as the Mobile Agriculture Education Science Lab coordinator. The lab has been on the road since 2008. It has covered 34,000 miles and has exposed 35,000 students to agriculture education. She is national Ag in the Classroom coordinator, a Summer Ag Institute presenter, Project Learning Tree facilitator, Ropes Course facilitator and has been active in the West Virginia and National Cattlewomen’s Association for many years. Her farm has been recognized numerous times for its conservation practices.

**Evelyn McGlothlin** – started her Clay County value-added food business at age 55, using produce from her own garden and wild-grown berries to create a diverse line of jams, jellies, pickled vegetables and spice mixes. Through her business, she is continuing a tradition of preserving food that was passed down to her from her mother. “Ordinary Evelyn’s” products are anything but ordinary. The canned goods are personally hand-processed by Evelyn, one batch at a time. Her products have been sold as far away as California, and she has brought positive attention to West Virginia. In 2013, *People Magazine* chose Ordinary Evelyn’s as West Virginia’s feature product in its food edition. She was also featured in *Southern Living* magazine in 2011.

**Cathy Bowyer** – spent her youth in the small farming community of Union showing cattle and horses. After high school, she studied agriculture and microbiology at WVU and graduated Magna Cum Laude in 1984. She joined the West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) in 1986. She worked in the meat and dairy labs and eventually become assistant director of the Regulatory and Environmental Affairs Division. She represented the state in numerous professional organizations. She was also a dedicated 4-H member. She was chosen as a 4-H All Star during high school and represented the state at the National 4-H Congress in 1978. She was named the outstanding 4-H leader in Jackson County in 1997, and served as a member and officer of the Jackson County 4-H Leaders Association from 1989-2009.