

## **Setting the example for environmental stewardship**

Marc and Chantal Bercier's farm in Eastern Ontario is a prime example of a farm committed to environmental stewardship.

The Berciers are winners of the 2016 [Canadian Farm-Rancher Pollinator Conservation Award](#), presented in partnership by the CFGA, Canadian Federation of Agriculture and the U.S.-based Pollinator Partnership. The award recognizes the contribution of Canadian farmers in protecting and creating environments where pollinators can thrive. The Berciers received the award at the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign conference, which took place last fall in Washington, DC.

### **The Berciers' project**

The Berciers' project at their farm in St-Isidore-de-Prescott, Ont., Le Ferme Agriber, was completed with expertise from local contractors and support from Alternative Land Use (ALUS) Canada, which funds initiatives to diversify habitat and biodiversity.

The couple worked hard to improve the land around their farm, creating a wetland to help filter out water from their farm before it feeds into the nearby Scotch River. The wetland and farm are populated with pollinator sites with a wide range of over 30 species of flowers and plants to encourage biodiversity. Their efforts have helped to improve both soil and water quality on their farm and the surrounding area.

The Berciers' project involved planting a variety of trees, shrubs and native flowers - species that contribute to healthy soils, absorbing nutrients and providing shade and cover, as well as food for a variety of wild species, including pollinators. They created many pollinator habitat sites around their farm and quality pollen sources throughout the spring, summer and fall. The new habitat areas are populated with over 30 different species of plants and flowers.

"For me, it's very important to farm with a vision of how future generations will benefit from agriculture," Marc Bercier said. "I am always thinking about how to improve our operation so that I can pass my knowledge and experience on to younger people that are interested in starting a business in farming."

### **Importance of pollinators**

Canada is home to more than 1,000 species of pollinators, including bees, butterflies, moths, bats and beetles. Pollinators are essential to the production of over \$2 billion annually in Canadian produce such as apples, berries, squash, melons and much more. The impact that these species have on the country's agricultural sector demonstrates why Canadian farmers are dedicated to finding long-term solutions that will further support the conservation of pollinators.

"Farmers recognize the indispensable natural services that native pollinators provide farmers through pollination and improving yields," said Ron Bonnett, president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. "We're pleased to showcase examples of how farmers have gone above and beyond to support pollinators, and the Bercier farm offers yet another success story of thoughtful investments that support a productive and sustainable farm business."