

SOUTHAMPTON FAMILY HONORED

Farming clan receives award

The Vegetable Growers Association of New Jersey presented the Kumpel Family with the Vegetable Grower Family of the Year Award for 2015 at the New Jersey State Agricultural Convention in Atlantic City recently. As a third-generation farm, the Kumpel family has been dedicated to advocating for and serving the New Jersey agriculture community.

Roger, Ruth, their son Jeffrey, daughter-in-law Danielle, daughter Colleen and her husband Walt farm 260-plus acres, 110 of which they own, in Southampton Township, Burling-

ton County, growing hay, long straw, grain and vegetables. Their farm is in the farmland preservation program and they have made various improvements to increase conservation, food safety efforts and efficiency. They installed a pivot irrigation system to conserve water; built a new building to wash and store potatoes and tomatoes; and equipped one of their large tractors with GPS, auto-guidance and auto steering.

While the Kumpels are excellent farmers, they never fail to step forward to protect and preserve New Jersey's agriculture in-

dustry. In 2007, when then-Gov. Jon Corzine planned to eliminate the Department of Agriculture, Roger was one of those instrumental in organizing a tractor parade in front of the State House in Trenton to highlight the devastating impact closing the agency would have on New Jersey agriculture. Ultimately, those efforts paid off and the plan was abandoned.

Service to agriculture and the community have been mainstays in the Kumpels' lives. Roger served on the State Board of Agriculture for four years, including one year as president, and in 2014 he again took a seat on the board to fill a vacancy. Roger says being on the board is a great honor and one of the most wonderful opportunities of his lifetime.

The Kumpels are active with the Burlington County Board of Agriculture and the Farm Bureau Women. Past roles of Roger's included: the Rutgers University Board of Managers for six years; the Watershed Management Area 19 Public Advisory Committee, serving as Vice President for one year; Burlington County's Route 130 Delaware River Corridor Extension, Route 206 Farmbelt Corridor Agricultural Viability Task Group; the Southampton Township Agricultural Advisory Board and Environmental Committee; and the Pinelands Ag Advisory



From left, Roger Kumpel, Ruth Kumpel, Joseph Maugeri, President of Vegetable Growers Association of New Jersey, during the New Jersey State Agricultural Convention in Atlantic City recently.

Committee. The Kumpels are Farm Bureau members and members of Vincentown #67 Grange.

In 2014, Jeff and Danielle opened a farm supply store in Vincentown to supply specialty farm parts that farmers needed. This was the first new agricultural business in the area in a long time and contrary to the trend of agricultural businesses leaving the state.

Over the years, Roger has received many honors for his dedication and level-headed approach to issues: He received the 2013 Distinguished Service to Agriculture award from the State Board of Agriculture and the Burlington County Board of Agriculture and the 2010 Distinguished Service to Agriculture award from New Jersey Farm Bureau and the Atlantic County Board of Agriculture.