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NORTH CAROLINA STRAWBERRY ASSOCIATION  
PRESENTS GROWER OF THE YEAR AWARD

In an awards ceremony at its 2009 Annual Meeting, held during the Southeast Strawberry Expo on November 9, the North Carolina Strawberry Association presented its “Grower of the Year” to Joan and Kenneth Rudd of Rudd Farm in Greensboro.

The presentation was made by NCSA Board of Directors member Bernice Kenan of Bernie’s Berries in Greensboro, NC. In her remarks she said that “the farm has been in the family since the 1930s, and they started their first strawberry crop as a way to diversify from tobacco in 2000 with about 1.5 acres. ...As the years have passed the strawberry production has increased to the current 9.5 acres and produce to many acres – so many that they had to buy a second farm.” The farm is a family affair, involving Kenneth, Joan, and their son, Matt, with help from other family members.

Kenneth Rudd served as the President of the NC Strawberry Association in 2007 and 2008. Both he and Joan have been active in planning the Southeast Strawberry Expo and leading workshops for new strawberry growers. Their farm was featured in the Expo farm tour in 2004 and in the spring of 2009 hosted a field day focused on conservation cost-share programs for strawberry producers. They are leaders and innovators widely respected by other growers.

The Association also presented two “Outstanding Service” awards at this meeting. One was to the Plant Disease and Insect Clinic at NC State University, which plays an important role in diagnosing disease and pest problems for strawberry growers. The other was to Rocco Schiavone, long-time agricultural technician working with Dr. Barclay Poling in the Department of Horticulture at NC State University.

The NC Strawberry Association is a membership association of growers, suppliers, extension, and others in the strawberry industry, with members not only in North Carolina but also in many other states. Besides holding the Strawberry Association annually, it funds strawberry research, promotes strawberries to the general public, and provides production and marketing resources to its members.