

**1997 State Winner
Brown Family Farm
William and Katharine Brown
Knox County**

This 172-acre family farm in Knox County supports three families. William and Katharine Brown live in the family homestead, built in 1832 by farm founder, Mahlon Walters. The family has possession of the original deed signed by then-President James Monroe. A barn which Walters built remains today and is used to house the family's dairy heifers. William and Katharine started the dairy herd when they married in 1947 and their sons, Dan and his wife Kathie, Kelly and wife Marcia, run the dairy operation and the farm's cropping program. William manages the replacement heifers and directs the family's maple syrup operation. He represents the third generation of the Brown family to be maple syrup producers on this farm. They currently have 3,000 maple syrup trees.

The farm is a rich blend of heritage and modernization. For example, much of the furniture in the house is original and has been carefully preserved by the Brown family. The historical integrity of the farmstead and outbuildings have been protected, however the farm operation is a modern one. The bank barn has 60 ft. 12 x 12 inch hand-hewn beams. This barn housed the dairy operation until a new barn was built in 1978. A covered manure storage facility was built in 1994 which allows the Brown family to be good environmental stewards by better managing the manure from the 80-cow Holstein dairy herd that is milked three times daily. They also use no-till planting and contour strips in the cropping program.

The farm was awarded the Knox SWCD Conservation award in 1987 and was named as an Ohio Tree Farm in 1989. Dan currently serves on the county Soil and Water Conservation Board; Kelly serves on the Fredericktown School Board; William serves as president of the Ohio Maple Producers Association. All the labor for the farm is provided by family members which includes Dan's and Kelly's six children, who are active in 4-H. The house has three large basement rooms, three stairways, six bedrooms on the second floor and is believed to have been one of the stops for the underground railroad which was used by slaves in the mid-19th century to gain freedom. The Browns have four other children, Susan, Sandra, Tim and Matt.