

*For immediate release. Isle of Wight/Smithfield/Windsor Chamber of Commerce and Isle of Wight County Department of Economic Development*

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## **Danny & Romaine Byrum of Batten Bay Farm Named Farm Family of the Year for 2011**

The Isle of Wight/Smithfield/Windsor Chamber of Commerce and the Isle of Wight Department of Economic Development will present Danny and Romaine Byrum the 2011 Farm Family of the Year Award at the Business Appreciation Luncheon on Thursday, May 5, at the Smithfield Center.

Past recipients of this award include Jimmy and J. V. Oliver, Tommy & Dee Dee Darden, Pete and Ken Edwards, William A. Gwaltney, Jr., John T. Butler, Jr, and Rex W. and Robert Alphin.

Batten Bay Farm is an all natural produce and cut flower farm owned and operated by Danny and Romaine Byrum. Located in Carrollton, Virginia, about 5 miles south of the James River Bridge, Batten Bay Farm is committed to all natural and sustainable agricultural methods for growing their crops.

Their customers know that they can count on Danny's and Romaine's products to be fresh, safe, and healthy because they utilize, almost exclusively, compost for fertilizer. Customers can feel confident knowing the Byrums use no chemical herbicides or pesticides.

The farm is a second career for both Danny and Romaine. After they retired from their respective careers, Danny and Romaine purchased the farm on Miller Lane, and began to live out their dream of farming. In just a short time, their farm has grown significantly. Currently, they sell at several local restaurants and farmers markets, including Portsmouth Farmers' Market, Norfolk Five Points Community Market, Governor's Point Farm Market, and recently started their own Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) venture, which is now in its second year.

A CSA is an innovative marketing tool for farmers, which allows the customers to pre-purchase a "share" of the harvest for the season prior to the season; therefore, creating a mutually supportive relationship between the local farmer and the community member. Customers receive their "share" of farm products weekly throughout the growing season. Participating in a CSA or buying from a local farmer teaches consumers to eat seasonally.

The Byrums have excelled at direct marketing their farm products to consumers. They are passionate about education, always encouraging their customers to visit the farm. In addition, they offer field trips to schools and any others who might be interested in learning about agriculture. They have a passion for teaching people about where their food comes from.

It's not just Danny and Romaine you'll find at the farm, but instead any one of their children or grandchildren. Every family member has had involvement in the farming operation at various points making it truly a family affair.

Rachel Chieppa, Rural Economic Development Manager, Isle of Wight County states, "I have enjoyed working with Danny and Romaine, whether it be through the Master Gardener program or in their work with the County Fair. Their eyes light up whenever they talk about their farm. There is a true

passion for what they do, and they inspire me each and every time I listen to them speak about the value of agriculture to the community. They are a true example of how anyone with the desire to be a farmer can do so. Their dedication is evident, and they serve as a fine example of how to grow a lot on a little bit of land, only farming about 9 acres.”