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## NORTH CAROLINA FARMER CELEBRATES 10 YEARS WITH LEADING FARM SUSTAINABILITY CERTIFIER

—Ronald Simmons of Master Blend Family Farms in Kenansville, NC, celebrates 10 years of certification with Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW—



Photo Credit: Master Blend Family Farms

**KENANSVILLE, NC (SEPTEMBER 12, 2023)**—Ronald Simmons of Master Blend Family Farms in Kenansville, NC, is celebrating 10 years of certification with Certified Animal Welfare Approved by [A Greener World](http://agreenerworld.org) (AGW), the leading animal welfare and sustainability label across North America.

Simmons is the third generation to farm the family's land in Duplin County, NC, and his farming journey began in 2012 when his father-in-law considered selling the family farm. Simmons wanted to try raising pigs outdoors on pasture and range, so with the help of his community and research through North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University, North Carolina State University and North Carolina Cooperative Extension, he took over production at Master Blend Family Farms. Simmons achieved Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW certification for the pasture-raised pigs in 2013 and since 2015 has focused on niche pork production, growing the farm's production capacity over time. The farm added a general store onsite that sells Master Blend Family Farms pork and a variety of other locally grown products. The business also added a food truck and catering service, and Master Blend Family Farms sells their products to premium restaurants, high-end eateries, and professional sports stadiums across North Carolina and the Southeast.

Simmons believes in raising pork to the highest animal welfare standards and ensuring they offer sustainable solutions for the farming industry. In addition to being a good steward of the land, part of the farm's business model is to ensure that children in the community get exposure to agriculture through farm visits, FFA and 4-H activities. At the time of publication, Simmons has purchased a second farm with the intent of setting up a school for agriculture.

Simmons is rooted in his community, and in 2017, Ron earned the Martin Luther King Jr. Entrepreneur of the Year Award. He was also named the 2018 North Carolina Small Farmer of the Year by the Cooperative Extension Program at NC A&T State University. To acknowledge the decade of Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW certification in 2023—and his commitment to high-welfare, sustainable farming, Simmons received a commemorative metal farm sign from A Greener World.

The Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW label lets consumers know farm animals are raised outdoors on pasture or range in accordance with the highest animal welfare standards in the U.S. and Canada, using sustainable agriculture methods on an independent farm. Consumer Reports has rated Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW as the only "highly meaningful" label for farm animal welfare, outdoor access and sustainability—and the only animal welfare certification in which they have confidence. A recent report from the influential Hartman Group, a leading food and beverage market research company, reveals Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW label has the **highest impact** on consumer purchasing behavior of any food label.

**Ronald Simmons of Master Blend Family Farms says,**

"Our Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW certification tells our customers that we really are farming the way we say we are. Our long-term goal is to be one of the leading pork producers with the highest standards for animal welfare and environmental management."

**AGW Executive Director Emily Moose says,**

"We're so proud to celebrate 10 years with [Master Blend Family Farms](#) and we applaud their commitment to good stewardship, community values and transparency. Farmers like Ronald Simmons have consistently been at the forefront of the growing market for verified sustainable

products. As this market continues to expand, AGW farmers are leading the way—offering trusted and verified products to a public hungry for honestly labeled meat, dairy and eggs. We celebrate our shared successes over the last decade—and look forward to the next.”

For more information about Master Blend Family Farms, visit [masterblendfarms.com](https://masterblendfarms.com), stay connected with the farm on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [Yelp](#) and contact Ronald Simmons at [info@masterblendfamilyfarms.com](mailto:info@masterblendfamilyfarms.com) and (910) 372-3372.

#### **ABOUT A GREENER WORLD**

**A Greener World (AGW)** identifies, audits, certifies and promotes practical, sustainable farming systems by supporting farmers and ranchers and informing consumers. AGW’s growing family of trusted certifications includes [Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW](#), [Certified Grassfed by AGW](#), [Certified Regenerative by AGW](#) and [Certified Non-GMO by AGW](#). Each program is designed to have positive and measurable impacts on the environment, society and animals, and to encourage truly sustainable farming practices. AGW’s standards and procedures are robust, transparent and achievable.

A nonprofit funded by donations, AGW offers a range of resources to help people make informed food choices, including an [Online Directory](#) of certified farms and products and [Food Labels Exposed](#)—a definitive guide to food label claims (available in print and online). For more information visit [agreenerworld.org](https://agreenerworld.org).

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