

Excellence Programs Award Committee
National County Agricultural Agents
Louisiana State University AgCenter

March 11, 2021

Dear Committee:

I am enthusiastically recommending Dennis Burns, Ralph Frazier, Jimmy Flanagan, and Dr. Randy Price for the 2021 NCAA Excellent in Crop Production Award. I am holding a faculty position at the School of Plant, Environmental, and Soil Sciences, Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, LA. My research area of interest is soil fertility and nutrient management specifically on integrating optical sensing technology in managing nitrogen fertilizer in crop production which has led me to work closely with the nominees for more than 8 years. I best know the nominees from this association, and I found them very dedicated, innovative, and hard-working contributors in the extension and outreach program of LSU AgCenter.

I highly recommend this team for this award without reservation. The members of this team collectively have extensive list of accomplishments in extension works, honors and awards received, and securing funding support. One of the many remarkable works of this team that is unique and currently making an impact to growers and crop industry in Louisiana is their outreach program on precision agriculture technology. They have established collaborative efforts with researchers and growers in putting up demonstration trials to test performances of remote sensor-based decision tools in managing fertilizer and other crop inputs in highly variable fields. They recently began introducing the application and use of prescription maps acquired from images collected using a digital camera attached to a drone (unmanned vehicle system). The nature of work in this area is rather cumbersome. They are involved in the entire process of bringing these precision ag-based decision tools for growers into full-scale farm operation settings; from testing of the concept with the researchers, conducting workshops to train agents and growers, securing funding support, establishing demonstration plots up to publications. I am impressed by how this team is always making one step further, working extra hours, and travel far distances to help researchers like me in facilitating the transfer of technologies to crop producers. What is so amazing is that despite of the large amount of work they have to do under the hot and humid climate of Louisiana and on days where everything is frustratingly difficult to accomplish, Mr. Burns, Frazier and Flanagan, and Dr. Price have always maintained a positive and affable spirit which is for me is very important and inspiring. I am sure many of our colleagues here at LSU AgCenter whom they worked with and are currently

working with share the same thought and appreciation for this team. The challenge we have face associated with COVID did not stop this team to continue their service to the community. Despite of the restriction on social gathering, they remained effective in dissemination of information through virtual presentation, webinars, and publications.

The application of precision agriculture technology in managing nitrogen fertilizer in Louisiana crop production systems was relatively new a few years back. The concept was proven already, and the optical sensor-based N recommendation technology was established through the concerted effort of LSU AgCenter researchers, but it was this team, comprised by Mr. Burns, Frazier and Flanagan and Dr. Price which made a big contribution in transforming this technology into a decision tool usable in farm-scale operational settings.

Because of their dedication, talent, and hard work, I believe that this team will continuously deliver remarkable outcomes to growers and our community. With all these being said, this team is no doubt has brought the extension and outreach program of LSU AgCenter to a unique and excellent level of service to crop industry and the community. I strongly believed that this team is most qualified to receive the 2021 NCAA Excellence in Crop Production Award.

Yours sincerely,



Brenda S. Tubana
Professor of Soil Fertility
Jack E. and Henrietta Jones Endowed Professor
309 M.B. Sturgis Hall – Louisiana State University Agricultural Center
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
Office: 225.578.9420
Mobile: 225.252.6025
Fax: 225.578.1403
Email: btubana@agcenter.lsu.edu