

The County Agent



A publication of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents

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President's Corner

Honoring Tradition, Embracing Progress

As I reflect on the 111th Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference in Denver, Colorado, I am filled with gratitude for the people who make NACAA such a remarkable organization. The 2026 AM/PIC was a tremendous success because of the dedication, professionalism, and enthusiasm of our members. From educational sessions and poster presentations to networking events, committee meetings, tours, and awards programs, the conference showcased the very best of Extension and agricultural education.

On behalf of the NACAA Board of Directors, thank you to everyone who attended, presented, volunteered, sponsored, exhibited, judged contests, chaired committees, and contributed in countless ways. A special thank you goes to the Colorado Association of County Agricultural Agents, conference co-chairs Kurt Jones and Bruce Fickenschier, and the many volunteers whose years of planning and preparation created an exceptional experience for our membership. Your hospitality, commitment, and hard work were evident throughout the conference and were instrumental to its success.

Denver provided the perfect setting for learning, professional growth, and meaningful connections. Attendees

were challenged and inspired by keynote and capstone speakers Dr. Temple Grandin, Dr. Jaye Hamby, and Michele Payn. More than 119 educational presentations and 118 research and education posters highlighted the innovation, expertise, and dedication that NACAA members bring to Extension every day.

The conference also provided an opportunity to celebrate excellence across our association. We recognized 71 Achievement Award winners, 65 Distinguished Service Award recipients, four Hall of Fame inductees, two Dan Kluchinski Memorial Scholarship recipients and Dr. Temple Grandin as the 2026 Service to American/World Agriculture Award recipient. Participation in our recognition programs continues to grow, with 828 Communications Award entries and 200 Search for Excellence submissions this year. The creativity, innovation, and passion reflected in these programs demonstrate the tremendous impact NACAA members have on producers, families, youth, and communities across the nation.

Congratulations to all award recipients, scholarship winners, and conference presenters. Your accomplishments exemplify the excellence that exists throughout our profession and serve as an inspiration to all of us. I also extend



*2026-2027 NACAA President
Connie Strunk*

my appreciation to everyone who supported the NACAA Scholarship Fund and Scholarship Auction. Your generosity helps create opportunities for future professional development and leadership growth within our organization.

While the educational opportunities and recognition programs are highlights of every AM/PIC, one of NACAA's greatest strengths remains the relationships we build with one another. The conversations that take place in meeting rooms, hallways, hospitality events, and during tours often spark new ideas, foster

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Happy Faces from the 2026 AM/PIC



President's Corner

continued from page 1

collaborations, and lead to lifelong professional friendships. Those connections strengthen not only our association but also the work we do in our communities every day.

As I left Denver, I found myself reflecting not only on what we accomplished this year, but also on the future of our profession and our association.

Think about how much agriculture and the role of Extension professionals have changed over time. From the early days of demonstration plots and face-to-face instruction to today's use of precision agriculture, digital decision-support tools, and instant access to global information, Extension has continuously evolved to meet the needs of the people we serve.

Change is not new to us.

Every generation of Extension professionals has faced new challenges, new technologies, and new expectations. While change can feel uncomfortable, history reminds us that growth often begins outside our comfort zone. Time and again, NACAA members have adapted, innovated, and found new ways to serve their communities.

Today, we face another period of rapid change. Agriculture is becoming more complex. Technology is advancing at an unprecedented pace. Our audiences are becoming more diverse in age, background, and expectations. Communication methods continue to evolve, and information moves faster than ever before.

Yet these changes are not obstacles to overcome, they are opportunities to embrace.

The success of Extension has always depended on our willingness to learn, adapt, and lead. That means exploring emerging technologies, developing new educational approaches, strengthening partnerships, and finding innovative ways to engage our audiences. The same qualities that built Extension into a trusted resource for generations will continue to guide us into the future. As your President, I am committed to supporting professional development, strengthening member engagement, fostering leadership growth, and ensuring NACAA remains the premier professional association for Extension agriculture and natural resources educators. Together, we will continue to lead through innovation, collaboration, and service.

I also encourage every member to make a personal commitment to NACAA. Submit a presentation. Enter

an award program. Serve on a committee. Participate in NACAA 365 webinars. Mentor a new professional. Recruit a colleague to join our association. Share your successes through the Journal of NACAA. Every member has unique talents and experiences to contribute, and our organization is strongest when those strengths are shared.

As we look ahead, I encourage you to begin planning now for the 2027 Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference in St. Paul, Minnesota. AM/PIC remains one of the most valuable opportunities for professional growth, networking, recognition, and the exchange of ideas. Whether you are a longtime attendee or considering your first conference, I hope you will join us and encourage a colleague to attend as well.

At the same time, I encourage you to think about the legacy we are creating. How can we build upon the strong foundation we inherited? How can we make NACAA even stronger for the next generation of Extension professionals?

One day, we will become part of NACAA's history. When future members look back on this period, I hope they see a group of professionals who honored tradition while embracing progress, who valued relationships while pursuing innovation, and who met change with confidence rather than hesitation.

The more each of us invests in NACAA, the stronger our organization becomes. NACAA is more than an annual conference or a professional association. It is a community of dedicated professionals committed to helping one another grow, advancing Extension excellence, and improving the lives of those we serve. Whether you are early in your career or have decades of experience, your perspective matters. Your willingness to innovate, collaborate, and adapt will help shape the future of NACAA and the future of Extension.

Thank you for your commitment to Extension, your dedication to NACAA, and your service to the people and communities we reach every day. It is an honor to serve as your President, and I look forward to working alongside you throughout the coming year and seeing many of you at AM/PIC 2027.

Together, let us make it a year of engagement, leadership, innovation, and impact.

Connie Strunk
NACAA President

In Memoriam: Bobbie Dean “Bob” Davis (1934–2026)

Bobbie Dean “Bob” Davis, a Past President of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents, passed away July 16, 2026, at the age of 92. Bob led NACAA as President in 1987, presiding at the Association’s Annual Meeting in Fargo, North Dakota. A native of Mt. Pleasant, Ohio, he earned his B.S. in Animal Science from The Ohio State University in 1957 and his M.S. in Extension Education from the University of Maryland in 1967.

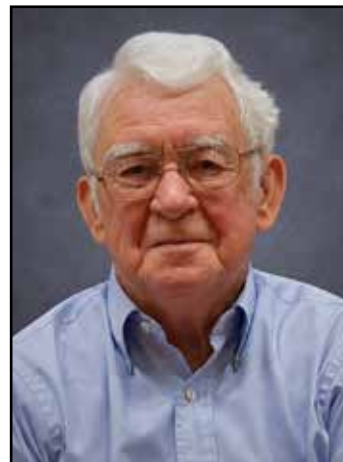


Bob dedicated more than three decades to Ohio State Extension, beginning as a 4-H Agent in Washington County and later serving as Extension Agent and Chair in Vinton County. He closed out his career with 18 years as Extension Agent and Chair in Hamilton County, focusing on Agriculture and Community & Natural Resource Development, before retiring in 1988 as Associate Professor Emeritus from Ohio State. In addition to his NACAA presidency, he served as President of the Ohio Cooperative Extension Agents’ Association and was honored with NACAA’s Distinguished Service Award and the Distinguished Alumni Award from the OSU College of Agriculture.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Bob was a devoted community servant, serving as a volunteer firefighter, church trustee, and founding leader of several Vinton County organizations. He is survived by his daughter, Terrie Bodey; his son, Mark Davis; his granddaughter, Allison; and a wide circle of family and friends. Memorial contributions may be made to the Ohio 4-H Foundation at ohio4h.org/give-now.

In Memoriam: Norman Edward McGlohon, Jr. (1932–2026)

Norman Edward McGlohon, Jr., a Past National Officer of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents, passed away peacefully on June 19, 2026, in Athens, Georgia, at the age of 93. Norman served NACAA as Treasurer from 1981 to 1983. Born in Laurens, South Carolina, he earned a bachelor’s degree in Agricultural Education and a master’s degree in Plant Pathology from Clemson University, followed by a doctorate in Plant Pathology from North Carolina State University.



Following two years of service in the U.S. Army in Berlin, Germany, Norman built a distinguished career with the University of Georgia Extension Service, retiring in 1989. His leadership extended well beyond his NACAA role — he served as president of the Clarke County Farm Bureau, president of the Georgia County Extension Agents Association, and as a member of the Farmers Round Table.

Norman was equally devoted to his faith and family, teaching Sunday School at Green Acres Baptist for over fifty years and supporting mission efforts around the world. He is survived by his wife, Mary “Bobbie” McGlohon; his sons, Norman (Tracy) McGlohon and Neal (Joy) McGlohon; four grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. Memorial gifts may be made to The Cypress Project (Church Planting Ministry) or to Green Acres Baptist Church, Athens, Georgia.



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2026 Applied Research Poster Session National Winners



1st Place

GRANULATE CUTWORM (*FELTIA SUBTERRANEA*) CONTROL IN ALFALFA: INSECTICIDE EFFICACY COMPARISON AND ALFALFA GROWTH RESPONSE

Michael Rethwisch¹, Katelyn Bush²

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1649

Granulate cutworms (*Feltia subterranea*) can sometimes be severe pests of alfalfa grown during the summer in the low desert areas of Arizona and California with their feeding keeping alfalfa from re-greening for several weeks after a cutting when cutworm populations are high. This situation was noted in late summer 2025 in several local alfalfa fields, allowing opportunity to compare efficacy of various insecticides and document crop growth response. Seven (7) insecticides, consisting primarily of pyrethroid insecticides registered on alfalfa hay, were applied late afternoon on September 15, 2025, using a battery powered backpack sprayer equipped with a boom with 4 T-Jet 8002VS nozzle tips. Plots were 25 ft. long x 14 ft. wide and treatments had four replications, with plot design being randomized complete block. Plots were sampled the early morning of September 17 (36 hours after application). Sampling consisted of locating the row of shed leaves from the previous raking/ baling operations that ran across each plot, and removing this debris/duff from a 1 foot wide x 1 meter long area by scratching the leaves away from the soil and from within crowns and soil cracks to uncover granulate cutworm caterpillars. Numbers of caterpillars in plots (1

GRANULATE CUTWORM (*Feltia subterranea*) CONTROL IN ALFALFA: INSECTICIDE EFFICACY COMPARISON AND ALFALFA GROWTH RESPONSE

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INTRODUCTION

Granulate cutworms (*Feltia subterranea*) can sometimes be severe pests of alfalfa grown during the summer in the low desert areas of Arizona and California with their feeding keeping alfalfa from regrowing for several weeks after a cutting when cutworm populations are high. This was the situation in late summer 2023 in several alfalfa fields located in the Palo Verde Valley of far eastern California (Figs. 1-3).

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Seven (7) insecticides (Table 1) were applied very early during September 15, 2023, using a battery powered backpack sprayer equipped with a boom with 4 T-Jet 8002VS nozzle tips, and applying a final solution of 202.3 g/L. The non-ionic surfactant Dynex-Amec® (Helsia Agriflor) was applied with most treatments at the rate of 0.33% v/v.

Plots were 14 x 25 ft, with four replications of treatments using a randomized complete block design.

Table 1. Products, rates and marketing company

BAYTHOD XL	2.8 oz/L	BETA-CYFLUTHRIN	BAYER
BEESGEE	3.8 oz/L	LAMBDA-CYHALOTHRIN	SYNGENTA
FACIASC EC	3.8 oz/L	ALPHA-CYPERMETHRIN	BASF
FACIASC EC	3.8 oz/L	ALPHA-CYPERMETHRIN	BASF
MUSTANG MAXX	4.0 oz/L	ZETA-CYPERMETHRIN	PAC
VERTEKTO	2.0 oz/L	ISOMECLOTHRAN	SYNGENTA
WARRIOR X	1.92 oz/L	LAMBDA-CYHALOTHRIN	SYNGENTA

Plots were sampled the early morning of September 17, approximately 36 hours after treatments were applied. Sampling consisted of locating the row of shed leaves from previous rain/spraying/baling operation that ran across each replicate, and removing this debris from a 1 foot wide x 1 meter long area (Fig. 3) by scratching the leaves away from the soil and from within rows and soil cracks to uncover granulate cutworm caterpillars (Fig. 4). Numbers of caterpillars in plots (1 such sample/plot) were counted and recorded.

Figure 3-1. Alfalfa field being inspected for granulate cutworms and lack of regrowth for 2 weeks after cutting Blythe and alfalfa stems in crown that were mostly brown with feeding damage noted on stems.

Two recent insecticide trials targeting granulate cutworms have been completed by University of California Cooperative Extension personnel in the past 10 years, and the only one completed in the past 10 years involved alfalfa 2/3 through the regrowth cycle rather than regrowth completely being held back by granulate cutworm feeding.

The current recommendation from many states is to use a pyrethroid class insecticide for cutworm control in alfalfa. This replicated field trial was initiated to compare current registered pyrethroid insecticides for use in alfalfa with isomerpyrazin, (Piraclozole technology) a potential new active ingredient that may soon be available for use in U.S. alfalfa.

RESULTS

Fewest granulate caterpillars were collected from alfalfa treated with Vertekto, at 0.33% reduction compared with untreated alfalfa plot (Fig. 5). This was the only treatment that was statistically different than untreated alfalfa on this sample date.

Of insecticides containing pyrethroid active ingredients, lambda cyhalothrin (Warrior X, Beesgee) and beta-cyfluthrin (Baythroid XL) resulted in fewest granulate cutworms, with these providing 37-40% fewer than collected from the untreated alfalfa plot samples. The alpha-cypermethrin products (Faciasc EC, Fastac EC) resulted in a slight reduction on granulate cutworm (5-10%), while zeta-cypermethrin (Mustang Maxx) resulted in more granulate cutworms than untreated alfalfa.

Treatment	Mean number of granulate cutworms
BAYTHOD XL	5.5
BEESGEE	5.8
FACIASC EC	4.7
FACIASC EC	8.5
MUSTANG MAXX	9.3
VERTEKTO	3.1
WARRIOR X	5.5

Figure 5-1. Mean number of granulate cutworms per 1 meter x 3 foot sample under alfalfa flag.

Insect control did not correlate with subsequent alfalfa regrowth however as only Beesgee® treated plots had green regrowth at 7 days post treatment (Fig. 6).

Figure 6-1. Green alfalfa at 7 days post treatment was only noted in Beesgee treated plots.

CONCLUSION

Only alfalfa treated with Beesgee had green alfalfa at 7 days post treatment, indicating that chlorantraniliprole active ingredient provided effective control necessary for alfalfa growth in this field trial. This active ingredient could be used rather than pyrethroid insecticides for granulate cutworm control.

Figure 3-2. Plots were sampled by removing flag leaf(s) and scratching alfalfa stems to find granulate cutworm caterpillars (Fig.4).

Means for each treatment were statistically separated and analyzed using Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) test (JMP Student Edition 19.0.3).

such sample/plot) were counted and recorded. Treatment means were statistically analyzed to determine if significant differences existed. Isocycloseram (Plinazolin technology/ Vertento®) at 2 oz./acre the best initial control, with 64.9% fewer cutworms compared with untreated alfalfa. This insecticide is not yet registered for usage on U.S. alfalfa. Of the registered insecticides evaluated, products containing the active ingredients lambda-cyhalothrin (Warrior® II, Besiege®) or beta-cyfluthrin (Baythroid® XL) resulted in fewest granulate cutworms, with these providing 37-40% fewer than collected from the untreated alfalfa plot samples. The alpha-cypermethrin products (Fastac® CS, Fastac® EC) resulted in a slight reduction on granulate cutworm (5-10%). Alfalfa regrowth was not correlated with initial insect control as only Besiege® treated plots had green regrowth at 7 days post treatment. This product contains both lambda-cyhalothrin and chlorantraniliprole as active ingredients, indicating the latter active ingredient was providing additional benefit than from just lambda-cyhalothrin (Warrior® II) by itself.





2nd Place

EVALUATION OF ORGANIC INSECTICIDES FOR HARLEQUIN BUG MANAGEMENT IN KALE

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Harlequin bug (*Murgantia histrionica*) is an important pest of brassica crops in the later part of the summer in the Mid-Atlantic region, and can cause significant feeding injury that reduces vegetable quality and marketability. Management of this pest is particularly challenging in organic production systems where insecticide options are limited and field-

based efficacy data are scarce. A field trial was conducted in fall 2025 at the University of Maryland Lower Eastern Shore Research and Extension Center in Salisbury, MD, to evaluate several organically approved insecticides for harlequin bug management in kale. Treatments included an untreated control, neem oil, spinosad, and pyganic, arranged in a randomized complete block design. Six insecticide applications were made between August 29 and September 23, and harlequin bug adults, nymphs, and eggs were counted on six plants per plot 3–4 days after application. Neem consistently resulted in significantly fewer harlequin bug nymphs and adults compared to the control throughout the trial. Pyganic and spinosad reduced pest abundance on some sampling dates, when compared to the control. However, kale treated with neem oil exhibited noticeable leaf discoloration due to the neem oil's ability to strip wax from the kale leaves. These results indicate that neem may be an effective organic option for harlequin bug management, though potential impacts on crop appearance could affect marketability.



3rd Place

GINGER PRODUCTION IN THE NORTHEAST: INTERCROPPING IN VARIABLE GROWING ENVIRONMENTS TO MAXIMIZE HARVEST OPPORTUNITIES

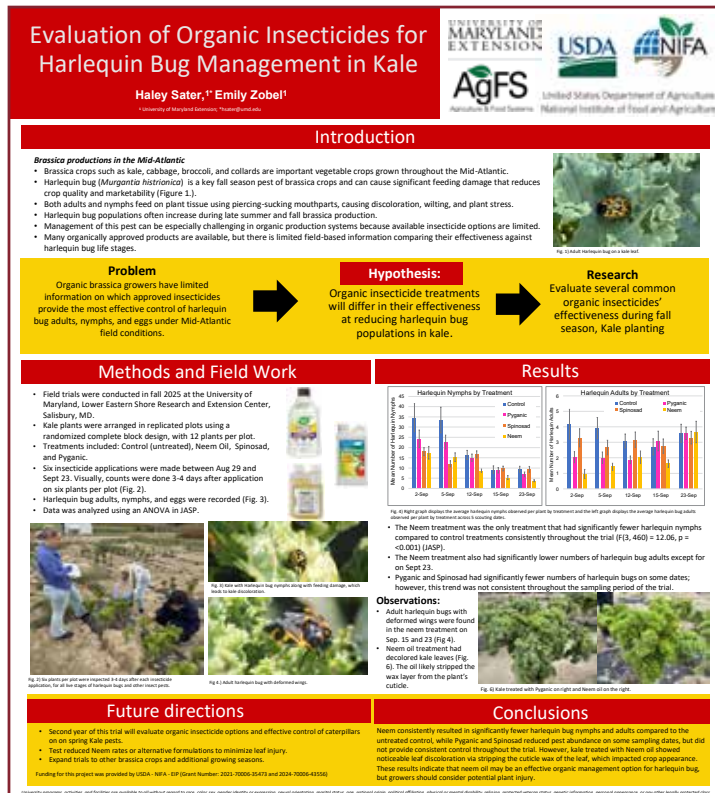
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Baby ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) is a niche crop with demonstrated marketability and high profit potential. While baby ginger has been grown successfully in the Northeast, it typically requires a substantial investment for seed stock and, given the time to harvestable maturity, commitment of a protective growing environment. These cost and



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Ginger Production in the Northeast: Intercropping in Variable Growing Environments to Maximize Harvest Opportunities

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 Alex Sawatzky, MS, Rutgers Gardens Student Farm; William Erickson, PhD, Rutgers Cooperative Extension

Research Justification and Hypotheses

Fresh baby ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) is a niche crop with demonstrated marketability and high profit potential. Added to a diversified vegetable system, baby ginger can offer growers a novel late-season harvest and sale. While baby ginger has been grown successfully in the Northeast, it requires a substantial investment for seed stock and, given the time to harvestable maturity (~200 from free days), commitment of a protected growing environment in cold climates. These cost and time-related barriers to production, which could deter growers from incorporating ginger into their farm systems, might be mitigated by reducing infrastructure costs and increasing revenue through intercropping.

Methods

Ginger rhizomes were grown in select indoor and in a select protected environment for five weeks before transplanting into raised beds and grown to maturity in three different environments: a high tunnel from planting to harvest, in-field with row cover applied late season, and in-field without protective cover. Two additional annual vegetables (green beans and carrots) were interplanted alongside ginger in each of these environments, seeded at the time of ginger transplanting. Green beans and carrots matured for harvest mid-summer; ginger was harvested at maturity in the fall.

Results

Ginger production ranged from 0.78 to 2.45 lbs/ft, with the highest production in the high tunnel. When intercropped with green beans and carrots, ginger was harvested at maturity in the fall.

Conclusions and Future Studies

While high tunnel production had the largest yield, in-field production also generated harvestable crops of baby ginger to sell. Producing ginger in a high tunnel, the established best practice for northeast growers, is the most repeatable and highest-yielding method. Yet, for farmers with limited space or capital to invest, field production of ginger may be feasible.

Future studies might investigate alternative intercropping choices, such as short-season root crops, root crops, or beans. For high tunnel production, heat and humidity tolerant varieties should be selected to thrive in the tropical environment preferred by baby ginger. Studies conducted north of the central New Jersey Climate Zone 7a should further test the viability of field-grown ginger.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to Andrew Geller, Manager Terry, and the Rutgers Gardens Student Farm team for their assistance with the ginger field trials.

References

1. Erickson, W., Sawatzky, A. 2023. Exploring production practices and market potential of baby ginger in the Northeast. *Journal of the Northeast Association of Horticultural Extension Agents*, 2023, 10(1), 1-10.
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time-related barriers to production might be mitigated by reducing infrastructure costs and increasing overall revenue. Intercropping practices incorporating other, shorter-season annual vegetables alongside slower-growing ginger may provide additional revenue throughout the season. Additionally, if ginger productivity could be maintained with lower infrastructure inputs than previously thought, farmers might find value in growing and marketing this niche crop. The objectives of this trial were to 1) evaluate yield of baby ginger, green beans, and carrots from an intercropping system toward maximizing row-foot profitability of production space and 2) measure the productivity of baby ginger and intercropped green beans and carrots across three distinct growing environments to demonstrate potential for reduced infrastructure needs. Ginger was grown in raised beds in three different environments—a high tunnel from planting to harvest, in-field with row cover applied late season, and in-field without protective cover—then harvested at maturity (fall 2025). Two additional annual vegetables (green beans and carrots) were interplanted alongside ginger in each of these environments during the first half of the season then harvested at maturity (mid-summer 2025). While high tunnel ginger production was the most successful (2.45lbs, \$37/ft), in-field production with (0.84lbs, \$12/ft) and without (0.78lbs, \$13/ft) late season row cover also produced harvestable crops. From both in-field beds, green beans (2.78lbs, \$17/ft and 2.65lbs, \$16/ft) and carrots (4.51lbs, \$11/ft and 6.48lbs, \$16/ft) yielded abundant harvests alongside ginger to supplement overall revenue per linear bed foot. These results demonstrate that, though yields are lessened, ginger can be successfully grown with reduced infrastructure in select areas of the Northeast, thus reducing input costs. Increasing revenue by maximizing production space via intercropping, especially in field-grown production systems without a high tunnel, may be a viable option for ginger production among Northeast growers looking to expand specialty crop production and marketing opportunities.

2026 Extension Education Poster Session National Winners



1st Place

POLLINATOR WEBINAR SERIES: FIVE YEARS OF TURNING ONLINE LEARNING INTO ACTION

Tarah Young¹

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The Pollinator Webinar Series was developed to bridge a gap between pollinator research and practical landscape strategies for Minnesota residents. The primary objective was to provide an accessible, high-quality educational experience that inspires successful long-term environmental stewardship and habitat creation. Recognizing Extension must serve both loyal stakeholders and new audiences, this program has served as a critical entry point to the University of Minnesota Extension program pipeline. A multi-modal approach was utilized to accommodate diverse learning styles. A winter webinar series provided accessible research-based content, which was further reinforced by summer field days to provide hands-on, in-person learning to maintain momentum and encourage community connections. To ensure the program remained responsive to participant needs, registration data was analyzed to identify multi-property managers and track the geographic footprint of pollinator work. A voluntary crowdfunding model was implemented to keep the program free and accessible to all. The program reached 3,996 total participants over five years. Of those, 38% attended more than one year of the series, while 18% of the 1,764 registrants in 2026 were new. Over the five years of the series, strong behavior change has been observed. Follow-up data collected during the past three years show that 95% of participants planted more flowering plants, 88% observed increased pollinator activity, and 86% improved existing pollinator

Pollinator Webinar Series:

Five Years of Turning Online Learning Into Action

Tarah Young, Extension Educator, Hubbard County
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

Presenting Issue

Minnesota is home to over 500 species of native bees, along with thousands of other insect pollinators. Pollinators require specialized habitat to support biodiversity, food production, and environmental resilience, and Minnesota landowners are increasingly seeking guidance on how to best create and support that habitat.

Goal: Bridge the gap between research and practice by providing accessible, high-quality pollinator education that inspires long-term stewardship for landowners and managers.

Programmatic Response

Winter Webinar Series:

Series themes over five years of webinar-style multi-day programs:



Summer Field Days:

Webinar participants were invited to summer field days for hands-on learning to reinforce webinar concepts and maintain momentum in behavior change.

Follow-Up Survey:

Distributed in the fall in three of five program years to determine behavior change.

Accessibility:

Utilized crowd-funding during registration to ensure financial barriers did not limit participation or access to information.



Examples of the series in action: Screenshot of a 2024 series webinar (left) and a 2025 field day related to pollinators in woodlands (right).

Audience

In five years, 3,996 participants have been reached. Of those, 38% attended more than one year of the series, while 18% of the 1,764 registrants in 2026 were new.

Audience Analysis: Email addresses, primary residence county, and secondary residence county data were analyzed to determine 1) repeat registrants and 2) impact across Minnesota.

Primary County Residence



Secondary County Residence

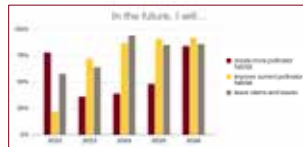


Department of Agricultural and Natural Resource Systems

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Results: Post-Webinar

Over time, 93% of participants shared plans to make immediate changes to landscapes to create or expand pollinator habitat.

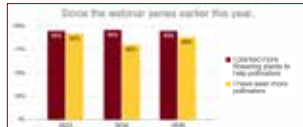


Survey data of intended behavior change following each webinar series from 2022-2026.

Results: Six-month Follow-Up Survey

In three years of follow-up reporting, participants averaged...

- 95% reported planting more flowering plants
- 88% improved existing pollinator habitat
- 49% established new habitat
- 88% observed increased pollinator activity



Survey data of actual behavior change indicated in a follow-up survey six months after the webinar series from 2022-2026.

Broader Impacts

Self-Sustaining Model: Raised \$7,403.72 in participant donations to fund future programing.

Data-Driven Decisions: Using five years of longitudinal data to ensure 2027 outreach remains relevant and impactful.

Broad Footprint: The analysis of multi-property management identifies a new scale of stakeholder impact for Extension.



Photos submitted by participants in follow-up survey. Used with permission.



2nd Place

FROM ROUGH TO REFUGE: ENHANCING WILDLIFE HABITAT ON FLORIDA GOLF COURSES – FIVE YEARS OF EXTENSION IMPACT

Bonnie Wells¹

¹Wells, B. County Extension Director & Natural Resources Agent III, UF/IFAS Extension Osceola County, Florida, 34744

Urban expansion in Florida continues to place increasing pressure on native habitats and biodiversity; however, golf courses—particularly their out-of-play areas—represent

habitat. Additionally, the program raised \$7,403.72 through participant donations. These results imply that digital webinar series can be an effective method for introducing new audiences to Extension, particularly when paired with in-person field days to deepen engagement. The use of deep data analysis in registration reveals that Extension's impact is often broader than a single property, reaching across regional landscapes. Grounding future planning in this longitudinal data ensures that the program remains a relevant, sustainable, and impactful model for environmental education.



FROM ROUGH TO REFUGE: ENHANCING WILDLIFE HABITAT ON FLORIDA GOLF COURSES – FIVE YEARS OF EXTENSION IMPACT

Bonnie C. Wells, DPM, Director and Natural Resources Agent III, University of Florida/IFAS Extension Osceola County, bcwells@ufl.edu

RESULTS

- Reached 1,100+ golf and landscape professionals through workshops, trainings and consultations
- Facilitated implementation of **wildflower plantings, nesting structures, and littoral zone enhancements** across participating courses
- Increased knowledge and adoption of science-based conservation practices within managed golf course landscapes
- Supported 8 Florida golf courses in achieving Audubon International (ACSP) certification since 2020
- Invited to present two national webinars for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA)
- Received national recognition with a National Association of Agricultural Agents' 2023 Search for Excellence Award

SITUATION & PROGRAM NEED

- Urban development in Florida is reducing and fragmenting natural habitats
- Biodiversity is critical for ecosystem services and environmental resilience
- Golf courses provide permanent greenspace within urban landscapes
- Out-of-play areas—often up to 80% of a course—offer significant opportunities for habitat enhancement and conservation
- Audubon International certification recognizes superintendent stewardship, supporting both course management and biodiversity conservation

GOAL STATEMENT

The goal of this program is to engage Florida golf course superintendents through Extension programming to implement sustainable best management practices (BMPs) that enhance biodiversity and support environmental stewardship and certification.

METHODOLOGY

- Delivered educational workshops and trainings, including contributions to the Florida Golf Course BMP Certification program (38 events)
- Conducted hands-on site visits with site-specific recommendations for habitat enhancement (wildflowers, nesting structures, littoral zones) (81 site visits)
- Fostered collaboration with golf industry partners to promote adoption of science-based BMPs
- Integrated applied research, environmental education and field consultation to support on-course implementation
- Served as an Audubon International (ACSP) auditor, guiding courses through certification and recertification

IMPACT

Over five years, this ongoing Extension program has transformed golf course out-of-play areas into valuable habitat—enhancing Florida's natural resources and biodiversity, strengthening superintendent stewardship, and delivering ecological and community benefits within increasingly urbanized landscapes.

1. Bluebird nesting box establishment. 2. On-course research habitat signage. 3. Butterfly milkweed. 4. Audubon International (ACSP) certification. 5. Performing an Audubon International search for excellence award. 6. Littoral zone pond enhancements. Photos by Bonnie C. Wells, DPM

an opportunity for conservation within urban landscapes. Over the past five years, this Extension program partnered with golf course superintendents to implement wildlife-friendly management practices that support biodiversity while maintaining course playability and operational goals. The program combined on-site consultations, habitat planning assistance, demonstration projects, workshops, and statewide Best Management Practices (BMPs) training to help professionals integrate ecological stewardship into daily management. Habitat enhancements included installation of native wildflower plantings such as *Heliothis debilis* and *Asclepias tuberosa* to support pollinators, placement of bird nesting structures, and restoration of littoral zones around golf course water bodies to improve shoreline stability and aquatic habitat. The program reached more than 1,100 golf course professionals statewide and produced measurable outcomes. Since 2020, eight participating golf courses achieved certification through the Audubon International Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses. Participating facilities also increased pollinator habitat acreage, improved shoreline vegetation management, and expanded wildlife nesting opportunities, verified through site visits and certification audits. National recognition included a Search for Excellence award and invited educational webinars for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. These results demonstrate that golf courses can function as valuable conservation corridors when Extension education aligns ecological stewardship with operational goals.



3rd Place

IOWA'S WOMEN MANAGING FARMLAND INCREASE SUSTAINABILITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Madeline Schultz¹, LISA SCARBROUGH²

¹Schultz, M. ISU Extension Specialist, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Iowa, 50011-3611

²Scarbrough, L. Communications Specialist, Iowa, Iowa, 50011-3611

Women landowners and operators have significant roles in Iowa agriculture. They own nearly half (46%) of all farmland,

and are one-third (33%) of all farmers in Iowa. Women make important decisions on three key farmland management issues: leasing, conservation, and succession. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach (ISU) plays a critical role in educating this influential group of agricultural managers. The ISU Farm Management Team led a four-year 'Women Managing Farmland' project to support women farmland owners and operators. The team completed nine local workshops, three local courses, four regional forums, nine statewide conference sessions, eleven webinars, and eleven Ag Decision Maker news articles from 2021 to 2025. These educational programs were attended by 745 in-person participants and 1,212 on-line participants. In 2025, in-person and virtual program participants were invited to reflect on program impacts. Follow-up focus groups were attended by eight women, and a follow-up online survey was completed by 124 women. The team worked with the ISU Research Institute for Studies in Education to conduct the third-party evaluation. Survey results indicated 45% of respondents negotiated new leases, 45% enrolled in a conservation cost-share program, and/or 43% created or updated estate plans. These and other actions taken led to economic benefits. Respondents reported cost savings (43%) and/or added income (48%) because of the educational programs. The most common ranges of savings were \$1,000.01 to \$5,000 (22%), and \$5,000.01 to \$10,000 (31%). The most common ranges of added income were 500.01 to \$1,000 (33%) and \$1,000.01 to \$5,000 (33%). Women reported strong improvements on sustainability measures including increased long-term farm business planning (63%), and increased distribution of land or other farm assets to next generation farmers (42%). Improvements in quality-of-life measures included increased confidence in making farmland decisions (83%) and increased social networks with a supportive

WOMEN MANAGING FARMLAND PROGRAMS
Increase Sustainability and Quality of Life

Madeline Schultz | Lisa Scarbrough
Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Farm Management Team
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ISSUE

Women are key decision-makers in Iowa agriculture. They own **46% of Iowa farmland** and make up **33% of farmers statewide**. Women farmland owners and operators make important decisions related to **land leasing, conservation adoption, and farm succession**. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach plays an important role in supporting this audience with trusted, practical education that helps improve farm outcomes and rural communities.

EXTENSION RESPONSE

From 2021–2025, the ISU Extension and Outreach Farm Management team delivered the **Women Managing Farmland** program to meet the educational needs of women farmland decision-makers.

Educational activities included:

- 9 local workshops
- 4 multi-session courses
- 4 regional forums
- 9 statewide conference presentations
- 11 webinars
- 11 Ag Decision Maker publications

Participation:

- **745** in-person participants
- **1,212** online participants

The program emphasized peer learning, practical tools, and real-world decision

EVALUATION METHODS

In 2025, past participants were invited to reflect on how the program influenced their farmland decisions and quality of life.

- **Focus groups:** 8 participants
- **Online survey:** 124 participants
- **Evaluation partner:** ISU Research Institute for Studies in Education

Data focused on reported changes in management actions, economic outcomes, sustainability practices, and confidence in decision-making.

RESULTS

Farmland Management Actions

- **45%** negotiated new or improved farmland leases
- **45%** enrolled in conservation cost-share programs
- **43%** created or updated estate or succession plans

Economic Impacts

- **43%** reported cost savings
- **48%** reported increased income
- **Most common benefit: \$1,000–\$5,000**

Sustainability Improvements

- **63%** increased long-term farm or land planning
- **42%** improved land or asset transfer to the next generation

Quality of Life Outcomes

- **83%** reported increased confidence in making farmland decisions
- **65%** expanded their agricultural support networks

IMPACT

Women farmland owners and operators are effective change agents when supported with targeted education. Extension programs that strengthen women's knowledge and confidence contribute to:

- More equitable and transparent farmland leasing
- Greater adoption of conservation practices
- Smoother transitions of land to future generations

Supporting women farmland decision-makers advances all three pillars of agricultural sustainability: economic viability, environmental stewardship, and strong rural communities.

agricultural community (65%). Impact: Women farmland owners and operators can be effective change agents for more equitable farmland leasing, adoption of conservation practices, and greater efficiencies in land transition to next generation

farmers. All Iowans benefit when women are supported in improving the three pillars of agricultural sustainability including the economy, environment and community.

NACAA 2026 Communication Award Winners

AUDIO RECORDING



National Winner

BRAINS, BEARS AND BUTCHERY: TALL TALES FROM EXTENSION LIFE WITH DR. GREGG RENTFROW

Knight, C.*¹

¹Knight, C. State Livestock Specialist, University of Maine, Orono, Maine, 04469

Episode 68 of the Maine Farmcast podcast was produced and recorded by Dr. Colt W. Knight, Livestock Specialist with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, in Penobscot County, Maine. Maine Farmcast is a weekly agricultural podcast hosted by Extension livestock specialists and distributed through the University of Maine website, RSS feed, and major podcast platforms including Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Amazon Music, Audible, Pocket Casts, Podcast Addict, Deezer, Player FM, the Podcast Index, Podchaser, and Listen Notes. The program features conversations with agricultural experts from across the country who share research-based insights and practical advice for both new and experienced farmers operating farms of any size. Since its launch, the series has accumulated more than 8,350 downloads and listeners from at least eight countries. This episode was released on August 20, 2025 and received 89 downloads from the host site with over 2 dozen shares on social media. The objective of this episode was to strengthen listener engagement by humanizing Extension professionals

and demonstrating that scientific discussion can be paired with humor and storytelling to maintain audience interest and build trust with agricultural audiences. In this episode, Dr. Knight was joined by longtime collaborator Dr. Gregg Rentfrow to share memorable stories from their careers in Extension and meat science, highlighting the unpredictable and often humorous experiences that occur while working with farmers, livestock, and research programs. The episode was recorded in a campus studio built by the author using Shure SM7B microphones and a Rode Podcaster Pro II audio interface. Dr. Knight composed and performed the program's introductory music using a custom electric guitar he built from reclaimed piano wood and completed editing and post-production using Adobe Premiere and Camtasia. Dr. Knight served as the host, producer, recording engineer, and editor for the episode. Please Judge 0:00-15:00. The Episode can be downloaded here - Episode 68: Brains, Bears and Butchery: Tall Tales from Extension Life with Dr. Gregg Rentfrow - University of Maine Cooperative Extension

BOUND BOOK/ EBOOK



National Winner

HONEY BEE PEST AND DISEASE GUIDE: PRACTICAL INSIGHTS INTO HONEY BEES, THEIR FOES AND THREATS

Sanchez-Jones, M.*¹, Harlow, L.*², Vu, A.*³, Yarborough, J.*⁴, Sullivan, J.*⁵, Bodrey, R.*⁶

¹Sanchez-Jones, M. Commercial Horticulture Agent, UF/IFAS

Extension Alachua County, Newberry, Florida, 32669

²Harlow, L. Horticulture and Small Farms Agent, UF/IFAS

Extension Bradford County, Stark, Florida, 32091

³Vu, A. State Specialized Extension Agent Apiculture, UF/IFAS Entomology & Nematology Department, Gainesville, Florida, 32611

⁴Yarborough, J. Livestock and Natural Resources Agent, UF/IFAS Extension Orange County, Orlando, Florida, 32812

⁵Sullivan, J. Sustainable Ag & Food Systems Agent, UF/IFAS Extension Osceola County, Kissimmee, Florida, 34744

⁶Bodrey, R. Agriculture, Natural Resources and Sea Grant Agent, UF/IFAS Extension Gulf County, Port St. Joe, Florida, 32456

Florida's beekeeping industry supports an estimated 650,000 colonies and roughly 5,000 registered beekeepers, most of whom are hobbyists or sideliners and need accessible, regionally relevant introductory resources. Over the past decade, UF/IFAS Extension has increased beginner-beekeeping offerings but lacked a standalone graphical reference. In response, county and state Extension agents worked together with the objective to provide Florida beginner beekeepers a pocket-sized, waterproof pictorial field guide that improves early recognition and management of honey bee pests and diseases. Agents collected (or sourced) photographs and authored content to produce an 83-page, photo-rich field guide covering equipment, honey bee biology, pest and diseases, predators and threats, signs of infection, treatments and links to expanded resources via QR codes. Prior to publication, the content was reviewed by subject matter experts in Florida and Georgia. The graphic design was completed by UF/IFAS Communications with input from the authors. This is distributed online or in-person through the UF/IFAS bookstore and during Bee College and other beekeeping training events. Following its release in March 2025, the initial printing of 500 copies diminished rapidly, prompting a reprint within 5 months. This reprint provided an opportunity to update resources previously linked to the now-dissolved Honey Bee Health Coalition. So far, 545 guides have been sold. Regional distribution across U.S. regions is South 85% (463 total; 379 in Florida equivalent to 69.5% of total sales), Midwest 8.4% (46), West 4.2% (23) and 2.4% in the northeast (13). To evaluate the impact of this resource, an optional post-purchase Qualtrics survey returned 36 responses. Sixty-seven percent of respondents (24), indicated the guide will help them adopt best management practices and 75% (27) said it assists them in identifying pests and diseases. Respondent contact information will be used for future follow-up surveys. Early sales and positive evaluation responses suggest the guide fills an introductory knowledge gap and supports better decision-making among Florida's beginner beekeepers. Beyond this positive outcome, the authors value the collaborative nature of this project and are actively working on translating this resource and expanding educational outreach for Florida's beekeeping industry.

COMPUTER GENERATED PRESENTATION WITH SCRIPT



National Winner

DEMYSTIFYING THE ECONOMICS OF FERTILITY: HOW RE-PRODUCTION SHAPES PROFITABILITY IN SMALL-RUMINANT OPERATIONS

Lutes, J.*¹

¹Lutes, J. Agricultural Business and Policy Field Specialist, University of Missouri, Pineville, Missouri, 64856

This presentation was developed as the culminating session of the 12-part Winter Small Ruminant Certificate: Advanced Reproductive Management for Goats & Sheep. Its purpose was to anchor the production options and lessons participants learned throughout the series into the economic reality of remaining profitable, helping producers evaluate whether reproductive investments make financial sense for their specific operation. Using the University of Missouri Extension sheep and meat goat planning budgets, which the presenter authors and updates annually, original analysis modeled how breeding rates, weaning rates, and seasonal marketing timing affect total revenue, costs, and breakeven price per pound across both 50-doe goat herds and 50-ewe sheep flocks. Key findings demonstrated that a 10% drop in breeding rate costs producers \$1,600–\$1,900 in lost profit, that goats and sheep require minimum weaning rates of 130% and 170% respectively to break even, and that market timing can shift price received by 15–27% relative to the annual average. Three audience polling questions were embedded throughout to assess participants' understanding of key concepts. The presentation was created entirely by the presenter using Microsoft PowerPoint, with slides and speaker script developed from original budget analysis. It was delivered live via Zoom on February 23, 2026, reaching 111 participants representing at least 32 U.S. states, Canada, Mexico, and other international attendees. The recorded session was uploaded to YouTube and is publicly available for continued access by producers, educators, and industry stakeholders at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONoal2mY410>.

PERSONAL COLUMN



National Winner

DAIRY STAR ARTICLES

Brenda Miller¹

¹Miller, B. Extension Educator, University of Minnesota, Long Prairie

The Dairy Star is a newspaper publication based out of Sauk Centre, MN. The paper is available to read in printed form and online. It reaches over 5,000 dairy farms and industry affiliates. These articles were printed for paper distribution in Zone 1 which includes 5 states: North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, and Nebraska. The articles are to provide farmers with timely and useful information. “Refuel with Milk” was printed in the August 23, 2025 edition (page 31). All farmers are athletes. This article is about how milk fuels a person’s body through all of the natural nutrients (vitamins, minerals, etc) it provides. The article explains the importance of taking care of your body, especially during strenuous times, to avoid fatigue and potentially hazardous situations. This goes for both mental and physical health aspects. Farming is not a 9-5 job but rather an endurance adventure in which farmers have to be sharp and aware in whatever environment they are working in. “Choose Your Team Wisely” was printed on February 14, 2026 (page 31). It discusses the importance of having the correct people on your team and placing them in the job that best fits their strengths and abilities. A teammate is more than just a warm body. They have the power to make you or break you (or your farming operation). Choosing good people for your farm requires strategy, communication, mentoring, and follow-up. A good team can greatly improve the overall efficiency and safety of your farm. The articles are edited by state Extension staff and then submitted to the Dairy Star for publishing.

FEATURE STORY



National Winner

FROM HAZARDS TO HABITATS: MANAGING GOLF COURSE LAKES AND PONDS FOR WATER QUALITY, WILDLIFE AND AESTHETICS

Bonnie Wells¹

¹Wells, B. County Extension Director & Natural Resources Agent III, UF/IFAS Extension Osceola County, Kissimmee, Florida, 34744

This feature article, From Hazards to Habitats: Managing Golf Course Lakes and Ponds for Water Quality, Wildlife and Aesthetics, was published June 2025 in the Summer issue (Volume 43, Number 4, pages 24–25) of Florida Turf Digest. The objective was to educate turf professionals on lake and aquatic Best Management Practices (BMPs) that improve water quality, reduce maintenance costs, and enhance wildlife habitat on golf courses, while also bringing awareness to the environmental stewardship practices golf courses are implementing across Florida. The purpose was to translate research-based science into practical, applied guidance for golf course superintendents and landscape professionals managing aquatic systems, and to highlight how BMP adoption supports sustainability, regulatory compliance, and positive public perception of golf courses as environmental assets rather than purely recreational spaces. The article explains ecological lake zones, water quality challenges, biological controls, and BMP implementation strategies that shift ponds from “hazards” to functional ecosystems supporting biodiversity. The primary audience included golf course superintendents and commercial landscape professionals across Florida. I researched and wrote the article using Extension resources, field experience, and applied science principles; graphic layout and final design were completed professionally by the Florida Turfgrass Association communications team. The article was distributed through statewide print circulation and published online at <https://www.ftga.org>, with approximately 6,000 print copies distributed annually plus digital readership.

NEWSLETTER



National Winner

CLOVER COUNTY NEWSLETTER FOR CHAFFEE/LAKE COUNTY 4-H

Rebecca Sheriff Chrestensen¹

¹Sheriff, R. 4-H Specialist, , Salida, Colorado, 81021

The Clover County News Chaffee/Lake County 4-H Newsletter is a monthly communication tool developed to inform and connect 4-H youth, families, and volunteers with Colorado State University Extension and local 4-H programming. The objective of the newsletter is to deliver timely program information, highlight educational opportunities, and promote leadership, service, and project engagement among youth participants. Each issue provides clear guidance on upcoming events, project deadlines, workshops, and county and state opportunities to help members successfully navigate the 4-H program year. The target audience includes enrolled 4-H youth members, parents and guardians, volunteer leaders, and community partners in Chaffee and Lake Counties, Colorado. The current audience population includes approximately 140 enrolled 4-H youth members and 28 adult volunteers, in addition to family members and prospective participants who access the newsletter. The two issues submitted for this entry include the January 2026 and February 2026 editions of the newsletter. Each issue was distributed electronically via email to the full Chaffee/Lake County 4-H mailing list and shared through Extension communication channels. Digital distribution ensures that families across geographically large rural counties receive consistent and timely program updates. Methods used to develop the newsletter included compiling information from Extension program calendars, county and state 4-H deadlines, volunteer leader updates, and youth program opportunities. Content was written and edited by the applicant and formatted using Venngage, a digital design platform that emphasizes accessibility and visual communication. The newsletter incorporates photos, hyperlinks, and digital resources to enhance reader engagement and improve access to educational

materials. Topics featured in the newsletters include project opportunities, scholarships, community service events, leadership activities, educational workshops, and program reminders. The newsletter strengthens communication and engagement within the county 4-H program by providing a consistent, centralized source of information for youth and volunteers. As a result, families remain informed about key deadlines and learning opportunities that support successful project completion and participation in county and state programs. Rebecca Sheriff Chrestensen served as the primary author, editor, and coordinator for the newsletter's development and distribution. Production costs were minimal due to the digital format, allowing Extension to communicate efficiently with rural families.

EDUCATIONAL VIDEO RECORDINGS



National Winner

YEAR ROUND GARDENING SERIES: A STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO BUILDING A RAIN BARREL

Tom Butzler¹, Baxter, P.²

¹Butzler, T. Horticulture Educator, , Mill Hall, Pennsylvania, 17751

²Baxter, P. Producer/Director, WPSU Penn State, University Park, Pennsylvania, 16802

WPSU, the public media station licensed to Penn State and operated through Penn State Outreach, plays an important role in connecting the university's research-based expertise with communities across central Pennsylvania. Through its longstanding partnership with Penn State Extension, WPSU produces the Year-Round Gardening series, an ongoing collection of short, instructional videos designed to give gardeners of all experience levels practical, science-grounded tips they can use throughout the entire calendar year. The series features Extension Educators, specialists, and Master Gardeners sharing timely guidance on a wide variety of topics. As part of this collaborative effort, WPSU sought to

create a do-it-yourself instructional video demonstrating how to build a simple, effective rain barrel—an increasingly popular project for homeowners interested in water conservation and sustainable gardening. I co-produced this segment with WPSU producer Patrick Baxter and was involved in every stage of its development. The process began with early conversations to define the project’s scope and outline the educational goals. From these discussions, I drafted a rough script detailing the construction steps and key teaching points. I then procured all necessary materials, including the rain barrel, tools, fittings, and other supplies, and secured an appropriate site that would work for both the construction process and the final installation shots. Before filming, I walked the videographer through a complete mock-up of the build to determine exactly what needed to be captured on camera. This included identifying where the videographer should stand, which angles would best illustrate each step, and what close-ups were essential. Once production began, I demonstrated each stage of the rain barrel construction on camera, guiding viewers through drilling, assembly, fitting, and installation. After filming wrapped, I assisted in refining the final script to align with the edited footage, ensuring that the narration matched the visual sequence and instructional goals. I then recorded the voice-over narration in the WPSU studio, providing clear explanations for each step. The finished segment, *Build Your Own Rain Barrel*, has been well-received. Since its release on June 26, 2025, it has received 4,296 views. The video can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUzrNlaKycr&t=23s>.

FACT SHEET



National Winner

PROPER PRUNING FUNDAMENTALS FACT SHEET Justin Stefanski¹

¹Stefanski, J. Extension Agent II, University of Tennessee, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, 37129

Proper Pruning Fundamentals is an educational fact sheet created to provide clear, practical pruning guidance for homeowners and landscape professionals. Because pruning

is one of the most common horticulture questions, and many existing resources are either too technical or lack clear demonstrations, this fact sheet presents essential pruning principles in a concise, highly visual format. Topics include proper pruning timing, tool selection and sanitation, branch anatomy, correct cut placement, the three-cut method for large limbs, and common pruning mistakes. The publication features entirely original written content and hand-drawn illustrations created by the author to clearly demonstrate proper techniques and improve client understanding. Since its release in 2025, the fact sheet has been widely distributed through the author’s Extension programming efforts, including pruning workshops and client site visits, and has been made available in both print and online formats. An estimated 1,500–2,000 copies have been distributed to homeowners, landscape professionals, and community members.

PUBLICATION



National Winner

ORANGE COUNTY COMMUNITY GARDEN BEGINNER’S GUIDE FOR BUILDING SUSTAINABLE URBAN FOOD SYSTEMS Kevin Camm¹, Gardner, C.*², Chairez, C.*³

¹Camm, K. County Extension Director, UF/IFAS Extension Orange County, Orlando, Florida, 32812

²Gardner, C. Urban Horticulture Extension Agent, UF/IFAS Extension Orange County, Orlando, Florida, 32812

³Chairez, C. Residential Urban Horticulture Agent/ Master Gardener Volunteer Coordinator, UF/IFAS Extension Orange County, Orlando, Florida, 32812

The Orange County Community Garden Beginner’s Guide was developed to provide residents, homeowners’ associations, schools, nonprofit organizations, and local governments with a single, research-based, step-by-step resource for planning, launching, and sustaining community gardens in a large urban county. Created and released to the public in 2025, the 27-page, full-color publication addresses site selection, zoning and land access, soil testing, water management, Best

Management Practices (BMPs), funding strategies, insurance and liability, organizational governance, and seasonal planting charts specific to Orange County's climate. The publication was developed, written, and produced in-house by Extension faculty, utilizing UF/IFAS research, original photography, and professional layout. Extension agents served as lead authors, responsible for content development, coordination, and final editorial direction. The guide was distributed electronically through the UF/IFAS Extension Orange County website, direct email communications, QR codes, and partner agencies for use in community garden development, educational workshops, and municipal planning, reaching residents, community organizations, and county departments across Orange County. The publication has been adopted as the county's standard reference for community garden proposals and start-ups, helping reduce barriers related to land approval, risk management, and technical knowledge while positioning UF/IFAS Extension as the authoritative source for urban agriculture guidance.

WEBSITE/ONLINE CONTENT



National Winner

PERENNIAL FORAGE SPECIES SELECTION TOOL **Mercedes Moffett¹, Salzer, T.^{*2}**

¹Moffett, M. Extension Educator - Carlton County, UMN Extension, Carlton, Minnesota, 55718

²Salzer, T. Extension Educator - St. Louis County, UMN Extension, Duluth, Minnesota, 55802

To uniformly address the frequent inquiry, "What forage should I plant?", University of Minnesota Extension educators developed the Perennial Forage Species Selection Tool. This web-based decision-support system provides a reliable, research-backed starting point for forage planning, accounting for the high variability in site conditions and management goals. The tool's framework is built upon the Specification Guide Sheet for Pasture and Hay Planting (NRCS, 2009) and is further informed by three decades of specialized professional

and personal experience from Extension educators and forage producers. Users are guided through an interactive decision tree featuring key variables: soil type, site drainage, intended use, preferred species (grass, legume, or mix), and desired management intensity. Recommendations are further refined by livestock species, including specialized sub-categories for beef and dairy systems. By synthesizing these inputs, the tool generates customized species and seeding rate suggestions tailored to an operation's specific environment. These results serve as a foundation for deeper consultation with Extension and other agricultural professionals, integrating soil test results and long-term production goals. Developed in 2024 in collaboration with UMN Extension Learning Technologies, the tool was available online in January 2025, and officially launched to Extension colleagues in April 2025. Since its inception, the tool has assisted over 600 users nationwide, demonstrating its value as a scalable resource for producers and agricultural professionals alike. Early outcomes reported by producers include increased decision-making confidence, reduced species selection guesswork, and improved plant stand establishment. The submitting authors serve as project directors and continue to manage the framework data and promote the tool as a primary resource for evidence-based forage selection.

LEARNING MODULE / NOTEBOOK



National Winner

MAKING THE MOST OF EACH ACRE WORKBOOK **Gabrielle Bolwerk¹, LaCanne, C.^{*2}, Florentino, S.^{*3}**

¹Bolwerk, G. Water Resources and Soil Health Educator, University of Minnesota Extension, Cloquet, Minnesota, 55720

²LaCanne, C. Crops Educator, University of Minnesota Extension, Andover, Minnesota, 55304

³Florentino, S. Alternative Livestock Systems Educator, University of Minnesota Extension, Mankato, Minnesota, 56001

By integrating both crops and livestock on the same acres, producers can improve soil health, increase farm financial resilience, potentially reduce synthetic fertilizer applications on crops, and fill seasonal gaps in livestock forage sources. To help educate Minnesota farmers about the benefits and implementation of crop and livestock integration, a group of Extension educators created a workshop series and accompanying workbook to provide education and engagement around integration topics. The objective of the “Making the most of each acre” workbook is to provide information summaries and interactive learning and planning activities for farmers attending crop and livestock integration workshops, relevant to both crop and livestock farmers. University of Minnesota Extension educators wrote and designed the workbook using Canva, professionally printed as a 24-page, 8.5”x11” booklet. Physical copies of the workbooks were distributed to 29 participants and 6 educators across two workshops in January and February 2026, where Extension educators presented on soil health, integration economics, cover crops, and livestock management for integrated crop and livestock systems. After the presentations, participants engaged in four case study activities, working collaboratively with other attendees and then sharing their answers with the larger group, then filled out a resource inventory and planning worksheet to connect the information they learned to actions they can take on their own farms. The workbooks were well-received, with one evaluation respondent describing the workbook as world-class, easy to understand, visually beautiful, with case studies that encouraged discussion, collaboration, and working through real solutions together. Using the workbooks, the educators were able to effectively engage the audience, leading to reported knowledge gains and intent to adopt crop and livestock integration practices.

PUBLISHED PHOTO



National Winner

FLEA BEETLES ON CANOLA **Patrick Wagner¹**

¹Wagner, P. Entomology Field Specialist, SDSU Extension, Rapid City

The photo was taken in a canola field at the West River Research Farm near Sturgis, South Dakota. It was published on June 9, 2025 in an article coauthored for the SDSU Extension website. The caption for this photo was “Crucifer flea beetles on canola.” The estimated outreach for the published article was 30,865 unique individuals. It was also circulated in the June 10th edition of the SDSU Extension Pest & Crop Newsletter, which is distributed via email to approximately 3,000 weekly subscribers. The primary audience was canola growers in South Dakota during the 2025 growing season. Flea beetles are a major pest of canola and several other crops, typically having two generations per year, spring and summer, with populations thriving during periods of dry and sunny weather. The main concern with flea beetles occurs early in the season when they can rapidly defoliate emerging plants; late-season feeding is also a problem, as the summer generation will feed on the leaves, stems, flowers, and developing pods. The purpose of the published photo and article was to raise awareness of flea beetles and how to identify and effectively manage an infestation.

EVENT PROMOTIONAL PACKAGE



National Winner

CHA LANDSCAPE SHORT COURSE PROMO PACKAGE **Haley Treadway¹, Ottinger, W.^{*2}, Orellana, R.^{*3}**

¹Treadway, H. Agriculture & Natural Resource Agent, , Chattanooga, Tennessee, 37416

²Ottinger, W. Sustainability Educator, University of Georgia Extension, Griffin, Georgia, 30223

³Orellana, R. Urban Water Agent, University of Georgia Extension, Griffin, Georgia, 30223

This team developed a comprehensive promotional package for the Chattanooga Landscape Short Course to increase awareness, accessibility, and participation among green industry professionals in southeast Tennessee and north Georgia, including turfgrass managers, arborists, nursery

professionals, and landscape architects. The objective was to expand outreach to both English- and Spanish-speaking audiences, strengthen regional partnerships, and promote high-quality professional development opportunities offering continuing education credits through organizations such as the American Society of Landscape Architects, International Society of Arboriculture, Tennessee Department of Agriculture, and Georgia Department of Agriculture. This effort addressed the need for inclusive, bilingual communication and improved access to Extension programming for a diverse and evolving workforce. The lead author developed the program website using WordPress to provide a centralized, user-friendly location for registration, sponsor recognition, speaker information, and credential details. The promotional flyer was created collaboratively, with one team member developing the English version

and another designing the Spanish version, while the lead author coordinated content, messaging, and distribution strategies. Materials were distributed through targeted email campaigns to over 200 regional stakeholders and industry professionals, and digital promotion was conducted through Facebook and Instagram, including a Spanish-language post with paid boosting to enhance reach and engagement among underrepresented audiences. Physical Spanish-language flyers were also distributed through La Paz Chattanooga to strengthen workforce and community connections. This integrated communication strategy successfully reached more than 17,000 individuals according to Meta analytics and improved visibility of Extension programming, industry partnerships, and educational opportunities, strengthening regional collaboration between University of Tennessee Extension and University of Georgia Extension.

NACAA 2026 Search For Excellence Award Winners

Search For Excellence in 4-H Programming



National Winner

A LAND REMEMBERED: CONNECTING FLORIDA YOUTH TO RANCHING, CONSERVATION, AND AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE
Bridget Stice¹, Bennett, L.^{*2}, Gill, K.^{*3}, Williams, A.^{*4}, Mauch, S.⁵

¹Stice, B. Extension Agent - Livestock IV, UF/IFAS Extension, Bartow, Florida, 33831-9005

²Bennett, L. Extension Agent - Agriculture, UF/IFAS Extension, Dade City, Florida, 33523

³Gill, K. Extension Agent - Livestock, UF/IFAS Extension, Arcadia, Florida, 34266

⁴Williams, A. Extension Agent - Small Farms & Alternative Enterprises, UF/IFAS Extension, Seffner, Florida, 33584

⁵Mauch, S. Extension Agent - 4-H Youth Development, UF/IFAS Extension, Seffner, Florida, 33584

Florida's ranchlands are among the largest remaining working landscapes in the state, supporting wildlife habitat, protecting water resources, and producing food for a growing population, but many youth have limited awareness of how agriculture, land stewardship, and food systems are connected. To address this, UF/IFAS Extension developed *A Land Remembered: Where Cattle, Conservation, and Beef Come Together*, a six-week interdisciplinary youth education program for fourth-grade classrooms, aimed at increasing student understanding of Florida's ranching heritage, agricultural systems, and environmental stewardship while strengthening literacy skills aligned with Florida B.E.S.T. ELA standards. Teaching methods combined literature-based instruction, experiential learning, guided discussion, and inquiry-based activities using *A Land Remembered - Student Edition, Volume 1*, a historical fiction novel following the MacIvey family through pioneer life and the early cattle industry in Florida. Program activities included guided reading, vocabulary development, Florida geography mapping, journal writing, and comparisons between pioneer cattle practices and modern ranching strategies, and students also participated in a five-day livestream of the Great Florida Cattle Drive for a virtual field experience. The program reached 728 classrooms across Florida, engaging 12,025 students, with teachers reporting an average student knowledge gain of 1.64 points on a four-point scale across nine learning objectives, with the largest gains in understanding Florida's cattle industry, how Florida's environment shaped pioneer life, and how human actions impact the environment.

Search for Excellence in Agriculture Awareness and Appreciation



NATIONAL WINNER

REIMAGINING FARM TOURS: INCREASING AGRICULTURE AWARENESS AND APPRECIATION THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT CREATORS

Morgan Pinkerton¹, Eason, H.^{*2}, Smith, M.^{*3}, Yarborough, J.^{*4}, Camm, K.^{*5}, Michael, S.⁶

¹Pinkerton, M. Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Agent, University of Florida/IFAS Extension Seminole County, Sanford, Florida, 32773

²Eason, H. Commercial Horticulture Agent, UF/IFAS Extension Orange County, Sanford, Florida, 32812

³Smith, M. Commercial Crop Production and Food Systems Agent, UF/IFAS Extension Lake County, Tavares, Florida, 32778

⁴Yarborough, J. Livestock and Natural Resources Agent, UF/IFAS Extension Seminole and Orange County, Sanford, Florida, 32773

⁵Camm, K. County Extension Director, UF/IFAS Extension Orange County, Orlando, Florida, 32812

⁶Michael, S. County Extension Director, UF/IFAS Extension Seminole County, Sanford, Florida, 32773

Central Florida continues to experience rapid urbanization, contributing to farmland loss and a growing disconnect between residents and agricultural producers, and a 2024 needs assessment identified agricultural literacy as a critical issue for sustaining local farms and food systems. In response, University of Florida/IFAS Extension partnered with Orlando North to modernize the long-standing Seminole County Farm Tour by engaging social media content creators as learners and communicators, aiming to improve public understanding of local agriculture, provide creators with science-based information, broaden audience reach through creator platforms, and expand creators' awareness of Extension and digital collaboration. In 2025, the two-day multicounty

tour featured a livestock operation, wholesale nursery, and specialty crop farms, with content creators engaging with farmers, Extension agents, and agricultural partners to learn about production systems, community contributions, and sustainability challenges, and the tour also incorporated cultural and culinary components, including collaboration with a local museum and chef. Creators documented their experiences through posts, videos, and storytelling tailored to their audiences. Within eight months of the tour, creator content generated more than 240,000 views and achieved a 12.3% engagement rate, greatly exceeding social media industry benchmarks of roughly 2.5%, and the program also generated over \$15,000 in sponsorships and in-kind support. Additional outcomes included new partnerships between farms and local culinary professionals, expanded cross-marketing efforts among participating producers, and increased visibility of Extension programs, illustrating how Extension can leverage partnerships with social media content creators to expand agricultural awareness and support resilient local food systems.

Search for Excellence in Consumer or Commercial Horticulture



NATIONAL WINNER

LANDSCAPE UNIVERSITY: ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES IN FLORIDA'S GREEN INDUSTRY

Morgan Pinkerton¹, Eason, H.^{*2}, Moffis, B.^{*3}

¹Pinkerton, M. Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Agent, University of Florida/IFAS Extension Seminole County, Sanford, Florida, 32773

²Eason, H. Commercial Horticulture Agent, UF/IFAS Extension Orange County, Orlando, Florida, 32812

³Moffis, B. Commercial Horticulture Agent, UF/IFAS Extension Lake County, Tavares, Florida, 32778

Florida's nursery and landscape industries generate \$25.4 billion in sales and support 242,000 jobs annually, and many professionals in the green industry hold state pesticide

and/or fertilizer licenses requiring renewal every one to four years with continuing education units. While the COVID-19 pandemic initially increased demand for virtual CEU opportunities, post-pandemic needs assessments confirmed the ongoing need for online Extension programs tailored to this audience. In response, three Extension agents launched Landscape University, an annual six-week webinar series delivering interdisciplinary training on integrated pest management and sustainable landscaping best practices, running from January to February during the industry's slow season and covering topics including weed management, pollinators, pruning, palms, agroecology, and composting. Each webinar featured expert presentations, real-world case studies, interactive polling, and live Q&A. From 2021-2026, Landscape University engaged 1,413 live participants and issued 857 CEUs, with an additional 195 views of recorded sessions on YouTube. Post-webinar surveys showed that 93.8% (839/894) of respondents increased their knowledge, with an average gain of +1.14 on a 5-point scale, and 6-month follow-up surveys found 93.3% (70/75) of respondents adopted at least one learned practice since attending. The success of Landscape University highlights the effectiveness of virtual Extension programming in delivering critical professional development, enhancing workforce knowledge, promoting sustainable landscape practices, and supporting professional licensure compliance.

Search for Excellence in Crop Production



NATIONAL WINNER

UF PEANUT FIELD DAY

Ethan Carter¹, Mauldin, M.^{*2}, Waters, K.^{*3}, Leonard, D.^{*4}, Tillman, B.⁵

¹Carter, E. Regional Crop IPM Agent, UF/IFAS Extension, Marianna, Florida, 32448

²Mauldin, M. Washington County Ag Agent, UF/IFAS Extension, Chipley, Florida, 32428

³Waters, K. Holmes County Ag Agent & County Extension

Director, UF/IFAS Extension, Bonifay, Florida, 32425

⁴Leonard, D. Calhoun County Ag Agent & County Extension Director, UF/IFAS Extension, Blountstown, Florida, 32424

⁵Tillman, B. UF Peanut Breeder, UF/IFAS, Marianna, Florida, 32446

The UF Peanut Field Day is a long-standing educational event held annually at the UF/IFAS North Florida Research and Education Center in Marianna. Jackson County, where the program occurs, is the largest peanut producing county in the state, with roughly 40,000 planted acres annually, and considerable peanut acreage in the surrounding counties makes NFREC the ideal location for the event. The event is co-chaired by the Regional Crop Integrated Pest Management Agent and the UF Peanut Breeder, with local Extension agents comprising the planning and implementation team and often serving as presenters. The core of the event is the field tour, consisting of six 25-minute in-field presentations relating to all aspects of peanut production, and the program has extensive reach with farmers in the region, averaging 170 attendees annually over the past three years. In recent years, the planning team has increased its focus on data collection and quantification of economic impact: over the past three years, 96% of survey respondents have reported a knowledge gain, 78% have reported making a practice change, and 82% have experienced an economic benefit, totaling \$223,630 as a result of attending the event.

Search for Excellence in Environmental Quality, Forestry and Natural Resources



NATIONAL WINNER

FIRST FRIDAYS WITH FLORIDA FIRST DETECTOR: A STATE-WIDE INVASIVE SPECIES WEBINAR PROGRAM

Morgan Pinkerton¹, McCormick, K.^{*2}, Hodges, A.³

¹Pinkerton, M. Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Agent, University of Florida/IFAS Extension Seminole County,

Sanford, Florida, 32773

²McCormick, K. Residential Horticulture Agent and Master Gardener Volunteer Coordinator, University of Florida/IFAS Extension Seminole County, Sanford, Florida, 32773

³Hodges, A. Extension Scientist Director, Doctor of Plant Medicine, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, 32611

Invasive species pose significant threats to agriculture, horticulture, natural ecosystems, and public health, with estimated annual U.S. losses nearing \$1.2 trillion, and Florida's climate, year-round plant growth, high tourism volume, and international trade elevate exposure to invasive species introduction and spread. To address this, University of Florida/IFAS Extension Seminole County partnered with Florida First Detector to develop First Fridays with Florida First Detector, a statewide webinar series designed to expand preventive education, strengthen early detection capacity, and support responsible management practices, using invasive species as a unifying topic that brings together farmers, green-industry professionals, land managers, natural resource practitioners, Master Gardener Volunteers, homeowners, and more. Since August 2022, the program has delivered 23 unique topics within a structured two-year curriculum cycle and is now in its second iteration, with each one-hour session offered free of charge and typically qualifying for continuing education units in up to 13 Florida pesticide license categories. Webinars incorporate closed captioning, live translation, interactive polls, and live Q&A, with sessions recorded and archived for on-demand viewing, and promotional materials such as flyers, blogs, and monthly social media graphics have reached over 300,000 individuals. Since the program started, the webinars have drawn 2,760 participants, issued more than 1,954 CEUs, and generated over 12,240 views on recap blogs and recordings. From 2022-2025, 95.9% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they understood the topics, a 31.1% increase from before the webinars, and 96.4% self-reported increased knowledge on invasive species, with six-month follow-up surveys showing 99.3% adoption of at least one practice. The series has contributed to securing over \$270,000 in grant funds to support invasive species education, demonstrating a scalable virtual education model that Extension programs can readily adapt to statewide audiences.



Search for Excellence in Farm and Ranch Business Management



NATIONAL WINNER

SURVIVING HIGH CATTLE PRICES

Ken Kelley¹, Baker, H.^{*2}, Runge, M.^{*3}, Fischer, M.^{*4}

¹Kelley, K. Regional Extension Agent, Auburn University, Brewton, Alabama, 36426-8149

²Baker, H. State Specialized Extension Agent, University of Florida IFAS, Ona, Florida, 33865

³Runge, M. Extension Professor, Auburn University, Auburn University, Alabama, 36849

⁴Fischer, M. Livestock and Forage Economist, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina, 29634

The U.S. cattle industry is operating in a historically unprecedented market environment: as of January 1, 2026, the U.S. cattle and calf inventory stood at 86.2 million head, the smallest total herd in roughly 75 years, with beef cow numbers and calf crops also at multi-decade lows. Tight supplies combined with resilient domestic and global beef demand have resulted in record cattle prices and increased volatility across all sectors of the beef supply chain, creating an urgent need for Extension professionals to help producers and industry stakeholders adapt management, marketing, and investment strategies. Surviving High Cattle Prices was a multi-state, multi-disciplinary Extension initiative designed to build Extension capacity during this high-price, tight-supply phase of the cattle cycle, beginning with a national symposium that brought together livestock economists, forage and animal scientists, industry leaders, policymakers, and producers to examine how the current cycle differs from historical patterns. The symposium fostered new multistate collaborations that produced rigorous papers addressing beef demand and industry margins, import dynamics, risk management and profit allocation, operational resilience, integrated crop-livestock systems, and genetics and reproduction economics, forming the foundation of a six-week train-the-trainer webinar series for Extension professionals nationwide. Through live

instruction, recorded modules, and applied case studies, agents and specialists increased their knowledge of cattle cycle dynamics, forage valuation, value of gain and cost of gain concepts, basis and price relationships, and risk-management strategies, with evaluation results demonstrating substantial gains in knowledge, confidence, and preparedness to deliver producer-focused programming. By strengthening Extension professionals' ability to translate complex market and biological information into practical decision-making tools, the program equips Extension to guide producers toward improved grazing and forage utilization, reduced hay dependence, disciplined use of profits, and strategic genetic and reproductive decisions during this historically tight cattle cycle.

Search for Excellence in Livestock Production



NATIONAL WINNER

STRENGTHENING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF SOUTHEAST OKLAHOMA CATTLE OPERATIONS

Crystal Ashalintubbi-Shipman¹, Clawson, S.², Whitworth, B.³, Pugh, B.⁴

¹Ashalintubbi-Shipman, C. Latimer County Ag/4-H Educator, Oklahoma State University Extension, Wilburton, Oklahoma, 74578

²Clawson, S. District Ag Economics Specialist, Oklahoma State University Extension, Muskogee, Oklahoma, 74401

³Whitworth, B. State Animal Health Specialist, Oklahoma State University Extension, Ada, Oklahoma, 74820

⁴Pugh, B. State Forage Specialist, Oklahoma State University Extension, McAlester, Oklahoma, 74501

Oklahoma ranks among the top five states in cattle inventory, with 4.70 million head reported in the most recent USDA-NASS survey, and cattle and calf sales representing the state's most significant agricultural enterprise. Cattle producers across Southeast Oklahoma have faced compounding

challenges in the past decade, including multi-year drought, common and emerging parasite threats, market volatility, rising input costs, and a widespread absence of succession planning, all of which threaten the long-term viability of local operations. Through a partnership with the Latimer County Cattlemen's Association, a program was built to help producers increase knowledge, improve decision-making, and adopt proven best management practices, while building producer confidence in utilizing available resources and deepening the relationship between local cattlemen and the OSU Extension office. Working alongside specialists in economics, animal health, and forage production, the team delivered multi-session workshops, a multi-agency Fall Gathering, and interactive applied learning activities covering general pasture management and recovery after drought, cattle parasite identification and control, Livestock Risk Protection insurance, market and tax strategies, and ranch estate planning. Pre- and post-assessments documented an average knowledge gain of 57% across all topics, with increases as high as 120% in LRP insurance and 91% in estate planning; 78% of participants adopted or plan to adopt pasture recovery practices, 67% improved parasite monitoring and control, and 100% of respondents reported expected increases in profitability or reduced financial risk. Through targeted workshops, interactive learning, and strong multi-agency collaboration, this program equipped 120 producers across five counties with the tools, knowledge, and agency connections necessary to strengthen the resilience and long-term sustainability of ranch operations throughout the region.

Search for Excellence in Sustainable Agriculture



NATIONAL WINNER

THE ART OF SUMMER SAUSAGE: CRAFT, CURE, & CREATE **Reed Graham¹**

¹Graham, R. CEA for Agriculture & Natural Resources, , Jackson, Kentucky, 41339

The Art of Summer Sausage: Craft, Cure & Create is a hands-on educational workshop designed to teach participants the traditional craft of making summer sausage from start to finish. Open to both adults and youth, the program introduces participants to the fundamentals of meat selection, grinding, seasoning, curing, stuffing, and smoking, giving attendees practical knowledge of the steps involved in producing flavorful, high-quality summer sausage while learning the science behind meat preservation. A key component of the workshop is a collaborative partnership with Family and Consumer Sciences, who lead the food safety portion of the program, focusing on proper meat handling, safe curing practices, temperature control, and sanitation procedures. Over the past three years, the program has reached more than 400 participants across five counties in Southeast Kentucky, attracting a diverse audience including families, youth, hunters, and livestock producers interested in learning practical meat processing and food preservation skills. The workshop has also demonstrated economic benefits for local producers: one local farmer who participated has begun adding value to their freezer beef business by utilizing surplus ground beef to produce summer sausage products, creating an additional revenue stream while reducing waste and offering customers a unique, locally produced product. By combining hands-on instruction, food safety education, youth engagement, and real-world agricultural applications, this program helps preserve traditional food skills while supporting local agriculture and entrepreneurship.

Search for Excellence in Young, Beginning, or Small Farmers/Ranchers



NATIONAL WINNER

HEROES TO HIVES IN MISSOURI

Travis Harper¹, Funkenbusch, K.^{*2}, Fuller, J.³, Isele, E.⁴, O'Neal, C.⁵, Pezold, M.⁶, Huchteman, M.⁷

¹Harper, T. Agronomy Specialist, , Clinton, Missouri, 64735

²Funkenbusch, K. Instructor - Occupational Therapy, ,

Columbia, Missouri, 65211

³Fuller, J. Human Development Specialist, , Poplar Bluff, Missouri, 63901

⁴Isele, E. Horticulture Specialist, , St. Peters, Missouri, 63376

⁵O'Neal, C. Plant Specialist, , Mt. Vernon, Missouri, 65712

⁶Pezold, M. Labor and Workforce Development Specialist, , Independence, Missouri, 64050

⁷Huchteman, M. Horticulture Specialist, , Carthage, Missouri, 64835

Heroes to Hives (H2H) is a beekeeping training program for military veterans founded in Michigan in 2017. Missouri has two military installations, and many veterans stationed at these facilities end up retiring in the state and are interested in agriculture. University of Missouri Extension became aware of Heroes to Hives in 2019 and in 2021 became the first state outside Michigan to offer the program, with more than 300 veterans registering that first year. The program consists of online training modules from the national H2H office, monthly live Zoom meetings on topics specific to Missouri beekeepers, and hands-on training at one of five Extension training apiaries in Missouri. It quickly became evident that more than 60% of veteran participants were dealing with a service-connected disability, so MU Extension incorporated accessible hive designs, such as the Layens and AZ hives, for those with physical disabilities and activities such as Tai Chi for those dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder. The primary goals of the program are to teach beekeeping to veterans and get them involved in agriculture, and more than 70% of participants are new to both beekeeping and Extension; a secondary goal is to help interested participants start a business, with more than 40% wanting to turn their beekeeping hobby into a small agriculture business. Through H2H, University of Missouri Extension has introduced veteran participants to related topics such as urban farming, accessible gardening, soil health, farm resiliency, pollinator habitat, and agritourism. In the first six years of the program (2021-2026), University of Missouri Extension has trained more than 1,750 veterans through Heroes to Hives, offering each participant more than 30 hours of training annually.



2026 SERVICE TO AMERICAN/WORLD AGRICULTURE AWARD RECIPIENT

Dr. Temple Grandin

Colorado State University Distinguished Professor in the Department of Animal Sciences within the College of Agricultural Sciences

Dr. Temple Grandin is eminently deserving of the NACAA Service to American/World Agriculture Award for her extraordinary, sustained, and measurable contributions to agriculture in the United States and around the world. For more than five decades, Dr. Grandin has provided visionary leadership in livestock handling, animal welfare, facility design, education, and public communication, resulting in permanent, positive change across the beef, pork, dairy, and livestock industries.



Dr. Grandin's work exemplifies the intent of this award: service that improves agriculture through innovation, application of science, leadership, and broad societal impact. Her contributions extend well beyond any single institution or program and have reshaped industry standards globally.

MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS AND SCOPE OF IMPACT

Dr. Grandin is internationally recognized as one of the most influential figures in modern livestock production. Through her pioneering application of animal behavior science to facility design and handling systems, she fundamentally changed how livestock are managed throughout the supply chain. Approximately half of all cattle in the United States and Canada are handled using equipment she designed, including curved chute systems and center-track restrainers that reduce stress, improve animal welfare, enhance worker safety, and increase processing efficiency.

Her work directly addressed critical industry challenges—excessive bruising, dark cutters, handling injuries, worker safety risks, and public concern over animal welfare—by

providing practical, science-based solutions that producers and processors could readily adopt. These improvements have resulted in significant economic benefits, improved meat quality, and increased consumer confidence in animal agriculture.

Dr. Grandin also led the development of objective animal welfare measurement and auditing systems, transforming animal welfare from a subjective concept into a measurable management outcome. Her scoring systems for handling and stunning are widely used by major meat processors, food retailers, and foodservice companies. These systems are now embedded in corporate procurement policies and quality assurance programs, influencing animal care practices for millions of animals annually.

LEADERSHIP AND GLOBAL INFLUENCE

The reach of Dr. Grandin's work is truly global. She has designed livestock handling facilities and provided professional consultation in Canada, Europe, Latin America, Australia, New Zealand, and other regions. She routinely delivers invited presentations internationally and is regarded worldwide as a trusted authority on humane livestock handling and welfare assessment.

EDUCATION, SCHOLARSHIP, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Grandin has authored more than 100 peer-reviewed scientific articles, hundreds of industry publications, and 16 books, including *Livestock Handling and Transport*, now in its sixth edition. Her scholarship consistently emphasizes practical application, ensuring research findings translate into real-world improvements. For more than 35 years, she has taught livestock handling and facility design at Colorado State University, training generations of professionals who now serve agriculture worldwide.

PUBLIC TRUST AND COMMUNICATION

A hallmark of Dr. Grandin's service is her ability to communicate effectively with both agricultural audiences and the general public. Through national and international media appearances, a widely viewed TED Talk, and an award-winning HBO film, she has strengthened public understanding of agriculture and animal welfare.

RECOGNITION AND SUMMARY

Dr. Grandin's career has been recognized with numerous national and international honors, including induction into the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame, Fellowship in the American Society of Animal Science and the American Association for the

Advancement of Science, the American Farm Bureau Federation Distinguished Service Award, the OIE Meritorious Award, and the American Veterinary Medical Association Humane Award. In 2025, she was selected as a Portrait of a Nation Honoree by the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery.

Dr. Temple Grandin exemplifies exceptional service, sustained leadership, and transformative impact on American and world agriculture. She is a resident of the Western Region and is excited to be the Key Notes Speaker at the opening ceremony at the 2026 NACAA Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference.

DAN KLUCHINSKI MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

NATIONAL WINNERS

NORTHEAST REGION WINNER

Angela Breneman



Pictured left to right: Nick Polanin (Former Northeast Region Director from New Jersey), Angela Breneman, Ashley Stonecipher, and NACAA President JJ Jones).

**Dairy Management Educator
Penn State
Lancaster**

The 2026 Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference held by NACAA will be July 8th, 2026 through July 12th, 2026 in Denver, Colorado. During this 5-day event, members like myself have the opportunity to network nationwide, learn more about agriculture and the programs being developed, and gather new ideas for programs and workshops that can be implemented at the county level.

The AM/PIC conference changes locations annually and encourages participants to learn about each state's unique features and agricultural industries. After a 40-year hiatus, Colorado's "Agriculture with Altitude" AM/PIC has promised to host a dynamic professional development conference, facilitate networking connections, and showcase Colorado's diverse agricultural landscapes and vast agricultural innovations.

I am a new employee at Penn State Extension, having been there for roughly one year. My home base is in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where dairy production is the #1 economic industry. I focus on helping dairy producers reach business goals by providing educational workshops, programs, and research-based materials that I put together from my educational experiences as well as my hands-on experience as a dairy farm owner myself. Coming from the dairy nutrition field prior to my employment at Penn State, my focus is on dairy and livestock nutrition, as well as calf and heifer management. I also focus on beef-on-dairy cross cattle and their roles in the dairy and beef markets.

Last year, I attended the NACAA annual conference in Billings, MT, and it was more than I could have imagined! I not only broadened my network in agriculture and connected with other agricultural agents across the country, but I also shared my successes and programs with them. I was given the opportunity to present on a program that I offer to dairy and beef producers called the Penn State Feeding System Assessment. My goal, in extension, is to help dairy producers grow their businesses and their management skills to make their businesses profitable and sustainable. By presenting, I feel I was able to do just that by sharing my knowledge about nutrition and reaching out to other dairy producers across the nation, helping other agents acquire the skills to start a similar program of their own. I hope to be able to do that again this year in Colorado, presenting a poster based on research obtained from the data collected during our feeding system assessments.

I also plan to attend professional development sessions that I can bring back to dairy producers during my in-person workshops and share knowledge with other new educators, helping them become more effective in their roles. In Pennsylvania, we have a wide range of dairy farms in terms of size and technology use, which is what makes us unique. Colorado is known for its extensive use of technology in its

dairies, and my goal is to learn more about the technologies and management techniques they are utilizing to provide my dairy producers with better tools for their businesses. Specifically, I am interested in learning more about cow comfort technology and create a “Cow Comfort Around the Farm” program to help improve this area on PA farms. This will help develop and grow my skills as an educator, and in turn, support Pennsylvania’s dairy industry in continuing to thrive.

NORTH CENTRAL/SOUTHERN/WESTERN WINNER

Ashley Stonecipher
Agriculture and Food Systems Agent
UF/IFAS Extension
Winter Springs

I am applying for the Dan Kluchinski Memorial Scholarship Award to support my attendance at the 2026 National Association of County Agricultural Agents (NACAA) Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference (AMPIC) in Denver, Colorado, July 8–12, 2026. I am currently in my fifth year as an Agriculture and Food Systems Extension Agent with the University of Florida, and this opportunity would provide valuable professional development during a critical stage of my early career. The scholarship’s emphasis on leadership, service, and professional growth reflects the legacy of Dan Kluchinski and aligns with my goals as an Extension professional.

At the conference, I will represent Florida as the State Committee Co-Chair for Animal Science and the State Chair for Posters. I have also submitted three presentations: Showmanship Success: Training Youth and Volunteers; Improving Pasture Weed Identification and Herbicide

Stewardship through an Interactive Extension Exhibit; and Lessons from the Field: Using Farm Visits and Pasture Walks to Strengthen Extension Impact. Presenting these programs will allow me to share successful Extension strategies while receiving feedback from colleagues across the country who work with similar agricultural audiences.

As the Agriculture and Food Systems Extension Agent for Volusia County, I develop and deliver educational programs for livestock producers, landowners, and agricultural businesses while promoting sustainable production practices. Attending AMPIC will allow me to learn innovative programming approaches, strengthen my leadership skills, and expand my understanding of agricultural issues facing producers nationwide. Networking with Extension professionals from other states will also provide valuable insights into new program delivery methods, producer engagement strategies, and educational tools that can be adapted to serve Florida producers.

Upon returning from the conference, I will integrate the knowledge gained into my existing Extension programming and share key insights with the Central Florida Livestock Agents group and statewide program teams. These ideas will be incorporated into workshops, pasture walks, and producer trainings, strengthening Extension outreach and enhancing agricultural education programs serving livestock producers and land managers in Central Florida.

Attending the NACAA AMPIC conference will support my continued growth as an Extension professional while strengthening my ability to deliver impactful educational programs. The knowledge, connections, and leadership experience gained will directly benefit the agricultural producers and communities I serve in Florida.

SAVE THE DATE

September 12-16, 2027



St. Paul, Minnesota

2026 NACAA

Distinguished Service Award Winners

WESTERN REGION



Arizona
Ashley Wright



Colorado
Larry Brown



Idaho
Carmen Willmore



Montana
Dave Brink



New Mexico
John Garlich



Oregon
Amy Derby



Utah
Katie Wagner



Washington
Tipton Hudson



Wyoming
Abby Perry

NORTH CENTRAL REGION



Indiana
Elysia Rodgers



Iowa
Ryan Drollette



Michigan
Lyndon Kelley



Minnesota
Sarah Schieck



Missouri
Jennifer Schutter



Nebraska
Elizabeth Exstrom



North Dakota
Mary Keena



Ohio
Timothy McDermott



Ohio
Lee Beers



Wisconsin
Peggy Damann

NORTHEAST REGION



Connecticut
Rich Meinert



Maine
Jason Lilley



Maryland
Neith Little



New Hampshire
Rachel Maccini



New Jersey
Steven Yergeau



New York
Rachel Moody



Pennsylvania
Ginger Fenton



West Virginia
Daisy Bailey

SOUTHERN REGION



Alabama
Alice Moore



Alabama
Marcus Garner



Alabama
Janet Johnson



Arkansas
Grant Beckwith



Arkansas
Jerri Dew



Arkansas
Jennifer Caraway



Florida
Mark Warren

2026 NACAA

Distinguished Service Award Winners



Florida
Matthew VanWeelden



Louisiana
William Afton



South Carolina
Charly Greenthaler



Texas
Zach Davis



Florida
Timothy Wilson



Louisiana
Vincent Deshotel



South Carolina
Justin Ballew



Texas
Ryan Merrel



Georgia
Joshua Dawson



Mississippi
Butch Bailey



South Carolina
Matthew Burns



Texas
Lisa Brown



Georgia
Greg Pittman



Mississippi
Brandi Karisch



Tennessee
Jeffery Via



Virginia
Carrie A. Swanson



Georgia
Stanley Culpepper



North Carolina
Della King



Tennessee
Jason Evitts



Virginia
Kevin Spurlin



Georgia
Ty Torrance



North Carolina
Stacey Jones



Tennessee
Lindsay Stephenson



Kentucky
Ray Tackett



North Carolina
Erin Eure



Texas
Marco Ponce



Kentucky
Jessica Barnes



Oklahoma
Michael Rose



Texas
Josh Kouns



Kentucky
Leann Martin



Puerto Rico
Anibal Ruiz-Lugo



Texas
James Crockett

2026 NACAA Achievement Award Winners

WESTERN REGION



Arizona
Anita Thompson



Colorado
Beth Hayes



Idaho
Andy West



Montana
Brent Roeder



New Mexico
Emily Bruton



Oregon
Jacob Powell



Utah
Cody Zesiger



Wyoming
Jedidiah Hewlett

NORTH CENTRAL REGION



Illinois
Christina Lueking



Indiana
Shalee Bradley



Iowa
Patrick Hatting



Kansas
Craig Dinkel



Michigan
Florencia Colella



Minnesota
Taylor Herbert



Missouri
Katie Neuner



Nebraska
Ruby Collins



North Dakota
Travis Hoffman



Ohio
Dean Kreager



Ohio
Ann Chanon



South Dakota
Robin Buterbaugh



Wisconsin
Jackie Mccarville

NORTHEAST REGION



Connecticut
Srikanth Kodati



Maine
Peyton Ginakes



Maryland
Maegan Perdue



New Hampshire
William Hastings



New Jersey
Jean Epiphan



New York
Cristian Acosta



Pennsylvania
Justin Brackenrich



West Virginia
Jennifer Friend

SOUTHERN REGION



Alabama
Robin Paul



Alabama
Ali Gotcher



Alabama
D. Matthew Webb



Arkansas
Jenna Martin



Arkansas
Krista Quinn

2026 NACAA

Achievement Award Winners



Arkansas
Blake Erbach



Florida
Cynthia Nazario-
Leary



Florida
Cassidy Dossin



Florida
Elizabeth (Lizzie)
Catherine Whitehead



Georgia
Justin Hand



Georgia
Sydni Ingram



Georgia
Brooklyne Wassel



Georgia
Jacob Williams



Kentucky
David Coffey



Kentucky
Reed Graham



Kentucky
Macy Fawns



Louisiana
Paul Bongarzone



Louisiana
Joshua Salley



Mississippi
Dillon Russell



Mississippi
Lindsey Pansano



Mississippi
Leyla Rios de



North Carolina
Rachel Owens



North Carolina
Cody Craddock



North Carolina
Matthew Strickland



North Carolina
Grace Atkins



North Carolina
Emilee Morrison



Oklahoma
Lauren Minyard



Puerto Rico
Jose Arocho



South Carolina
Chad Carter



South Carolina
Mark Cathcart



South Carolina
Susan Lunt



Tennessee
Joe Seago



Tennessee
Anna Duncan



Tennessee
Emily Richards



Texas
Brandi Keller



Texas
Matthew Pfeifer



Texas
Janelle Duffey



Texas
Mark Carroll



Texas
Steven Baringer



Texas
Savanna Williams



Virginia
Rebecca Roberts



Virginia
Afton (Livvy)
Preisser

NACAA Hall of Fame Award

The NACAA Recognition and Awards Committee is proud to present these four recipients with the NACAA Hall of Fame Award. The Hall of Fame Award recognizes one member or life member from each NACAA region. Each state can nominate one individual. Based on a 500 word summary and three letters of support, the state nominees are evaluated on their Extension programming, state and national association activities and humanitarian efforts beyond the normal call of duty.

Our thanks to Pipeline Ag Safety Alliance for sponsorship of the NACAA Hall of Fame Awards.



2026
Western Region
Hall of Fame Award
Leigh Ann Marez
New Mexico
35 Years - Retired

Leigh Ann retired in June 2025 as the Eastern District Director for New Mexico State University (NMSU) Cooperative Extension Service, after an impressive 35 years of dedicated service to her community, NMSU Cooperative Extension, and New Mexico. She has been a member of NACAA since 2011 and is now a life member.

During her tenure with Extension, Leigh Ann served in many roles within NMSU Cooperative Extension Service – from 4-H agent, to program specialist, to agricultural/4-H agent, to county director. She concluded her career as the NMSU Cooperative Extension Eastern District Director for eight years. Leigh Ann held several offices in the NMCAA and the NACAA. She received numerous awards, including the Achievement Award in 2012 and the Distinguished Service Award in 2017.

Leigh Ann began her career in Cooperative Extension right out of college. As an entry-level agent and then program specialist, she was known for bringing energy and new ideas

to her Extension offices. She was a dedicated, hard-working agent, who took on multiple roles as needed, to ensure that New Mexico constituents' needs were met. Twice Leigh Ann served in concurrent positions within Extension – one year as the sole Extension agent in Guadalupe County and the interim Extension agent in the adjacent De Baca County, covering a total of 5,355 square miles, 63.7% of which was agricultural land; another year, she took on the interim Eastern District Director role while still holding the Guadalupe County Extension Agent position.

Leigh Ann brought innovation and a collaborative spirit to her work. She developed a county Heifer Futurity Project for 4-H agriculture and the Guadalupe County Fair, intending to support the next generation of agricultural producers. She sought sponsorships that allowed 4-H youth to raise and show a heifer during the county fair, then retain it to build a herd. An example of her spirit of collaboration and commitment to agriculture was assisting the Santa Rosa High School in acquiring funding to build a greenhouse and begin a horticulture program. This not only promoted agricultural education in our schools, but also helped to link formal education with the important experiential learning model of 4-H.

As a district director, Leigh Ann provided highly competent, compassionate leadership and support to each of the extension agents and staff in the eleven counties she oversaw. If a county had an agent, Leigh Ann stepped in to ensure that their Cooperative Extension office still served its constituents. She was never too busy to haul a group of kids to a state event, jump in at a County Fair and help clip swine, or help put together a Beef Quality Assurance workshop, if needed.

Leigh Ann always focused on serving her constituents, of course, but her service to Extension was often collaborative and regional or statewide.

DSA Awarded in 2017



**2026
North Central Region
Hall of Fame Award
Chuck Schwartau
Minnesota
38 Years - Retired**

Chuck Schwartau has been an exemplary member of University of Minnesota (UMN) Extension, the Minnesota Association of Extension Ag Professionals (MAEAP), NACAA, and his community. His educational programming efforts and leadership activities have reached far beyond the borders of MN and he continues to positively impact the greater agricultural community.

During his 38 years with UMN Extension, Chuck served various roles. For about 15 years, Chuck was one of the few Extension Educators in the country who focused on dairy labor management. As a result, Chuck has been an invited speaker at several regional, national and international conferences and written articles and recurring columns in over a dozen ag publications in the U.S. and other countries.

He was instrumental in developing the Farm Beginnings® program to help young farmers get started with practical knowledge of ag production and management (utilized now by at least 14 states).

Use of tools he helped develop to assess a dairy's management, grew into the MN Dairy Initiative. Chuck organized more than 50 dairy farm advisory teams in his region and he helped write and teach an extensive 12-hour dairy labor management curriculum.

Chuck's survey of all Minnesota dairies with over 150 cows was instrumental in developing labor management programs.

Chuck wrote and delivered a farm safety program emphasizing dairy farms and worked with University of Wisconsin-River Falls on a similar program for Wisconsin. The program was delivered to over 200 farm units and morphed into a similar program for pork producers and certified custom manure applicators.

Chuck also wrote parts of a UMN beef correspondence course, reaching four Midwestern States, and conducted extensive research among dairy farm families in a four-county area about stresses on the dairy farm. He also worked with farm mediation, managing initiation of over 200 requests for mediation by creditors and following through with over 100 farms that requested mediation.

Chuck was a NACAA National Search for Excellence presenter four times, and had 3 National finalist, 6 Regional finalist, and 44 state-winning communications entries.

Chuck's service to NACAA is extensive, serving as the National Treasurer, NC-Regional Director, NC Region and National Communications Committee Chair, NACAA representative to the Education Foundation Board of Trustees, NACAA Education Foundation Trustee (currently), NACAA representative and NACAA program chair for JCEP's Galaxy III, and Chair of JCEP's Galaxy IV in Pittsburg, PA (2013). He served as President of MAEAP, consistently attended NACAA AM/PICs, and was a NACAA AA (1989) and DSA (1994) recipient.

Chuck's humanitarian activities are extensive. Of note, Chuck was recently elected as a lifetime member to the MN State Agricultural Society (MN State Fair), a prestigious honor in recognition of his over 50 years of volunteer work with the fair. He has served on numerous community advisory boards and committees, often in leadership positions.

Chuck Schwartau has an exemplary career of education, leadership, and service. The MN chapter of NACAA (MAEAP) is proud to nominate him for the NACAA Hall of Fame Award.

DSA Awarded in 1994





**2026
Northeast Region
Hall of Fame Award
Carol Schurman
Pennsylvania
40 Years - Retired**

Carol Schurman began her 40-year career with Penn State Extension in 1977 as an Indiana County 4-H Educator. She retired in 2017. As a 4-H educator, agriculture was always part of her educational method. The 4-H program has many projects, but Carol was focused on providing agricultural science options when possible. Programs she implemented that continue today are horse bowl, hippology, yearly recognition, day camps, animal science skillathon, embryology, school enrichment, and county/regional communication contests.

Raised on a dairy farm, she felt it was important to teach youth about agriculture, especially since so many people have lost touch with this in their lives. She conducted agricultural science day/regional camps for many years – hundreds of youth learned about where their food comes from. Over 3,700 youth were reached in over ninety settings through camping programs. Over \$84,000 was raised in grants. These programs won national awards in NACAA and NAE4-HYDP. She also has been an ag literacy reader for the PA Farm Bureau, taking the agriculture story to hundreds of elementary school youth annually. She developed hands-on activities to share with youth groups, and promotions for 4-H often included an agricultural science activity.

Her 4-H embryology program reached twenty-five classrooms and five hundred youth each year. The excitement of chick-hatching was a method to teach youth where chicken McNuggets come from! Developing communication skills was a significant emphasis. Carol offered county, regional, and state workshops in presentations, public speaking, interview skills,

judging, and making a good impression. She taught over eighty workshops with 1500 participants. County members won many awards because of her special attention.

She was co-director of Southwest 4-H Camp for 35 years, with twenty-five counselors and sixty campers yearly. She coordinated the Southwest PA 4-H Leaders' Symposium annually, involving seventy-five volunteers from ten counties. Carol also implemented the Western PA 4-H Small Animal Show, held for over 30 years. She mentored many new staff and was a 4-H Programs of Distinction reviewer.

Carol believed in encouraging out-of-county opportunities for youth and volunteers. During her career, over 250 members attended national 4-H events, including Congress, Conference, Eastern Horse Roundup, Wildlife, Forestry, NJHA, Engineering, Commodity Marketing, and Quarter Horse Congress. Over 140 volunteers and clubs were recognized for efforts with Extension Spirit Awards, Salute to Excellence, county Human Service Council Awards, state livestock recognition, grants, and national wildlife volunteers.

In 2012, as a state committee member to celebrate the PA 4-H Centennial, she developed a 4-H history program, which was presented to twenty-one groups, reaching 1,741 people. The committee won a national NAE4-HYDP award. Her early Extension work also included work with the local Dairy Herd Improvement Association. She has continued to serve 4-H and Extension in her retirement as a 4-H volunteer. Carol's 4-H members were her children. She dedicated her life to positive youth development through her attention to opportunities, mentoring, sponsorship, and teaching. Carol practiced what she preached and was respectful, kind, and attentive to every youth and adult she worked with.

DSA Awarded in 1996





**2026
Southern Region
Hall of Fame Award
Alan Galloway
Tennessee
39 Years - Active**

With the initials of AG, it seems Alan Galloway was destined to spend his career working in the field of agriculture. Alan received a BS in Agribusiness from Tennessee Technological University in 1979 and an MS in Agricultural Economics from Clemson University in 1981. After 5 years working for Southern State Coop, he became one of the original twelve farm management specialists hired by the University of Tennessee Extension in 1986 with the creation of the MANAGE program.

In the midst of a tough financial time for agriculture, Alan and the other farm management specialists worked one-on-one with farm families, developing farm financial plans and assisting them in making better business decisions.

During his 39-year career, he participated in numerous successful educational programs beyond financial planning. Alan researched and created the annual planning budgets for multiple types of tobacco production and, in recent years, coordinated with the University of Kentucky Extension to develop one set of budgets for both states. Alan was part of the team developing the Tennessee Farmland Legacy program. This program created a 200-plus page manual covering many aspects of how to pass the farm down. Alan's contribution included the estate planning chapter. In 2005, Alan became an instructor for the state-wide income tax schools. These schools provide continuing education to CPAs and other tax preparers. Alan currently serves as the income tax school program coordinator. After obtaining a grant, Alan led the development of the Tennessee Christmas Tree Production Manual and conducted workshops across the state for potential growers.

With the challenges caused by COVID, Alan and the MANAGE team created the Master Farm Manager online program. The program included eight sessions on various farm management topics, with Alan conducting the highly rated session on farm income taxes. The effort expanded into the Farming Fundamentals program, providing beginning farmers with the basics of farm management.

Alan became an association member in 1987, and his involvement in the Tennessee association (TAA&S) evolved from District IV treasurer to secretary for the 1996 NACAA AM/PIC planning committee and TAA&S president in 2001.

At the national level, he has served as chair of the County Agent Editorial Advisory board, regional vice chair and national chair of the NACAA recognitions and award committee, and southern region vice director and director. In 2012, he was elected NACAA Treasurer, where Alan worked to improve the record-keeping processes and the AM/PIC planning spreadsheet to assist states hosting a future AM/PIC. Alan was elected NACAA Vice President in 2015 and served as NACAA President in 2018.

At the local level, Alan served as a solicitor, auctioneer, and warehouse coordinator for the WCTE public TV station's annual fund-raising auction for over 30 years. For 22 years, he served on the Anne Cameron American Cancer Golf Tournament planning committee. Since 2022, Alan has hired and trained local FFA members to assist on the Christmas Tree farm and donated to the local FFA chapter.

DSA Awarded: 1999

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L to R Back Row Standing: Linda McClanahan (KY) Southern Region Vice Director; Danny Lauderdale (NC) Southern Region Vice-Director; Jennifer Bentley (IA) North Central Region Director; Betsy Greene (AZ) Western Region Director; Colt Knight (ME) Vice President; Joni Ross Harper (MO) Secretary; Scott Hawbaker (IL) Executive Director; Jennifer Pelham (FL) Southern Region Director; Lonnie Jenschke (TX) Southern Region Director; Tom Butzler (PA) Northeast Region Vice Director

Not Present: Tyrone Fisher (NC) President Elect; Cade Rensink (KS) North Central Region Vice Director



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The County Agent

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2027

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2028

Atlanta, Georgia.....August 20-24

2029

Hershey, Pennsylvania.....September 17-20

2030

Raleigh, North Carolina.....August 18-22

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December, 2026

Committee/Awards Edition

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Mail Date: December 28, 2026

April, 2027

Open Topic/Scholarship Highlights

Deadline for articles: February 20, 2027

Mail Date: March 20, 2027

June, 2027

Pre-AM/PIC Edition

Deadline for articles: April 10, 2027

Mail Date: May 20, 2027

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