



2025 ACN WINNERS PROGRAM

OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNERS:

- Story of the Year – “Rays of Hope: Shedding Light On Rural Mental Health Challenges”
Anthony Greder, Pamela Smith, Todd Neeley, Todd Hultman,
Katie Dehlinger, Mike Watkins, Dave Vrbas, DTN/Progressive Farmer
- Writer of the Year – Katie Knapp, The Furrow
- Photo of the Year - “Branded Sunrise” Rob Mattson, Noble Research Institute
- Photographer of the Year – Rob Mattson, Noble Research Institute
- Designer of the Year – Amy Gohman, Colle McVoy
- Communicator of the Year – Lindsay Graber Runft, Certified Angus Beef

2025 WRITING CONTEST WINNERS

W01: Breaking News

1st Place: “AFBF votes to expel Illinois Farm Bureau” Holly Spangler, Prairie Farmer/Farm Progress

2nd Place: “Salaried Deere Employees Take a Hit” Dan Miller, DTN/Progressive Farmer

3rd Place: “How Will Tariffs Impact Farm Equipment Markets?” Karen Jones, Successful Farming

W02: Economics and Management

1st Place: “Global Growth” Matthew Wilde, CHS

2nd Place: “Riding the Wind” Jena McRell, Grant Company/The Cattleman

3rd Place: “Lasso the Love” Pam Caraway, Farm Progress/Farm Futures magazine

W03: Editorial Opinion

1st Place: “No, He’s Not a Buffalo: Why We Can’t Avoid Their Questions Anymore”
Jennifer Shike, Farm Journal's PORK

2nd Place: “Wind restrictions could save our weed control”
Holly Spangler, Prairie Farmer/Farm Progress

3rd Place: “Iowa vs. USDA: Disputes Hurt Families and Farmers”
Chris Clayton, DTN/Progressive Farmer

W04: Human Interest

1st Place: “The Harvest” Karen Conley, National Bison Association

2nd Place: “Bringing Buffalo Back to Standing Rock” Lisa Foust Prater, Successful Farming

3rd Place: “Grazing Cattle in Grizzly Country” Laura M. Brenner, Noble Research Institute

W05: Humorous Article

- 1st Place: “The conundrum of letting kids name our livestock” Heidi Crnkovic, AGDAILY
2nd Place: “ ‘Skunkapalooza’ comes to Missouri farm” Mindy Ward, Farm Progress/Missouri Ruralist
3rd Place: “Off To The Pig Races” Martha Mintz for HOMESTEAD, John Deere

W06: Issues

- 1st Place: “Promises Made. Promises Kept?” Chelsea Dinterman, Successful Farming
2nd Place: “Bigger. Faster. Smarter?” Karen Jones, Successful Farming
3rd Place: “Will Illinois Farm Bureau be kicked out of AFBF?”
Holly Spangler, Prairie Farmer/Farm Progress

W07: On-Farm Production Article

- 1st Place: “Yes, you can grow wheat in Iowa” Gil Gullickson, Wallaces Farmer, Farm Progress
2nd Place: “The Battleship ‘Pumpkin’ ” Steve Werblow, The Furrow/Homestead
3rd Place: “Know All Your Numbers” Jason Jenkins, DTN/Progressive Farmer

W08: Personality Profile

- 1st Place: “Outside the lines: The ranching roots of pro snowboarder Mark Carter”
Ryan Tipps, AGDAILY
2nd Place: “Gathering Wool Creating Art” Martha Mintz for HOMESTEAD, John Deere
3rd Place: “Beauty in Bronze” Allison Jenkins, MFA Incorporated/Today's Farmer magazine

W09: Regular Column

- 1st Place: “Big Life Changes in the Family Lead to a Bittersweet Tractor Reunion”
Russ Quinn, DTN/Progressive Farmer
2nd Place: “The Big Question for Agriculture in Trump Two”
Urban C. Lehner, DTN/Progressive Farmer
3rd Place: “What you can learn from 700 people in a machine shed funeral”
Holly Spangler, Prairie Farmer/Farm Progress

W10: Technical Feature

- 1st Place: “Long-awaited relief” Emily Kummerfeld, MFA Incorporated/Today's Farmer magazine
2nd Place: “Frogeye Leaf Spot Threatens Soybean Yields” Chelsea Dinterman, Successful Farming
3rd Place: “A View From Above” Martha Mintz for John Deere's THE FURROW

W11: Farm Feature

- 1st Place: “More Than Food” Bill Spiegel, The Furrow
2nd Place: “Stacking Enterprise” Martha Mintz for THE FURROW, John Deere
3rd Place: “Passing on the Farm: Lessons from the Huber’s Succession Journey”
Jennifer Shike, Farm Journal's PORK

W12: Emerging Writer

1st Place: “Amy Hildebrandt: All-American dairy farmer” Ava Splear, Farm Progress, Prairie Farmer

2nd Place: “Young farmers: It’s hard to wait on a transition plan” Rachel Schutte, Farm Progress

3rd Place: “At the Crossroads of Passion and Perseverance”

Jessica Hartman, American Angus Association

W13: Team Story:

1st Place: “Rays of Hope: Shedding Light On Rural Mental Health Challenges”

Anthony Greder, Pamela Smith, Todd Neeley, Todd Hultman, Katie Dehlinger,

Mike Watkins, Dave Vrbas, DTN/Progressive Farmer

2nd Place: “A Sport of Beauty” Katie Knapp and Steve Werblow, Homestead, The Furrow

3rd Place: “The Oleic Advantage” Adrienne Held & Chelsea Dinterman, Successful Farming

WRITER OF THE YEAR – HONORABLE MENTION

Holly Spangler, Prairie Farmer/Farm Progress

MASTER WRITER LEVELS:

Level One

Molly Biggs
Laura M. Brenner
Whitney Shannon Haigwood
EllaMae Reiff
Mariah Squire
Charlie Wallace

Level Two

Anthony Greder
Jessica Hartman
Elizabeth Hodges
Shelley E. Huguley
Sarah Kocher
Susan Payne
Noah Rohlfing
Dave Vrbas
Mike Watkins

Level Three

Rhiannon Branch
Mitch Galloway
Diane Meyer
Rachel Schutte

Level Four

Joshua Baethge
Natalina Sents Bausch
Karen Conley
Adrienne M. Held
Todd Hultman
Emily Kummerfeld
Allison Lynch
Ava Splear

Master Writer (level five)

Andy Castillo
Karen Jones
Kriss Nelson
Kevin Schulz
Chris Torres

Writer of Merit (level six)

Heidi Crnkovic
Katie Knapp
Martha Mintz
Jennifer Shike
Bill Spiegel

2025 PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST WINNERS

P1: Portrait/Personality

1st Place: “Long time love” Des Keller, DTN/Progressive Farmer
2nd Place: “Lynn McKay” Lorne McClinton, LMCC Holdings for The Furrow
3rd Place: “100 percent wool” Joel Reichenberger, DTN/Progressive Farmer
HM: “South Dakota Sunrise” Joel Reichenberger, DTN/Progressive Farmer

P2: Pictorial

1st Place: “Dust” Steve Werblow, The Furrow, Homestead
2nd Place: “soybean sunset” Gil Gullickson, Wallaces Farmer, Farm Progress
3rd Place: “Bean Harvest” Adam Hester, CHS
HM: “Wet Feet” Katie Knapp, The Ag Photographer, The Furrow

P3: Feature

1st Place: “Earning Summer Money” Rob Mattson, Noble Research Institute
2nd Place: “Three Generations” Betty Haynes, Midwestern Lens
3rd Place: “SCN Sampling” Jason Jenkins, DTN/Progressive Farmer
HM: “In Good Hands” Joclyn Bushman, Fresh Pickings Magazine, Iowa Soybean Association

P4A: Nuts and Bolts: Livestock

1st Place: “Strawberry-The Star” Martha Mintz for HOMESTEAD, John Deere
2nd Place: “Swiss Cowgirl” Betty Haynes, Midwestern Lens
3rd Place: “Early Morning Grazing” Jennifer Carrico, DTN/Progressive Farmer
HM: “Hen” Steve Werblow, Homestead, The Furrow

P4B: Nuts and Bolts: Crops

1st Place: “Grandpa's combine” Betty Haynes, Midwestern Lens
2nd Place: “Soaring to spray” Joel Reichenberger, DTN/Progressive Farmer
3rd Place: “Soybean Science” Joclyn Bushman, Iowa Soybean Review, Iowa Soybean Association
HM: “Drone Driver” Betty Haynes, Midwestern Lens

P5: Picture Story, Photo Sequence or Photo Essay

1st Place: “Farming Alaska” Martha Mintz for THE FURROW, John Deere
2nd Place: “3M/FFAR” Rob Mattson, Noble Research Institute
3rd Place: “Know All Your Numbers” Jason Jenkins, DTN/Progressive Farmer
HM: “Hybrid How-To” Jason Jenkins, DTN/Progressive Farmer

P7: Emerging Photographer

1st Place: “Husker Harvest Days 2025” Andy Castillo, Farm Progress
2nd Place: “Dirk Rice: Loyal to family and the land” Ava Splear, Farm Progress, Prairie Farmer
3rd Place: no entry
HM: no entry

P8: Photo Illustration

1st Place: “Branded Sunrise” Rob Mattson, Noble Research Institute

2nd Place: “Smartphone Pandemic” Betty Haynes, Midwestern Lens

3rd Place: “Ag espionage” Lorne McClinton, LMCC Holdings for The Furrow

HM: “Herbs and spices still life” Lorne McClinton, LMCC Holdings for The Furrow

P9: Unpublished Photos

1st Place: “Pollinator” Joy Crosby, Georgia Peanut Commission

2nd Place: “Sunset Silhouette” Jennifer Carrico, DTN/Progressive Farmer

3rd Place: “Prettiest Produce” Betty Haynes, Midwestern Lens

HM: “Comrades” Harlen Persinger, Hlensphotos

P10: Advertorial Photos

1st Place: “Demos With Daddy” Betty Haynes, Midwestern Lens

2nd Place: “Fendt Social: National Farm Animals Day” Jamie Cole, Red Barn Media Group

3rd Place: “Iowa Food & Family Project”

Joclyn Bushman, Fresh Pickings Magazine, Iowa Soybean Association

HM: no entry

P11: Rotating Theme / Pictures Taken with a Cell Phone

1st Place: “Freezing Frost” Rhiannon Branch, Illinois Farm Bureau / FarmWeek

2nd Place: “Harvest Moon Rising” Crystal Albers, Grant Company

3rd Place: “Dug Peanuts” Joy Crosby, Georgia Peanut Commission

HM: “Farm Kid” Betty Haynes, Midwestern Lens

P12: Digitally Enhanced Photos

1st Place: “Farming Alaska” Martha Mintz, John Deere THE FURROW

2nd Place: no entry

3rd Place: no entry

HM: no entry

Honorable Mention Photographer of the Year:

Katie Knapp, The Ag Photographer (The Furrow) (Southeastern Peanut Farmer)

MASTER PHOTOGRAPHER PROGRAM:

Level One

Curt Arens

Tami Nicholson

Lisa Foust Prater

Jordan Reynolds

Level Two

Crystal Albers

Ava Splear

Level Three

Andy Castillo

Jason Jenkins

Des Keller

Level Four

Jocelyn Bushman

Rhianna Branch

Joy Crosby

Allison Jenkins

Level Five

none in 2025

Master Photographer

Betty Haynes

2025 MARCOMM CONTEST WINNERS

MC1: Advertorial, One-Page

1st Place: “Take Control of Sand” Abby Shea, broadhead

2nd Place: “Miravis Ace eases drought’s stressful stranglehold on wheat” Ryan Tipps, AGDAILY

3rd Place: “Producers Weigh In on Enlist® Weed Control System” Sarah Petersheim, Bader Rutter

MC2: Advertorial, Multi-Page, Series or Special Section

1st Place: “Healthy Heifers, Healthier Herds: A Veterinarian’s Resource Guide”

Abby Shea, broadhead and Boehringer Ingelheim Cattle Health

2nd Place: “Where the Green Grass Grows” Sarah Petersheim, Bader Rutter

3rd Place: “Trying a New Tar Spot Protection” Justin Davey, Successful Farming Custom Solutions

MC3A: Media Kits/Online Media Rooms/Media Events/Advertising Kits / For-Profit

1st Place: “Media Are Horse People Too: How Broadhead Used This Simple Fact to Launch the Purina® Microbiome Quotient® Platform”

Wyatt Bechtel, Purina Animal Nutrition and broadhead.

2nd Place: “Gleaner T Series Product Launch” Marilyn Cummins, Red Barn Media Group

3rd Place: no entry

MC3B: Media Kits/Online Media Rooms/Media Events/Advertising Kits / Not-For-Profit

1st Place: “National Peanut Month” Joy Crosby, Georgia Peanut Commission

2nd Place: “Power Up Family Mealtime” Joy Crosby, Georgia Peanut Commission

3rd Place: “2024 Georgia Peanut Harvest Tour” Joy Crosby, Georgia Peanut Commission

MC4: Collateral Piece

1st Place: “Cash Crop Giveaway. - Peel it. Win it. Plant it!” Clint White, Sorghum Checkoff

2nd Place: “Mini-Annual Report” Robby Edwards, Bumpers College, University of Arkansas

3rd Place: “Sorghum in foodservice” Clint White, Sorghum Checkoff

MC5: Feature Article

1st Place: “Are your cows sports cars or farm trucks?” Kenna Rathai, Kenna B. Rathai Communications

2nd Place: “More Than a Meat Scientist” Lindsay Graber Runft, Certified Angus Beef

3rd Place: “What’s Good for the Cattle Is Good for the Wetlands”

Lindsay Graber Runft, Certified Angus Beef

MC6: News Article

1st Place: “Panel Talks Capturing Added Value in Cattle” Sarah Kocher, American Angus Association

2nd Place: “Packer Ownership, Taxes Focus of LMA’s D.C. Fly-in”

Katrina Huffstutler, Grant Company

3rd Place: “Detect Bird Flu Symptoms Early to Minimize Risk”

Kenna Rathai, Kenna B. Rathai Communications

MC7: Print News Release

1st Place: “Robotic batch milking press release” Nicole Smith, broadhead. and GEA Farm Technologies

2nd Place: “ASA Press Release: Tariffs are Not Fun, and Farmers are Frustrated”

Wendy Brannen, American Soybean Association

3rd Place: “Press Release – NDSU Mineral Study”

Wyatt Bechtel, Purina Animal Nutrition and broadhead.

MC8: Audio News Release

1st Place: “Norbrook Battling Respiratory Diseases in Livestock” Leigh Ann Cleaver, Mod Op

2nd Place: “Norbrook - Managing BRD in Cattle” Leigh Ann Cleaver, Mod Op

3rd Place: no entry

MC9: Technical Writing

1st Place: “2024 Insights Report”

Bethany Baratta, Susan Langman, Joclyn Bushman & Kriss Nelson

Iowa Soybean Association's Research Center for Farming Innovation

2nd Place: “Texas Corn Planting with Water Conservation in Mind”

Faith Smith with Texas Corn and Texas NRCS

3rd Place: no entry

MC10: Speech / White Paper

1st Place: “It Takes a Co-op: Board Chair Speech, 2024 CHS Annual Meeting” Cynthia Clanton, CHS

2nd Place: no entry

3rd Place: no entry

MC11: Writing for Special Projects

1st Place: “A Message from the ASA President – ASA Soybean Success Report”

Wendy Brannen, American Soybean Association

2nd Place: “Iowa Soybean Review 60th Anniversary”

Iowa Soybean Review staff: Bethany Baratta, Susan Langman, Joclyn Bushman &

Kriss Nelson, Iowa Soybean Association

3rd Place: “Healthy Farms, Healthy Bays”

Courtney Girgis for Solutions from the Land, Rooted Communications

MC12A: Publication – Print or Electronic / For Profit

1st Place: “C magazine” Cynthia Clanton, Matthew Wilde, Adam Hester & Amy Gohman, CHS

2nd Place: “Michigan Farm News”

Dennis Rudat, Mitch Galloway & Bri Grunden, Michigan Farm News

3rd Place: “Today's Farmer” Allison Jenkins, MFA Incorporated

MC12B: Publication – Print or Electronic / Not-for-Profit

1st Place: “Legacy Magazine” Rachael Davis, Laura Brenner, Cadie Ramos, Maddy Bezner & Rob Mattson, Noble Research Institute

2nd Place: “FFA New Horizons, Fall/Winter 2024 and Spring/Summer 2025” Justin Davey and Lauren Quinlan, Successful Farming

3rd Place: “Iowa Soybean Review” Iowa Soybean Review staff: Bethany Baratta, Susan Langman, Joclyn Bushman & Kriss Nelson, Iowa Soybean Association

MC13: Marketing Video

1st Place: “For the Hardworking Few - Wilson Trailer” Crystal Albers, Grant Company

2nd Place: “A Season-Long Solution for Tar Spot” Justin Davey, Successful Farming Custom Solutions

3rd Place: “Raised with Respect™ video” Lindsay Graber Runft, Certified Angus Beef, Signal Theory

MC14: Video Production

1st Place: “A New Chapter in Our Heritage” Andrew Levenson, Root+Beta, Heritage Tractor

2nd Place: “SAE to Successful Business” Justin Davey and Lauren Quinlan, Successful Farming

3rd Place: “Lehenbauer Farms and a 100-Year Soybean Legacy” Jamie Cole, Red Barn Media Group

MC15: Podcasts

1st Place: “Working Ranch Podcast On Fetal Programming” Wyatt Bechtel, Purina Animal Nutrition and broadhead.

2nd Place: “Field Advisor Podcast” Kelsey Litchfield, Illinois Soybean Association

3rd Place: no entry

MC16: Blogs

1st Place: “Massey Ferguson Customer Stories” Jamie Cole, Red Barn Media Group

2nd Place: “Water Grows Blog” Faith Smith with Texas Corn and Texas NRCS

3rd Place: “Corn & Soybean HQ Blog” Sarah Petersheim, Bader Rutter

MC17: Websites

1st Place: “Nutrien.com” Leigh Ann Cleaver, Mod Op

2nd Place: “BASF: A Farmer-first Approach to Sustainability” Kenna Rathai, Kenna B. Rathai Communications

3rd Place: “2024 Angus.org Redesign” Holly Martin, American Angus Association

MC18: Webinars

1st Place: “New developments in calf nutrition: Challenging the dogma” Amber Friedrichsen, Hoard's Dairyman, W. D. Hoard & Sons

2nd Place: “Feeding and managing cows in a robotic milking system” Amber Friedrichsen, Hoard's Dairyman, W. D. Hoard & Sons

3rd Place: “Angus University Webinars” Jessica Hartman, American Angus Association

MC19: Social Media

1st Place: “Fendt Social Media” Jamie Cole, Red Barn Media Group

2nd Place: “Sorghum Food Influencer Campaign” Clint White, Sorghum Checkoff

3rd Place: “Munch Madness” Robby Edwards, Bumpers College, University of Arkansas

MC20: Mobile/Tablet Technology Applications

1st Place: no entry

2nd Place: no entry

3rd Place: no entry

MASTER COMMUNICATOR LEVELS:

Level One

Molly Biggs
Jordan Bright
Kady Figge
Bri Grunden
Jessica Hartman
Grace Knepp
Kelsey Litchfield
Holly Martin
Lauren Quinlan
Jill Wagenblast

Level Two

Crystal Albers
Maddy Bezner
Laura Brenner
Amber Friedrichsen
Amy Gohman
Lori Hallowell
Adam Hester
Sarah Kocher
Andrew Levenson
Sarah Petersheim
Cadie Ramos
Abby Shea
Faith Smith
Matthew Wilde

Level Three

Marilyn Cummins
Robby Edwards
Mitch Galloway

Level Four

Joy Crosby
Ryan Tipps

Level Five (Master of Communications)

Bethany Baratta
Wyatt Bechtel
Joclyn Bushman
Leigh Ann Cleaver
Justin Davey
Lindsay Graber Runft
Susan Langman
Kriss Nelson
Kenna Rathai
Nicole Smith
Clint White

Level Six (Communicator of Merit)

Jamie Cole

2025 DESIGN CONTEST WINNERS:

D01: Cover Page Design - Commercial

1st Place: “Is your farm safe?” Lisa Lynd, Farm Progress

2nd Place: “How to lasso love” Lisa Lynd, Farm Progress

3rd Place: “Stomp On SCN PF Cover”

Brent Warren, Jason Jenkins, Barry Falkner, DTN/Progressive Farmer

D02: Cover Page Design - Custom

1st Place: “Spring 2024 C Magazine” Amy Gohman, Colle McVoy

2nd Place: “Winter 2025 C Magazine” Amy Gohman, Colle McVoy

3rd Place: “The Furrow Cover, Summer 2024” Nate Werner, Mod Op

D03: Single-Paged Editorial Design - Commercial

1st Place: “Help Wanted” Chris Torres & Rosa Francis, American Agriculturist

2nd Place: “Making it Count, Iowa Soybean Review” Susan Langman, Iowa Soybean Association

3rd Place: “Family Business Matters PF 0624” Brent Warren, DTN/Progressive Farmer

D04: Single-Paged Editorial Design - Custom

1st Place: “Green & Growing, Furrow, March 2025”

Nate Werner, Mod Op / The Furrow Homestead Edition

2nd Place: “Bits & Pieces, Furrow, Sep/Oct 2024”

Nate Werner, Mod Op / The Furrow Homestead Edition

3rd Place: no entry

D05: Opening Page or Spread Design - Commercial

1st Place: “Successful Farming March 2025 Clearing the current”

Matt Strelecki, Successful Farming

2nd Place: “Intensive Grazing Boosts Stocking Rate PF 0425”

Brent Warren & Barry Falkner, DTN/Progressive Farmer

3rd Place: “Successful Farming, The Mexico Maize” Matt Strelecki, Successful Farming

D06: Opening Page or Spread Design - Custom

1st Place: “Global Growth” Amy Gohman, Colle McVoy

2nd Place: “Sorghum Soars” Amy Gohman, Colle McVoy

3rd Place: “Nature's Night Shift” Cadie Ramos, Noble Research Institute

D07: Two-Plus Page Design - Commercial

1st Place: “Flavor Fusions” Brianna Schechinger, Iowa Soybean Association

2nd Place: “Stand By Me, PF 1224”

Brent Warren, Becky Mills & Barry Falkner, DTN/Progressive Farmer

3rd Place: “Where Are All the Good Ol Ag Kids?” Jaime Albers, Angus Journal

D08: Two-Plus Page Design - Custom

1st Place: “Sorghum Sustainability Report” Clint White, Sorghum Checkoff

2nd Place: “Sorghum Soars” Amy Gohman, Colle McVoy

3rd Place: “...Feed And Fuel - Two Plus” Cadie Ramos, Noble Research Institute

D09: Special Editorial Section Design (Commercial / Custom)

1st Place: “Voices for Agriculture, PF 0824”

Brent Warren, Barry Falkner & Elaine Shein, DTN/Progressive Farmer

2nd Place: “Taking Corn Higher (Sep/Oct 2024)” Nate Werner, Mod Op - The Furrow

3rd Place: “Conservation Legacy (Nov 2024)” Nate Werner, Mod Op - The Furrow

D10: Overall Magazine Design - Commercial

1st Place: “Fresh Pickings Magazine Summer 2024” Brianna Schechinger, Iowa Soybean Association

2nd Place: “Fresh Pickings Magazine Spring 2025” Brianna Schechinger, Iowa Soybean Association

3rd Place: “The Cattleman - December 2024”

Jena McRell, Grant Company and Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association

D11: Overall Magazine Design - Custom

1st Place: “Legacy Magazine - Summer 2024” Cadie Ramos, Noble Research Institute

2nd Place: “Fall 2024 C Magazine” Amy Gohman, Colle McVoy

3rd Place: “Legacy Magazine - Winter 2024” Cadie Ramos, Noble Research Institute

D12: Overall Magazine Design – Special Issues (Commercial / Custom)

1st Place: “Rays of Hope, PF 0524”

Brent Warren, Barry Falkner & Anthony Greder, DTN/Progressive Farmer

2nd Place: “The Furrow, February, 2025” Nate Werner, Mod Op - The Furrow

3rd Place: no entry

D13: Special Publication Design – Annual Reports, etc (Commercial / Custom)

1st Place: “National Pork Producers Council 2024 Annual Report” Lori Hallowell, Bader Rutter

2nd Place: “Sorghum Holiday Calendar” Clint White, Sorghum Checkoff

3rd Place: “Fendt Innovations Collectors' Book” Jamie Cole, Red Barn Media Group

D14: Web Design – Electronic Newsletter/Magazine (Commercial / Custom)

No entries in 2025

D15: Best Use of Typography (Commercial / Custom)

1st Place: “Successful Farming, The Mexico Maize”

Matt Strelecki, Successful Farming

2nd Place: “Successful Farming Down to Earth” Matt Strelecki, Successful Farming

3rd Place: “Successful Farming, Black Cloud Over Solar”

Matt Strelecki, Successful Farming

D16: Best Use of Chart and Graph Material (Commercial / Custom)

1st Place: “Global Growth” Amy Gohman, Colle McVoy

2nd Place: “Steering Through Volatility” Amy Gohman, Colle McVoy

3rd Place: “Sorghum Checkoff 2024” Clint White, Sorghum Checkoff

D17: Best Use of Photography in a Print Periodical (Commercial / Custom)

1st Place: “Fall 2024 C Magazine” Amy Gohman, Colle McVoy

2nd Place: “Spring 2024 C Magazine” Amy Gohman, Colle McVoy

3rd Place: “The Furrow, Feb, Mar, Spring 2025” Nate Werner, Mod Op - The Furrow

Honorable Mention Designer of the Year:

Matt Strelecki, Successful Farming

2025 DIGITAL & SOCIAL MEDIA AWARD WINNERS

DSM1: Podcasts

1st Place: “ ‘One Bid Away’: Bulls that almost weren’t famous and other tales from the bull studs.”

Miranda Reiman, Julie Mais, Megan Silveira & Jaime Albers

The Angus Conversation, Angus Media

2nd Place: “Reporter’s Notebook: DTN’s Pulse of Rural America”

Elaine Shein, Chris Clayton, Nick Scalise, DTN/Progressive Farmer

3rd Place: “15 Minutes With a Farmer: Bill Gross”

Lisa Foust Prater, Justin Davey & Jordan Reynolds, Successful Farming

DSM2: Blogs

1st Place: “Cowtowns & Skyscrapers” Jennifer M. Latzke, Kansas Farmer magazine / Farm Progress

2nd Place: “Water Grows Blog” Faith Smith with Texas Corn and Texas NRCS

3rd Place: “Show Me Life” Mindy Ward, Farm Progress/Missouri Ruralist

DSM3: Websites

1st Place: “Agriculture.com” Natalina Sents Bausch, Successful Farming

2nd Place: “Iowa Soybean Review website”

Susan Langman, Bethany Baratta & Joclyn Bushman, Iowa Soybean Association

3rd Place: “AngusJournal.net”

Julie Mais, Miranda Reiman, Megan Silveira & Jaime Albers, Angus Journal

DSM4: Webinars

1st Place: “2024 DTN Ag Summit Series: Navigating the 2024 Cattle Market”

Katie Dehlinger, ShayLe Stewart, Jennifer Carrico, Susan Payne & Nick Scalise

DTN/Progressive Farmer

2nd Place: no entry

3rd Place: no entry

DSM5: Social Media

1st Place: “24/25 Texas Corn Producers Social Media” Faith Smith and the Texas Corn Producers

2nd Place: “AGDAILY Social Media” Ryan Tipps and Heidi Crnkovic, AGDAILY

3rd Place: “Sorghum Pet Food Influencer Campaign” Clint White, Sorghum Checkoff

DSM6: Mobile/Tablet Technology Applications

1st Place: no entry

2nd Place: no entry

3rd Place: no entry

DSM7: Multimedia Story

1st Place: “Tom Burke’s Top 10 List Live from the American Angus Hall of Fame”

Megan Silveira, Angus Journal

2nd Place: “Then the Sun Rises” Jena McRell,

Grant Company and Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association

3rd Place: “Lance Dunbar : A Hero by Day and Night” Jennifer Shike, Farm Journal's PORK

DSM8: Video Production

1st Place: “Then the Sun Rises: Voices from the Fire” Crystal Albers, Grant Company

2nd Place: “Failure Isn't Fatal” Dan Miller & Rob Lagerstrom, DTN/Progressive Farmer

3rd Place: “Idle Up — Barry Pollard, Retiring Board of Directors President”

Megan Silveira, Angus Journal

2025 ACN Lifetime Achievement Award

The Ag Communicator's Network (ACN) Lifetime Achievement Award (LAA) is designed to honor current and former members of the organization, including those who may be deceased, for their outstanding professional and personal achievements. Recipients of the award are recognized for leadership, with specific emphasis on their contributions toward improving the viability and value of ACN. This award is reserved for those who have adhered to high standards of professionalism in all aspects of their endeavors.



The Ag Communicators Network (ACN) proudly announces **Gregg Hillyer**, editor-in-chief of *The Progressive Farmer*, as the recipient of the 2025 Lifetime Achievement Award—ACN's highest honor recognizing a career of excellence, service, and dedication to agricultural journalism.

The Lifetime Achievement Award honors current or former members of ACN who have demonstrated exceptional leadership, professionalism and a lasting impact on the agricultural communications industry. Hillyer embodies these ideals through decades of award-winning storytelling and mentorship. A native of southwest Iowa, Hillyer grew up on a dairy farm and went on to earn a degree in agricultural journalism from Iowa State University. His rural roots and passion for writing sparked a career that has spanned multiple decades, leaving an indelible mark on ag journalism.

Before taking the helm at *The Progressive Farmer*, Hillyer served as editor of *Soybean Digest* for nearly 12 years. Throughout his career, he has become known not just for his editorial leadership, but for the depth and clarity of his writing and photography.

Hillyer's work has earned numerous accolades, including:

- Two Oscars in Agriculture
- Story of the Year from the ACN
- ACN Master Writer designation and ACN Writer of Merit
- Honorable Mention, ACN Photographer of the Year
- First Place in a national conservation writing competition
- A special citation from USDA for his work on conservation compliance

Known for his calm presence, strong editorial voice and dedication to high standards, Hillyer has influenced generations of writers and photographers. His work continues to elevate agricultural journalism and support the mission of ACN.

The Ag Communicators Network is honored to recognize Gregg Hillyer with its 2025 Lifetime Achievement Award, celebrating a legacy of service, professionalism and excellence in agricultural communications.

The Ag Communicators Network has named a Lifetime Achievement Award recipient since 1990.

The 2025 Lifetime Achievement Award was sponsored by CHS.

2025 ACN Distinguished Service Award

Each year the Ag Communicators Network honors an individual outside of the organization with the Distinguished Service Award (DSA). The recipient is a leader who gives something back to the agricultural community through outstanding efforts in education, science, or public affairs. The person selected should be currently active in their field.



The Ag Communicators Network (ACN) is proud to present its 2025 Distinguished Service Award to **Aaron Hager**, professor in the Department of Crop Sciences at the University of Illinois, in recognition of his outstanding leadership in agricultural science and education.

Since 1947, ACN's Distinguished Service Award has honored non-members who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to the agricultural community. Hager's decades-long dedication to science-based weed management and public outreach exemplifies the values of this prestigious award.

Raised on a grain and livestock farm in west-central Illinois, Hager has spent more than 30 years as a key contributor to the University of Illinois' weed science program. His work has consistently prioritized practical, economically sound solutions for farmers, especially in the face of mounting herbicide resistance.

"Crop yield losses due to weeds in the U.S. exceed \$4 billion annually," notes Adam Davis, head of the University of Illinois crop sciences department. "Aaron's leadership in tackling herbicide-resistant waterhemp populations—through research, education, and outreach—has had an enormous impact on weed management across the Corn Belt."

Hager has delivered research-based recommendations to growers across Illinois and beyond, distributing more than 100,000 printed resources and maintaining an active digital presence. He has presented at over 600 meetings—ranging from local field days to international conferences—and published nearly 200 articles on the University of Illinois Crop Bulletin website.

But it's not just his research that sets him apart—it's his commitment to communication. "Dr. Hager's reputation for working with journalists is another reason he's a good candidate for the ACN Distinguished Service Award," said Pamela Smith, senior editor for DTN/Progressive Farmer. "Dr. Hager returns phone calls. He isn't afraid to reach out to journalists when he thinks a story needs to be told."

Hager was a leading voice during the rollout of dicamba-resistant soybeans, offering balanced, science-driven insights at a time of regulatory uncertainty and heightened concern over off-target herbicide movement. His thoughtful approach and consistent outreach helped farmers and industry leaders alike navigate a rapidly evolving landscape.

Whether he's in the field, in a research lab, or behind a keyboard, Hager's work is guided by one principle: put science first.

The Ag Communicators Network is honored to recognize Aaron Hager with its 2025 Distinguished Service Award for his enduring contributions to agriculture and his unwavering support of truth, transparency, and stewardship in agricultural science.

2025 Andy Markwart Horizon Award

The Andy Markwart Horizon Award is an annual award given to an ACN member who embodies the youthful vigor, energy, passion, dedication, and creativity shown by Andy in his volunteer work with the organization for many years. Andy, editor of The Furrow, died in 2006 from heart problems. However, his legacy lives on through this prestigious honor. The award is sponsored by the ACN Professional Improvement Foundation (PIF) and Gardner & Gardner Communications.

Courtney Girgis Named 2025 Andy Markwart Horizon Award Winner



LaGrange, Ga. — The Ag Communicators Network (ACN) is proud to announce Courtney Girgis, founder of Rooted Communications, as the recipient of the 2025 Andy Markwart Horizon Award, recognizing her passion, energy, and creative commitment to the future of agricultural communications.

Presented annually in memory of Andy Markwart, former editor of *The Furrow*, the Horizon Award honors an ACN member who embodies the youthful vigor, leadership and dedication that Andy brought to his work and volunteer service before his untimely passing in 2006. The award is sponsored by the ACN Professional Improvement Foundation (PIF) and Gardner & Gardner Communications.

From an early age, Girgis knew she had a calling to tell agriculture’s story. “Agriculture has always been part of my life,” she wrote in her award essay. “But I realized early on that not everyone who eats understands or appreciates how—and who—grows their food. It’s been my mission to help tell the stories of agriculture, both to agricultural and non-agricultural audiences, since I was 17.”

That mission has guided Girgis through more than a decade of impactful work, from her early days as a writer and editor at a nonprofit agricultural research institute to launching her own freelance business, Rooted Communications, in 2021. Through her independent work, she has written for publications and organizations including *Successful Farming*, *FFA New Horizons*, *Solutions from the Land*, *Mission: Water*, *Oklahoma Living* and *Missouri Farmers Care*. Her storytelling blends vivid imagery, compelling writing, and a deep respect for the people and practices behind modern agriculture. Girgis is passionate about bringing readers into unfamiliar places, helping them learn, care and connect.

“I like to weave facts and contextual information into the emotions and stories of the human

experience to make readers care, learn and understand the world in new ways,” she shared. As a freelance communicator, Girgis has also remained a committed and enthusiastic member of ACN. She credits the organization and its members for opening doors, offering mentorship and helping shape her career. She’s attended nearly every Ag Media Summit since 2012 and considers it one of her favorite professional development opportunities. “I did not know Andy,” she wrote, “but my guess is he would have been among those I would have enjoyed learning from.”

Courtney Girgis joins a distinguished group of past Horizon Award recipients who have demonstrated early-career excellence and a strong trajectory of service and impact. Her work exemplifies the spirit of the award—and the legacy of Andy Markwart—with every story she tells.

2025 ACN PIF Scholarship Recipients

Morgan Anderson - Dr. James Evans Scholarship

Maci Carter - Past Presidents Scholarship

Megan Clark - Past Presidents Scholarship

Meet the 2025 Dr. James Evans Scholarship Finalists

By Courtney Girgis, ACN Board Member and Chair, Future Ag Communicators Committee

This year, the Future Ag Communicators Committee reviewed a competitive bunch of 13 applications in the Ag Communicators Network's Scholarship Program.

Thanks to Lyle E. Orwig's endowment of the Dr. James Evans Scholarship and the Professional Improvement Foundation (and your generous donations to PIF), we are able to offer three scholarships to Ag Communicators of Tomorrow (ACT) members this year: the Dr. James Evans Scholarship (\$3,000) and two Past Presidents Scholarships (\$2,000 each).

The top eight applicants scored within 20 (out of 400) points of each other, and our finalists rose to the top in a three-way tie: Morgan Anderson, Maci Carter and Megan Clark.

The first round of judging scored students based on internships and career-related experiences, a writing sample, leadership activities, academic achievements, and a professional recommendation. The second round will be based on an interview at Ag Media Summit, where the students will vie for the top scholarship named in honor of Dr. James Evans for his tremendous contributions to the establishment and growth of ag communications programs. The three finalists will each receive stipends of up to \$1,000 to help them travel to and attend Ag Media Summit in Rogers, Arkansas, in July.

The Finalists

We asked our star students a few questions to get to know them better. Here are their words.



Morgan Anderson

Hometown: Amanda, Ohio

College: Ohio University

Major: Journalism: News & Information

Expected Graduation: May 2026

What are your summer plans? This summer, I'm excited to intern with Rural Media Group's RFD-TV in Nashville, Tennessee. In their newsroom, I will continue working in agricultural communication with an emphasis on broadcast— my specialty.

Why did you choose ag communications as a career path and is there a particular part of the industry you hope to work in? I believe a life well-lived is one where people and purpose collide, and I strive to embody this in all I do. From the local farm to the small-town football team, I see a greater story in everything that defines and connects us. As a student, agricultural communicator, and

lifelong learner, I aim to bring these stories to life. My passion for storytelling and boundless curiosity has driven me to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Journalism: News & Information (broadcast journalism) at Ohio University's nationally ranked E.W. Scripps School of Journalism. My career mantra is simple: "Let's put agriculture on the news!" In newsrooms where agriculture is often overlooked, I pitch and produce enterprise stories that are both compelling and impactful. I specialize in localizing global and national issues as an agricultural broadcast journalist. Long-term, my goal is to work in television news, specializing as an agricultural multimedia journalist and reporter with a goal of one day becoming an anchor.

What does it mean to you to be a scholarship recipient? To be an Agricultural Communications Network scholarship recipient is an honor. This scholarship will provide crucial support as I continue to pursue hands-on experiences in agricultural media, deepening my understanding of industry issues while refining my storytelling and production skills. Thank you to all at ACN who have made this scholarship possible, as I can assure you that an investment in Morgan Anderson will yield a great return. Additionally, a special thanks to my professional mentors at WOUB Public Media and Ohio's Country Journal/Ohio Ag Net— two entities that have been formative in shaping me as a journalist. Because of them, I feel confident, multi-faceted, and driven to enter any newsroom.

Is there anything else you'd like to share? For the 2023-2024 school year, I was blessed to have been elected to serve as a National FFA Officer; specifically, as the National Eastern Region Vice President. During my year of service as a National FFA Officer, no two days were the same, but the core mission remained constant: to advocate for agricultural education. By the numbers: I represented over 1 million FFA members; facilitated 82 workshops and delivered 23 keynote speeches; completed 22 stakeholder visits; traveled to 21 states and Japan on 69 flights— logging more than 100,000 miles. As you can see from those numbers alone, it's safe to say it was a year of growth, skill-building, and continuous learning! I'm walking away from that year with a deeper appreciation for career & technical education, the power of human connection, and the importance of listening more than you speak.



Maci Carter

Hometown: Marion, Ohio

College: Oklahoma State University

Major: Agribusiness and Agricultural Communications

Expected Graduation: May 2026

What are your summer plans? This summer, I am thrilled to be serving as a Brand and Communications Intern with Koch Agronomic Services in Wichita, Kansas. In this role, I look forward to developing a

variety of communication pieces and contributing to marketing strategies across multiple brands within the company. This experience is allowing me to strengthen my professional skills, expand my understanding of brand communications, and pursue meaningful work that aligns with my passion for agriculture. I will also be taking advantage of valuable professional development opportunities that will support my growth well beyond this internship.

Why did you choose ag communications as a career path, and is there a particular part of the industry you hope to work in? Growing up on a family farm in central Ohio, agriculture has always been my roots and passion. From working ground for my dad to evenings in the show barn and Saturday mornings at the Farmers Share Breakfast with our local Farm Bureau, my most vivid childhood memories revolve around the industry. Some of my favorites include preparing meals for the field with my mom and eating dinner in the buddy seat beside my dad. As I got older, I naturally gravitated toward organizations like 4-H, FFA and other agricultural groups. These experiences introduced me to the power of communication. Through public speaking, community outreach, and communications competitions, I discovered a deep passion for using my voice to share stories like those of my father and other agriculturalists. Oklahoma State University offered the unique opportunity to pursue a dual degree in Agribusiness and Agricultural Communications, allowing me to turn my passions into a career. I appreciate the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the business side of agriculture while also learning how to craft and share accurate, compelling messages through various media platforms. This combination has helped me communicate more confidently and effectively within the industry. When it came time to pursue internships, I quickly found myself drawn to communications-focused roles. My first summer in college, I interned as a farm broadcaster with Radio Oklahoma Ag Network, and it was an experience that exceeded every expectation. It deepened my connection to Oklahoma agriculture and provided me with meaningful opportunities to share authentic stories from the field. While I love using recorded media to tell compelling stories, I also prioritize diversifying my experiences. Last summer, I served as a Marketing and Event Planning Intern for John Deere in Austin, Texas. This experience expanded my skill set in developing marketing strategies, crafting value propositions for cutting-

edge technology, and allowed me to bring my knowledge of agricultural producers to life by planning a customer-focused event at the Farm Progress Show. This summer, I am eager to continue growing as a Brand and Communications Intern with Koch Agronomic Services. I know it will be a season of professional development and personal growth as I gain experience in a new part of the industry. While I may not have a specific job title in mind for following graduation, one thing remains certain: I am passionate about sharing the good news of agriculture and committed to utilizing my skills to amplify the voices and values of the industry I love.

What does it mean to be a scholarship recipient? I am incredibly honored and blessed to be a recipient of an Agricultural Communicators Network scholarship. Throughout my collegiate journey, I have witnessed firsthand the tremendous work and meaningful impact this organization has on agricultural communications. Seeing past recipients and their integrity only deepened my appreciation for what this recognition represents. Agricultural communications is where my heart truly lies, and it is beyond rewarding to be acknowledged by such a respected organization within the industry I care so deeply about. I am proud to be part of this community and excited to continue growing as a communicator and advocate for agriculture.

Is there anything else you'd like to share? I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Agricultural Communicators Network for its support of students like me. This scholarship not only helps ease the financial burden of pursuing my education but also reaffirms my commitment to sharing the stories of agriculture with integrity and passion. I look forward to staying involved in this community and giving back in the future.



Megan Clark

Hometown: DeWitt, Iowa

College: Iowa State University

Major: Agricultural Communication and International Agriculture, minor in Animal Science

Expected Graduation: May 2026

What are your summer plans?

I am with Merck Animal Health as a Cattle Sales Intern working with their team in Southwest Nebraska.

Why did you choose ag communications as a career path and is there a particular part of the industry you hope to work in?

I chose agricultural communications as a career path because of the diverse career opportunities available within the major. My passions are writing, photography, and face-to-face communication, and all three can be accomplished with an agricultural communications degree. Additionally, this career path allows me to help bridge the gap between producers and consumers, as well as educate people on the industry that feeds and fuels the world. In my future career, I'd like to work within sales, marketing, or for a livestock publication.

What does it mean to you to be a scholarship recipient? I am extremely grateful and humbled to be a scholarship recipient at the 2025 Agricultural Media Summit. Since I first attended the conference when it was virtual in 2020, I knew it would be an annual event I wouldn't want to miss. There truly is no better place for ag communicators to join together and network to make the industry more well-rounded. So, receiving a scholarship is an honor and I appreciate all of the donors who make these awards possible.

Is there anything else you'd like to share? I'd like to give a big thank you to the donors, application and interview committee, and others who help make these scholarships available. In addition, I'd like to thank the organizers of AMS who work tirelessly to host a high-quality convention that communicators everywhere look forward to attending each year. Your hard work doesn't go unnoticed, and I look forward to my time at this year's convention.

– Girgis owns Rooted Communications

These scholarships are made possible through Lyle E. Orwig's endowment of the Dr. James Evans Scholarship and the Professional Improvement Foundation