

# Environmental Leaders Award Program

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This program is a joint effort of the National Young Farmers Educational Association (NYFEA), Montana State University and University of Nebraska-Lincoln. It seeks to reward and recognize young/beginning animal ag producers who have a proactive environmental stewardship ethic in their operation.

This program is open to large or small operations, full-time operators or part-time. It is open to conventional or organic operations (and everything in between). You do not need to be an NYFEA member to participate.



## What will the winners receive?

A \$500 travel scholarship to Agriculture's Promise

<http://www.agriculturespromise.com/> held annually in

Washington, D.C. It may be possible to substitute another event if your schedule does not permit participation in Ag's Promise. Enrollment is accepted anytime and recognition is given at the Agriculture's Promise Conference (every April in D.C.) after your plan of work is completed.

## What Do I Need To Do?

The first step is to fill out the form at <http://bit.ly/EnvLeaders> or contact one of the team members below. They will help you develop a plan of work and be available for questions or assistance throughout the process.

- 1) Environmental leaders will be required to complete an educational component (online modules are available). A combination of these self-study modules and educational programs, such as local conservation or extension programs will fulfill this requirement.
- 2) Awardees will implement a positive practice on their farm or ranch (this does not have to be a physical practice; it could be a better record keeping system or a risk assessment). Pictures, video or other documentation will be required.
- 3) Lastly, the award winners will talk about their operation and their positive stewardship at an event of their choosing. The project team will develop a case study about your farm or ranch, and develop news releases for your local papers and even state, regional or national farm/ranch publications.

## How Do I Learn More?

If you would like to learn more about this program, contact Jill Heemstra [jheemstra@unl.edu](mailto:jheemstra@unl.edu), 402-748-3909 or Tommy Bass [tmbass@montana.edu](mailto:tmbass@montana.edu), 406-994-5733. Even if you do not plan to participate but would like to stay "in the loop", you are welcome to contact us.

- Visit our website <http://www.extension.org/animal+manure+management> (select "Beginning Farmers" from the resource list)
- Visit and "like" the Agricultural Environmental Leaders (EnvAgLeaders) page on Facebook, <http://www.facebook.com/envagleaders>. We will make announcements about the program there. Even if you do not participate in the program, please consider visiting this page and joining the conversation to highlight the positive stewardship ethic found in agriculture.
- Follow @EnvAgLeaders on Twitter <http://www.twitter.com/envagleaders>

Nominate someone else—if there are young/beginning ag producers in your area that would be interested, please give them a copy of this information. They do not need to be an NYFEA member to participate or attend the Agriculture's Promise conference.

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## Environmental Leader Award

- Open to young/beginning producers (less than 10 yrs experience and/or under 40 yrs of age).
- This is not a competition with other applicants. Everyone who completes the requirements will receive the travel scholarship and be recognized as an Environmental Leader.
- Receive individual advice and assistance from team members
- Meet other young, proactive producers and visit our nation's capitol. The Agriculture's Promise event is a great opportunity to learn more about the challenges and opportunities the next generation in agriculture will face.
- Let us know you are interested at <http://bit.ly/EnvLeaders>



Our first environmental leader award winner was Peter Juergens from Lidderdale, Iowa. Peter and his brother Aaron operate a swine finishing operation, Ranch Creek Farms. Peter is extremely interested in air quality issues and works with an inventor and researchers to test systems and technologies that can improve air quality inside the barns as well as for his neighbors. Peter was presented his award at the Agriculture's Promise Event in Washington, DC on April 11, 2011. Learn

more at: <http://www.agriculturespromise.com/>

Others that have expressed interest in receiving the award in 2012 include

- Organic goat dairy in the pacific northwest
- Young producer joining his family's diversified farm in the southeast
- Midwestern cow/calf producer converting crop land to forage production to reduce erosion

This project is emphasizing livestock, dairy, and poultry stewardship, however crop producers are welcome to apply, especially if they use manure in their cropping system or have other connections to animal agriculture. We want to recognize producers of all types and sizes who have a positive stewardship ethic!

*Please feel free to pass this information along to other producers that might be interested/eligible to receive this award.*