LOCAL AGRICULTURE EDUCATORS ATTEND STATE CONFERENCE

SAUK CITY, WIS. – The 2023 Professional Development Conference was held in person for the Wisconsin Association of Agricultural Educators June 25-29, 2023. Throughout the year, our agricultural educators are able to provide a wide variety of experiences in agriculture for our students, which aids them in becoming college and career ready. Also, the opportunities that our organization provides our ag teachers help to prepare them for experiences beyond their classroom.

This conference was supported by sponsors including Compeer, Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin, Wisconsin FFA Alumni and Supporters, Edward Jones and James Grasee, Don and Mary Josko, MinnTex, RealityWorks, Wisconsin FFA Alumni and Supporters, Wisconsin Farm Bureau, Alcivia, iCEV, Countryside Legacy, Cutting Edge Curriculum, Alsum Produce, Capital Microscope Service, Milk Source, Midwest Food Products Association, O’Connor, Wells, CPAs, UBS Palm Financial Group, Alpha Tau Alpha of UW River Falls, Seneca Foods, UW Platteville, Land O’Lakes Foundation, Tractor Central, Greenstone Farm Credit Services, Premier Cooperative.

Agricultural education is critical at all levels of the education system as these classes provide students with the skills and knowledge needed for careers in this fast-paced and dynamic industry. Wisconsin’s agricultural industry works to provide food, fuel, fiber, and shelter to meet the needs of the growing world.

The WAAE Professional Development Conference gives members an opportunity to participate in hands-on workshops that focus on the latest trends in agriculture, technology, and innovative strategies to bring those techniques into the classroom. Agricultural educators were able to attend all workshops this year due to the taping of workshops and keeping them available for members to view in future years as they search for new curricula in different areas.

The conference guest speaker on Tuesday, June 27, was Randy Romanski, Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection delivering an invigorating message to these agricultural educators. Conference attendees participated in professional development workshops to improve teaching techniques
and new trends in agriculture. Workshops were available on National Quality Program Standards, How STEM and modern agriculture bridge, Aquaculture/Aquaponics, Food Science/Processing, Plant Science, Soil Science, Financial Literacy in the Ag Classroom, and Inquiry-Based Instruction, Natural Resources, using technology in the classroom, program management, and Business and Industry Tours.

State winners receiving awards were Outstanding Secondary Ag Program-Wisconsin Heights with instructor Kim Houser; Outstanding Ag Educator went to Mary Handrich- Grasee of Denmark School District; Outstanding Early Career Educator went to Connor Anderson of the Lodi School District; Teacher Mentor went to Rachel Sauvola of the New Richmond School District; Outstanding Post Secondary Program went to Western Technical College, Agribusiness Science and Technology Program led by Dona Goede; Teacher Turn The Key Award went to Joelle Liddane of Holmen School District; Honored Secondary Educator went to Jeanne Alling, Sandra Dykes and Dan Robinson; Lifetime Achievement went to Roger King, retired educator at Holmen School District, the NAAE Outstanding Service Citation went to Mud Hole Custom Tackle with Anthony Youmans receiving the award for them; Outstanding Cooperation Award also went to Mud Hole Custom Tackle, Organizational Relations Award went to Project LEAF; and the State Special Citation went to Gordon Gasch and David Laatsch, former agricultural educators.

WAAE is the professional association for agricultural educators in Wisconsin. Members include middle school, high school, technical college, and university educators. The focus of the association is to provide professional development, legislative support, and educational resources for teachers to enhance their local agricultural education programs.

For more information about your local agriculture education program and to find out how you can support agriculture in your community, please contact your local agriculture education instructor or WAAE at www.waae.com.

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