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LOCAL AGRICULTURE EDUCATORS ATTEND STATE CONFERENCE

SAUK CITY, WIS. – The 2022 Professional Development Conference was held virtually for the Wisconsin Association of Agricultural Educators June 26-30, 2022. The theme of the conference, “Innovation Integration” with QR codes used for the program and all workshop surveys.

Throughout the year, our agricultural educators are able to provide innovative 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, Don and Mary Josko, MinnTex, RealityWorks, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation, Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin, iCEV, Alpha Tau Alpha of UW River Falls, Seneca Foods, UW Platteville, Tractor Central, Greenstone Farm Credit Services, and Kwik Trip.

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.

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.

New this year was a day at the Sparta barn venue called Country Reflections where workshops were held throughout the grounds, a picnic lunch with all attendees and later that evening, a pork BBQ dinner. Camaraderie was everywhere with cohorts visiting in clusters sharing tips and tricks throughout the day.

State winners receiving awards were Outstanding Secondary Ag Program-Chippewa Falls with teachers Jeanna Burgan and Caitlin Foster; Outstanding Ag Educator went to Diane Runde Morgan of the Janesville Craig School District; Outstanding Early Career Educator went to Emma Huber of the Tomah School District; Teacher Mentor went to Jordan Donnerbauer of Stanley-Boyd School District; Outstanding Post Secondary Program went to Chippewa Valley Technical College-Farm Business Management Program led by Mark Denk; Post-Secondary Instructor went to Dr. Mark Zidon of UW-Platteville; Teacher Turn The Key Award went to Cierra Essock of Hustisford School District; Honored Secondary Educator went to DeWayne Fossum, Kevin Champeau, and Rene' Lehman; Lifetime Achievement went to Mike Sabel of Mid-State Technical College; the NAAE Outstanding Service Citation went to Cheryl Zimmerman, Wisconsin FFA Executive Director; Outstanding Cooperation Award went to NASCO; Organizational Relations Award went to Compeer Financial; and the State Special Citation went to Dr. Mark Zidon of UW-Platteville and Cheryl Skjolaas, Senior Outreach Specialist for the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension/ College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, Center for Agricultural Safety and Health, Biological Systems Engineering Department.

WAAE is the professional association for agricultural educators in Wisconsin. Members include over 400 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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