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Kyle and Rachel Zwieg named 2022 Wisconsin Outstanding Young Farmers
Dodge County farmers honored for outstanding commitment to agriculture

NEENAH, Wisconsin [Jan. 23, 2022] – The Wisconsin Outstanding Young Farmer (OYF) program is pleased to announce Kyle and Rachel Zwieg of Ixonia, Wisconsin, were selected as the 2022 Wisconsin Outstanding Young Farmers during the 68th Annual Awards Weekend Jan. 21 – 22.

The Zwiogs are the sixth generation of a dairy and crop farm business that's been in existence since 1856. Kyle credits his family and the many mentors along the way who helped shaped his ag career, encourage his thirst for knowledge and hone his farming and business skills. "I didn't do this alone, and I am grateful to my family and many mentors along the way, who continue to help me," says Kyle Zwieg.

With an eye to the future, the farm has significantly moved forward on new ideas over the past decade. They adopted robotic milking technology in 2020 and are committed to cow comfort and increased dairy efficiencies. Conservation-minded, the Zwieg's embraced a 100% no-till cropping system in 2010 and strives to try new techniques such as aerial seeding of cover crops into standing corn and soybeans. They are active in their local farmer-led watershed group, in their community, and in telling ag's story.

Kyle and Rachel have three children, Theodore, Landon and Logan, and were sponsored by Lakeshore Farm Management, Universal Cooperative Association, Compeer Financial, Fink Trucking Service LLC, Deer Run Seeds and Vita Plus.

"Today's farmer is an entrepreneur in a complex agribusiness," says Cindy Matton, Wisconsin Outstanding Young Farmer organization. "Farmers must understand all aspects of farming and business, as well as be involved in their community. It's not only fitting for farmers to be honored for their achievements—it's essential. Congratulations to all our finalists. You are making a difference."

Additional winners

- Mike and Gina Redetzke were named OYF Runner Up. The Redetzke's farm near Colby, Wisconsin, custom-raising heifers for area dairy farms, and running a small grass-fed beef herd. Mike and Gina were sponsored by PPA, Marathon County, Vita Plus, Rural Mutual, Short Lane Ag Supply and EPPIC.

- Dylan and Bryanna Handel, Barneveld, Wisconsin, were awarded the “Speak Up for Ag Award,” sponsored by *Agri-View*. The couple operates a 75-cow Jersey dairy and was sponsored by Premier Co-op, Wrights Feed, Farm First, Compeer Financial and Meister Cheese.

Other finalists

- Keith and Stephanie Abts, New Franken, Wisconsin, sponsored by Denmark State Bank, Maribel Grain Co., Luxemburg Milling Co., Valley Veterinary Clinic, Abts Bou-Matic, Forage Storage Solutions and Country Visions Cooperative.
- Matt and Sara Hintz, Amherst, Wisconsin, sponsored by TH Agrichemicals, Golden Harvest, Nexus Marketing/NFO Livestock, Roberts Irrigation, Quality Liquid Feeds and International Bank of Amherst.
- Ryan and Megan Prellwitz, Ripon, Wisconsin, sponsored by Ballweg Implement, Modern Pole Builders, Sun Badger Solar.

Judges for the event included:

- Donald Adams, BMO Harris Bank
- Scott Reuss, University of Wisconsin Extension Crops, Soils and Horticulture Agent for Marinette and Oconto Counties
- Angie Ulness, University of Wisconsin Extension Manitowoc County Ag Educator and past WI and National OYF Winner

In addition to the important networking events and the awards portion of the program, OYF finalists participated in ag forums about improving mental health with Jeff Ditzenberger, founder of T.U.G.S and crisis management preparedness with Shannon Linderoth, Filament. They also toured LaClare Family Farm and LaClare Creamery in Malone.

The 2022 event was held at the Best Western Premier Resort and Hotel, Neenah, Wisconsin. Next year, the Zwiogs will host the Wisconsin OYF Awards Weekend in January 2023, location TBD.

Wisconsin will have two finalists at the 2022 National OYF Awards in Hilton Head Island, SC February 2-6, 2022. WI OYF 2020 Winners, Phil and Laura Finger, Oconto are finalists for the 2021 National OYF Award, and Joe and Ashley Dudkiewicz, Crivitz, WI OYF 2021 Runners Up are finalists for the 2022 National OYF Award. Due to Covid, they are holding both the 2021 and 2022 Awards together this year. Please wish these two fine young farmer families good luck at National OYF.

Sponsors for 2022 the Wisconsin OYF event included:

- **Diamond:** *Agri-View*, Compeer Financial, Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin, Len and Ann Reckelberg, Sun Badger Solar, USAgNet
- **Platinum:** Dairy Business Association, Deer Run Seeds, EPPIC, Golden Harvest, Graef Transport Inc., Lloyd & Daphne Holterman, Kuhn North American, Inc., Leedstone, Inc., M.P.B. Builders, Roberts Irrigation, Ron’s Cheese/Pagel’s Ponderosa, Rural Mutual, Short Lane Ag Supply, Zernicke’s Landstad Dairy LLC
- **Gold:** Ballweg Implement, Dairy Department Inc., Denmark State Bank, Farm First Dairy Cooperative, Finger Family Farm, LLC, Fink Trucking Service LLC, Forage Storage Solutions LLC, Kwik Trip, Cheery’s Creative Crafts – Lora Gaedtke, NFO Livestock/Nexus Marketing, Peshtigo National Bank, Quality Liquid Feeds, TH Agri-Chemicals, Valley Veterinary Clinic, Wisconsin Farmers Union Foundation

- **Silver:** Abts Equipment, Eau Claire Energy Cooperative, Foremost Farms USA, International Bank of Amherst, Maribel Grain Company, Marieke Gouda, McFarlandale Dairy LLC, Meister Cheese, Pertzborn Farms, Premier Cooperative, Salentine Homestead Dairy LLC, Universal Cooperative Association, Wrights Feed Service Inc.
- **Bronze:** Animart LLC, Country Visions Cooperative, Lakeshore Farm Management, Luxemburg-Casco HS Tech Ed, Luxemburg Milling Company, Timeless Portraits – Brooke Vandebush

About Wisconsin OYF:

The Outstanding Young Farmer Program began in 1954 as a National Program for the US Jaycees. Wisconsin's first winner was named in 1952 and 68 state programs have been held since. Wisconsin has had 18 national winners during the program's history. Visit www.wi-oyf.org to learn more or submit a nomination or an application form.