

Six exceptional young farmers will participate in the 68th Wisconsin Outstanding Young Farmer (OYF) Awards Weekend Jan. 21-23, 2022 in Neenah, WI at the Best Western Premier Bridgewood Resort Hotel & Conference Center.

The finalists include:

- ** Keith & Stephanie Abts, New Franken
- ** Bryanna & Dylan Handel, Barneveld
- ** Matt & Sara Hintz, Amherst
- ** Ryan & Megan Prellwitz, Ripon
- ** Mike & Gina Redetzke, Colby
- ** Kyle & Rachel Zwieg, Ixonia

The OYF candidates are sponsored to the state event by past OYF finalists, UW Extension County Ag Agents or other agricultural groups; sponsors can still contribute to the overall event or a specific candidate.

The Awards Weekend in Winnebago County allows the candidates to network on farm and family issues at the two-day event and they will participate in an Ag Forum/Workshop. The group will also have "tours" from local businesses on Saturday morning.

The 2022 state OYF winner will be named Saturday evening at the finale banquet. Also recognized will be a runner-up and a "Speak up for Ag" winner, sponsored by Agri-View. The state winner will be nominated to attend the February 2023 national OYF Awards Congress, which will be held in Appleton, WI.

The OYF award is based on 50 percent progress in ag career, 25 percent soil and water conservation and 25 percent contributions to community, state or nation. Goals of the OYF program are:

- ** To foster better urban-rural relations through the understanding of farmers' challenges, as well as the appreciation of their contributions and achievements;
- ** To bring about a greater interest in farmers/ranchers;
- ** To help build an urban awareness of the farmers' importance and impact on America's economy.

The 2020 state winners, Phil & Laura Finger, Oconto, are Finalists for the 2021 National OYF, which will be held in Hilton Head Island, SC in early February 2022. The National OYF event will be recognizing the finalists from both 2021 and 2022 due to the cancellation of last year's event. Now in its 68th year, Wisconsin OYF has had 18 national winners. On the national level, OYF is sponsored by John Deere and the Outstanding Farmers of America Fraternity; and supported by the National Association of County Agricultural Agents.