

2026 Achievement Award Rubric

Overall Goal: Recognize young farmers/ranchers for their achievements in production agriculture and leadership.

Scoring:

Category	Points
1. Personal Background	10
2. Scope of Farm/Ranch	15
3. Growth & Achievements	25
4. Management Decisions	15
5. Goals & Planning	10
6. Resiliency	10
7. Financial Success Part 1: Debt-to-Asset Ratio and Profit	25
8. Financial Success Part 2: Analysis and Record Keeping	15
9. Financial Success Part 3: Off-Farm Income	10
10. Leadership Experience: Farm Bureau	30
11. Leadership Experience: Other Ag Organizations	10
12. Leadership Experience: Other	10
13. Leadership Growth and Development	10
APPLICATION TOTAL	195
Interview (Top 10 competitors only)	5
TOTAL POINTS	200

1. PERSONAL BACKGROUND	0 -2 points For poorly written responses with little-to-no details, preventing the judge from being able to form an understanding of the applicant or farm/ranch operation. Little to no advocacy efforts described.	3 - 6 points For clear answers with some details. Applicant could be more descriptive to build a clearer understanding of the applicant and the farm. Applicant is involved but may not demonstrate strong initiative as an advocate.	7 - 10 points For well-written answers that give the judge a strong sense of the applicant as a person and a strong understanding of the farm/ranch operation. Applicant is an active advocate for agriculture, showing initiative to advocate both through organizations and independently.	
2. SCOPE OF YOUR FARM OR RANCH	0-3 points Applicant does not have a vested interest and is not subject to risk in the ownership structure. Applicant is not a significant decision maker and does not answer the question, or does not answer it clearly, offering little-to-no examples. The decisions made do not have significant impact on the operation.	4-9 points Applicant has vested interest but is not subject to significant risk in the ownership structure of the farm/ranch. Applicant is an important decision maker and has described responsibilities with some good examples. Decisions are meaningful, but not as critical to the overall success.	10-15 points Applicant has a high level of vested interest and is subject to significant risk in the ownership structure of the farm/ranch. Applicant is a primary decision maker and has specifically described decision making responsibilities with detailed examples that demonstrate decisions are critical to the success of the operation.	
3. GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENTS	0-5 points The applicant's story of farm growth is somewhat weak. Has few to no examples, little contributions or impact on growth, and/or response does not address the question. Farm/Ranch has had little to no growth over time. Applicant lists and describes very little production efficiency growth since the first year.	6-15 points The applicant's story of farm growth and achievement over time is adequate; some examples are shared. Farm/Ranch has had some growth and applicant has somewhat contributed to the success of the farm/ranch. Applicant lists and describes some production efficiency growth since the first year.	16-25 points Applicant tells a compelling story of farm growth and achievement over time with strong examples. Farm/Ranch growth is clearly evident, and applicant's contributions have heavily influenced the success of the farm/ranch. Applicant lists and clearly describes impressive production efficiency growth since the first year.	
4. MANAGEMENT DECISIONS	0-3 points Applicant does not understand farm/ranch management. Applicant has not answered the question or does not have an understanding of the market. Either decisions are not listed, no explanation has been provided, or the decisions did not make significant impact.	4-9 points Applicant has some understanding of good farm/ranch management. Decisions are somewhat strategic and impactful. Applicant has some market knowledge and has made an effort to help the operation succeed. Response offers some explanation of the impact that resulted from management decisions.	10-15 points Applicant has a strong command of strategic farm/ranch management through market knowledge and purposeful decision-making. Applicant shows initiative and innovation and clearly describes significant, purposeful, and impactful management decisions. Response offers a well thought out explanation of strategic management decisions that have resulted in changes that position the operation for success.	

5. GOALS & PLANNING	0-2 points Applicant does not provide goals or has vague or inadequate description of goals and plan to achieve them.	3-6 points Applicant identifies some general goals but does not give clear or detailed explanation on how they plan to achieve them.	7-10 points Applicant has identified specific, well thought out goals for the future that clearly demonstrate plans for long-term success. Applicant describes specific, well thought out plans to achieve each goal.	
6. RESILIENCY	0-2 points Applicant does not identify any business challenges or offers little to no details about how they were addressed. Applicant does not have a transition or succession plan or no explanation is provided as to why there is not one.	3-6 points Applicant is able to identify major business challenges but does not clearly describe how they were addressed. Applicant has initial thoughts about establishing a transition or succession plan, but plan is not yet complete or explanation as to why there is not a plan could use improvement.	7-10 points Applicant is able to identify major business challenges and demonstrates character, perseverance and business insight to effectively address challenges. Applicant describes a strong, well thought out transition or succession plan or gives a strong and appropriate explanation as to why there is not one.	
7. FINANCIAL SUCCESS: Part 1 <i>NOTE: In considering financial situation, judges should consider the whole application and how the financials are connected to the history, goals and strategies of the farm/ranch. Financials should not be evaluated independent of the other sections.</i>	0-5 points Debt to Asset ratio is above 70% with no explanation. Net profit is not stable or is negative for a significant amount of time or by a large margin without explanation.	6-15 points Debt to Asset ratio is between 30-70% and/or not well justified or explained. Net profit lacks stability and/or not well explained; only shows slight improvement relative to other ratios or goals described.	16-25 points Results strongly align with goals and strategies discussed in previous sections. Debt-to-Asset ratio is less than 30% unless otherwise justified by the type of operation or there are reasons for added debt load due to the growth phase of the operation. Net profit is stable and well explained; shows improvement relative to other ratios and goals described.	
8. FINANCIAL SUCCESS: Part 2	0-3 points Has little or no additional financial evaluation practices, does not keep records or utilize advisors. Uses only cash-basis accounting. Offers 1 or less financial strengths and weaknesses.	4-9 points Offers some additional financial analysis including examples. Utilizes some record keeping and may or may not have advisors. Might use accrual or cash-basis accounting. Maintaining documentation does not appear to be a priority and applicant may simply try to remember most numbers or evaluation from year to year. Offers less than 3 strengths and weaknesses with limited plans to improve.	10-15 points Uses a combination of financial ratios and measurements to evaluate the operation and measure success. Utilizes a proven record keeping system and accrual-based accounting to determine real profitability that is evaluated by qualified advisors. Maintains documentation of all financial evaluation on an annual basis. Offers 3 or more strengths and weaknesses and addresses plans to improve.	

9. FINANCIAL SUCCESS: Part 3 <i>NOTE: Inheritance of land or farm business is OK but should not be the sole reason for growth.</i>	0-2 points Farm or ranch is dependent on off-farm income. One business could not survive without the other. Little to no growth without investment outside the farm operation.	3-6 points Utilizes some off-farm or other business income to supplement expenses not covered by farm/ranch income. Other businesses complement each other but support each other financially. A substantial portion of the growth of the farm operation was due to additional outside income.	7-10 points Farm is self-sustaining and doesn't require off-farm income to sustain any part of the farm operation. Farm success is not determined by, nor dependent upon, the use of off-farm income or inheritance. Other farm/ranch business income(s) directly complements the farm/ranch, but the entities do not rely on each other. Other income from family inheritances or winnings are not the sole reason for farm growth and success. Family invests additional income wisely in the long-term health, welfare and savings of the family.	
10. LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE: FARM BUREAU	0-6 points Little to no experience. Many experiences reflect being a member with little to no leadership roles. Little to no recognitions/awards are listed and are not significant in nature. Experiences are mostly local and state.	7-18 points A moderate amount of experience with a mix of experiences that include both being a member and serving in leadership roles. Some recognitions/awards are listed and are somewhat relevant in nature. Experiences include local, state and possibly national.	19-30 points A lot of quality and impactful experiences, including experiences that involve serving in leadership positions and not simply being a member. Several recognitions/awards are listed and are relevant and significant in nature. Experiences include local, state, national and possibly international.	
11. LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE: OTHER AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS	0-2 points Little to no experience. Many experiences reflect being a member with little to no leadership roles. Little to no recognitions/awards are listed and are not significant in nature. Experiences are mostly local and state.	3-6 points A moderate amount of experience with a mix of experience that include both being a member and serving in leadership roles. Some recognitions/awards are listed and are somewhat relevant in nature. Experiences include local, state and possibly national.	7-10 points A lot of quality and impactful experiences, including experiences that involve serving in leadership positions and not simply being a member. Several recognitions/awards are listed and are relevant and significant in nature. Experiences include local, state, national and possibly international.	
12. LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE: OTHER	0-2 points Little to no experience. Many experiences reflect being a member with little to no leadership roles. Little to no recognitions/awards are listed and are not significant in nature. Experiences are mostly local and state.	3-6 points A moderate amount of experience with a mix of experiences that include both being a member and serving in leadership roles. Some recognitions/awards are listed and are somewhat relevant in nature. Experiences include local, state and possibly national.	7-10 points A lot of quality and impactful experiences, including experiences that involve serving in leadership positions and not simply being a member. Several recognitions/awards are listed and are relevant and significant in nature. Experiences include local, state, national and possibly international.	

13. LEADERSHIP GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT	0-2 points Did not describe an impactful leadership experience or experience listed is inadequate. Does not offer examples of past efforts to grow as a leader or businessperson. Does not identify goals for leadership growth and development or goals listed are not relevant.	3-6 points Describes a somewhat meaningful and impactful leadership experience. Lists some past efforts to improve as a leader or businessperson but could be more specific. Has some general goals for leadership growth and development.	7-10 points Describes a meaningful and impactful leadership experience. Lists specific actions that show that applicant is self-aware and invested in becoming a better leader and businessperson. Has various concrete goals for leadership growth and development.	
APPLICATION TOTAL:				_____/195
14. INTERVIEW <i>NOTE: In addition to the 5 points allocated for the interview, judges may alter scores from other sections based on what they learn during the interview.</i>	0-1 points Applicant is unfamiliar with the contents of the application and cannot answer questions about the business and/or financials. Applicant lacks appreciation of the value of Farm Bureau.	2-3 points Applicant can answer basic questions but lacks specific knowledge about the business and/or financials. Applicant is somewhat familiar with the contents of the application and can speak with some confidence about the value of Farm Bureau.	4-5 points Applicant demonstrates command of the farm/ranch business and financials. Applicant has a strong familiarity with contents of the application and appreciates the value of Farm Bureau.	
TOTAL:				_____/200