



Excellence in Agriculture & Achievement Award Programs

Tips and Tricks from Past State Winners

Read through the application and start making notes now. Don't expect to sit down and knock out the application in one sitting. Take the time to think through your answers. Talk through your experiences and goals with someone who knows you well and can give you suggestions and feedback. Start jotting down notes over the next month and then take time to formalize those notes as you dive into the writing part of the application process.

Have someone (a close friend or family member), look at your application/questions and also jot down some ideas on how to answer. It's also surprising what others think of your operation, and you may be overlooking something that other's view as important or thinks is cool about you and your operation that you take for granted or overlook. Especially on the "where have you come and how have you grown" part of the application. Also use your Farm Bureau manager to help you with the Young Leader activities. You may be doing or have done activities you don't even realize are important and can be included. Try to fill up all the space you can.

To fill up lines, your farming operation might be more diversified than you think it is. Instead of soybeans, do you have GMO and non-GMO beans? Or maybe Xtend beans as a way of viewing diversity of your farm.

Ask a close farming or knowledgeable peer to read the application through. They might have a different perspective than you on what makes your farm unique and successes you have had in building your operation.

The application is about where you've been where you are and where you're going. So, it's important to remember win or lose, taking stock of where you are both personally and professionally is an important skill. Having written records of your goals isn't just an important application tip, it works as a good life tip.

When typing up the questions, spend time on the content, not on the grammar. This application will get looked at by a lot of eyes that will help with grammar, but only you can tell your story.

Most every farmer is humble, you don't like to point out your successes. This application will make you pull those out of your back pocket, so try to put the humbleness aside, give yourself a pat on the back, and don't worry that your sounding boastful. This is a competition, and you wouldn't be spending the time filling out the application if you weren't in it to win.

If at first you don't succeed, try again. You'll be surprised if you take a year or two off, how much your application will change in that years' time.

Do you know a prior state / national winner? Even if they are from another state. Ask them if they'd be willing to review your application. They'll say "yes" but give them a few days to do review it.

Remember, these are tips from past state finalists in the both award categories.