

Fall 2018



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2019 NOYF Awards Congress set for Quad Cities



2019 NOYF Hotel:

Isle Hotel Bettendorf

1777 Isle Parkway • Bettendorf, IA, 52722
(800) 843-4753 • ann.klundert@islecorp.com

Reserve your room online at
<https://bit.ly/2S0T6tV>

Or visit www.islebettendorf.com

Use Group Code: YFARM19

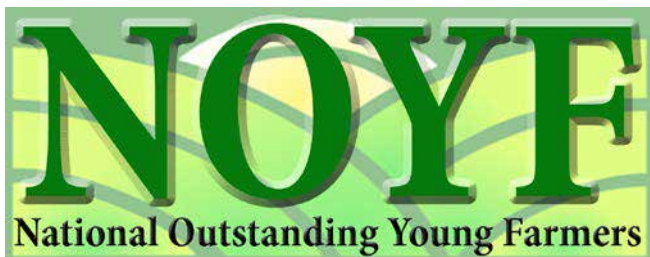
Deadline for room rates January 27
(86.99/night plus taxes)

Free Parking • Shuttle Available at (800) 724-5825

Find all Congress information at
www.outstandingfarmers.com



WATERFRONT
CONVENTION CENTER



2019 Awards Congress Quad Cities, Iowa/Illinois

Deadline: January 25, 2019

Name: _____

Spouse's Name: _____

OYF Class Of: _____ State: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Special Needs (Dietary and/or Mobility): _____

_____ NOYF 2019 Complete Weekend Package(s) (\$325 each)

_____ NOYF 2019 Saturday Events (\$175 each)

_____ NOYF 2019 Awards Banquet ONLY (\$85 each)

Payment Information (check one)

Enclosed is \$_____ to confirm _____ registration(s) for the NOYF Awards Congress.

☒ Check ☐ Money Order ☐ Master Card ☐ Visa ☐ Discover

Credit card # _____ Expiration _____

Name on card _____ Billing Zip Code _____

Cardholder's signature: _____

TOUR OPTIONS (Mark 1 for each person on the registration)

Please see the Spirit or www.outstandingfarmers.com for descriptions)

_____ A _____ B _____ C _____ D

Make check or money order payable to OFA. Mail or email this form to:

OFA Coordinator Sharon Page • 4946 Reeder Rd • Lyons, MI 48851-9724

Phone (517) 881-6945 • email: pageboy@yahoo.com

Visit www.outstandingfarmers.com for electronic version.

2019 NOYF Tours Offer Variety of Options

Please mark one tour choice per registered guest on your 2019 NOYF Awards Congress registration!

Tour A

8:00 John Deere Harvester Works
10:00 John Deere Accelerated Design Verification Lab
11:30 Lunch TPC
1:30 Cinnamon Ridge Farms
3:00 John Deere Pavilion Store

Tour B

8:00 John Deere Accelerated Design Verification Lab
10:00 John Deere Harvester Works
12:00 Lunch TPC
1:30 Cinnamon Ridge Farms
3:00 John Deere Pavilion Store

Tour C

8:00 Cinnamon Ridge Farms
10:00 John Deere Davenport Works
11:00 Lunch at Davenport Works
1:20 Exploring LeClaire, Iowa

Tour D

8:00 John Deere Davenport Works
10:00 Cinnamon Ridge Farms
11:30 Lunch TPC
1:30 John Deere Pavilion Store



Tour a robotic dairy at John and Joan Maxwell's Cinnamon Ridge Farms.



John Deere Harvester Works manufactures combines and front end equipment.



John Deere Davenport Works manufactures quality construction and forestry equipment.



Climb into machines, operate simulators, and explore the history and future of John Deere at the Pavilion.

"It's All There...In LeClaire!"



Ag outreach and pre-convention activities planned for NOYF

By John and Joan Maxwell (IA 1997)

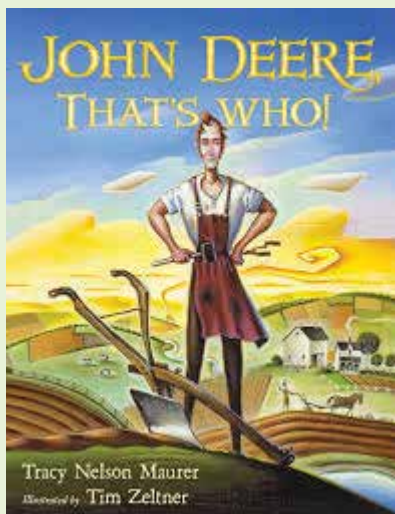
Pre-convention opportunities

OFA this year will be having an agriculture outreach project of reading in an elementary classroom in the area. Anyone interested can come early to convention on February 4, 5, 6 or the morning of the 7th, and the book we will be reading will be "John Deere That's Who." The book is provided and is then given to the teacher. Also, OFA members can bring a picture of their farm and talk a little bit about it. The reading will be about 20 minutes. Please RSVP your reading time and date no later than January 23, 2019. All of this can be arranged by emailing John and Joan Maxwell at TourMyFarm@gmail.com

Pre-convention opportunities

For those that will be coming early to the OFA convention, local OFAers are hosting events on their farms for convention goers:

Wednesday, February 6, from 5-7 p.m.,



John and Joan Maxwell (IA 1997) are opening up their home for an evening of food and fellowship. There is no charge for this event and no RSVP is needed. The address is 10600 275th St, Donahue IA 52746.

February 7, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Ken and Marilyn Bush (IL 1966) invite you to their farm to view their antique memorabilia with a lunch to follow. There is no charge for this event and no RSVP is needed. The address is 6706 79th Ave West, Milan IL 61214.

NOYF 2019 anniversary classes:

55 years: 1964
50 years: 1969
45 years: 1974
40 years: 1979
35 years: 1984
30 years: 1989
25 years: 1994
20 years: 1999
15 years: 2004
10 years: 2009
5 years: 2014



JOHN DEERE

Special thanks to these 2018 Tour Sponsors!

Ironstone Vineyards

John & Gayle Kautz

Gambini Nut Co.

Joe Gambini & Lois Armstrong

Ludeman Farms

Sandy & Peggy Ludeman

Hildebrandt Farms

Scott & Peggy Hildebrandt



Go Green!

Friday night's theme at the NOYF Awards Congress is John Deere! Who will come up with the most unique way to represent Deere? Come to the Quad Cities to find out!



SECRETARY'S REPORT

Don and Cheryl Hartman (NM 2006)
6495hartman@gmail.com

Producers need to advocate

Greetings from the land of Enchantment! Another year is coming to an end here in New Mexico. As of today, we are still harvesting chile peppers, but its winding down we may have a couple more weeks left. We still have grain sorghum in the field to cut, but as you all know the price of grain isn't great, but I've seen worse. Our onions yielded good but like the rest of the country

the price wasn't the best either. Our watermelons were outstanding, and the price seems good, we had 3 good cuttings and we are officially finished with them.

As I write this article, my mind turns to the current state of our country, people and politics. I wish more Americans were involved or at least educated in agriculture. We all face adversity and encounter problems on a daily basis. But being the resilient folks that we

are, we deal with it. People in agriculture are flexible and roll with the punches. We face all sorts of adversity such as weather, disease, mechanical breakdowns, price fluctuations, and policy changes. We are for the most part quiet, peaceful, and hard-working people. We might complain some about our problems, but you won't find us being destructive or protesting in the streets.

We have the unique ability to deal with a variety issues that get in our way. People in agriculture are often portrayed as backwards and uneducated, which is a huge misconception! We are driven, educated, and technologically advanced. Our work ethic is second to none! We possess multiple skills, we are educated in animal health and agronomy to welding with everything in between! This is the reason that agriculture is more productive today than ever before in history. Finally, we are perpetually optimistic that tomorrow will be better. If the rest of the country would focus on being a bit more productive and a little less focused on division and destruction, we would be in a better place.

We should all take time to focus and be more of an advocate for American agriculture. As people are becoming farther removed from agriculture, educating the public of where our food and fiber comes from is more important than ever. Also, food safety and animal welfare are hot topics that need to be addressed openly.

This is why Cheryl and I are so proud to be a part of OFA. It is an organization that recognizes the best and brightest in American agriculture. This organization celebrates the accomplishments and diversity of American agriculture. Please be on the lookout for talented candidates and keep those names coming in. God bless, and we look forward to seeing all of you in Moline!

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Greg and Carmen Bendixson (ND 2002)
bendixsn@nccray.com



Green is the color of NOYF 2019

Greetings from northwest North Dakota. It is mid-October, and our harvest has been stalled out for the past month. We're hoping for some sunshine soon so harvest '18 can be finished up.

We are looking forward to the 2019 OFA Congress to be held in the Quad Cities. The congress venue features a nearly new hotel/casino, a very large ballroom, and close proximity to all tour sites and the airport. John Deere will be the focus of the majority of the tour spots, with most tours also visiting Cinnamon Ridge Farm. It looks to be another excellent OFA Congress. The regional committee has put in a lot of hard work and has done a great job of setting up this congress.

Looking ahead a little to 2020, the OFA will be treated to a true New England experience, as the Congress will be held on Connecticut's

shore. This will be an opportunity to see a much different type of agriculture than most of us are accustomed too.

With the selection of the 2019 candidates completed, it is never too early to focus on finding nominees for the future. We need our OFA alumni to continue to nominate young farmers from your area. The NACAA has become a great source for finding nominees. If you do not know of a candidate to nominate, visit with your county agent, and they may be able to refer a name to you. You could also go to the agent in the next county, or across the state line; visiting with several county agents should be able to secure several potential candidates that you could nominate.

Hope to see you soon!

NOYF WINNER'S SPOTLIGHT

Robby and Stephanie Bevis (AR 2018)

Robby and Stephanie Bevis of Scott, Arkansas, have a row crop operation of 3,000 acres of corn, rice and soybeans. They have three children, Corey, Trey and Logan. They were named NOYF winners at the Awards Congress in February 2018. Below, they share some more information about their operation and their experience at NOYF.

Robby is a fifth generation farmer and has made many updates and changes along the way. He implements no till and cover crop for soil health and advocates heavily for the Arkansas Soul Health Alliance as chairmen. Robby is active in Arkansas Farm Bureau, Natural Heritage Commission and Natural and Cultural Resource Council along with many other community endeavors. Robby and Stephanie serve in their church for various events and outreaches. They also advocate for CASA, Court Appointed Special Advocates. They advocate for foster children who have been abused and neglected.

Stephanie runs a network marketing business as well as serves as contract labor on Multi District litigation cases.

We are excited because Trey is gradu-

ating from college in December and returning to the operation. Nervous is another emotion running through us. It's a hard time to be getting started in agriculture. The legacy that was built before us has taught us so many things and we hope and pray that we are passing down the legacy for many years to come. Finances and Prices are out of our hands so much of the time, we have to keep perspective in the good years for the bad years. We know they come. We are living them right now.

We were so honored to have been chosen finalists for the NOYF. We



were able to meet so many advocates across the country and it was confirmation that we are pushing for the right changes and sowing the seed for the perfect harvest. Thank you for the opportunity to represent OFA in Washington, D.C., for National Ag Day coming in 2019.



NOYF WINNER'S SPOTLIGHT

Ian and Val Plagge (IA 2018)

Ian and Val Plagge were named NOYF winners at the Awards Congress in February 2018. They live near Latimer, Iowa. Below, they tell us a little more about their operation and their experience with NOYF.

We like to say we raise corn, soybean, pigs and kids. We are harvesting our twelfth crop this fall. We are owners of a feeder to finish pig operation. We operate two 1,250 head finishing barns. We buy our pigs from a sow cooperation in Audubon, Iowa, and sell our pigs Tyson in Waterloo, Iowa, where they are processed into fresh cuts of pork such as boneless loins, tenderloins, hams and spare ribs for retail, wholesale and food service, as well as pre-cooked pork products, pizza toppings and taco meat for the food service industry.

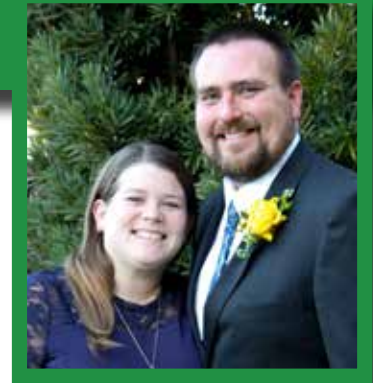
Our most important "crop" is our four kids, Klayton, 7, Audrey, 5, Lauren, 3, and Reagan, 2. Our kids (and Val) also take care of lambs as a hobby.

We both are home on the farm and get 100 percent of our income from farming. We pride ourselves on this, but as farming income has decreased and health insurance has increased over our career, it also has become a challenge. This requires us

to monitor and budget both the farm and personal accounts. We also work hard to keep up good relations with our neighbors and landlords, and that is one reason why Val started her blog "Corn, Beans, Pigs & Kids." The blog gives updates on the family and farm as well as posts of agricultural issues and food trends. Besides being an excellent way to keep our landlords up to date on happening around the farm, it has been an outreach tool for general readers and consumers.

We had a great time in Sacramento at the Outstanding Farmers of America

Conference and were honored to represent the Class of 2018 as one of the top four. The hospitality of the group was amazing and we loved getting to know the other members of our class. We look forward to continuing to meet more OFA members and attending future conferences.



NOYF WINNER'S SPOTLIGHT

Nick and Sunny Cummings (OH 2018)

Nick and Sunny Cummings raise corn and soybeans in Ohio. They were named NOYF winners at the Awards Congress in February 2017. Below, they share some more information about their operation and their experience at NOYF.

Our grain operation consists of approximately 2,000 acres of mostly corn and soybeans (813 acres rented individually, 665 acres owned, and 530 acres custom hire). Our farming operation is unique because we are a first-generation farming family, and have worked over 20 years to build it into what it is today.

We have been blessed throughout our farming endeavors to have many relationships with wonderful partners, landlords, ag lenders, and chemical and seed representatives who have worked beside us to give us advice and direction in order to make sound management decisions. All of these relationships, along with a lot of time and hard work, have helped to shape our farming operation into what it is today, and for that, we are forever grateful.

The biggest challenge that we face is acquiring more farmland in our area. In the future, we hope to continue to

grow, seeking new opportunities to rent or buy more land. Right now, due to the generational changes that are occurring in many farming operations, we feel that there will be future opportunities to rent or buy farmland. We strive to secure a legacy for our children to carry on in the future. We feel that there is no better way to instill such strong family values, work ethics, and love for the land in our children as continuing a life on the farm.

NOYF/OFA was an amazing experience for both of us! It has led us to become more involved in our local agricultural community, promoting agriculture and supporting local organizations. It was a wonderful time for us to connect and meet many new, lifelong friends. We cherish the



relationships that were made during that time, and love having a network of friends who understand and share our love of agriculture and life on the farm.



NOYF WINNER'S SPOTLIGHT

Sam and Jenn Zimmermann (WI 2018)

Sam and Jenn Zimmermann were named NOYF winners at the Awards Congress in February 2018. They live in Wisconsin, where they have a dairy. Below, they tell us a little more about their operation and their experience with NOYF.

Sam and I are from the great state of Wisconsin and were both blessed to be raised on dairy farms. We were nominated at our county level in late 2016 for this program, so our journey in OYF began then. Never would we have imagined filling out that first application how this process was going to impact us. Let me start by saying late 2016 was the start of what has been a tough road in the dairy business. It is not like these tough times have never been had before, but for us it was our first experience with the volatility in milk prices and learning to run the business in a sharp declining market. I remember at one-point Sam saying to me, "I don't feel very outstanding." As we filled out the information and focused on our care for land, our advancements in agriculture and our overall involvement we realized that it was not the decline that would define us, but rather the perseverance, the love for the industry, and above else our attitude towards the challenges life brings us all. So, we embraced the process and we are so glad we did.

When we headed to our state program we met so many amazing people. People that encouraged us, gave suggestions, and understood what we were going through. Would you believe that we have bettered our herd with OYF? Well we did just that, we met people who we

now buy baby calves from to improve our overall genetics. Then the national event expanded on that even more. We have friendships that I am certain will last a lifetime. This event has caused us to look at our operation through many lenses, it has given us an increased network, we had a great trip, and we have more ideas on ways to improve or diversify. It was truly an amazing experience and the best part is it isn't over. We get to experience this ongoing as new members of OYF.

As we progress forward, I see our dairy only growing slightly, if the business grows it will be diversified more. We plan to continue to advance in the areas of technology as well as animal and crop health. We desire to be good stewards of all that God has given us. With our kids growing up we remain flexible to different directions and ready to involve our kids as they may see fit, but also are willing to develop other youth in becoming interested in agriculture and are willing to mentor employees as they are interested. This industry is challenging, and it has been difficult to watch so many great farms come to an end. The challenges we face are mainly in pricing of milk, vastly different consumer expectations or education, and hiring employees for a 7 day a week business. Every business faces challenges and the opportunity is to be creative and overcome, which is what we are constantly trying to do. Great businesses are made in the tough times because that is when you really get good at what you do. Our uniqueness comes from constantly thinking outside the box and making sure we stay

flexible enough to meet changes in the industry and or our family needs. Our goal is to remain in this industry and move the family farm forward, I cannot guarantee that will be the case or what that might look like, what I can say is no matter what we are blessed, and we plan to enjoy the ride.

In short, I will say this,



our operation is not perfect, our family is sometimes messy (or all the time), our businesses (Catch All LLC and On-Q Holsteins) have success and failure, we make some good decisions and others that are not so good, but we embrace what is in front of us and move forward. Winning in my book is getting to enjoy the journey, something we forget sometimes. To our friends, our fellow OYF members, our industry partners, our neighbors, our employees and our family from the bottom of our hearts, thank you! Each of you have played a role in not only this OYF journey, but in the big picture as well and we would not be as blessed without you! "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." Galatians 6:9. Our greatest season is yet to come.



OFA summer tour travels through Minnesota

BY Mary Johnson (NE 1989)

Our OFA summer tour started with a Welcome Dinner at the Minneapolis-St Paul Airport Hotel on Sunday evening. We would come back to this location at the end of our Minnesota trip. This was a wonderful trip, seeing OFA members' farms, visiting a brewery, several quaint small towns, and getting an idea of what Minnesota has to offer.

On Monday, July 16, we embarked on a city tour of Minneapolis and St Paul, viewing old and exclusive neighborhoods, and touring the newly reopened State Capitol building, which had been closed for three years for renovation. One of our highlights was seeing the falls in one of the wonderful parks in this beautiful city.

The second day, July 17, we drove to Cannon Falls, to the farm of John and Joan Conzemius (MN 1968) and visited their farming operation. Although John has retired, his son Mike is running the farming operation. The farm consists of 3,000 acres of corn, soybeans, canning crops, and seed corn. There were 10 center pivots in this operation, and we enjoyed lunch and a tour of the farm. A highlight was touring the Little Log House at Hastings, Minnesota—a beautiful village of yesteryear, with gardens galore, antique machinery and buildings. This was a paradise!

Wednesday, July 18, we headed to Winona, Minnesota, and took a 90 minute narrated cruise on the Mississippi River, hearing stories and folklore about the area, and seeing nesting eagles. We then visited the community of Red Wing, seeing the Red Wing store and various shops that provided some great shopping! From there, we visited several Amish farms that made various crafts. I think each of us headed home with a loomed Amish rug!

Thursday, July 19, we started our day seeing the Mayowood Mansion for a private, one-hour walking tour of the former home of Doctor Charles H. Mayo, co-founder of the Mayo Clinic. Gorgeous mansion, grounds—even with the showers that we received that day. From here we headed to Austin, Minnesota, the home of Hormel Foods and the Hormel Institute, a major cancer research institute – very interesting. Another treat-- touring the SPAM Museum, which highlighted everything about SPAM history! Our next stop was Mankato, Min-

nesota to stay for the night.

Friday, July 20, we headed to CHS Industries Soybean Processing Facility in Mankato, touring the facility, and watching a barge being loaded with soybeans to head down the Mississippi River to the gulf. In addition, we watched the facility test for non-GMO corn. We had lunch in Mankato, then drove east to Waseca, in south central Minnesota. Here we visited Farm America, a Minnesota Interpretive Center. There we learned how farmers survived and thrived during the 1800's and 1900's to evolve into the farmers that they are today. That evening, we headed to the farm of Scott and Peggy Hildebrandt (National Winners for 2002), and learned about their farming operation and Peggy's plumbing operation. Here we were treated to a wonderful supper, drinks, and entertainment by a local music group.

Saturday, July 21, we headed to New Ulm, Minnesota, to visit this German community and tour the Arthur Schell Brewing company. For 156 years, the Schell family has operated this brewery, and this is the 2nd oldest family owned brewery in the United States. After we left New Ulm, we drove to the Fagen Fighters WWII Museum, touring several buildings with airplanes, and history of WWII. From here, we headed to SanMarBo Farms, in Tracy, Minnesota, owned by Sandy and Peggy Ludeman (National OFA winners in 1983). Sandy was founding Chairman of United Soybean Association, and they, along with their farm, have received many state and National awards, including the 2005 National Environmental Stewardship Award by the National Pork producers. Here we were treated to a wonderful supper and quilt show highlighting Sandy's wonderful handmade quilts, and a birthday celebration honoring Joe Gambini! Later this evening, we arrived in the small town of Walnut Grove, and were treated to the Wilder Pageant, a live, outdoor pageant that is held every summer outdoors, depicting the life of Laura Ingalls Wilder.

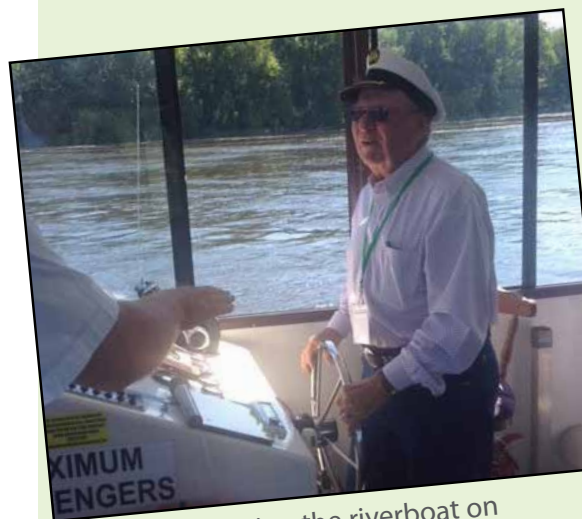
Sunday, July 22, we headed back to our start, at the Hilton Hotel in Minneapolis. That day we were free to visit the Mall of America, a huge shopping, restaurant, and entertainment extravaganza. Farewell dinner was this night, as we said our good-byes to all of our OFA friends. A wonderful, educational, fun trip with our OFA family!



Al & Chris Minderman at the falls



Little Log House, Hastings, MN



Dan White steering the riverboat on the Mississippi

OFA MEMBER'S SPOTLIGHT

Russ and Marilyn Rosenboom (IL 1972)



In 1972 we represented Illinois in the national OYF event in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and our life changed. "Life Changing" is what we tell new OYF candidates. "Especially if you come back, participate, and make new friends." We treasure OFA memories and friendships. We keep clean sheets on the spare bed for OFA visitors who stop by.

OFA memories include working on an Illinois contest as well as 10 national contests, and an Illinois tour. As an officer, we went to Toronto, Canada, to observe their program. It took several meetings in Moline with Jaycees and John Deere to set up the program without the Jaycee involvement. Thank you to the Jaycees for your years of work to hon-

or young farmers. Thanks to John Deere for your sponsorship, Cheryl Salley for your guidance and love of the program. And we certainly appreciate Orion Samuelson as Master of Ceremonies and promoter of the program.

We look up to the membership which is filled with role models in farming areas, as well as leadership. This program has provided us many unique opportunities only available because of the alumni knowledge of areas and contacts. With this group we have attended meetings and tours and played cards with Dale and Joanna in most of the 50 states.

We started our farming career with rented 320 acres and Russ with a

sheep shears in his hands. Over the years we have raised sheep, pigs, and cattle, vegetables and sold seed corn. We mined black peat soil from a low area for many years and had a business selling that beautiful soil. Now the neighbors enjoy fishing in the ponds created by the peat business. These days we are just corn and soybeans and windmills. We enjoy farming with our two sons and recently welcomed a grand daughter to the team.



COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Sharon and Kevin Page (MI 1991)
pageeboy@yahoo.com

Travels help spread the ag message

Hello from the Mitten state—Michigan!

For many of us alumni, we know how rewarding our OFA experiences have meant to us. This has been echoed over and over every time we interact with one of the members or just telling others about the program. This year alone with my husband, Kevin, or by myself we (I) visited with many alumni friends while on the road in Illinois, Wisconsin, North Dakota, New Jersey, Connecticut, Nebraska, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Minnesota. These friendships that have evolved through the OFA/NOYF are priceless!

One of the rewards as the Coordinator is that I get the privilege to spend extra time to expand on these friendships, especially with the newest members. My duties give me various opportunities to travel, which I have the privilege to mingle with some of the newer members, Washington D.C., NACAA, NAFB to name a few. This year I escorted the Chad and Deb Bremmer, IL, Brad and Molly Judson MS, Ben and Julie Anna Boyd GA, and Mark and Angie Ulness, WI,

to Washington, D.C. These young leaders shared their ideas and voice on current events in today's ag. July sent me to Chattanooga, TN, for the National Association of County Ag Agents (NACAA) where Jarmen and Nancy Sullivan (NC 2017) joined me to work the booth. They enthralled the ag agents with their story and encouraged the agents new and old to never stop reaching out to get candidates. In November, Chad and Deb Bremmer will be tending the booth with me at the National Association of Farm Broadcasters (NAFB) Convention in Kansas City. Here the Bremmers can converse be interviewed by many of Farm Broadcasters.

All this exposure is to get our NOYF story out to general public; this is OUR STORY not be the "best kept secret" as Chuck Studer (former John Deere liaison) stated at the 2017 Congress. This is our vital as we move forward to seek additional funding, candidates, and stay connected with alumni. In addition, I wish to thank all those who responded to the NOYF '19 survey in Sacramento. Your input is important. The goal of our leadership team is every NOYF/ OFA event rewarding and continue to be a positive voice for agriculture!

Plans for 2020 NOYF Congress are underway in Connecticut

By Joe and Ida DeFrancesco (CT 2016)



The 2019 OFA Congress cannot come too soon for us; this year has not gone as planned and we are enthusiastic and curious about what 2019 is going to look like around our vegetable and bedding plant farm. Here is a peek into our year since we last caught up with OFA.

My husband Joe and I farm plants and vegetables and our busiest times are between Easter and Halloween each year. We kick off the year with our spring flowers like pansies, daffodils, hydrangeas, and lilies. We start those plants between November and January before Easter inside our 9 acres of greenhouses. It is a privilege to get to walk inside a 72-degree greenhouse under a sunny sky in the middle of grey January day in Connecticut and forget about the cold outside. Joe spends a bit of every day loading the hopper of our five million BTU furnace with waste wood chips. We made the transition to heat our greenhouses with wood chips in 2009 instead of oil. Nine acres under glass does require a bit of effort to keep heated. We got hit with some 90 degree days in late winter which shocked some of the

bulb crops outside and killed off more than half of the garlic crop. That was followed by a record-breaking cold spell which kept snow on the ground into May. When you make a significant portion of your sales in two months of the year, and it requires folks to venture outside and dig in the dirt, and that dirt is covered in snow, well, it does put stress on things.

We marched right past Mother's Day and finally saw some beautiful color with the geraniums, petunias, impatiens, calibrachoa and vegetable plants. Our trucks deliver our hardy plants from Boston to Long Island. We are fortunate in that we have highway 95 only minutes away from the farm.

The first greens like spinach, kale, swiss chard, and collards were ready to harvest about two weeks later than usual which is pretty lucky given that winter wouldn't leave. It did slow down the strawberry crop, and that is the first sign of summer to most of our customers. We were joking with our OFA friends about who had the driest soil across the country in June and July because Joe was out irrigating 90 percent of the farm daily.

Then it started to rain. Storms swept up from the south and brought unprecedented pest and disease pressures. It kept raining. Our top vegetable crops are tomatoes, bell peppers, squash, and cucumbers. When Joe started to see the first signs of phytophthora, and he knew the forecast showed two or three weeks of hot and humid with daily rain he knew three of those top crops were going down and would not recover. It was only in the last few weeks when we prepare our reports that we saw

how great those pepper, cucumber and squash fields were. Even though we just got three harvests from those fields, we picked about an average amount for the year! We grow more than 40 types of tomatoes, and they played a huge role in saving our wholesale business.

We run a vegetable CSA over the summer with more than nine years under our belt we can adapt to the daily changes in the fields. We survey our members for their preferences around vegetables and divide up our crops when they are limited to match and delight our members. Despite losing my top crops, we delivered full and above value baskets every week this year. We wrapped up our CSA the last week of September, and I think we haven't quite recovered yet. It is great to sit among the acres of chrysanthemums and appreciate the change in seasons.

Joe still has a few fields to till and plant in cover crops like winter rye and expects to finish those up by the end of October. The Easter bulbs have already started to roll in to plant into pots. Our garlic is already in the ground, and we won't see it until next summer. Joe will spend November and early December creating wreaths, centerpieces, and pots from evergreens while I will wrap up the bookkeeping and launch the marketing for the following year. That brings us through a full year and winter is a welcome guest around our farm.

We have already booked our rooms for the 2019 congress, and we will be looking for your familiar faces. If we don't see you in February, we will expect you at the 2020 congress when we invite you all to visit Connecticut and to see our farm.



OFA Spirit of Giving fund continues to thrive

OFA DONOR FUND

Buck Teeter	1975	TN
ONEOK	2017	ND
Jack & Mary Lou Thomson Foundation	1955	CA
John & Delores Brown	1965	FL
Wisner H Buckbee	1965	NY

PLATINUM \$5000+

Joe Gambini & Lois Armstrong	1965	CA
Gerald Barnes & Neoma Loehr	1970	OR

DIAMOND \$1000+

Kevin & Sharon Page	1991	MI
Marlan & Mary Johnson	1989	NE
Dana & Julie Stapleton	2002	SD
Rod & Janelle Holth	Honorary	ND
Russ & Marilyn Rosenboom	1972	IL
Dave & Jeanne Endres	2001	WI
Tim & Sara Sullivan	2005	MN
David & Bernie Shriver	1970	IL
Ralph & Cleo Thompson	1970	ND
John & Marge Walchli	1969	OR
Andy & Hilde Burger	1966	DE
Ken & Audrey Mason	1970	SD
Robert & Roberta Call	1960	NY
Ken & Marilyn Bush	1966	IL
Robert Sakata	1956	CO
Bob & Ella Mae Wade	1969	KY
John & Gail Kautz	1966	CA
Dan & Sheila White	1970	TX
Kevin & Krissy Albert	2005	NE

GOLD \$500+

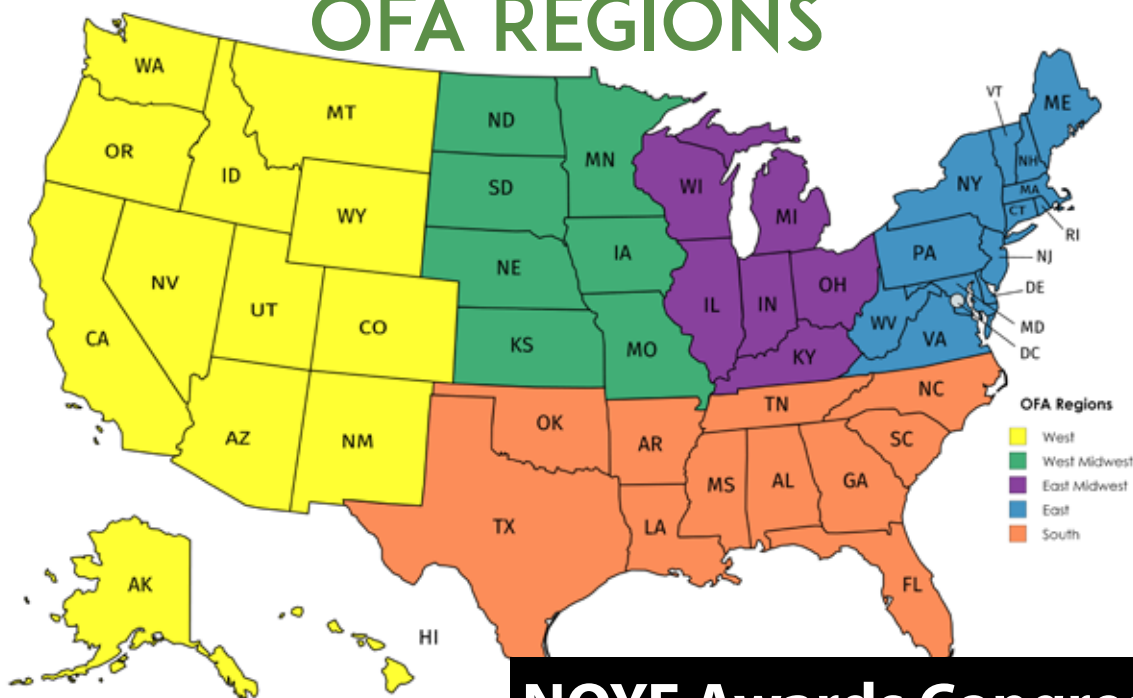
Bill Richards	1967	OH
Lloyd & Daphne Holterman	1994	WI
Rod & Mary Birchen	1993	IL
Greg & Carmen Bendixson	2002	ND
Scott & Peggy Hildebrandt	2002	MN
Willard & Ruth Pederson	1967	ND
Memory of Pat Barnes (class of 2007)	2007	
Willard & Pat Hennings	1965	WA
Eric & Marlene Haberer	1972	KS
Max & Connie Peterson	1974	IL
Bryce & Cheryl Chamberlain	1982	IL
Richard & Jauanalee Alden	1966	NE
Sandy & Peggy Ludeman	1982	MN
Dale & Joanna Koester	1959	ID
Mike & Sandy Hennenfent	1981	IL
Steve & Janeen Moest	1994	IL
Dennis & Doris Tubergen	1994	MI
Jay & Kristin Richardson	2004	WI
Mary Ann Brown	1965	GA
Steve & Dee Gordon	2012	OR
Glen & Angie Walters	2002	GA

SILVER

Leo Sebek Memorial	2002	SD
Mark & Angie Ullness	2017	WI
Rufus & Mary Sharard	1967	SC
Ruth Pederson Memorial (Uglen)	2012	ND
Joe & Ida DeFrancesco	2016	CT
Mark & Trudy Peterson	2002	MO

OFA is a 501(c) 3 Tax Deductible Non-Profit Organization.

OFA REGIONS



NOYF Awards Congress Rotation

2019 - West Midwest

2022 - South

2020 - East

2023 - West

2021 - East Midwest

2024 - West Midwest



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DUES

- ☐ \$25 Annual
- ☐ \$250 Lifetime
(per couple)

Submit to:

OFA Treasurer Andrew Kimmel
Outstanding Farmers of America
169 Idaho Rd
Shelocta, PA 15774



Send submissions or comments to: Erin Slivka
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