



Award Application

Deadline: Sept. 1, 2026

Top Producer

The **Top Producer Next Gen Award** will be given to a producer under the age of 40 who demonstrates excellence in the business of farming, including marketing, farm finance, family and employee relations and technology.

Entrants are judged on entrepreneurial originality (50%), financial and business progress (30%) and industry or community leadership (20%). Any farmer, rancher or partnership that gets at least half of their income from farming and farm-related ventures may apply.

To apply, complete the entry form and send two letters of reference from an accountant, banker or agribusiness leader. Winners agree to be recognized in articles published in **Food & Farm** magazine, online and across Farm Journal properties. Any financial information remains confidential unless entrants agree to its release.

Prizes can include:

- A trip for two including hotel accommodations and a flat travel reimbursement stipend to attend the 2027 Top Producer Summit (Feb.15-17, 2027 in Nashville, TN).
- Additional prizes provided by award sponsor(s) which are not affiliated with Farm Journal and will be directly communicated to the winner via sponsor.

Return Entries to:

E-mail Margy Eckelkamp: meckelkamp@farmjournal.com

Farm Journal
c/o Top Producer/Margy Eckelkamp
P.O. Box 410038
Kansas City, MO 64141
Voice: (573) 864-2468

Please complete the following application.

Name _____ Birth date _____ Home phone _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
 Office phone _____ Mobile phone _____
 Fax _____ E-mail address _____
 Type of farming operation (dairy, grain, etc.) _____
 Farm name _____

Applying as: Individual Multi-partner unit

Briefly describe your responsibilities in the management of the business.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Percent of income earned from farming _____ Annual gross income from farming _____
 Total acres farmed _____ Acres owned _____
 Acres rented _____ Acres custom farmed _____
 Please list other operators/business partners and their relationship to you.
 Name _____ Relationship _____ Full/Part-time _____
 Name _____ Relationship _____ Full/Part-time _____
 Name _____ Relationship _____ Full/Part-time _____

What activities make up your business? Please indicate what percentage of total gross income is represented by each segment of your business.

_____ % Crops (include 2026 acres for each) _____
_____ % Livestock (list number and type of animals marketed per year, i.e. market hogs, feeder pigs, dairy cows milked, fed cattle, feeder cattle, other) _____
_____ % Agribusiness _____
_____ % Non-agribusiness _____

How many employees (below the management level) are involved in your farm/ranch?

Full-time _____ Part-time _____

Business structure: Sole proprietor _____ Partnership _____
Corporation _____ LLC _____

List your work experience (both on and off the farm), beginning with your current position.

ESSAY QUESTIONS (attach typed responses):

1. Give us a short history of your farm operation.
2. Why did you enter farming and what were your original goals? What are they now?
3. Describe a business innovation that you have developed for your operation in one or more of the following areas: (1) farm finance; (2) family/employee relations; (3) marketing/sales; (4) technology; or (5) environmental.
4. Describe the success of that effort. If applicable, include any documentation that might support your statement (for example, financials, newspaper articles, industry awards).
5. What help have you received (financial or in-kind) from other family members, business partners or mentors?
6. What challenges have you faced and overcome in your operation?
7. If married, describe your spouse's occupation and/or role in the operation.
8. Describe your involvement in leadership/community service.
9. Please attach a current balance sheet and cash flow statement, as well as any other financial documents you'd like to share (all will be kept confidential).

References (for example, CPA, lender, business leader or other financial consultant)

I grant permission for Top Producer to contact the following references for information about my farm, including my financial progress. (Please attach letters from references.)

Name _____
Title/Company _____

E-mail Address _____
Phone _____

Name _____
Title/Company _____

E-mail Address _____
Phone _____

I certify that the above information is accurate and agree to appear in subsequent publicity of this award, should I win.

Applicant's signature: _____



CONTACT US: If you have any questions, comments or complaints regarding the Contest, please contact Margy Eckelkamp P.O. Box 410038 Kansas City, MO 64141 (email meckelkamp@farmjournal.com; via telephone: (573) 864-2468)