



# Award Application

Deadline: Sept. 1, 2026

# Top Producer

The **Top Producer of the Year Award** recognizes producers who demonstrate excellence in the business of farming, including marketing, farm finance, family and employee relations and environmental stewardship. 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. Please see the "Top Producer of the Year Official Contest Rules" for more details.

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 **Top Producer** magazine, online, and across Farm Journal properties. Any financial information remains confidential unless entrants agree to its release.

The three finalists for the 2027 Top Producer of the Year award will be recognized at the 2027 Top Producer Summit (Feb. 15-17, 2027 in Nashville, TN). All 2027 Top Producer of the Year finalists receive:

- A trip for two including hotel accommodations and a flat travel reimbursement stipend to attend the 2027 Top Producer Summit.
- 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](mailto: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 \_\_\_\_\_  
 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 \_\_\_\_\_

**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. Describe and document the financial progress you have made during your agricultural career. **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).**
8. If married, describe your spouse's occupation and/or role in the operation.
9. Describe your involvement in leadership/community service.

**Please attach:**

- Responses to essay questions above. Note the financial attachments for #7.
- Your current resume (be sure to include your leadership/community involvement)
- Two references letters from your references listed below. Have them share why you should be named Top Producer of the Year, your qualifications, etc.

**References (for example, CPA, lender, attorney, 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: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# 2027 Top Producer® Of the Year Official Contest Rules

## NO PURCHASE NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN.

Participation constitutes entrant's full and unconditional agreement to and acceptance of these Official Rules. The 2027 Top Producer® Of the Year Contest ("Contest") is sponsored by Farm Journal, Inc., P.O. Box 410038 Kansas City, MO 64141 ("Sponsor").

**PARTICIPATION DATES AND PROMOTION STRUCTURE:** The Contest is a trade promotion and skills contest that begins 8 a.m. Feb. 12, 2026 and ends on 8 a.m. on Feb. 15, 2027 ("Submission Period"). One (1) grand prize winner and two (2) finalists will be selected from among all eligible submissions received during the Submission Period and announced on or approximately on Feb. 15, 2027.

**ELIGIBILITY:** The Contest is open to legal residents of the fifty (50) United States, the District of Columbia, and Canada (excluding Quebec) who are 18 years of age or older at the time of entry and who are farmers, ranchers or partnerships receiving at least half their income from farming and farm-related ventures. Employees, representatives, agents, officers, and directors of Sponsor (including contest judges) and all its respective parents, subsidiaries, members, divisions, affiliates, advertising, promotion, and fulfillment agencies ("Sponsor and Promotion Parties"), and those individuals who are immediate family members of Sponsor and Promotion Parties, or persons living in the same household as, or domiciled with, Sponsor and Promotion Parties, are not eligible to participate in the Contest. "Immediate family" means parents, siblings, children and spouse. Void where prohibited. All federal, state, provincial and local laws and regulations apply.

**HOW TO ENTER:** Entrants must:

- Complete a contest entry application form (available online at [www.TPSummit.com](http://www.TPSummit.com))
- Obtain two (2) letters of reference from entrant's accountant, banker or agribusiness leader recommending the applicant for his or her entrepreneurial originality, financial and business progress and/or industry or community leadership;
- Share financial documentation to show financial progress (all financial information remains confidential with the judges, unless entrants agree to its release).

And send all of the above to Margy Eckelkamp P.O. Box 410038 Kansas City, MO 64141 (or via email: [meckelkamp@farmjournal.com](mailto:meckelkamp@farmjournal.com)).

Entries submitted via email must be received during the Submission Period. Entries submitted via postal mail must be postmarked during the Submission Period. No other method of entry is accepted. Any entries received and/or postmarked after the end of the Submission Period will be disqualified. Limit one entry per person. Sponsor is not responsible for incorrect, inaccurate or incomplete entry of information by entrants; lost entries or transmissions, interrupted or unavailable network, server, or other connections; scrambled transmissions or other errors or problems of any kind whether mechanical, human, or electronic, technical malfunctions or the computer hardware, software, or any combination thereof; or problems associated with any virus or any other damage caused to entrants' systems.

**SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:** To be considered for entry, an application must:

- Be the entrant's own original work
- Be in the English language
- Not include any of the following:
  - o words, images or statements that are or could be considered offensive to individuals on the basis of age, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability status, veteran status or any other class or characteristic protected from discrimination by the laws of the United States, Canada or any individual state or province within the United States or Canada, or that promote bigotry, racism, hatred, harm or discrimination against any such individuals;
  - o threats (real or perceived) to any person, place, business, group or entity;
  - o materials that depict illegal acts or that are sexually explicit, libelous, obscene, violent, hateful, slanderous or defamatory;
  - o other inappropriate content that includes, but is not limited to, any display of smoking, alcohol, illegal drugs, firearms, harming of animals, nudity, or provocative/suggestive outfits or poses;
  - o copyrighted materials owned by others (including photographs, sculptures, paintings, and other works of art or images published on or in websites, television, movies or other media); if an video contains a watermark from a photographer or videographer, or is labeled as a sample/proof, it will not be eligible;
  - o unauthorized use of the intellectual property of a third party;
  - o name, likeness, voice, or other indicia identifying any person other than entrant including, without limitation, celebrities and/or other public or private figures, without that person's written permission; or
  - o content inconsistent with Farm Journal's reputation and image.

Submissions must be the original work of the entrant, may not have been previously published, may not have won previous awards, and must not infringe upon the copyrights, trademarks, rights of privacy, publicity or other intellectual property or other rights of any person or entity. By making a submission, entrant warrants and represents that he/she consents to the submission and use of the submission in the Contest and to its use as otherwise set forth herein. The personal information gathered about entrants will be used solely for the administration of the Contest and is subject to Sponsor's privacy policy available at <http://www.agweb.com/privacy-policy/>. Notably, any financial information submitted by entrant as part of the application process remains private and will not be made public without entrant's express consent.

Entries that do not meet the criteria above may be automatically disqualified. All decisions regarding the criteria are made by Sponsor in its sole discretion and are final.

**WINNER SELECTION:** One Grand Prize Winner and two runners-up ("Finalists") will be selected from among all eligible entries. As this is a skill contest, the odds of winning depend on the number of entries received and the relative merit of the entrants as demonstrated through judging by Sponsor's representatives.

One (1) Grand Prize Winner. The Grand Prize Winner will be selected by judges' vote. A judging committee comprised of a panel of independent, qualified judges designated by Sponsor among its representatives will select the Grand Prize Winner from among all eligible entries. Each judge will evaluate each entry on the basis of the following criteria in their sole discretion:

- \*Entrepreneurial Originality (50%)
- \*Financial and Business Progress (30%)
- \*Industry or Community Leadership (20%)

Each entry will then be awarded a score ranging from 0 (poor) to 100 (perfect) in each criterion. The judging committee will tally the scores for each entry and rank them according to the cumulative score. In the event of a tie, the entry with the highest score in the "Entrepreneurial Originality" criterion shall be the winner, followed by the "Financial and Business Progress" criterion, and "Industry or Community Leadership," in that order.

Two (2) Finalists. The two (2) entries that received the second and third highest score totals based on the criteria and methodology described above will be announced as Finalists.

The Finalists will be announced on or approximately on Feb. 15, 2027. The Grand Prize Winner will be announced at the 2027 Top Producer Summit.

In order to be awarded a prize and declared the Grand Prize Winner of a Finalist, the selected entrant must sign and complete a General Release of Liability and Publicity Release and return it within 10 days of the date of receipt of the prize award notification. Sponsor is not responsible for and shall not be liable for late, lost, misdirected, or unsuccessful efforts to deliver the notification to selected entrants. If a selected entrant cannot be contacted within 15 days of the drawing, is ineligible, fails to claim a prize within 15 days of initial contact, or fails to timely return the completed and executed General Release of Liability and Publicity as required, the prize may be forfeited and awarded to the entrant who has accumulated the next-highest point total from among the remaining eligible entries. If the selected entrant has moved to a different address, it is the sole responsibility of the selected entrant to notify the Sponsor or designated agent of the selected entrant's new address. Sponsor is not responsible for any undeliverable prize deliveries due to change of address.

**PRIZE:** The Grand Prize Winner will receive a trip for two to the 2027 Top Producer® Summit (\$1,500 value), as well as additional prizes. All prizes will be awarded. No alternative prizes or substitution is permitted, except by Sponsor in its sole discretion in the event of prize unavailability. Prizes are not transferable or convertible to cash. All winners are subject to verification. Taxes of any kind, including all federal, state, provincial and/or local taxes, are the sole responsibility of each winner.

**SPONSOR'S RIGHTS IN SUBMITTED MATERIALS:** By submitting an entry, each entrant grants Sponsor the irrevocable and perpetual nonexclusive right to use, display, print, publish, reproduce, distribute, modify, create derivative works from, promote and provide access to the entry materials, which include but are not limited to entrant's application and supporting letters of reference, in any media throughout the world, and without additional consideration, and each entrant waives moral rights in such entry materials. Each entrant grants Sponsor the rights to use entrant's name, voice, and/or likeness for the purpose of inclusion on a winner's list, and in advertising, trade, or promotion, without further compensation worldwide in perpetuity and in any form of media including the Internet, unless prohibited by law. Entries will not be returned.

**OTHER CONDITIONS:** By participating in the Contest, entrants agree to be bound by these Official Rules and the decisions of Sponsor, which shall be final. Sponsor is not responsible for and shall not be liable for: (i) telephone, electronic, hardware or software program, network, Internet, or computer malfunctions, failures, or difficulties of any kind; (ii) failed, incomplete, garbled, or delayed computer transmissions; (iii) any condition caused by events beyond the control of Sponsor that may cause the Contest to be disrupted or corrupted; (iv) any injuries, losses, or damages of any kind arising in connection with or as a result of any prize, or acceptance, possession, or use of any prize, or from participation in the Contest; or (v) any printing or typographical errors in any materials associated with the Contest. Sponsor reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to suspend or cancel the Contest at any time if a computer virus, bug, tampering, unauthorized intervention, or other technical problem of any sort corrupts the administration, security, or proper play of the Contest, subject to the prior approval of the Régie des alcools, des courses et des jeux, where appropriate. Sponsor reserves the right to cancel the Contest or change any element thereof, with or without notice, at any time, due to printing errors, web site errors, transmission errors or other mistakes or problems in the production or administration of the Contest, subject to the prior approval of the Régie des alcools, des courses et des jeux, where appropriate. Sponsor also reserves the right to disqualify, in its sole discretion, any person tampering with the entry process, the operation of the website, or who is otherwise in violation of the Official Rules. By participating, entrants agree that all disputes will be resolved in the appropriate courts in the state of Pennsylvania, exclusively, and subject to the laws of the state of Pennsylvania, unless otherwise required by law.

By participating in the Contest, each entrant agrees to release and hold Sponsor and its employees, officers, directors, agents, representatives, parents, members, affiliates, subsidiaries, advertising, promotion, and fulfillment agencies, and legal advisors, harmless from any and all losses, damages, rights, claims and actions of any kind in connection with the Contest or resulting from acceptance, possession, or use of any prize, including without limitation, personal injury, death, and property damage, and claims based on publicity rights, defamation, or invasion of privacy, to the extent permitted by law.

**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](mailto:meckelkamp@farmjournal.com); via telephone: (573) 864-2468).

**WINNERS' NAMES:** A full list of winners will be posted to the Top Producer® website, AgWeb.com on or about Feb. 15, 2027 and available online indefinitely.