



SPIRIT

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2025



Visit outstandingfarmers.com for updates and information.



5401 S Sheridan Road, Suite 301
Tulsa, OK 74145

U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TULSA, OK
PERMIT NO. 1154

OFA PRESIDENT LOOKS AHEAD WITH VISION

It is an incredible honor to serve as the President of Outstanding Farmers of America (OFA) for the next two years. We know that we are following in the footsteps of many great leaders, and we take this responsibility seriously. Like all of you, Ginger and I want to leave things better than we found them and with the support of the officer team, we are committed to strengthening our organization for the future.

Our number one priority as a President team is growth—growth in membership, engagement, and support for OFA. Our organization has a rich legacy, and ensuring its longevity means finding new ways to connect with members while also securing the resources we need to thrive. To accomplish this, we are launching a **Regional Advisory Panel**, a key strategy developed by the officers to enhance communication and participation across the country.

The **Regional Advisory Panel representatives** will play a vital role in keeping members engaged. They will connect with members in their region, build stronger networks, and meet several months before the national convention to encourage participation. When the convention is hosted in their region, they will also assist with local hospitality, ensuring a welcoming experience for all.

Another critical focus is increasing sponsorship beyond just convention support. Expanding the base



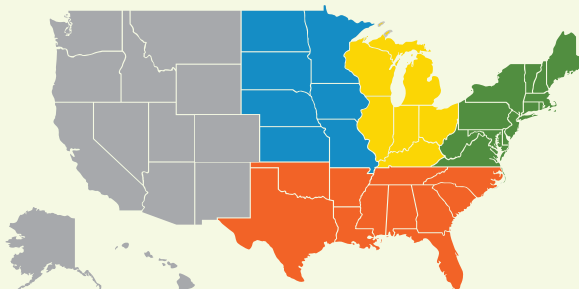
of supporting sponsors will allow the OFA to offer more opportunities for members and strengthen the OFA's future. We could not exist if it were not the support of John Deere but it is time to fill our basket with other corporations and organizations to support the incredible work we do.

We look forward to working alongside each of you as we build on the strong foundation of OFA. Thank you for your dedication to this incredible community.

Sincerely,
Chris and Ginger Martin

Membership breakdown by region:

- West - 370
- West Midwest - 318
- South - 442
- East - 372
- East Midwest - 292



OFA CONVENTION LOCATIONS:

- 2026 - East (Hershey, PA)
- 2027 - South
- 2028 - East Midwest
- 2029 - West
- 2030 - West Midwest



Class of 2025: from left back row, Trey Wasserburger, John Wayne, Sara Wayne, Jacob White, Olivia White, Callie Feather, Jacob Feather, James Hawkins, Kimberly Hawkins, Bryan Thompson, Kaci Thompson, Andrea Heiken, Zach Heiken, Jennifer Hoewisch, Jacob Hoewisch; front row, Mike Singlesad, Kelly Boeddeker, Clarissa Egolf, Adam Egolf.

National Outstanding Young Farmer of the Year Award

Des Moines – The National Outstanding Young Farmers (NOYF) of the Year were recognized in Des Moines, Iowa at the 70th Annual Outstanding Farmers of America National Convention, February 5-8, 2025 at the Prairie Meadows Hotel. These farmers are active citizens in their community championing sustainable agriculture practices and are creating bright farming futures.

More than 30 nominations from across the nation were received from agricultural extension agents, family members, business owners and other agricultural professionals. “The quality of nominations received keeps getting more impressive each year. I do not envy the decision judges must make to determine finalists and winners,” said National Outstanding Young Farmer Coordinator, Mary Johnson.

Once nominations closed on September 1, 2024, Johnson coordinated forms to be sent to a panel of five independent judges with scoring sheets. When scoring sheets are returned, a list of the top ten finalists is determined and notices are issued.

“The most fun part of my job is to inform finalists they have in fact been recognized. As we know, farmers are the unsung heroes of what makes America work. To recognize a farmer - and a young farmer at that - is always very rewarding,” said Johnson.

The ten finalists making up the Class of 2025 include: Callie and Jacob Feather (AR), Kimberly and James Hawkins

(GA), Mike Singlestad and Kelly Boeddeker (MN), Olivia and Jacob White (MS), Dayna and Trey Wasserburger (NE), Andrea and Zach Heiken (NJ), Kaci and Bryan Thompson (OH), Clarissa and Adam Egolf (PA), Sara and John Wayne (WV), Jennifer and Jacob Hoewisch (WI).

The finalists arrived in Des Moines on an expense-paid trip to the convention, where they met over dinner and watched a preview of the NOYF finalist video. They also participated in in-person judging, facing a panel of seven judges – including OFA officers Cheryl and Don Hartman, Tor and Nicole Andersen, and Chris Martin. Also on the panel were Keith Mickler, past president of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents, and Ben Pullen, director of the Institute of Agriculture at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa.

“This was a very impressive group of people,” said Keith Mickler. “As an extension agent for 20 plus years, it did my heart good to see how this group of young farmers are tackling a very hard job with so much passion.”

On Saturday, February 8 at the closing convention banquet, the top four farmers of the year were announced. Winners included; Kimberly and James Hawkins from Georgia; Dayna and Trey Wasserburger from Nebraska; Andrea and Zach Heiken from New Jersey and Sara and John Wayne from West Virginia.

All finalists and winners were congratulated by the more than 160 guests in attendance.

Meet the Class of 2025 NOYF Winners

Four winners were selected as **National Outstanding Young Farmers of the Year** out of ten incredible finalists.

Kimberly & James Hawkins

James Hawkins is the owner and operator of Lanlett Farms, a diverse agricultural operation based in Edgehill, Georgia. James is a first-generation farmer who holds a Bachelors in Business Management and Accounting from Augusta University. Initially working as an accountant, James eventually traded his suit, tie and desk for the sun, soil, and a tractor.

Lanlett Farms spans nearly 1,000 acres, with a focus on row crops (corn, cotton, peanuts, wheat, and hay) and a commercial beef cow/calf herd. The farm implements sustainable practices such as conservation tillage and cover cropping to improve soil health and water efficiency.

James has also grown a custom poultry litter hauling business and participates in local agricultural research trials. He serves as vice-chairman of the Farm Service Agency COC committee, is active in the Glascock County Farm Bureau, and volunteers as a youth sports coach. A recognized leader in conservation, James received the 2023 National Cotton Farmer of the Year Award and is a mentor for the Soil Health Institute.



Dayna & Trey Wasserburger

Trey Wasserburger is a proud first-generation rancher and owner of TD Angus, a rapidly growing cattle and farming operation based in North Platte, Nebraska. Trey founded his business in 2017 with a registered Angus herd that now exceeds 1,200 breeding females. TD Angus is one of the largest purebred herds in the country and ranks second in Nebraska for herd size. Trey sells 500 bulls annually across 30 states and operates a family-owned feedlot, where they finish 4,000 feeder cattle. His unique “conception to consumer” model completes the beef production cycle by sending finished cattle to the Sustainable Beef packing plant, which partners with Wal-Mart to sell the meat.

In addition to livestock, Trey farms 480 acres of irrigated corn for silage and implements sustainable practices like metered irrigation and using feedlot manure for fertilization. He is deeply involved in his community as a member of the North Platte Chamber board, a youth sports coach, and serves on Governor Pillen’s Ag Advisory Board.



Andrea & Zach Heiken

Zach Heiken is the owner and operator of ZRH Farms, LLC, a thriving agricultural operation in Pedricktown, NJ. A first-generation farmer, Zach’s passion for farming began at eight years old when he helped a local farmer with harvest, later saving every dollar he made working in construction to fulfill his dream of owning a farm. Starting with 125 acres in 2005, Zach has since grown his operation to over 4,450 acres, including row crops, small grains, and vegetables.

Today, ZRH Farms produces a variety of crops, including peppers, cucumbers, and asparagus. Through strategic use of drip irrigation and center pivots, Zach maximizes water efficiency while implementing conservation practices such as vertical tillage and cover cropping.

He is deeply committed to community involvement, donating fresh produce to local food banks and organizing efforts through Feeding America during the pandemic. Zach is an active member of several agricultural boards, including the New Jersey Vegetable Growers Association.





Sara & John Wayne

Cattle

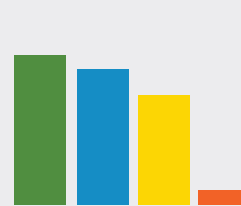
Located in central West Virginia, John and Sara Wayne have operated Wayne Cattle, LLC, a diversified farm, since 2009. Operations include a commercial cow herd, hay production, backgrounding stocker cattle, and retail meat sales. Over the past 15 years, the Wayne's have grown their farm to include 60 commercial cows and 600 backgrounded calves, while expanding their hay acreage and building a successful direct-to-consumer meat business. They also market 55 beeves annually and supply pork and lamb, with wholesale sales to local grocery stores all while also maintaining a contract with a local food bank to provide high-quality protein to families in need.

As leaders in conservation, the Waynes have worked with NRCS to implement sustainable practices such as rotational grazing, water conservation, and nutrient management. Their efforts earned them the 2021 Conservation Farm award.

Involved in various organizations. John, Sara, and their two sons, volunteer at their local church, 4-H club, and with the Braxton County Fair. Involving themselves in local, state, and national agriculture organizations helps the Waynes maintain a commitment to the farming community.

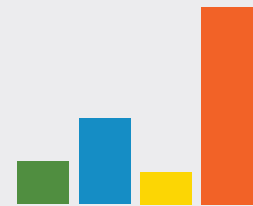
By the Numbers

Here are highlights from the 2024 OFA Membership Survey.



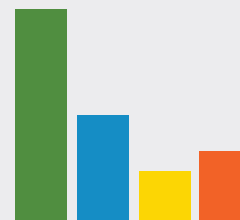
OFA Membership Ages

- 1% - Under 30 years old
- 35% - 31-50 years old
- 37% - 51-70 years old
- 27% - 71 - 90+ years old



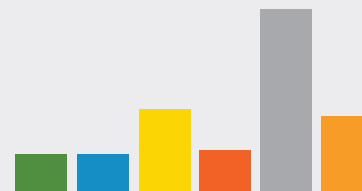
What is your preferred brand of farming equipment?

- John Deere 54%
- Case IH 23%
- New Holland 13%
- Kubota 10%



OFA Educational Background

- 14% Highschool graduate only
- 27% Some College or Vocational Training
- 51% Bachelor's Degree
- 8% Master's Degree or Higher



What are your annual gross sales of farming for the past three years?

- 9% \$100,000 and less
- 8% \$100,001 - \$250,000
- 8% \$250,001 - \$500,000
- 18% \$500,001 - \$1M
- 41% \$1M - \$5M
- 16% More than \$5M



What are your top three farming expenses?

3. Land Rent/Mortgage
2. Payroll and Benefits
1. Fertilizer, Pesticides, Herbicides, etc.

OFA Members Gather to Renew Energy in Des Moines

More than 160 Outstanding Farmers of America (OFA) members from across the country came together for an unforgettable annual convention filled with camaraderie, learning, and plenty of fun. From insightful tours and engaging sessions to lively dinners and unique entertainment, this year's event had something for everyone. Attendees were inspired by professional speaker Jolene Brown, tested their detective skills during a murder-mystery themed dinner, and kicked off the festivities with an Iowa State Fair-themed welcome party—complete with a husband-calling contest that had the crowd roaring with laughter. It was a convention packed with memories, strengthening the bonds that make OFA a special community.



A tour stop at Corteva's Soybean Growth Chamber and Greenhouses did not disappoint.



Jon Ebert with John Deere shares information about upgrades Deere is doing to their equipment.



OFA members from Wisconsin celebrated Jennifer and Jake Hoeswich as NOYF finalists.



Don and Cheryl Hartman thank MaryBeth Jackson and Val Plagge for ALL their efforts to make the 2025 OFA Convention a success for the West Midwest region.



These strapping young fellas participated in the "Best Legs" contest at the Iowa State Fair themed welcome party.



The OFA officer team along with local committee host MaryBeth Jackson visited the APEX Learning Center in Waukee High School to share information about their farms and the OFA.



Casey won the blue ribbon for blowing the largest bubble at the welcome party! A whopper measuring eight inches. (Before it popped and covered her eyebrows.)

Member Spotlight

Joe Gambini & Lois Armstrong



During the 2025 OFA Convention, Joe Gambini and Lois Armstrong were presented with a plaque honoring their 60th year of being members of the OFA AND, attending their 60th OFA convention.

Thank you for inspiring generations of farms and helping cultivate a legacy of passion and progress.

“My dad came from Italy in 1907, he was a 20-year-old boy that came through Ellis Island,” Joe stated. “At that time, they processed 5,000 immigrants a day.”

Antonio Gambini arrived in San Francisco later that same year, not long after the 1906 earthquake, eager to make his own way in the world.

“Imagine a young guy, he didn’t know English... all he knew was that America was the land of opportunity,” Joe said.

In just over 10 years of being in America, Antonio Gambini purchased 180 acres of land that is part of the farm that exists today on River Road near Oakdale, California and was originally a dairyman milking 120 cows. He started planting tomatoes during World War II and the family later expanded into other areas, including the planting of trees, now with walnuts as the primary crop.

“I was born on my ranch, and I’m still there,” Joe added chuckling.

The business has stayed in the family, with Joe’s son Rod and his daughters Toni and Tori all involved, as well as many of their children. Joe lost his first wife, Lila, to cancer in 1985. Now, he works alongside his best friend and significant other of many years, Lois Armstrong. The business also has two corporations, Gambini Farms and Gambini Nut Company, Inc.



One stop along the tour trail of the convention included the Iowa State University Meat Lab.



OFA Vice President models a custom John Deere inspired bikini at the annual Hospitality Live Auction. A giving guest donated \$100 for Tor NOT to wear it ever again.



Carving one-pound bricks of butter at the Iowa State Fair Welcome Party was fun!



Nominate an Outstanding Farmer of America today!

Nominations for National Outstanding Farmer of the Year are currently open. The nomination form and criteria can be found at outstandingfarmers.com/nomination-form.



Save the Date!

2026 OFA Convention
Hershey, Pennsylvania

The Hershey Hotel
February 4-7, 2026

outstandingfarmers.com/convention



Officer Team

OUTSTANDING FARMERS OF AMERICA OFFICERS & REGIONAL ADVISORY PANEL

2025-2027 President

Ginger & Chris Martin

President@outstandingfarmers.com

2025-2027 Vice President & Treasurer

Nicole & Tor Andersen

VicePresident@outstandingfarmers.com

2025-2027 Secretary

Betsy & Carl Long

Secretary@outstandingfarmers.com

Regional Advisory Panel

WEST REGION

Laci & Blake O'Hare

Blake.wildharefarms@gmail.com

Jordyn & Eric Correia

Correia28@aol.com

WEST MIDWEST REGION

Tina & Gary Schoenfeld

Gary_schoenfeld@yahoo.com

SOUTH REGION

Danette & Danny McAlhaney

Dandd3@aol.com

EAST MIDWEST REGION

Jody & Terry Page

Terrypage22@gmail.com

EAST REGION

Kyli and Jake Stevens

thefirecreekfarms@gmail.com

Karen & Byron DuBois

Moorek85@yahoo.com