
Highlighting the Best: Missouri Farmers Care Seeks Applicants for the Missouri Agricultural Stewardship Award

From Soil & Water Conservation Program <soil&waterconservationprogram@swcd.mo.gov>

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To DNR.Soil and Water Conservation Districts staff <dnr.soilandwaterconservationdistrictsstaff@dnr.mo.gov>

Cc DNR.MGS SWC Staff <dnr.swcstaff@dnr.mo.gov>

Good morning,

See the announcement below from Missouri Farmers Care seeking applicants for the next round of the Missouri Agriculture Stewardship Award. There are numerous farmers and ranchers across the state that are deserving of this award. Please consider nominating someone from your county or share this announcement with someone that you think should apply.

Soil and Water Conservation Program

Missouri Geological Survey

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Highlighting the Best: Missouri Farmers Care Seeks Applicants for the Missouri Agricultural Stewardship Award

JEFFERSON CITY, MO – Missouri Farmers Care, a coalition of Missouri’s agricultural organizations, commodity groups and agribusinesses, is now accepting applications for the Missouri Agriculture Stewardship Award.

The award recognizes the high bar set in Missouri agriculture for the careful and responsible management of land, natural resources, and animals entrusted to the care of Missouri farmers and ranchers. Missouri Farmers Care seeks award applicants who demonstrate the best innovation, stewardship, and diligence in land management decisions on their working farms and ranches.

The Missouri Agriculture Stewardship Award is presented in partnership with Missouri Farmers Care, Missouri Corn Merchandising Council, Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, and organizations across Missouri agriculture.

“Missouri farmers and ranchers have a deep commitment to conservation and stewardship of their private lands,” said USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist Scott Edwards. “The Missouri Agriculture Stewardship Award is a great way to recognize and highlight the conservation work of deserving producers across the state and it allows the award winner to share their story, inspiring other producers to practice sound conservation.”

Stanton Family Farms from Centralia, Mo. is the 2025 Missouri Agricultural Stewardship Award recipient. Stanton Family Farms encompasses two family businesses working side by side. Andrew and wife, Judy, grow crops and cattle as Stanton Farms. Their sons, Dustin and Austin, own Stanton Brothers, an egg production business specializing in cage-free, brown eggs marketed directly to consumers. The family employs a range of stewardship practices including the use of modern agriculture technologies, grass buffer strips to protect water quality, crop rotation, cover crops, and recycling of natural fertilizer.

“Missouri farmers manage natural resources with a long-term view of leaving them in better condition for the generations that follow in their footsteps,” said Ashley McCarty, executive director Missouri Farmers Care. “Private landowners hold 93 percent of Missouri land, with 27 million acres managed as farms

and ranches. This award recognizes the best of the best in production stewardship and, in doing so, hopefully inspires further adoption of innovative management across Missouri agriculture.”

The 2026 Missouri Agricultural Stewardship Award will be presented to a farm family at agricultural and natural resource conferences this winter. Recipients will be extended invitations throughout the year to speak on panels, present at conferences to share their experiences with fellow producers, and host an on-farm tour that highlights their successful conservation and stewardship practices. Award recipients will receive a \$5,000 honorarium.

“Missouri Corn is honored to support the Missouri Agriculture Stewardship Award, which acknowledges and promotes the efforts of families implementing stewardship and conservation practices on their farms,” stated Brian Lehman, Chairman of the Missouri Corn Merchandising Council and a corn grower from Versailles, Missouri. “We are excited to see how this year’s award recipient showcases the significant progress that today’s farmers are making in safeguarding and enhancing natural resources.”

Missouri agriculture continues the tradition of highlighting stewardship efforts of Missouri farmers. Missouri Farmers Care and partners have collaborated to highlight farmers and ranchers embodying land stewardship, leadership and communication since 2017. The Missouri Agriculture Stewardship Award continues the tradition with a recognition tailored to highlight the best of Missouri agricultural production.

“In the heart of Missouri’s farmlands, today’s soybean farmers stand as stewards of tomorrow’s legacy,” said Mark Lehenbauer, Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council Chair. “Through dedication and innovation, we nurture the land for future generations. The Missouri Agriculture Stewardship Award honors our commitment, paving the way for sustainable agriculture and ensuring a prosperous future.”

The Missouri Farmers Care Foundation Missouri Agriculture Stewardship Award is made possible thanks to the generous support of:

- [Missouri Corn Merchandising Council](#),
- [Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council](#),
- [USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service](#),
- [Missouri Cattlemen’s Association](#),
- [MFA, Inc.](#),
- [Missouri Fertilizer Control Board](#),
- [FCS Financial](#),
- [Missouri Farm Bureau](#),
- [Missouri Soil and Water Conservation Program](#), and
- [The Nature Conservancy](#).

Application information is available at <https://mofarmerscare.com/agstewardshipaward/>. Active Missouri farmers and ranchers can submit applications online (preferred) or mailed to Missouri Farmers Care Foundation, 19171 State Highway 11, Kirksville, MO 63501. All applications must be submitted or postmarked by June 30, 2025.

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Photo Caption: Missouri Farmers Care is now accepting applications for the Missouri Agriculture Stewardship Award. The award recognizes the high bar set in Missouri agriculture for the careful and responsible management of land, natural resources, and animals entrusted to the care of Missouri farmers and ranchers. The award is presented in partnership with the Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council, Missouri Corn Merchandising Council, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and additional agriculture and conservation partners.

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Missouri Farmers Care Foundation enables Missourians to understand the influence and importance of agriculture in their daily lives by serving as the centralized hub of the unified educational programs, awards, and hunger relief efforts of Missouri's agricultural community. www.MOFarmersCare.com

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