**Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation**

**Young Farmers & Ranchers Achievement Award**

**Rules for 2025 MFBF Competition**

**Purpose:**

Recognize young farmers/ranchers for their achievements in production agriculture and leadership.

**Background**

The Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) annually conducts a Young Farmers & Ranchers (YF&R) Achievement Award competition. County Farm Bureaus are encouraged to promote this activity. Selection of the winning YF&R competitor is based on their efforts in production agriculture and leadership achievement. **The ideal candidate(s) for the Achievement Award is an individual or couple involved in production agriculture with a majority of their gross income subject to farm and/or ranch risks.** Minnesota Farm Bureau will provide, as part of the state recognition award, an expense-paid trip to the 2026 AFBF Convention held in Anaheim, California, January 9-12, 2026. Appropriate recognition will be given to all national competitors in attendance at the AFBF Convention. The MFBF YF&R Committee and the MFBF Leadership Coordinator will coordinate the program at the state level.

Information about the Achievement Award applicant is requested on the entry form. ALL INFORMATION IS HANDLED IN STRICT CONFIDENCE.

**Eligibility:**

**The ideal candidate(s) for the Achievement Award is an individual or couple involved in production agriculture with a majority of their gross income subject to farm and/or ranch risks.**

* An applicant can be either an individual or a couple that is married or has similar legal rights under the law applicable to the state Farm Bureau organization. An applicant may choose to apply individually, rather than as a couple.
* Applicant(s) shall be a Farm Bureau member(s) between the ages of 18 and 35 in good standing with their county Farm Bureau. The individual or spouse/spouse-equivalent shall have reached their 18th birthday at the time they qualify for the state competition and shall not have reached their 36th birthday by the completion of the competition. Competitors qualify at the time the state application is submitted and the completion of the competition is the day awards are given out on the national level (Monday, January 12, 2026).
* Applicant(s) must be in attendance on-site at the MFBF Annual Meeting to compete.
* Applicant(s) must be actively engaged in farming and/or ranching, with the majority of their gross income coming from production agriculture. Applicant(s) must have at least three years of financial records showing that the majority of income came from production agriculture.
* Applicant(s) may only compete in one state YF&R competition per year.
* Past and present members of the AFBF Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee and/or their spouses are not eligible to compete.
* Previous AFBF Achievement Award competitors are not eligible to compete.
* Current employees or agents of county, state and/or the American Farm Bureau organizations and their affiliates are not eligible to compete. An affiliate is defined as an entity owned or controlled in whole or in part by another entity through, for example, ownership (including partial ownership) or positions on the board of directors. Past employees and interns who were responsible for implementing any of the YF&R Competitive Events at the state or national level since January 1, 2021, are ineligible.

**Entry Form & Application Guidelines**

* Do not use the applicant’s name, the name of their county, or any names that may bring about the recognition or identification of the applicant’s state beyond the entry form. The written versions of the application have a search feature to locate any identifiers.
* The entry form and application should be completed in first person narrative (i.e. I, me, we, us), but proper names of the applicant(s) may not be used. Couple applications should follow these instructions: For personal statements, put (A1) or (A2) at the beginning of the paragraph/sentence to denote which applicant is “speaking,” and for joint statements, simply use the word “we.” Applicants must use (A1)/(A2) to denote each applicant’s involvement for all of question 2b and 10-12.
* The Financial Success section must be typed, signed and notarized; handwritten financial forms will be disqualified. If the notarization includes a state identifier such as a state name or seal, the identifier needs to be blacked out.
* Do not use abbreviations or acronyms, unless it has been spelled out once with the abbreviation in parentheses behind it. For example, the United States Department of Education (USDE). MFBF, FB, and YF&R are acceptable to use throughout the application.
* It will be up to the judges’ discretion to deduct points if applicants include activities before they were 18.

**Note: Disregarding the guidelines will result in disqualification of the application.**

**VIRTUAL CONVENTION:** If MFBF is unable to hold the 2025 Annual Meeting in-person for any reason, the competitive events will be held virtually, and all applicants should be made aware of this possibility prior to their application.  If the competition will be virtual, all contestants will be given the opportunity to withdraw their application for 2025 to ensure eligibility for future years.

**Judging**

* The entry form and application of each state entry will be coded upon receipt by MFBF. The applicant’s name and county will not be revealed to the judges until judging is completed.
* Judging is based on the application sent to MFBF by the competitor. An interview with the finalists during the MFBF Annual Meeting determines final scores, rank and winners.
* A panel of qualified judges will select the state winners. The competitors will be interviewed by the same judges who reviewed the written applications.
* Interviews will be up to 25 minutes in length and are intended to evaluate the competitor’s command of the farm/ranch business and financials, familiarity of the contents of the application and appreciation for the value of Farm Bureau (see rubric document). In addition to the five (5) points allocated for the interview, judges may alter scores/ranks from other sections based on what they learn in the interview.
* During the interview process, only the named applicant(s) on the entry form is permitted into the interview, and the applicant(s) should refrain from using the name of their state or county, or any names that may bring about the recognition or identification of their state. Applicants can refer to each other by their first name throughout the interview.

**Scoring:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Points** |
| 1. Personal Background
 | 10 |
| 1. Scope of Farm/Ranch
 | 15 |
| 1. Growth & Achievements
 | 25 |
| 1. Management Decisions
 | 15 |
| 1. Goals & Planning
 | 10 |
| 1. Resiliency
 | 10 |
| 1. Financial Success Part 1: Debt-to-Asset Ratio and Profit
 | 25 |
| 1. Financial Success Part 2: Analysis and Record Keeping
 | 15 |
| 1. Financial Success Part 3: Off-Farm Income
 | 10 |
| 1. Leadership Experience: Farm Bureau
 | 30 |
| 1. Leadership Experience: Other Ag Organizations
 | 10 |
| 1. Leadership Experience: Other
 | 10 |
| 1. Leadership Growth and Development
 | 10 |
| Total Application Points | 195 |
| Interview (Top 10 competitors only) | 5 |
| TOTAL POINTS | 200 |

**\*\*The chart above is not the rubric. Please refer to the separate rubric document for all scoring criteria.**

**Deadline**

The Minnesota entry form and application must be received by the Minnesota Farm Bureau on or before 12:00 midnight September 15, 2025.

**State Awards**

* 1st Place Prize - $1000 Check, 2nd Place Prize - $500 Check
* American Farm Bureau Convention – The MFBF Achievement Award winner and spouse/spousal-equivalent will be awarded transportation, lodging and registration costs necessary to compete in the American Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmers and Ranchers Achievement Award competition and participating in the recognition and awards program at the AFBF Annual Convention held in 2026 in Anaheim, CA.
* Farmers to Washington D.C. trip – The finalists will have the opportunity to take part in a 2026 MFBF Farmers to Washington D.C. trip. Contestants are eligible for the Farmers to Washington, D.C. trip once they complete competition at the 2025 MFBF Annual Meeting. A fee of $150 per finalist will be charged to the individuals. It will include round trip airfare, lodging while in Washington D.C., sightseeing tours and some meals. The participants will meet with their Congressional delegation, top governmental officials and the American Farm Bureau Federation government affairs staff. Counties will also pay a matching $150. Spouse/spousal-equivalent is welcome to participate at own expense (less hotel).
* MFBF LEAP Conference – The winner of the MFBF Achievement Award competition and their spouse/spousal-equivalent will receive a complimentary registration and hotel room at the 2026 MFBF LEAP Conference.

**Application Development Option**

The Minnesota Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee announced in 2017 a program to help grown our competitive contests and allow those interested to grow their operations and build their leadership skills by announcing an Application Development Option.

How it works:

The Application Development Option allows you to be a part of the judging process of the contests without competing. You are judged and receive feedback to learn about how they can grow their impact on agriculture and grow in their own personal leadership development.

You are NOT ranked with the other competitors of the contest and therefore you are ineligible to advance onto national competition. This allows you to come back and compete in the contest in future years and does not allow you to win or receive any contest prizes.

Guidelines:

You must agree to this option prior to the competition. You must circle this option on your signature page.

**Achievement Award Mentors**

MFBF has designated mentors with specific skills sets to assist contestants with their Achievement Award applications. You are encouraged to contact them as you work on your application to assist and to answer your questions. Contact Rachael Peterson at rachael.peterson@fbmn.org for the current list of Achievement Award Mentors.



**Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation**

**Young Farmers & Ranchers Achievement Award**

**2025 Entry Form**

Please submit this form via email to rachael.peterson@fbmn.org.

The application must be submitted **on or before 12:00 a.m. (midnight) September 15, 2025.**

The data below and throughout the application applies to you and your spouse/spouse-equivalent, if married. Please fill out in first person, following guidelines above, and indicate “Applicant 1” (A1) and “Applicant 2” (A2) on questions 2b and 10-12.

Applicant(s)\*: A1: A2:

*\*Will be used in the program and for recognition*

Phonetic Pronunciation: A1: A2:

Address:

City: State: Zip Code:

Phone:

Email: A1: A2: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: A1: A2:

Age on January 12, 2026: A1: A2:

Are you an alumnus of any of the following youth organizations? (Check all that apply)

 4-H AFA FFA MANRRS

Do you have any ADA special requirements we should be aware of?

 Yes  No If yes, please list: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I (we) hereby certify the information on this entry form and attached application to be accurate and true statements. **MFBF DOES NOT ACCEPT LIABILITY FOR APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED INCORRECTLY BY A COMPETITOR**. MFBF reserves the right to use my (our) photos and/or any video footage for use in promoting Farm Bureau. The photos and/or video footage of the undersigned contestant(s) may also be available to Farm Bureau sponsors. By participating in the Event, I (we) warrant that I (we) fully and unconditionally agree to and accept the YF&R official contest rules and the decisions of the MFBF YF&R Committee, which are final and binding.

**VIRTUAL CONVENTION:**  If MFBF is unable to hold the 2025 Annual Meeting in-person for any reason, the competitive events will be held virtually, and all applicants should be made aware of this possibility prior to their application.  If the competition will be virtual, all contestants will be given the opportunity to withdraw their application for 2025 to ensure eligibility for future years.

Applicant(s) Signature(s): A1: A2:

I hereby certify that the above-named applicant(s) is the official state entry and is therefore eligible to be entered in and considered for AFBF’s Young Farmers & Ranchers Achievement Award for 2025.

County President Signature: Date:

Membership and Marketing Specialist Signature: Date:

**Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation**

**Young Farmers & Ranchers Achievement Award**

**2025 Application**

1. **PERSONAL BACKGROUND**
2. Briefly tell us about yourself, your family, education, and personal interests. **Approximately2,000 characters**
3. Please describe your farm/ranch including how you acquired it, acres owned and rented, years in operation, crops and livestock. **Approximately2,000 characters**
4. List any other related business enterprises and their relationship to/importance in the total farm/ranch. **Approximately1,500 characters**
5. Tell us about how you advocate for agriculture. **Approximately1,500 characters**
6. **SCOPE OF YOUR FARM OR RANCH**
7. Explain the ownership structure of your farm/ranch and your vested interest. Please include all enterprises in your explanation, if applicable. **Approximately2,000 characters**
8. What percentage of the farm/ranch management decisions are you responsible for? Please break down for each enterprise, if applicable. **Approximately1,250 characters – 10 lines**\*\*Rember to indicate A1/A2 throughout this response, if applicable.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Enterprise** |  | **% Management Decisions** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
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1. Please add any additional information that helps explain the previous two responses, if needed. **Approximately** **1,000 characters**
2. Describe your role in the operation. Explain specifically your duties and decision-making responsibilities. **Approximately2,000 characters**
3. **GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENTS**
4. Please tell the story of your farm growth since your first year of owning/managing your farm/ranch. Where were you then and where are you now? Use specific examples to show how your operation has grown and highlight your contributions to the success of the operation over time. **Approximately3,000 characters**
5. List and describe any production efficiency growth you have achieved since your first year of owning/managing your farm/ranch. **Approximately2,500 characters**
6. **MANAGEMENT DECISIONS**

Please explain how your understanding of the market has led you to create strategies that make your operation thrive and ensure its success now and into the future. Discuss up to two impactful strategic or management decisions you have made on your farm/ranch, why you made them, and the changes that resulted from implementing those decisions. **Approximately** **3,500 characters**

1. **GOALS & PLANNING**

Moving forward, what short-term and long-term goals do you have for your farm/ranch? Explain how you plan to achieve these goals. **Approximately2,500 characters**

1. **RESILIENCY**
2. Describe any major business challenges your farm/ranch has encountered and what you did to overcome them (i.e., policy, financial, family, management, etc.). **Approximately** **2,000 characters**
3. Describe the transition or succession plan(s) you have for your farm/ranch. If you do not have either, please explain. **Approximately 1,500 characters**
4. **FINANCIAL SUCCESS: Part 1**

*NOTE: In considering financial situation, judges will consider the whole application and how the financials are connected to the history, goals and strategies of the farm/ranch. Financials are not to be evaluated independent of the other sections.*

*\*All figures must appear as whole numbers.*

1. Using the grid below, please show your debt-to-asset ratio, including farm/ranch/personal debts and assets for each year requested:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Total Debt**(combined farm/ranch and personal debt) | **Total Assets**(combined farm/ranch and personal assets) | **Debt to Asset Ratio**(total debt divided by total assets) |
| First year (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) |  |  |  |
| 3 years ago |  |  |  |
| 2 years ago |  |  |  |
| 1 year ago |  |  |  |
| 2025 year-end projections |  |  |  |

Please indicate whether the above reflects:

* the portion of the farm/ranch you own, as indicated in 2(a).

OR

* the portion of the farm/ranch for which you make management decisions *if more than the amount you own*, as indicated in 2(b).

Give an explanation of related irregularities or strategies, if needed: **Approximately1,000 characters**

1. Using the grids below, please show total **farm/ranch** income, expenses and net profit for each year requested. *This should reflect anything related to the farm/ranch business(es) described in the application regardless of marketing practices, production methods or sources.*

**TOTAL INCOME = Farm/Ranch Income + All other income related to the farm/ranch business(es)**

**Other Income Examples:** farm bill payments, trade aid, conservation payments, net crop insurance benefits, and/or income derived from the marketing or selling of farm/ranch products/services such as specialty marketing, agritourism, etc. *(do not include off-farm or other enterprises that are unrelated to the farm/ranch operation)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Farm/Ranch Income** | **+ All other farm/ranch-related income** | **= Total Income** |
| First year (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) |  |  |  |
| 3 years ago |  |  |  |
| 2 years ago |  |  |  |
| 1 year ago |  |  |  |
| 2025 year-end projections |  |  |  |

**TOTAL EXPENSES = Farm/Ranch Expenses + Interest + Depreciation**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Farm/Ranch Expenses** | **+ Interest** | **+ Depreciation** | **= Total Expenses** |
| First year (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) |  |  |  |  |
| 3 years ago |  |  |  |  |
| 2 years ago |  |  |  |  |
| 1 year ago |  |  |  |  |
| 2024 year-end projections |  |  |  |  |

**NET PROFIT = Income – Expenses**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Total Income** | **– Total Expenses** | **= Net Profit** |
| First year (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) |  |  |  |
| 3 years ago |  |  |  |
| 2 years ago |  |  |  |
| 1 year ago |  |  |  |
| 2025 year-end projections |  |  |  |

Please indicate whether the above reflects:

* the portion of the farm/ranch you own, as indicated in 2(a).

OR

* the portion of the farm/ranch for which you make management decisions *if more than the amount you own*, as indicated in 2(b).

Give an explanation of related irregularities or strategies, if needed: **Approximately1,000 characters**

**Banker/Loan Officer/Tax Accountant Signature: ­­**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*\*This signature verifies the years completed, not the projections and/or irregularities.*

**Notary Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Notary Stamp:**

1. **FINANCIAL SUCCESS: Part 2**
2. Describe the practices you use to evaluate the financial success of your farm/ranch, including ratios or analysis, record keeping systems and/or advisors used to support successful financial management. **Approximately2,000 characters**
3. Describe where you see your greatest financial strengths and weaknesses in your farm/ranch business. **Approximately2,000 characters**
4. **FINANCIAL SUCCESS: Part 3**
5. Do you have any other **farm/ranch business** income not otherwise shown in the financials section (such as supporting agri-businesses)? If so, how is that income used? **Approximately1,000 characters**
6. Is any **off-farm** income earned by you or your spouse and how is that income used? **Approximately1,000 characters**
7. What **additional income**, if any, from inheritances, winnings, etc. did the applicant(s) accept and how is/was it used? **Approximately1,000 characters**
8. **LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE: FARM BUREAU (from age 18 to current)** *Note: This applies to both applicants, if applying together. Please indicate A1 and A2 when applicable.*

List Farm Bureau leadership roles, recognitions and/or awards received by the applicant, including service on committees, boards or as officers. Please include years and level of involvement (county, state, national). *Example: A1 – Elected President of the County Farm Bureau Board of Directors (2022-2023)*

**Approximately2,500 characters**

**County Farm Bureau**

**State/American Farm Bureau**

1. **LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE: OTHER AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS (from age 18 to current)**

List other agricultural leadership roles, recognitions and/or awards received by the applicant, including service on committees, boards or as officers (i.e. Farm Credit, Soil Conservation, Farm Service Agency, farm cooperatives, adult roles in 4-H or FFA) *Example: A1 and A2 – 4-H, Serves as a 4-H Livestock Club Leader (2021 – present)* **Approximately2,500 characters**

**12. LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE: OTHER (from age 18 to current)**

List other community and non-agricultural leadership roles, recognitions and/or awards received by the applicant, including service on committees, boards or as officers (i.e. Chamber of Commerce, civic/service clubs, church, school, scouts, coaching, etc.) *Example: A1 – Local Elementary School, Served as Parent Teacher Association (PTA) President (2018-2022)* **Approximately2,500 characters**

**13. LEADERSHIP GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

1. Describe your most impactful leadership experience and any actions you have taken to better yourself as a leader or businessperson. **Approximately** **2,500 characters**
2. Describe your goals for leadership growth and development. **Approximately1,500 characters**