

**South Carolina Farm Bureau Federation  
Young Farmers & Ranchers Excellence in Agriculture Award**

**Rules for 2025-2026 Competition**

**Background**

The Excellence in Agriculture Award spotlights Young Farm Bureau members who are actively engaged in their community and effectively advocate for agriculture. Competitors are evaluated on their understanding of agricultural issues, personal involvement in agriculture advocacy, leadership experiences and achievement, and their ability to communicate the importance of agriculture. **Competitors for this award must not have earned a majority of their income from an owned production agriculture enterprise in the past three years.**

Information about the Excellence in Agriculture applicant is requested on the entry form. ALL INFORMATION IS HANDLED IN STRICT CONFIDENCE.

**Eligibility**

- 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. 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 his/her county Farm Bureau. The individual or spouse/spousal-equivalent shall have reached his/her 18th birthday at the time he/she qualifies for the state competition and shall not have reached his/her 36th birthday by the completion of the national competition. Competitors qualify at the time the state application is submitted and the completion of the national competition is the day awards are given out (January 12, 2027).
- Applicant(s) must be in attendance on-site at the SCFB Annual Convention to be selected as state winner.
- Applicant(s) must not have derived a majority of his/her gross income from an owned production agriculture enterprise in any of the past three years.
- Past and present members of the AFBF Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee and/or their spouse are not eligible to compete.
- Past state YF&R Achievement Award winners and/or 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 noneligible 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 who were responsible for implementing any of the YF&R Competitive Events since January 1, 2018, at the state or national level are ineligible.

**Agreement**

All applicants MUST agree to the following, in the event they are named a finalist or the State winner(s):

- The state winner must complete the AFBF EA application before the December 2026 deadline.
- The state winner must agree to compete in the 2027 AFBF Excellence in Agriculture Award competition, scheduled to take place at the AFBF Annual Convention held in Charlotte, NC, January 8-12, 2027.
- The state winner must be willing, within reason, to accept Farm Bureau leadership and or assignments between the time they are announced as the State winner(s) and the time the AFBF EA application is due.

\*Disclaimers for Awards & Competitions: Awards programs are subject to change. Out-of-town trips are based upon availability. Winner must agree to represent SCFB in the national competition to receive the prize package.

**Application & Presentation Guidelines**

- Do not use applicant's name, the name of his/her county, or any names that may bring about the recognition or identification of the applicant's county beyond the entry form. Verbal and presentation reference to applicant's name, state and county will be allowed during your presentation for personalization of presentation.
- The entry form and application must be completed in first person narrative (i.e. I, me, we, etc.) for questions 1-5. "A1"/"A2" may not be used for questions 1-5. Applicants must use "A1"/"A2" to denote each applicant for all of question 6.

- Do not use abbreviations or acronyms unless it has been spelled out once with the abbreviation in parentheses behind it. For example, United States Department of Education (USDE). AFBF, FB, and YF&R are acceptable to use throughout the application.
- The attached entry form and application are examples of the information needed for the official online application. All applications must be submitted in the online application portal. No emailed or mailed entry forms will be accepted.
- Type within the spaces allotted. All required fields must be completed on the online application portal including required attachments.
- Each applicant should submit either a copy of their W2 or 1099 form, or a letter of verification from their employer or company on letterhead that includes length of employment and a brief description of their job responsibilities.
- Applicant(s) must sign the application signature page on the online application.
- Each applicant should submit five (5) pictures (electronic file only) of his/her/their farm, family and/or involvement. The images submitted will be used for a visual presentation of finalists at the SCFB Annual Convention, but will not be used during the judging process.
- After the application has been submitted, the applicant's County Farm Bureau President and County Secretary will be notified in order to verify that the applicant is a member in good standing with their County Farm Bureau.
- It will be up to the judges' discretion to deduct points if applicants include activities before they were 18.

Note: Disregard of the guidelines will result in disqualification of the application.

### **Presentation Guidelines**

- This will consist of a 20-minute presentation, in which the applicant(s) has an opportunity to share the contents of the entire application in presentation form with a panel of three judges. The presentation will be followed by 5 minutes of interview-style questions from the judges. The presentations will be given on Friday, December 5, 2025, at the SCFB Annual Convention in Myrtle Beach, SC.
- The applicant(s) has a total of 25 minutes to present the topics addressed in the application. At 20 minutes, a warning card will indicate that he/she should move on to the question and answer session. It is up to the applicant to make this transition. No additional time will be given for questions if the applicant(s) does not stop. A card will be shown at the end of 25 minutes and time will be called and conclude the applicant's time in front of the judges.
- The only visual means in which to deliver the information is through a PowerPoint or Prezi presentation. The applicant(s) needs to submit the presentation on a USB flash drive formatted for use on a PC to the SCFB representative prior to the presentation. A computer, projector/screen, and one slide advancer remote will be provided.
- Verbal and presentation references to applicant(s) name, state and county will be allowed during the presentation.
- No props (including notes), sound or video will be allowed during the presentation.
- Applicants are not allowed to view other presentations.
- The entry form and application of each entry will be coded upon receipt by SCFB. The applicant's name will not be revealed to the judges until judging is completed.
- All applications will be judged, and 3 finalists will be announced by October 25, 2024. Those who judged the written applications may not necessarily be the same judges for the presentation, but every effort is made to use the same judges.
- All judges will use the application rubric to score the applications.
- The following breakdown of points will be used for the application:

### **Application Judging**

#### **Category & Points**

- Ag Involvement, Impact on Ag and Issues Facing Ag: 180 pts
- Goals: 40 pts.

- Farm Bureau Experience: 90 pts.
- Other Leadership Experience: 80 pts.
- Application Form: Writing should be clear, descriptive, and free of grammatical errors: 10 pts.
- **TOTAL POINTS: 400 (80% of Total Score)**

### **Presentation Judging**

- All finalists will present during the SCFB Annual Convention.
- Competitors will present to a panel of three judges who represent the industry.
- All judges will use the same presentation rubric to score the presentations.
- The following breakdown of points will be used for the presentation:

### **Category & Points:**

- Delivery of Presentation: 30 pts.
- Content of Presentation: 40 pts.
- Responses to Questions: 30 pts.

**TOTAL POINTS: 100 (20% of Total Score)**

### **Prizes**

Excellence in Agriculture Award prizes are sponsored in part by the South Carolina Farm Bureau Federation and Southern Farm Bureau Life Insurance Company. Three finalists will receive:

- \$500 cash
- A one-night stay at the 2025 SCFB Annual Meeting in Myrtle Beach on December 6, 2025.
- A one-night stay at the 2026 SCFB YF&R Conference in Charleston, SC, on February 7, 2026.

The winner or winning couple will receive:

- Up to \$8,000 toward the purchase of a new 4x4 UTV
- A one-night stay at the SCFB Annual Meeting in Myrtle Beach in December 2027, to be highlighted as the 2026 winner\*.
- A trip to compete (required) at the 2027 American Farm Bureau (AFBF) Annual Convention in Charlotte, NC, January 8-13, 2027\*.
- An opportunity to attend the 2026 AFBF YF&R Conference in Portland, OR, March 13-15, 2026\*

\*Disclaimers for Awards & Competitions: Awards programs are subject to change. Out-of-town trips are based upon availability. Winner must agree to represent SCFB in the national competition to receive the prize package.

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**Entry Form for 2025-2026 Competition**

The data below and throughout the application applies to you and your spouse/spousal-equivalent, if married. Please indicate “Applicant 1” (A1) and “Applicant 2” (A2) when responding to question 6.

Applicant(s)\*: A1 \_\_\_\_\_ A2 \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phonetic Pronunciation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date of Birth: A1 \_\_\_\_\_ A2 \_\_\_\_\_

Age on January 12, 2027: A1 \_\_\_\_\_ A2 \_\_\_\_\_

Education/Degree: A1 \_\_\_\_\_ A2 \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide one of the following for verification purposes – **upload to the application site**:

Copy of Form 1099 or Form W-2

A letter of verification from your employer or company on letterhead that includes the length of employment and a brief description of your job responsibilities

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:

\_\_\_\_\_

*Note: Remember to write in first-person narrative (i.e., I, me, we, us) for questions 1-5. Remember not to use any state-specific identifiers.*

1. **PERSONAL BACKGROUND** (family, education, and personal interests) – **Approximately 2,000 characters**

**2. AGRICULTURAL INVOLVEMENT – *Approximately 2,500 characters***

A. Please explain the applicant's (applicants') occupation.

**2. AGRICULTURAL INVOLVEMENT (continued) - *Approximately 2,500 characters***

B. Please explain the applicant's (applicants') personal involvement in agriculture/agribusiness.

**3. IMPACT ON AGRICULTURE - *Approximately 5,000 characters***

Clearly describe the efforts the applicant(s) has taken to positively promote and impact the agriculture industry. Examples may include things such as hosting farm tours, legislative visits, writing a blog, etc.

**4. ISSUES FACING AGRICULTURE - *Approximately 5,000 characters***

A. Agriculture faces important issues at the local, state, national and international levels. Explain three important issues that the industry needs to address in the next five years. Choose one issue from three of the four levels mentioned above. For example, an applicant might select ag literacy as a local issue, mental health as a state issue and rural broadband as a national issue.

**4. ISSUES FACING AGRICULTURE (continued) – *Approximately 5,000 characters***

- B. Choose one of the issues in your response to 4A and discuss how you personally have addressed, or can address, that issue and work towards a resolution.

**5. GOALS - Approximately 5,000 characters**

What goals does the applicant(s) have for the next five years related to their career, Farm Bureau involvement and involvement with other organizations? What steps have been made to reach these goals?

**6. LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE (from age 18 to current)- Approximately 2,500 characters**

*Note: This applies to both applicants, if applying together. Please indicate A1 and A2 when applicable.*

- A. List Farm Bureau leadership roles, involvement opportunities, recognitions and/or awards received by the applicant(s), indicating service on committees, boards or as officers. Please include years of involvement.  
*Example: A1 – Elected President of the County Farm Bureau Board of Directors (2023-2024)*

6. **LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE (continued)- Approximately 2,500 characters**

- B. List other agricultural leadership roles, involvement opportunities, recognitions and/or awards received by the applicant(s), indicating service on committees, boards or as officers. (i.e. Farm Credit, Soil Conservation, Farm Service Agency, farm cooperatives, 4-H, etc.). Please include organization, description and years of involvement.

*Example: A1 & A2 – 4-H, Serves as a 4-H Livestock Club Leader (2021 – present)*

- C. List other community and non-agricultural leadership roles, involvement opportunities, recognitions and/or awards received by the applicant(s), indicating service on committees, boards or as officers (i.e. civic/service clubs, church, school, volunteer leadership, etc.) Please include organization, description and years of involvement.

*Example: A1 – Elementary School, Served as Parent Teacher Association (PTA) President (2018-2024)*

If you had any situations or circumstances that may have affected your leadership experience, please use this space to explain. **Approximately 250 characters**

*Note: There are **no** points associated to this section and can be left blank.*