

NewsWatch

2 Michigan couples earn AFBF awards

Two couples from Michigan were recently named runners-up in the American Farm Bureau Federation awards programs, which recognizes outstanding young farmers between the ages of 18 to 35.

Jeff and Alyssa Vander Werff, of Casnovia in Ottawa County, were recognized for Excellence in Agriculture, and

Key Points

- The runners-up hail from Ottawa and Shiawassee counties.
- Vander Werffs honored for contribution, involvement in Farm Bureau, community.
- Demerlys were honored for achievement in the business of farming and leadership.

Chris and Jamie Demerly, of Owosso in Shiawassee County, were honored for Achievement in Agriculture. They were recognized during AFBF's 90th convention in Texas on Jan. 12.

Vander Werffs honored

The Vander Werffs placed as a runner-up for the AFBF Excellence in Agriculture



EXCELLENCE ACHIEVED: A Farm Boss chain saw on behalf of Stihl was one of the prizes Jeff and Alyssa Vander Werff received as a runner-up for the AFBF Young Farmer Excellence in Agriculture Award. Here, the couple (at left) poses with the prize sponsor and a member of the AFBF Young Farmer Committee.



GOOD THINGS COME IN THREES

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HIGH ACHIEVERS: Chris and Jamie Demerly (at left) pose with a prize sponsor and their new Case IH DX compact tractor.

Award, which recognizes young farmers and ranchers who do not derive the majority of their income from their agricultural operation, but who actively contribute and grow through their involvement in Farm Bureau and the agriculture community.

Jeff, 28, is a specialty and field crops consultant with the grower-owned cooperative Hamilton Farm Bureau. Alyssa, 24, is a veterinary clinical research associate with Pfizer Animal Health. Aside from their full-time jobs, the pair co-own VWO LLC, a 115-acre fruit farm, and they are in the process of entering a four-way, multi-generational partnership with Jeff's father and uncle to continue the Vander Werff family's farm operations.

Jeff won the state Young Farmer Excellence in Agriculture Award at Michigan Farm Bureau's annual meeting in December. The national contest includes spouses, so Jeff and Alyssa competed for the award in Texas as a couple. As a runner-up in the contest, they received a \$6,000 U.S. Savings Bond, a Farm Boss chain saw and a plaque.

Demerlys acknowledged

Chris, 34, and Jamie, 31, are runners-up for the AFBF Young Farmer Achievement Award, which recognizes a successful young member for outstanding achievement in the business of farming and leadership. Chris farms full-time in partnership with his parents, producing field and specialty crops. In addition, he operates his own straw and hay baling business.

He and his family also own and operate Corunna Mills Inc. Chris won the state competition, and they competed as a couple at the national level.

As a runner-up in the national contest, the pair received a Case IH DX compact tractor and an inscribed plaque.