

# TENNESSEE YOUNG FARMERS ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD PROGRAM

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## **Intent**

The primary purpose is to **recognize outstanding environmental stewardship efforts** of Tennessee young farmers.

A second purpose is to **increase public awareness of the agricultural community's commitment to environmental stewardship** by publicizing winners' accomplishments.

## **Eligibility**

Nominations will be made from Tennessee young farmers who:

1. Have evaluated the potential environmental effects of practices, structure, and conditions on their farm.
2. Have a plan to deal with significant environmental/conservation problems and opportunities.
3. Have shown significant progress in implementing their plan over a minimum of two to four years.
4. Are YF&R members and a Farm Bureau member.

## **Procedure**

Nominations will be submitted through the online application process linked on the TN YF&R website or accessed through the QR code at the top of this page.

Nominations should be finalized and submitted by **June 1**. Applications will not be considered complete without letters of support from both the local UT/TSU Extension Agent and county Farm Bureau President.

Nominations will be reviewed by a committee chaired by Dr. Lori Duncan and consisting of three UT/TSU Extension employees and at least one member of the Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation for selection of five district winners and a statewide winner. Awards will not be made if the committee finds no suitable nominees were submitted.

## **Awards**

Five awards will be presented, one in each Farm Bureau district and the statewide winner. The awards will be presented on Friday, July 17, 2026, at the Young Farmers Conference in Lebanon, TN at the Farm Bureau Expo Center.

**District winners** will receive a personalized framed certificate, environmental stewardship sign suitable for outdoor display at the farm entrance or similar location, and a \$400 cash award from TFBF. The **UT/TSU Extension Agent** submitting the nomination for the district winners will also receive a \$400 cash award from TFBF.

The **State Winner and spouse** will receive a trip to Charlotte, North Carolina for the AFBF Annual Convention on January 9-14, 2027, or cash equivalent courtesy of Agricenter International, a personalized framed certificate, an environmental stewardship outdoor sign, \$1,000 cash award from TFBF, a trip to the AFBF FUSION Conference in New Orleans on March 12-16, 2027, and trips to all Tennessee YF&R Conferences. The **UT/TSU Extension Agent** submitting the nomination for the state award winner will also receive a \$1,000 cash award from TFBF.

**To receive any district and state awards, attendance by the nominee is required at the Young Farmer Conference on Friday, July 17, 2026, in Lebanon, TN.**

In addition, county nominees may be recognized at suitable local events and through the media.

### **Nomination Content and Evaluation**

The below questions are taken from the online application and included here for information only. Evaluation criteria and maximum points are included for each question.

1. **Identifying information** – email, name, FB member #, address, county
2. **Farm assessment (50 points)**
  - a. Farm description (10 points) – what commodity(ies) are you producing? How many head and/or acres? Are you a beginning farmer or how many generations has your family farmed? Who is involved in your farm enterprise?
  - b. Problems identified (10 points) – what environmental issues have you identified on your farm? Is there a comprehensive assessment of your farming system?
  - c. Actions taken (15 points) – how are identified problems being addressed and what are future plans? *Conservation practices could include but are not limited to: composting, crop rotation, cover crops, constructed wetlands, buffer strips, controlled traffic, conservation or no-tillage, anaerobic digester, alternative energy sources, rotational grazing, nutrient management, precision agriculture, stormwater runoff control, stream exclusion fencing, alternative watering system, etc.*
  - d. Economic analysis (10 points) – what are the economics of adopted practices or actions taken to address the identified problems?
  - e. Supporting materials (5 points) – information selected to illustrate, support, and document the narrative such as photos, maps, newspaper articles, field day programs, farm plans, nutrient management plans, Farm-a-Syst results, monitoring data, etc.
3. **Environmental stewardship (50 points)**
  - a. Results (15 points) – what significant environmental, economic, social, and/or community enhancements resulted from specific practices on your farm? Include any qualitative and quantitative results.
  - b. Innovation (5 points) – did your farm utilize or contribute to any new methods or information that supports protecting or enhancing the environment (cover crop trials, equipment modifications/testing, variety trials, new practices, etc.)?
  - c. Transferability within farming communities (10 points) – describe how practices on this farm lends itself to replication by other farmers. Are any of these activities or results being shared with other farmers, and if so, with who and how? (farm press, field days, etc.)
  - d. Education and outreach to public (10 points) – what education and/or outreach activities were done by this farm? Does the project promote public awareness regarding agriculture and ways we are caring for the environment? (social media, youth groups, farm tours, etc.)
  - e. Partnerships (10 points) – list organizations that this farm cooperates or collaborates with (ex: NRCS, UT, TSU, TDA, supply chain, schools, associations) and describe those partnerships (conservation programs such as CRP, EQIP, ag non-point source fund, etc.)?
4. **External support letters**
  - a. Letter of nomination from UT/TSU County Extension Agent
  - b. Letter of nomination from local Farm Bureau President