



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
HEALTH / AGRICULTURE BUILDING
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October 21, 2015

TO: New Jersey Agricultural Leaders
FROM: Joe Atchison, NJ Outstanding Young Farmer Program Manager
SUBJECT: Call for Nominations – 2017 Outstanding Young Farmer

The New Jersey Department of Agriculture is accepting nominations for the **2017 Outstanding Young Farmer (OYF) Award**.

Attached is a program overview and *Official State Nomination Form*. The submission deadline for nominations is **January 15, 2016**. Any individual or organization can nominate a deserving young farmer's name. You may re-nominate persons who have been nominated in the past but who did not compete in the National OYF program; however, these candidates must still meet the eligibility criteria.

The purpose of the OYF program has not changed since the award was first presented in 1955. The goal is to bring about a greater interest in the farmer, to foster better urban-rural relations through the understanding of farmers' challenges, to develop an appreciation of their contributions and achievements, and to inform the agribusiness community of the growing urban awareness of farmers' importance and impact on America's economy. The National OYF program is sponsored by Deere & Company, administered by the Outstanding Farmers of America Fraternity, and supported by the National Association of County Agricultural Agents and the US Junior Chamber of Commerce.

When I receive your completed *Nomination Form (s)*, an OYF application will be sent to the candidate(s). Applicants are not required to complete a financial statement for state competition.

The 2016 winner is Jess Niederer, a vegetable farmer from Mercer County. Jess has been selected as a National Outstanding Young Farmer semi-finalist and will compete for one of the four National OYF awards. The first runner-up was John Vanini, Jr (herbs and vegetables) from Cumberland County. For the 2016 program we received nine nominations from throughout the state. There are many deserving young farmers in New Jersey and I hope that you will nominate several young farmers located throughout the state, not just your own geographic area or commodity group.

If you have any questions on the OYF program, contact me by phone at (609) 984-2223 or you can e-mail me at joe.atchison@ag.state.nj.us.

Enclosures