



# Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Young Farmers Awarded at Maryland Farm Bureau's 100<sup>th</sup> Convention**

December 9, 2015 (Davidsonville, MD) – The Maryland Farm Bureau (MFB) Young Farmers Committee is pleased to announce the following members who received Young Farmer awards at the 100<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention on Sunday:

- Jeremiah and Janelle Weddle received the Maryland Young Farmers Achievement Award.
- Jamie Tiralla received the Maryland Young Farmers Excellence in Agriculture Award.
- Michael Calkins won the Maryland Young Farmers Discussion Meet Competition.

“We are proud to have these young farmers representing our state at the American Farm Bureau annual conference in Orlando, FL next month,” said Chuck Fry, President of Maryland Farm Bureau. “This is a great leadership opportunity for the future of Farm Bureau.”

The Maryland Young Farmers Achievement Awards is designed to recognize farmers ages 18 to 35 who are setting the highest standards for leadership on the farm and within their community. This specialized annual contest results in the selection of the Maryland Achievement Award competitor(s) for the American Farm Bureau event in Orlando, FL next January. The ideal candidate(s) for the Achievement Award is an individual or couple involved in production agriculture with a majority of his or her income subject to normal production risks.

Jeremiah and Janelle Weddle of Hagerstown, MD were selected as the winners of the Maryland Young Farmers Achievement Award. The Weddles co-own and operate Creek Bound Farms, LLC. They have been married for 11 years and have twin 7 year old boys. The Weddle family farms 2500 acres, on which they produce corn, soybeans, wheat, alfalfa and small grain forages. They also raise 350 replacement heifers. Jeremiah manages the crops, equipment, and employees while Janelle is the office manager and helps with the heifer side of the business. Their goal is to pass on their love for farming to the next generation.

The Maryland Young Farmers Excellence in Agriculture Award is designed as an opportunity for young farmers ages 18 to 35 to earn recognition for their service, while actively contributing and growing through their involvement in Farm Bureau and agriculture. This contest also results in the selection of the Maryland Excellence in Agriculture Award competitor(s) for the American Farm Bureau event in Orlando, FL next January. The ideal candidate(s) for the Excellence for Agriculture Award is an individual or couple who is a non-production agriculturalist (less than

50% of income acquired off the farm) that promote the agricultural industry through his or her daily routine.

Jamie Tiralla from Prince Frederick, MD was selected as the winner of the Maryland Young Farmers Excellence in Agriculture Award. Jamie and her husband, Benson, live on a 115-acre farm with their two children Caroline (5) and Henry (3). They raise grass fed beef, lamb and goat, as well as pork and sell their meats at a farmers market. Jamie works off the farm and is the Creative Director for an advertising agency. She was recently elected the chair of the Maryland Farm Bureau Young Farmers Committee and a current fellow in the LEAD Maryland program. She devotes much of her time to both her county and state Farm Bureau, as well as other agricultural organizations.

The Maryland Young Farmers Discussion Meet Competition is designed to simulate a committee meeting where discussion and active participation are expected from each contestant. Participants build basic discussion skills, develop a keen understanding of important agricultural issues and explore how groups can pool knowledge to reach consensus and solve problems. The competitors in the 2015 Maryland Farm Bureau Discussion Meet Competition were Michael Calkins of Howard County, Charles Cox of Calvert County, Jenell Eck of Queen Anne's County, and Jessica Flores of Wicomico County.

Michael Calkins from Woodbine, MD was selected as the winner of the Maryland Young Farmers Discussion Meet Competition. Professionally, Michael is a Soil Conservation Planner and Stormwater Management Specialist for the Howard Soil Conservation District. Along with his wife, Ali, they manage a horse riding and training business. Michael is the Howard County Young Farmer President and is also actively involved with The Farmer Advisory Board to the Governor, in which he is the Vice Chair. Recently Michael was elected as the Chairman of the Maryland Farm Bureau's Political Action Committee (PAC).

“The Young Farmers appreciate the opportunity to send our members to the AFBF annual meeting to compete on a national level,” said Chuck Fry. “This wouldn't be possible without the sponsorship from Farm Bureau partners Case IH, Chevrolet and Stihl.”

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Maryland Farm Bureau is a private, non-profit membership organization. It is controlled by its members through the democratic process and is financed by voluntary membership dues. Its strength comes from the active participation of over 36,000 member families that belong to the state's 23 county Farm Bureaus. For the last 100 years, Maryland Farm Bureau has served to promote and protect Maryland agriculture and rural life.