

For more information, contact:

Sara Schafer
Editor, Top Producer
Telephone: (573) 581-6387
Email: sschafer@farmjournal.com

For Immediate Release

Finalists Announced for 2018 Top Producer of the Year Award

Lenexa, Kan. (Jan. 11, 2018)—Three accomplished and diverse farming operations are finalists for the prestigious Top Producer of the Year award at the 2018 Top Producer Seminar happening Jan. 23-26 in Chicago. The annual award, given by Top Producer magazine, recognizes producers whose excellence in business can teach industry peers about value-added ventures, succession plans, overcoming adversity and more.

Sponsored by Bayer and Case IH, the Top Producer of the Year contest is in its 19th year and represents the best in the business of farming. The winner will be announced Wednesday, Jan. 24 during the annual Top Producer of the Year banquet at the 2018 Top Producer Seminar in Chicago. The finalists are:

- Zach Bailey, along with his brothers Cole and Mason, and father, Darren, operate Bailey Family Farms in Iola, Ill. The third-generation operation employs 15 full-time and five part-time team members and produces soybeans, corn and wheat.
- Frank Howey oversees Frank Howey Family Farms, a diversified farm business including corn, wheat and soybean production, a cattle operation, timber production, as well as rental property and a seed business in Monroe, N.C. He and his wife, Alison, employ 20 full-time team members.
- Jeremie Pavelski serves as president of Heartland Farms, a fifth-generation operation in Hancock, Wis. The company produces chipping and fresh-market potatoes, sweet corn, canning peas, green beans and soybeans. The Heartland team includes 120 full-time and 150 part-time employees.

Judging criteria include entrepreneurial originality (50%); financial and business progress (30%); and industry or community leadership (20%).

Each of the finalists will receive a trip for two to attend the seminar and sessions with a CEO coach, courtesy of Bayer. Additionally, the winner will get to choose either a Steiger Rowtrac or a Magnum Rowtrac for 150 hours of use, courtesy of Case IH.

The 2018 Top Producer Seminar will bring together nearly 30 experts who will challenge farmer-attendees to arm their operation for future success.

“We’re featuring a top-notch group of experts who will provide key insights and tactical advice on risk management, human resources, succession planning, consumer trends and more,” said Sara Schafer, Top Producer Editor. “Attendees will leave with a to-do list of how they can take their operation to the next level in 2018 and beyond.”

The 2018 theme, “Make Your Move,” will encourage producers to take the next step in their businesses based on solid information. Agenda highlights include presentations such as:

- Trust In Food™ Opening Keynote by Townsend Bailey, McDonald’s Corporation, Director of U.S. Supply Chain Sustainability
- Washington Update: Can Republicans Govern? by Jim Wiesemeyer, Pro Farmer/Farm Journal, Washington Policy Analyst
- Strengths = Super Powers: Four Secret C-Suite Leadership Tactics that Farm Executives Should Use by Sarah Beth Aubrey, A.C.T. Consulting Principal and Top Producer Columnist
- Fine-Tune Your Negotiation Skills: Creating a Climate and Attitude of Win-Wins by Bryan Dodge, Dodge Development President, Executive Coach and Business Consultant
- Lunch with Keynote Speaker: “If I Can...” by Chris Koch, Athlete, Adventurer and Farmer (presented by BASF)
- Megatrends that Will Impact Your Farm Operation by Matt Roberts, The Kernmantle Group
- Predicting Chaos: Managing Your Weather Risk by Eric Snodgrass, University of Illinois and Agrible Co-Founder and Senior Atmospheric Scientist
- Looking Beyond Our Backdoor: Today’s Grain Markets by Jerry Gulke, The Gulke Group President

In 2017, the event attracted producers representing over 4 million acres and 26 states.

Premier Sponsors of the 2018 Top Producer Seminar include: Advance Trading; BASF; Bayer; Beck’s; Case IH; Channel; Dow AgroSciences; DuPont Pioneer; ESN; John Deere; K•Coe Isom; Topcon; Top Third Ag Marketing; and Valent.

Co-sponsors are: CliftonLarsonAllen; CropZilla; and Rabo AgriFinance.

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Learn more and register at www.TopProducerSeminar.com.

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