



## CONTACT

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## News Release

# 2023 Stars Over Iowa Winners Announced

AMES, IOWA—The 2023 Stars Over Iowa Winners were announced at the 95<sup>th</sup> Iowa FFA State Leadership Conference at Iowa State University on April 18, 2023. A Star Over Iowa was selected in each of the four different areas: Agricultural Placement, Agribusiness, Agriscience, and Agricultural Production.

The 2023 Star in Ag Placement Winner is Natalie Byrnes of the Little Switzerland FFA Chapter at Waukon. Natalie has productively invested over 2,100 recorded hours milking and monitoring health of a dairy herd at Prairie Star Farms. At the beginning of her employment, she was tasked with maintaining sanitation as well as milking approximately 125 organic cows. Her knowledge of the dairy industry grew immensely along with the success of the operation. Soon, a new parlor was being built and she became involved in design of structures as well as managing milkings. The operation has now increased to approximately 160 cows using conventional dairy practices. Natalie's responsibilities now include managing milking operations, sanitation, basic maintenance and analyzing herd health to provide quality products to dairy consumers. She has invested in agriculture-based stocks with money earned to increase her profitability while employed. Throughout the course of her SAE, she has grown in her communication and problem-solving skills that will greatly benefit her future personal and professional endeavors. Natalie is her chapter's Star in Agricultural Placement and has received state honors in the Agronomy CDE. Following graduation in 2024, Natalie plans to attend an undecided college to major in Neuroscience. She is the daughter of Dan and Traci Byrnes. Her chapter advisor is Ms. Jessica O'Connor. Her high school principal is Ms. Jennifer Garin and her Superintendent is Mr. Jay Mathis.

Brady Frascht of the Charles City FFA Chapter is the 2023 Star in Ag Production winner. Brady owns and manages a crop and livestock farm. His operation includes a 22 head cow/calf herd and he is involved in the family's 500 head cattle feeding operation. He also raises and shows market hogs. Brady has purchased a 25-acre farm and he rents an additional 80 acres for corn and soybean production. He helps in the family's crop operation. Brady plans to expand his SAE program in the near future by building another calving barn and purchasing and renting more farm ground. He has recently made a large investment in his drone pesticide application business. In FFA, Brady has served as the chapter secretary and president. He received first place in the proficiency award for beef production entrepreneurship in 2022. He has exhibited FFA livestock including the county fair and the Iowa State Fair. Brady is the son of Rod and Amy Frascht. His chapter advisors are Mr. Jim Lundberg and Mr. Bret Spurgin. His high school principal is Mr. Bryan Jurrens.

Justin Nierling of the Decorah FFA Chapter is the 2023 Star in Agribusiness winner. He is the owner and operator of Nierling Custom Farming, where he provides producers with services such as round baling and wrapping. In the summer of 2020, Justin was looking for something he could do to set himself up for a lifelong career. He looked at several options and ultimately decided to buy a round baler to start his own custom round baling business. Throughout the years, his business has grown significantly, and he has gained great responsibility and learned many life lessons in running a business. Justin has baled 9600 bales in the lifetime of his business. He expanded services last year and bought a bale wrapper. He wrapped a total of 3700 bales within the last 2 years. Justin recently traded his baler off for a brand-new baler and bought a bale trailer to rent out to clients to speed up hauling round bales. Justin had many people help him get started in custom farming over the years. One of the biggest ways he received clients was through advertising his services on social media and by offering merchandise to the public. In FFA, Justin received a gold rating at state with his proficiency. He also served as a committee chairperson in his chapter. After graduation, Justin plans to slowly start taking over the family farm. He also plans on picking up more crop ground to farm and to grow his business in providing producers with more custom services. Justin is the son of Matt and Jolene Nierling. His chapter advisor is Ms. Joni Bruvold. His high school principal is Mr. Brad Hurst, and his superintendent is Dr. Tim Cronin.



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The Star in Agriscience Winner is Lauren Cherne of the Beckman Catholic FFA Chapter at Dyersville. Lauren researched various issues in agriculture and present her findings to the State and National agriscience fairs. She became interested in agriscience through her interest in agriculture and investigation. Through her research, she learned to use statistical analyses, communicate with others about her findings, and learned about scientific procedures. So far in her projects, Lauren has worked with meat, plants, and weed control methods, and her most recent project involves a survey about protein products. Lauren’s research and the skills she has gained can be used to help producers and consumers develop new ideas to advance agriculture as a whole. Her skills gained in research have fostered her passion for her future career pathway in Food Science. Lauren is a three-time national finalist in Agriscience and was the 2023 Iowa FFA Ag Processing Proficiency winner. She served as the chairperson of her chapter’s citizenship committee. After graduation in 2023, Lauren plans on attending Iowa State University to major in Food Science. Lauren is the daughter of Eric and Jennifer Cherne. Her chapter advisor is Mrs. Dawn Mausser and her high school principal is Mr. Marcel Kielkucki. Lauren’s superintendent is Mrs. Cathy Walz and her school priest is Father Tyler Raymond.

The Stars Over Iowa program is made possible with support from Beck’s Hybrids through the Iowa FFA Foundation. The National FFA Foundation sponsors cash awards for the overall star winners.

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## **About Iowa FFA Association**

The Iowa FFA Association is a youth organization of more than 19,000 student members as part of 260 local FFA chapters across Iowa. The FFA mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. The Iowa FFA Association was organized by delegates from 23 schools at Iowa State College on May 17, 1929 and is an integral part of public instruction in agriculture. The Iowa Department of Education provides leadership and helps set direction for FFA as a service to local agricultural education programs. For more, visit the Iowa FFA Association online at IowaFFA.com, on Facebook, and Twitter.