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**Stitzlein Receives Ohio Pork Industry Excellence Award**

***Teppe, Isler, Happy, and Ohio Ag Net Also Honored***

LIMA, OHIO – Awards were presented to Ohio pork producers and industry friends during a luncheon held during Ohio Pork Congress today. The Ohio Pork Industry Excellence Award was given to Gary Stitzlein of Waldo. Dave Tebbe of Minster received the Ohio Pork Industry Service Award. Swine Manager of the Year honors went to Kevin Isler of Maryville. Jerry Happy, St. Mary’s, was named Pork Promoter of the Year. And Ohio Ag Net/Ohio Country Journal was named Friend of the Ohio Pork Industry.

The Ohio Pork Industry Excellence Award is presented to a pork farmer, or farm family, for willingness to go above-and-beyond to donate time, money, and talents on behalf of the industry. The Ohio Pork Council recognized Stitzlein for all his contributions to the pork industry – both at a state and local level.

Stitzlein has been with Kalmbach Feeds since 2000. Over his years there, his leadership abilities and passion for the agricultural industry set the standards high for all those who he encountered. Known by many for his passion for bettering the pig industry, his love for pigs did not stop with just the work he was involved in at Kalmbach. He was on the board of directors for the swine testing station and served on the Delaware County Fair swine committee as well.

The Ohio Pork Industry Service Award goes to an individual who exemplifies outstanding service to the swine industry. This individual exceeds volunteer expectations and is willing to support the pork industry in various ways. This year, the Ohio Pork Council selected Dave Tebbe to receive the 2021 Ohio Pork Industry Service Award.

Today, with more than 40 years of professional experience serving the pork industry through Sunrise Cooperative and the Interdependent Pork Production System he helped create, Tebbe remains active in promoting pork and the pig industry. Through Tebbe Farms as well as his professional employment and volunteer time, Tebbe has been active with local pork producers by volunteering at state and county fairs. He is also known to be a leader in his community, as he continues to volunteer his time to community events and serving as a coach to numerous youths over the years.

Tebbe has devoted countless hours serving independent producers to ensure they have an opportunity to compete in an ever-changing industry. By working interdependently, producers in the system Tebbe developed have succeeded and remained sustainable for the next generation. He has also worked with many different integrators across Ohio and nationally to help place pigs with quality growers, in central and western Ohio and northeast Indiana.

The Ohio Pork Council Swine Manager of the Year Award recognizes a leader of a swine operation that is highly knowledgeable of the pork industry and has demonstrated the ability to make key decisions on behalf of their operation. This year, the Ohio Pork Council gave this award to Kevin Isler.

Throughout 23.5 years with Kalmbach Feeds, Isler has shown outstanding leadership and has done so while helping to develop the next leaders of the Kalmbach Swine Production Team. At Kalmbach, Isler has worked in numerous positions, such as breeding manager, farrowing manager, farm manager, and sow unit supervisor. Those that work with and for Isler often credit his excellent managing, training, and mentoring skills to the success of the operations he is involved with.

Isler is always willing to lend a helping hand and serve as a leader for Kalmbach’s swine production team and two Topigs multiplication farms. His ability and desire to ensure proper production biosecurity and health of the pigs has led to his management of the Park Avenue training program for the entire system. Isler has also served as a 4-H advisor in Union County for numerous years and is an active supporter of the Richwood Independent Fair.

The work of the Ohio Pork Council is made possible by the many generous supporters who devote time to enhance the organization’s efforts on behalf of all farmers. To acknowledge their efforts and express gratitude, OPC established the Friends of Ohio Pork Industry award. This award recognizes an individual, organization or company that has made a substantial impact on the organization through monetary support or volunteer activities throughout the year. The Ohio Pork Council chose to honor the Ohio Ag Net and Ohio’s Country Journal with this award in 2021.

The Ohio Ag Net and Ohio’s Country Journal provide a valuable service by providing the latest news for farm businesses. Their team provides more than just the news and the markets; they are passionate caretakers and storytellers of Ohio’s farmers’ story. Whether it is through print, radio, online or social media platform; Ag Net’s team spread the state’s agriculture news beyond Ohio’s state lines.

In a time when ag media is fading out, Ag Net is still investing in Ohio Agriculture and farm families across the state. For the Ohio Pork Council, the state’s leading ag news is more than just adding an entertaining value as an Ohio Pork Congress luncheon host or videographer. They lend countless hours to promote what farmers do on the farm every day beyond words on a page or after the radio spot

ends. The team spends hours in conversations with farmers and the youth, assisting them to become stronger spokesperson for the Ohio agriculture.

The Pork Promoter of the Year Award is given to an individual or company who excels in promoting the pork industry. This year, the Ohio Pork Council named Jerry Happy the Pork Promoter of the Year.

Happy has been an active member of the Ohio Pork Council’s Board of Directors and has served as an associate director for the organization. He has played a large role in helping to execute events such as the Pork Chop Open and the 2021 Ohio State Fair, among countless others. Along with his efforts with the Ohio Pork Council, Jerry also worked as a Regional Manager, Protein for AP.

The success of the pork stand at the 2021 Ohio State Fair can be credited to Happy’s knowledge and skill in grilling, smoking, and preparing the delicious pork products being sold. He also went above and beyond to help promote pork via the Ohio Pork Council’s social media pages. Happy’s pork promoting efforts reached thousands of people across Ohio and the United States. His ability to educate and promote all things pork sets him apart from those around him. His passion and knowledge of the industry radiates through conversation, which is part of what makes him such a well-known asset to Ohio’s pork industry.

**About The Ohio Pork Council**

The Ohio Pork Council was established in 1968, beginning with nearly 800 pig farmers dedicated to the task of promoting their own product. Currently, OPC has approximately 2,500 members. Their mission is to serve and benefit all Ohio pork producers. To learn more about the Ohio Pork Council, visit www.OhioPork.org or call 614-882-5887.

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NOTE: Photographs of award winners receiving their honors at the luncheon will be posted on the Ohio Pork Council website homepage immediately following the event for your use. [www.ohiopork.org](http://www.ohiopork.org)