

Ohio Pork Council Presents Top Awards at 2025 Pork Congress

Recognizes key achievements of past, present, and future leaders.

LIMA, OHIO – A true highlight of the 2025 Ohio Pork Congress was the annual awards presentation by the Ohio Pork Council (OPC) to recognize outstanding contributors to the state’s pork industry. These included the Ohio Pork Industry Excellence, Pork Promoter of the Year, Manager of the Year, and the Friend of Pork Industry. In addition, the inaugural class of Ohio Pork’s Leadership Class was recognized for their dedication to complete the multifaceted yearlong educational process.

“It’s always very gratifying and sometimes a bit emotional to stop and recognize all of the hard work and dedication that so many have made to help make Ohio’s pork industry better,” said Nathan Schroeder, OPC president from Leipsic. “I’m honored to be part of an industry that continues to set the bar higher every day and these recipients prove that that kind of effort pays off and makes our future brighter.”

Jim Albaugh, a longtime producer from West Milton, received the **Ohio Pork Industry Excellence Award** – an annual award which recognizes a pork farmer, or farm family, for their willingness to go above-and-beyond to donate time, money, and talents on behalf of the industry at the state and national level.

“Jim has always been there with a courteous smile, a sense of humor and story about life’s lessons,” said Bryan Black a former OPC president from Canal Winchester. “His dedication to youth mentoring is legendary in our state and it’s been great to see him recognized for this service and much more.”

For over 50 years, Albaugh has been committed to raising pigs, been involved with Ohio Pork Council and the Ohio Chester White Breeders Association. He played a vital part in the establishment of the OH-PIGS Program, a youth-centered show pig program, and had numerous roles in other local organizations. Regardless, Albaugh is always doing what is best for the future of agriculture and the pork industry.

The Ohio Pork Council **Pork Promoter of the Year** is Anthony Stateler, a producer from McComb. He has hosted community members and state officials on his multi-generational farm, appeared on OPC’s social media efforts, and hosted many virtual field trips. He has embodied the positive promotion of the industry.

Using his love of agriculture and the pork industry, Stateler is a great leader and voice for the industry. While doing something as simple as sharing animal care processes, teaching about environmental stewardship, or simply answering questions about agriculture, he has raised the bar on promoting the industry in a way that captivates people from all backgrounds.

Richard Ryan, from Irwin, Ohio, received the Ohio Pork Council **Swine Manager of the Year**. This award recognizes a leader of a swine operation who is highly knowledgeable of the pork industry and has demonstrated the ability to make key decisions.

Ryan's passion for farming began while growing up on the family farm, and alongside his brother, wife, and late father, led him to 45 years in agriculture. As the third generation, Ryan and his family have continued to expand, adapt, and persevere in the industry and continue to raise pigs in their farrow-to-finish operation, along with growing grain crops.

The OPC established the **Friend of Ohio Pork Industry Award** to recognize an individual, organization, or company making a substantial impact on the organization through monetary support, voluntary activities, or general support to the pork industry. This year, OPC honored Andrew Montoney, State Director of USDA, APHIS, and Wildlife Services with the award.

In 2024, Montoney led the operational charge in the coordination of the control and elimination of feral swine in Ohio, which complemented OPC's legislative efforts that resulted in the passage of Ohio H.B. 503 last December. Under Montoney's leadership, his team has helped to reduce the number of feral swine from thousands to hundreds, helping to safeguard Ohio's pork industry from the threat of diseases, like African swine fever.

The **Ohio Pork Leadership Class** is designed to give the participants a comprehensive view of the pork industry with skills training in multiple areas that will make them successful in future leadership in the state and beyond. OPC honored these individuals who completed the class: Alexa Hamilton, Brooklyn Ashcraft, Caleb Hershberger, Edwin Van den Hengel, Justin Moeller, Kaylyn Kadam, Lucas Buehler, Michelle Flick, Molly Rhodes, Pablo Salinas, Richard Knapke, Selina Bevilacqua, and Tyler Logan.

Schroeder added, "Once again, we congratulate all our 2024 Ohio Pork Council award recipients. They have made, and will continue to make, our industry stronger, better, and more resilient."

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.

PHOTO ACCESS: To access award recipient photos, please use this link <https://spaces.hightail.com/space/8NJj06jowC> and see following captions.

(Caption for Ohio Pork Industry Excellence Award Photo – Jim Albaugh)

Ohio Pork Council President Nathan Schroeder (far left) presents the Ohio Pork Industry Excellence Award to Jim Albaugh who is joined by his family members (left to right), Dixie Albaugh, Dakota Albaugh, Sheri Albaugh, and Dennis Albaugh.

(Caption for Pork Promoter of the Year – Anthony Stateler)

OPC President Nathan Schroeder (left) presents the Pork Promoter of the Year Award to Anthony Stateler of McComb, Ohio, as he is joined by his parents, NPPC President-Elect Duane Stateler, and mother, Marjorie.

(Caption for Swine Manager of the Year – Richard Ryan)

OPC President Nathan Schroeder (left) presents the Swine Manager of the Year Award to Richard Ryan of Irwin, Ohio.

(Caption for Friend of Ohio Pork Industry Award – Andrew Montoney)

OPC President Nathan Schroeder (left) presents the Ohio Pork Council Friend of Pork Award to Andrew Montoney (center), with OPC Executive Vice President Cheryl Day.)

(Caption for Ohio Pork Leadership Class)

The inaugural Ohio Pork Leadership Class receiving awards at the 2025 Ohio Pork Congress were (left to right) Lucas Buehler, Tyler Logan, Richard Knapke, Kaylyn Kadam, Michelle Flick, Edwin Van den Hengel, Caleb Harshberger, Alexa Hamilton, and Brooklyn Ashcraft. Not pictured was Justin Moeller.