

Top Young Farmers Honored

Five Chosen Best Young Farmers and Ranchers

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The first group of honorees in DTN/The Progressive Farmer's America's Best Young Farmers and Ranchers program: (left to right) Doug Palen, Matt Danner, Clayton Hurdle, Jessie Hobbs III, John Horter. (DTN/Progressive Farmer photo by Jim Patricio)

CHICAGO (DTN) -- Five top family farmers have been selected as the inaugural class in the DTN/The Progressive Farmer America's Best Young Farmers and Ranchers program. The announcements were made Thursday during the DTN/The Progressive Farmer 2010 Ag Summit in Chicago.

The America's Best Young Farmers and Ranchers program recognizes the innovation and imagination of America's top young farmers and ranchers who are setting the stage for the future of food production in the United States to feed a growing population both here and around the world.

In all, young farmers account for only 5 percent of this nation's farm operators -- 120,000 young managers, men and women.

Here are brief introductions to this year's honorees.

Matt Danner, Templeton, Iowa -- Matt farms with his father, Rich Danner and his brother, Chris. Their Templeton Family Farms was established in 1886. Today, father and sons work 4,000 acres of corn and soybeans and operate a large hog operation in Iowa's west central Carroll County.

Jessie H. Hobbs III, Elkmont, Ala. -- Hobbs Farms, managed by Jessie and his father, J. Howard, includes 3,350 acres of cotton, corn, soybeans, pumpkins, wheat, hay and sunflowers. The business includes a custom fertilizer business.

John Horter, Andover, S.D. -- John is a fourth-generation farmer who works 2,700 acres in northeast South Dakota. The farm produces wheat, corn and soybeans. Horter Farms also custom farms 2,500 acres and runs a 500-head, Angus and Charolais cow-calf operation.

Clayton Hurdle, Rosedale, La. -- A fourth-generation farmer, Clayton operates on 2,800 acres. His rich Louisiana river bottom produces a variety of crops including sugarcane, soybeans, wheat, milo and hay.

Doug Palen, Glen Elder, Kan. -- Doug was looking for a challenge. And, he found one. He works a farm in north-central Kansas that has doubled in size under his tenure. The farm produces wheat, corn, beans, grain sorghum, sunflowers and cattle.

Honoring their selection, each young farmer and their spouse has received an all-expense paid trip to Chicago for the DTN/The Progressive Farmer 2010 Ag Summit. They will also be featured in a special issue of The Progressive Farmer magazine in February.

Nominees for America's Best Young Farmers and Ranchers must be 40 years old or younger, manage at least 1,000 acres

(on their own, or in cooperation with other family members or business associates) and/or have an interest in a 50-head cow herd or larger.

Nominees must also be involved in work for the betterment of production agriculture and/or their local communities. That involvement can include, but is not limited to, involvement in local churches, schools, community events, local, state and national organizations, agricultural organizations, political appointments and elected offices.

Look for full feature articles on these individuals and their operations in the February issue of The Progressive Farmer magazine.

DTN/The Progressive Farmer is accepting nominations for the 2012 America's Best Young Farmers and Ranchers program. For rules see the pages of The Progressive Farmer magazine or check online at www.DTNProgressiveFarmer.com

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