



Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation

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EIGHT RECEIVE 2010 AGRISCIENCE AWARDS

Two Scientists: a Professor at Oregon State University and a USDA ARS Research Hydrologist in Maryland; three High School Educators from Wisconsin and Indiana; and three High School Agriscience Students from Illinois, California, and Florida, Receive \$145,000 in Monetary Awards

July 12, 2010, Washington, D.C. – On July 12, the Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation and the American Farm Bureau Federation® will hold the inaugural *Agriscience Awards* presenting \$145,000 in monetary awards at a luncheon ceremony in Washington, D.C.

Awards

\$25,000 Distinguished Agriscience Scientist Award - **Patricia Kennedy, Ph.D.**, Professor in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife at Oregon State University, Eastern Oregon Agricultural Research Center, Union, OR. Dr. Kennedy has a unique faculty position; she is one of the few wildlife biology faculty at a land grant institution who is stationed at an Agricultural Experiment Station. She represents the future of these stations where research into agricultural sustainability requires both a commodity and ecological perspective. Dr. Kennedy is renowned for her practical and proactive approach to endangered species management, with research aimed at reducing the need to list wildlife as threatened or endangered. Currently, Dr. Kennedy directs a variety of collaborative investigations on management alternatives that promote sustainable livestock and crop production in the inter-mountain west. She will also receive up to \$25,000 in research funds.

\$25,000 Distinguished Agriscience Scientist Award - **Thomas J. Jackson, Ph.D.**, Research Hydrologist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, Hydrology and Remote Sensing Lab, Beltsville, MD. Dr. Jackson's research involves the application and development of remote sensing technology in hydrology and agriculture, primarily microwave measurement of soil moisture, resulting in over 300 scientific publications. The focus of his current research is the development of the Soil Moisture Active Passive (SMAP) satellite, scheduled for 2014. He is the SMAP science team lead for calibration and validation. He will also receive up to \$25,000 in research funds.

\$10,000 Agriscience Educator Award - **Crystal Retzlaff**, Agriculture Educator and FFA Advisor, Oconto Falls High School, Oconto Falls, WI. Crystal has been teaching at Oconto Falls High School for seven years. She teaches Genetics, Biotechnology, Pet/Companion Animals, Exploring Agriculture, Veterinary Science, Food Science, Introduction to Career Foods, Food Processing, Wildlife/Forestry, Animal Science, Landscape/Floriculture, and Anatomy/Physiology. She also advises the local FFA consisting of over 125 members.

\$10,000 Agriscience Educator Award - **Lisa Konkell**, Agriscience Educator and FFA Advisor, Big Foot Union High School, Walworth, WI. Lisa is a veteran teacher with 17 years of teaching experience. When she started at Big Foot, it was a half-time program which quickly became a full-time program after her first year and is now a two-person Agriscience Department. Curriculum transformation has occurred in the past 15 years from a primarily production agriculture focus to the balance of production and agribusiness concepts with a strong emphasis on science incorporation.

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\$10,000 Agriscience Educator Award - Byron L. Ernest, Department Head for Agriculture, Lebanon Community School Corporation, Lebanon, IN. Mr. Ernest was recruited to start Lebanon's Agriculture Department which now, in its 7th year, has four teachers and an enrollment of 584 students in grades 8-12, the largest in Indiana. Byron teaches Advanced Life Science courses in animals, plant and soil, and food science. These are dual credit courses with Purdue University College of Agriculture. In cooperation with AgReliant Genetics, he has developed project/inquiry-based agriscience lessons where students are doing actual research, and publish their findings through the use of pod-casts and wiki sites. This transparency allows actual scientists from around the world to critique the students' work. Byron was named the 2010 Indiana Teacher of the Year, the first time an Agriculture Instructor has ever been selected for this honor.

\$5,000 Agriscience Student Award - Rosemary Chapple, Senior, Waterloo High School, Waterloo, IL. Raised on a small Angus cattle farm in Southern Illinois, Rosemary has been a 7-year, 4-H member, showing cattle and chickens. Her three chick experiments led her to 24 different competitions including two international science fairs and three national FFA agriscience fairs. Rosemary recently won the Illinois State SAE award in Emerging Technologies featuring her experiments. A member of the Waterloo FFA, she served on the State officer team as president of 14 FFA chapters. In the Fall, Rosemary will attend the University of Illinois majoring in Aerospace Engineering.

\$5,000 Agriscience Student Award - Stephanie Hoskins, Senior, Lincoln Park Academy High School, Fort Pierce, FL. From a young age, Stephanie was intrigued by the enigmas of natural science. In 7th grade, she began researching the use of bacteria isolates as biological control agents against plant pathogenic fungi and has developed her research over the past six years. At the conclusion of her research, she has confirmed *Paenibacillus lentimorbus* and *Burkholderia pyrrocinia* as biological control agents against 13 plant pathogenic fungi and is the first person to identify the genes responsible for the observed antimicrobial activity. Stephanie will attend Vanderbilt University in the Fall and plans to become a microbiologist.

\$5,000 Agriscience Student Award - Jake Carlson, Junior, Elk Grove High School, Elk Grove, CA. Jake Carlson has been showing livestock since he was eight, and he currently owns 35 head of Toggenburg and Saanen dairy goats. Jake has successfully exhibited his goats in California and across the western United States. Jake also completed his Eagle Scout requirements this year by building and installing 10 wood duck nesting boxes in Deer Creek Wildlife Preserve. He will begin serving as President of the Elk Grove FFA Chapter, as well as Sacramento Section Vice President, and plans to run for a California State FFA office. After high school, Jake plans to attend Fresno State University and major in biological sciences, with a future goal of becoming a large animal veterinarian.

The Foundation and American Farm Bureau Federation have formed a public-private partnership to sponsor eight ***Agriscience Awards***. The competition was open to researchers/scientists, educators and high school students around the country who are judged to exemplify excellence in the field of Agriscience, and to highlight the importance of agriculture in the 21st century. In addition to the \$25,000 presented to the scientists for their current work, each will receive up to \$25,000 in research funds.

Sponsors

The Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation is an independent Federal government agency established by Congress in 1992 to “encourage and support research, study and labor designed to produce new discoveries in all fields of endeavor for the benefit of mankind.” The Foundation has created ***Frontiers of Discovery—Work in Progress and Discover the Future*** programs that honor “cutting edge” innovations and promote innovative ideas of America’s youth and educators. For more information, please visit: www.columbusfdn.org or contact Judi Shellenberger at (315) 258-0090.

The America Farm Bureau Federation is the unified national voice of agriculture, working through our grassroots state and county Farm Bureaus to enhance and strengthen the lives of rural Americans and to build strong, prosperous agricultural communities. Farm Bureau is an independent, non-governmental, voluntary organization governed by and representing farm and ranch families united for the purpose of analyzing their problems and formulating action to achieve educational improvement, economic opportunity and social advancement and, thereby, to promote the national well-being.