

Making a Competitive Application

Linda McClanahan,
Mercer County ANR Agent



National Perspective

NACAA AM/PIC

Luncheon Attendance

Search for Excellence

- Determining categories

Disqualification

- Outline

- Directions – word limits, etc



Examples

AWARDS & APPLICATIONS

Awards & Applications / About / Leadership & Contacts / Professional Development / Publications & News / Login

All Awards | All States | 2026

- Awards FAQ
- Award Applications & Nominations
- Award Winners**
- General Awards +
- Communication Award +
- Program Recognition Council Awards +
- Scholarships +





AWARDS & APPLICATIONS

[Awards FAQ](#)

[Award Applications & Nominations](#)

[Award Winners](#)

[General Awards](#) +

[Communication Award](#) +

[Program Recognition Council Awards](#) +

[Scholarships](#) +

SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE PROGRAMS

ELIGIBILITY

All NACAA members in good standing with their state associations are eligible. Team entries are permitted. All team members need not be current members of NACAA. However, only NACAA members will receive award recognition. Please indicate the members of the team that are non NACAA Members. State Search for Excellence Chairs are eligible but must follow established guidelines. Application must be signed by a current NACAA member.

Entries will not be considered unless all required signatures are complete on the application form.

ENTRY

Submitting entry electronically is mandatory for all Search For Excellence Award Programs (see NACAA web site). Complete on-line application form and submit with entry that should not exceed 1200 words. Entry should reflect program activities and accomplishments within the past three years. Members are encouraged to apply for multiple Search For Excellence Awards, however members can only enter the same program in ONE Search for Excellence Category.





Communication Award +
Recognition
Awards
Search for Excellence
Programs Information

> Farm and Ranch Business Management

[Awards & Applications](#) / [About](#) / [Leadership & Contacts](#) / [Professional Development](#) / [Publications & News](#) / [Dashboard](#)



Search for Excellence Score Sheet

Scholarships +

Area	Points
Educational Objectives	20
Program Activities	10
Teaching Methods	10
Results	20
Impact Statement	20
Evaluation	20



INTERPRETATION AND CLARIFICATION OF SFE JUDGING CRITERIA

Educational Objectives

Emergency Response to Accidents Involving Livestock (ERAIL) is a comprehensive training and response program that focuses on responding to accident events. In the United States, total red meat production is around 53.1 billion pounds, with large numbers of animals transported over the nation's highways daily. According to the 2020 Ag Census, there are 3.26M head of livestock in Michigan and over 300 processors. With a robust livestock industry including production, recreation and exhibition, animals are transported regularly across the roadways across the state. The goal of the ERAIL program is to increase preparedness for accidents involving livestock by focusing on training for first responders and providing access to specialized equipment needed for these events. These efforts protect the safety of first responders at accident scenes and the public traveling on roadways, the welfare of animals involved, and the image of the livestock industry.

Program Activities

The ERAIL program is made up of four components: 1) in-person training for response and transportation professionals, 2) virtual training modules that expand the reach of the ERAIL training program, 3) individual consultations for organizations, locations, and units that are looking to be prepared for these types of situations, and 4) a fleet of emergency response trailers. These four areas combine for a comprehensive program that focuses on education, instruction, outreach, and that provides equipment and tools needed by responders to address emergency situations. By offering in-person and virtual training, the ERAIL team enhances the skillsets of first responders when responding to these types of events. Trainings offered by the ERAIL team focus on animal behavior, containment needs, and animal handling practices. Team members also familiarize participants with different types of livestock transport vehicles, so participants are better prepared to respond to an accident.

Additionally, the ERAIL team collaborates with interested organizations and locations on how to prepare to respond to accidents involving livestock. The team has comprehensive expertise in emergency response that can be utilized when giving guidance. They provide organizations with options, recommendations, and connections to develop a local response team and plan. The team has worked with a large audience of transportation companies, animal control departments, local county emergency managers, first responder units, farmers, and agriculture organizations. These connections throughout the state allow the ERAIL team to formulate preparedness and response plans tailored to specific locations and identify partners, facilities, and responders that can act when an accident occurs.

Finally, the ERAIL team provides access to tools and equipment needed to properly respond to accidents involving livestock by placing ERAIL response trailers across the state. The ERAIL response trailers are fully equipped with various materials and supplies that may be needed when responding to an accident involving livestock or other animals. These efforts make up a robust, effective and proven program supported by evaluation data, funding support, stakeholder comments and effective response events.

Teaching Methods

The ERAIL program uses a combination of teaching and outreach methods aimed at awareness, instruction, and capacity building. Program participants have two options to receive instruction in

response to accidents involving livestock. First, they can attend an in-person training that focuses on hands-on demonstrations on animal handling, well-being and accident response. These trainings include classroom instruction, examples of accident situations and an overview of the tools and equipment needed during a response. Program attendees are then placed into small groups where they receive training, which builds the confidence of animal handlers by giving them hands-on experience in a controlled environment. Successful completion of the ERAIL training results in a certificate of completion.

Knowing that not everyone can attend a scheduled, in-person training, the ERAIL team developed virtual training modules to expand the program's reach. This virtual program has been built using the MSU Desire2Learn (D2L) online course platform. It consists of 13 self-paced modules that include key objectives, scenarios, video and computer-generated graphics, and assessment points throughout the program. The virtual training expands the reach of the ERAIL program and allows access to the important information taught in the in-person program for those who cannot attend due to timing or logistical challenges. Once a participant has completed the course and successfully passed the knowledge comprehension exam, they are issued a certificate of completion.

Results

The efforts of the ERAIL team have created a flagship program for MSU Extension. The ERAIL program is supported by generous funding from partnerships with associated organizations. To date, over 700 people have been trained through the ERAIL program, with future trainings planned. Funding has made it possible to develop a fleet of ERAIL response trailers; three response trailers are currently placed in Jackson, Branch and Otsego counties in Michigan. Throughout 2024, additional trailers will be placed in Berrien, Gratiot, Monroe and Muskegon Counties. Plans and dedicated funding will allow for the placement of additional response trailers in the state over the next three years.

The MSU Extension ERAIL team has also built support for the ERAIL program through partnerships and collaborations with other associated organizations. This support includes financial and promotional partnerships with various organizations including Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Michigan Pork Producers Association, Michigan Turkey, United Dairy Industry of Michigan, Michigan Association of Animal Control Officers, Michigan Beekeepers Association, Michigan Commercial Beekeepers Association and Michigan State Police.

Impact Statement

The Emergency Response to Accidents Involving Livestock (ERAIL) program is designed to provide training and resources for people responding to accidents involving livestock. There are vast impacts of the ERAIL program in Michigan, supported through the comments below:

"With our vast number of livestock operations in Michigan, it is important that we are prepared to respond to unplanned events that may arise. The work of the MSU Extension ERAIL team better positions the pork industry and the entire animal agriculture industry in Michigan to safely and effectively respond to these types of situations." – Mary Kelpinski, Michigan Pork Producers Association

"I don't know whose idea that trailer was, but it was amazing, we couldn't have done this response nearly as fast if we didn't have this trailer." – First responder

"That trailer saved us today". - Processing plant staff

"Thank you to the ERAIL Team! The trailer worked out great and all the first responders were properly trained to use the equipment, we are very thankful you made this resource available and helped us through this accident event." – Local farmer

"Without me going to the ERAIL Training, without this opportunity, I would have been lost, it would have been a situation that went from bad to worse, the training, is what made the difference in the response." Melissa Fitzgerald, Otsego Animal Control

Evaluation

Evaluation data are utilized to improve the ERAIL program and expand its reach. Data show that 96% of participants report an increase in their skillset. Consistently, over 90% of the training participants indicate that they felt more comfortable around livestock after the training and are more confident in their skills addressing accidents involving livestock. 100% of participants are aware of response resources that are available to them to help prepare for and respond to accidents involving livestock. Summaries from accident events are compiled and utilized to help determine gaps in the training programs.

Educational Objectives:

The MNFP helps people who want to start a farm in Maine by teaching best practices related to:

1. Intensive Business Planning. BFs will increase their knowledge and skills by participating in group and one-on-one education and assistance. This includes record keeping workshops, business plan writing workshops, and risk management education.
2. Filling Gaps in Production Knowledge. BF will observe and experience many aspects of crop, horticulture, and livestock farming. Activities include hands-on training and apprenticeships at University and commercial farms. Participants learn from established, successful farmers through on-farm tours and informal mentoring.
3. Increasing Access to Resources and Networks. Resources for new farmers will be strengthened, augmented, and refined. New resources, including recently developed social networking outlets, will be expanded and refined. Learning modules will be developed for each production area.

Results:

1. Intensive Business Planning. In three years, 464 beginning farmers increased their knowledge and skills in business planning by participating in group and one-on-one business planning and coaching. We developed courses on farm record keeping, farm management, and business plan development. Of the project participants, 76 completed their business plan and 24 obtained financing for their agricultural businesses.

2. Filling the Gaps in Production Knowledge. BFs learned about, observed, and experienced many aspects of crop and livestock farming through on-farm tours and informal mentoring. In three years, 88 events were held around the state that included hands-on experience on University farms and commercial farms. Mitigating heat stress in livestock, developing IPM



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Extension

For additional information, visit www.canr.msu.edu/outreach

Search for Excellence Awards

Supplemental Information – ERAIL Program Materials

Emergency Response to Accident Involving Livestock (ERAIL) Training Agenda

Start Time	End Time	Task	Location	Owner
8:00	9:00	Registration	Pavilion Outside Classroom D	Support Staff
9:00	9:10	Program Introduction/ Animal Handling Safety Tip	Pavilion, Classrooms C & D	Beth Erik
9:10	9:30	Swine Handling Demonstration	Large Arena	Team
9:30	10:10	Debrief Swine Handling, General Handling & Behavior.	Pavilion, Classrooms C & D	Cora, Katie, Jerad
10:10	10:30	Poultry Handling	Pavilion, Classrooms C & D	Dr. Green
10:30	11:15	How to Identify and Handle Compromised Animals (30 mins) & Mortality Management (15 mins)	Pavilion, Classrooms C & D	Paola and Sarah
11:15	11:45	Lunch – English Breads	Pavilion, Classrooms C & D	
11:45	Noon	Transition		
12:00	12:30	Breakout session 1 [Beef, Sheep, Poultry, Equine, Bees]	Sheep, Swine, Cattle- Show Arena, Poultry – Auditorium, Bees – Classroom A	Team
12:35	12:40	Transition		
12:40	1:15	Breakout session 2 [Beef, Sheep, Poultry, Equine, Bees]	Sheep, Swine, Cattle- Show Arena, Poultry – Auditorium, Bees – Classroom A	Team
1:15	1:30	Transition		
1:30	1:55	Breakout session 3 [Beef, Sheep, Poultry, Equine, Bees]	Sheep, Swine, Cattle- Show Arena, Poultry – Auditorium, Bees – Classroom A	Team
1:55	2:00	Transition		
2:00	2:35	Breakout session 4 [Beef, Sheep, Poultry, Equine, Bees]	Sheep, Swine, Cattle- Show Arena, Poultry – Auditorium, Bees – Classroom A	Team
2:35	2:40	Transition		

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Extension

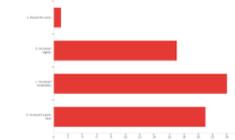
For additional information, visit www.canr.msu.edu/outreach

Evaluation Responses to Sample Questions

Q1 - As a result of today's program, my knowledge of the subject has:



Q4 - 3. As a result of today's program, my skill level in responding to an accident involving livestock has:



Q6 - 5. Did this training create an awareness of the resources, skills, and people that are needed to respond properly to a livestock transportation accident?



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Extension





APPLIED RESEARCH

Annual Meeting Handbook

Journal of NACAA

+

Posters

+

Presentations

International Travel Educational Opportunities

Leadership Academy

Region	Submitted By	Title	Poster
West	Mario E. de Haro Marti	Using cover crops with corn silage to manage manure nutrient load in southern Idaho	View
Southern	Matthew Foster	Finalist Occurrence of Glyphosate-Resistant Junglerice in Louisiana	View
West	Maggi Mathews	Marketable Tomato Yields in Relation to 2,4D Drift	View
Southern	Wael Elwakil	Strawberry Breeding Assisted with Plant Phenome AI Model	View
West	Michael Rethwisch	3rd Place NEW MITICIDES VARY IN EFFICACY IN CONTROLLING TWOSPOTTED SPIDER MITES (Tetranychus urticae) IN ALFALFA HAY BASED ON GROWTH RESPONSE	View

Finalist



Carnival Corral: Family Fun with an Agricultural Message

Linda K. McClanahan, Extension Agent

Kentucky Cooperative Extension, Mercer County, Harrodsburg, KY 40330



Abstract

Agricultural awareness has become an important issue. With less than 2% of the US population being involved in production agriculture it is important for the agricultural industry to share its story. As the premier Kentucky festival featuring beef, Kentucky's Fort Harrod Beef Festival was entering its' fourth year in 2009 and the committee wanted to add more educational opportunities into the festival. Carnival Corral was designed to fill this need and meet needs to increase agricultural awareness as identified by local agriculture groups. Objectives for this event were to teach young people and their parents where their food comes from, how much we depend on farmers everyday, and the wonderful job farmers do as caretakers of livestock and stewards of the environment. Carnival Corral is a fun-filled area for children and their parents surrounded by corral panels and festively decorated with colorful balloons, banners and related materials. Each child that visited Carnival Corral could participate in ten games, all featuring questions related to different segments of the agricultural industry, get their face painted while reading accurate agriculture books, walk away with a Carnival Corral coloring book and learn new things about farmers and the agriculture industry. Volunteers indicated this was an effective tool for increasing agricultural awareness and teaching children about agriculture. Over 450 children plus their parents went through Carnival Corral over the three-day festival weekend.

Need

- > Children need to learn about where their food and other products come from
- > Children need to learn that farmers take great care of their animals and the environment
- > Children need to learn the importance of agriculture since they are our future lawmakers
- > Children learn best by doing and those opportunities were limited at the festival



Methods

Children had the opportunity to play 10 different carnival games ranging from steer roping to a duck pond and even a hay maze. At each game children answered questions about a different segment of agriculture, including beef cattle, dairy cattle, grain crops, swine, and forages. Correct answers earned them chances to win prizes by tossing the ring on the milk bottle, throwing the soybeans at the pig, or playing other games.



Children collected a farm animal stamp at each game. When they collected 10 stamps they received a free ice cream sandwich courtesy of the Mercer County Cattleman's Association.



Each child received an activity book and crayons to learn more about beef production, byproducts and nutrition after all the fun of playing games was over. This enabled the children to learn by using different skills.



Impact

- > Approximately 450 children and their parents were presented information on the importance of agriculture.
- > Children can now correctly answer questions about food, byproducts and farming.
- > Volunteers indicated this was a very valuable tool for teaching agriculture messages.
- > Children and their families will be able to make informed decisions that relate to agriculture.
- > In agriculture programs that followed volunteers observed a knowledge increase in children as they could correctly answer more questions about agriculture.



Acknowledgments

Thanks to the Kentucky Farm Bureau Education Foundation, Mercer County Farm Bureau Federation and the Mercer County Cattleman's Association for assistance in funding this program. Thanks to the Kentucky Soybean Board, Kentucky Beef Council, and the Southeast United Dairy Producers for donating prizes. Special thanks to Doris Hamilton for all of her assistance in helping design the program and to all volunteers who made this program possible.



FarmsCool Week

McClanahan, L.K.¹

¹Mercer County Extension Agent for Agriculture & Natural Resources, University of Kentucky
Cooperative Extension Service, Harrodsburg, KY, 40330



May 31 - June 14, 2010

Abstract

Local agriculture groups have identified agricultural awareness as an important issue. With less than 2% of the US population being involved in production agriculture it is important for the agricultural industry to share its story. It was only fitting to try to reach this objective by targeting elementary school students. Objectives for FarmsCool Week, held May 10-14, 2010, were to teach students where their food comes from, how much we depend on farmers every day, ways farmers are caretakers of livestock and stewards of the environment, and to give them an opportunity to have a hands-on learning experience with farm animals. This week was designed similar to other weeks that are celebrated in school such as Red Ribbon Week. Each day of the week had a different theme for the students to participate in. For example, Monday was Grow Green Monday so students wore green to show their support for farmers who take care of the environment while growing our food. In addition, curriculum and educational materials were given to teachers at each grade level to supplement and reinforce the theme for the day. One day of the week students got to enjoy Farnin' on the Playground, a hands-on learning venture where students rotated between ten stations that featured farm animals, tractors, crops and farm by-products. Over 1300 elementary school students participated in FarmsCool Week and were presented with numerous opportunities to learn more about farming, their food and farm by-products that they use every day.

Objectives

- Teach students where their food comes from
- Educate future consumers how much we depend on farmers everyday
- Provide information on ways farmers are caretakers of livestock and stewards of the land
- Give students an opportunity to have a hands-on learning experience with farm animals.



Methods

This program was organized so students participated and learned about a different theme each day of the week. Themes were:

- Grow Green Monday - Students wore green to support farmers who care for the environment while growing food.
- Boot Day Tuesday - Students wore boots to stand out and show their support for farmers who clothe and feed us. Farmers work hard every day to grow the food we eat and produce most of the material used for our clothes and shoes, like cotton and leather.
- Wacky Wednesday - Students wore "wacky" socks to learn about the crazy and unusual products we get from animals and plants.
- Hats Off Thursday - Students wore hats and tipped them to farmers who take good care of their animals.
- Food Frenzy Friday - Students wore red, like pizza sauce to explore the origin of many of their favorite pizza ingredients.

In addition to students wearing various colors, teachers were provided with curriculum from Ag In the Classroom and other sources to reinforce the theme for the day.

One day all students went Farnin' on the Playground. Here students rotated through ten stations for eight minutes each including beef cattle, dairy cattle, sheep, goats, chickens, pigs, horses, crop by-products, machinery and horticulture. This portion of the program gave students an up-close look at farming and hands on experience with farm animals.

Impact

- Approximately 1300 Pre-4th grade students learned about agriculture.
- Students were able to hear, touch and smell livestock, crops and machinery, some for the very first time.
- 98% of teachers indicated this program was an effective tool for teaching students where their food & fiber comes from.
- "So many children don't know where their food actually comes from, I had several students that didn't know pork came from pigs and hamburgers came from cows! It was an excellent learning experience for first grade students."



Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank the Mercer County Farm Bureau Federation, FFA Chapter and Master Gardeners for assistance with this program and Mercer County School System for allowing us to conduct the programs. Special thanks to Doris Hamilton for all of her assistance in helping design the program and to all volunteers who made this program possible.

