

State Ag Spokespersons Compete For National Title

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Spokespersons for agriculture are needed to address the many controversial issues associated with farming and to educate the majority of the population who know little about their food source.

To select one spokesperson is almost impossible since so many facets of agriculture need to be addressed.

Theoretically the job to select an ag spokesperson should have been made a bit easier when the National Young Farmers sponsored a contest from which three national spokespersons were selected. The depth of talent and knowledge portrayed by the contestants, who each needed to attain the title at local and state levels before competing in the national contest, revealed that each of the nine contestants are effective spokespersons for the industry they dearly love — farming.

Contestants needed to give a prepared speech before a panel of three judges: consumer leader, an agricultural communicator, and an agricultural representative. These included Walt Pecchatka, executive vice president of Penn Ag Industries; Lem Mentzler, FFA adviser at LMH; and Lou Ann Good, *Lancaster Farming* staff writer.

In addition to winning at the state level, spokespersons were required to qualify with written documentation that they had spo-

ken about ag issues before two or more audiences, wrote letters to state legislative leaders, and attained two media interviews.

During the national contest, each state spokesperson delivered a 5-minute prepared speech and answered about 10 minutes of impromptu questioning by the judges.

The prepared speeches addressed a current agricultural or environmental topic that provided a positive perspective of agriculture and renewable resources.

Judges needed to evaluate the content and how well the contestants answered impromptu questions and how convincing and accurate they were in their overall delivery and viewpoints.

The three selected as spokespersons for agriculture are Jerry Hergenreder from Longmont, Colo.; Jerry Terrill from Salem, Mo.; and Luke Windsor from Hopkinsville, Ky.

Hergenreder, his wife Tricia and four children, have a diversified farming operation raising sugarbeets, corn silage, alfalfa, winter and spring wheats, barley, seed wheat, and dry beans. Most of their 990 acres are flood-irrigated. They also have a small number of cows and calves.

Hergenreder's speech, "Believe it or Not — This is Agriculture," spoke about his responsibilities as a farmer, requiring him to act as producer, commodities marketer, mechanic, vet, welder, heavy equipment operator, electrician,



After winning at their respective state levels, these nine competed for the title of National Spokesperson of the Year. From left back are Luke Windsor, Ky.; Jerry Hergenreder, Colo.; Dean Smith, Neb.; Jerry Terrill, Mo.; Tim Grove, Vir.; and Tommy Stalvey, Ga. Front from left are Alisa Hamm, Ala.; Shirley Krall, Pa.; and Jennifer Byerly, Ind. The three selected as national spokespersons are Windsor, Hergenreder, and Terrill.



Participants in the Farm and Ranch Contest, from left, are A. Dale Herr, Pa.; Bill Warnke, Neb.; Mike Wheley, Ind.; Terry Weisheit, Ind.; Neal Pohlmore, chairman; Arthur Duvall, Neb.; Nolan Hornbreckle, Ala., and Jim Hefner, Ohio.



During the media blitz at Fox's Market, Jerry Hergenreder shares the role he plays in providing safe food for consumers.



Luke Windsor believes technology will improve farm profits.

and numerous other roles. Hergenreder addressed the communication gap between producer and consumer in which farmer's are blamed for food price increases yet receive only \$4 for a hundred pounds of corn.

Terrill, 29, is a regional livestock specialist for the University of Missouri Outreach and Extension.

Terrill and his family have a herd of purebred Limousin cattle. He grew up as an active member of 4-H programs and FFA. He received a bachelor's degree in animal science and a master's in applied beef production.

Terrill's speech addressed the question: "Is the American Farmer an Endangered Species?" He said the catch phrase "sustainable agriculture" must be economically viable. If it is not profitable, it is not sustainable. In addition, sustainable agriculture must be socially supportive and ecologically sound to preserve the resource base that sustains all.

"The biggest challenge farmers face is to make sure that the public knows food is produced in an efficient, environmentally conscious manner," Terrill said.

Luke Windsor, 23, is pursuing a master's degree in organizational communication at Murray State University.

Windsor has always been involved in the family farm's production of corn, soybeans, and

tobacco. Windsor is a district sales manager for Akin/Callahan Seed Co. Inc.

Windsor discussed transgenic crops and their potential to improve farm profit. The technology that can offset the cost of production fees, resistance to weed and insect buildup, and export concerns.

Other participants included Pennsylvania's Shirley Krall, who farms with her husband Tom in

Lebanon County. She spoke on "Doing Farm Tours That Count;" Jennifer Wayne Byerly, Indiana, who spoke about Rural Rehabilitation Resources for farmers with disabilities; Alisa Hamm, Alabama, who addressed "What Is an Environmentalist?;" Tommy Stalvey Jr., Georgia, who spoke about "The Agriculture Experience;" Tim Grove, Virginia, who addressed "Environmentally

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