

Feature Story



NCGA and BASF honor five ag students at Commodity Classic

From the corn fields of Iowa to the plains of Texas, the U.S. is filled with young individuals with their eyes on a future in agriculture. With this abundance of talent in young ag, the responsibility falls on the industry to provide them with the tools necessary to secure this future.

At the 2017 Commodity Classic, stellar graduate and undergraduate students came together to receive the William C. Berg Academic Excellence in Agriculture scholarship from the National Corn Growers Association in partnership with BASF. Each of these agriculture students received \$1,000 to use toward their future education.

This year's winners are Izak Christensen, José Rodrigo Mendoza Jimenez, Kelsey Barnes, Michael Tupper and Rachel Stevens.

>> **Izak Christensen** of Ames, Iowa, is a concurrent undergraduate and graduate student at Iowa State University, studying agricultural business and agronomy and pursuing a master's degree in business administration. Izak plans to use his degrees in agribusiness and to impact the agriculture industry, as a whole.

>> **José Rodrigo Mendoza Jimenez** of Guatemala City secured his undergraduate degree at Universidad del Valle in his home country of Guatemala. José is now pursuing a doctoral degree in food science and technology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

>> **Kelsey Barnes** of College Station, Texas, is a graduate student studying international agriculture at Texas A&M University. Kelsey's experiences in developing countries through AgriCorps helped spark her passion for global agriculture.

>> **Michael Tupper** of Ionia, Iowa, is a junior at Iowa State University, studying agricultural engineering. Last year, Michael served as the Iowa Future Farmers of America (FFA) association's state president, dividing his time between college courses, state and national FFA responsibilities, and his family's farm in Northern Iowa.

>> **Rachel Stevens** is from Falls City, Neb., and a graduate student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln studying mechanized systems management. Rachel's research focuses on implementation of hybrid planting, which she hopes will help producers optimize crop yields.

"We are thrilled to partner with BASF and invest in these incredible students," said NCGA President Wesley Spurlock, a corn grower from Stratford, Texas. "This industry relies on the

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next generation to help feed our growing world, and these five young people are aimed at doing just that.”