



2026 agInnovation Awards for

Excellence in Leadership

Purpose

To recognize those who have served the Regional Associations, agInnovation, and/or the national Land-grant System with exemplary distinction. Through this person's leadership, he/she shall have personified the highest level of excellence by enhancing the cause and performance of the Regional Associations and agInnovation in achieving their missions and the Land-grant ideal. The Excellence in Leadership is a national award.

Award and Presentation

Up to five awards, one from each agInnovation region will be presented each year. The awards shall be signified by the creation of a suitably inscribed piece and presented to the recipient or his/her proxy at the agInnovation Annual Meeting and/or at the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) Annual Meeting and will be further memorialized by a resolution to be included as an agenda brief for the fall agInnovation meeting. The home institution shall be made aware of the recognition by formal letter from the agInnovation Chair to the Administrative Head with other upper administration officials copied as appropriate. The expense of the actual inscribed award and expenses associated with travel of the winners to accept the award will be borne by agInnovation.

Eligibility

Individuals eligible for this award are former or current State Agricultural Experiment/Research Station (SAES or ARD) leaders who have provided service as assistant director, associate director, director, administrator or as chief operating officers with equivalent, but variant titles (e.g. vice chancellor, associate vice chancellor, associate vice president, dean for research) and/or as a regional executive director. This award is distinctive in its expectations and not necessarily coincident with retirement, election to specific office or any other specific professional benchmark.

Nominations

The formal call initiating the annual process will reside with the agInnovation Chair. Each region will establish its own nomination and review process, while adhering to the below elements, leading to the national award recognitions. Nominations shall address the contributions of the nominee to the Land-grant ideal through service to include offices held, committee assignments, and other service and, in particular, special and extraordinary service activities. Such service should include for example: active participation in the affairs of the Regional Association and/or agInnovation; regional, national and/or international special assignments with distinctive performance that has advanced the mission of agInnovation and the Land-grant ideal; systemic efforts to enhance diversity and inclusion; and a record of significant accomplishments in the agricultural sciences. Specific examples of contributions may include: the enhancement of cooperation across institutions, creation of model administrative systems useable by other institutions, and development of new strategic directions for the Regional Associations or agInnovation.



Submission and Review

Nominations for the recognition should be submitted to the Regional Associations by February 28 each year. The Regional Associations will review the nominations and will select their winner. The Regional Association Chair or Regional Executive Director (ED) shall notify: 1) the agInnovation Chair and the Executive Vice-Chair and 2) the Executive Vice-Chair of STC. Each Regional Association should also send their names and titles, bio (paragraph) for script (200-250 words), and a B&W photograph (at least 3" wide x 4" tall and 300 dpi, jpg or tiff) as a head shot from the chest up with some space on all sides of the head to the agInnovation Science and Technology Committee Executive Vice-Chair (lead regional ED to STC) no later than June 1. The bio paragraph and the picture should be in separate files. This ED will secure the inscribed Awards, transmit the recognition materials to APLU and will create the agInnovation resolution. The winners will be recognized at the fall agInnovation meeting and the APLU Annual Meeting. Regional Associations may also choose to recognize the Awardee in addition to the above venues.

Please contact your regional association office if there are questions:

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