

AgYield NextGen Foundation Announces First-Ever National Scholarship Competition Winners

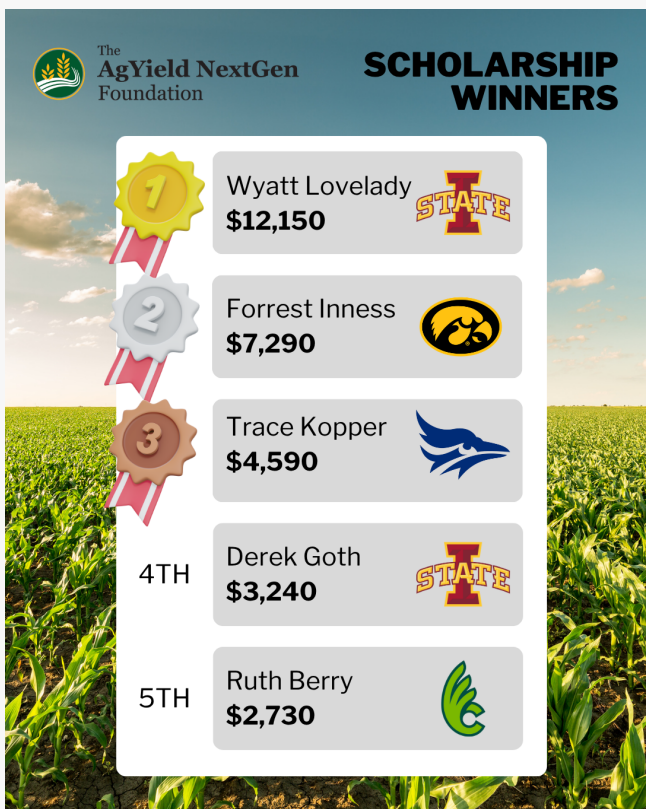
Inaugural competition draws students from more than 40 universities nationwide, awarding \$30,000 in scholarships to students

OAK BROOK, IL, UNITED STATES, May 7, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [AgYield NextGen Foundation](#) today announced the winners of its inaugural Spring 2026 National Scholarship Competition, the first scholarship program of its kind in American agriculture. The competition challenged university students from across the country to manage a simulated full crop season, making real-time marketing, risk management and financial decisions in response to live market data, USDA crop reports and weather events over 36 simulated weeks.

Iowa agriculture claimed the top two spots in the national competition. Wyatt Lovelady, a student at Iowa State University, earned first place and a \$12,150 scholarship after finishing the simulation with a portfolio value of \$442,046.45, the highest score in the field. Forrest Inness of the University of Iowa claimed second place and a \$7,290 scholarship with a final score of \$377,295.15.

The full top five finishers and their scholarship awards are as follows:

- 1st Place: Wyatt Lovelady, Iowa State University, \$12,150
- 2nd Place: Forrest Inness, University of Iowa, \$7,290
- 3rd Place: Trace Kopper, Tabor College, \$4,590
- 4th Place: Derek Goth, Iowa State University, \$3,240
- 5th Place: Ruth Beery, Wilmington College, \$2,730



The AgYield NextGen Foundation **SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS**

1	Wyatt Lovelady	Iowa State University	\$12,150
2	Forrest Inness	University of Iowa	\$7,290
3	Trace Kopper	Tabor College	\$4,590
4TH	Derek Goth	Iowa State University	\$3,240
5TH	Ruth Berry	Wilmington College	\$2,730

The AgYield NextGen Foundation announces winners of its inaugural Spring 2026 National Scholarship Competition. Wyatt Lovelady of Iowa State University took first place and a \$12,150 scholarship, followed by Forrest Inness of the University of Iowa in second.

A Foundation Built to Close a Critical Gap

The AgYield NextGen Foundation was established by Justin Kelly, CEO and managing partner of AgYield, who grew up on a farm and later spent years on the Chicago trading floor. Over years of working directly with grain producers, Kelly and the AgYield team identified a persistent gap: students were graduating with strong agronomic training but little practical experience in the financial decision-making and market strategy that determine whether a farming operation survives or thrives. The Foundation was created to bridge that gap, equipping the next generation of agricultural leaders with the confidence, financial literacy and real-world judgment they will need.

“We started this Foundation because we kept seeing the same thing over and over: students who understood agronomy but had never been tested on the financial side of a real season,” said Justin Kelly, CEO and managing partner of AgYield and board president of the AgYield NextGen Foundation. “The students who competed this spring changed that for themselves. They navigated markets, managed risk and made the kinds of decisions that define whether a farm operation succeeds. That is exactly what this Foundation exists to do.”

“

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Justin Kelly, CEO, AgYield and Board President, AgYield NextGen Foundation



Justin Kelly is CEO and managing partner of AgYield and board president of the AgYield NextGen Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to preparing the next generation of agricultural leaders through real-world financial decision-making and scholarship competitions.

A Rigorous, Real-World Test of Agricultural Decision-Making

The Spring 2026 competition was conducted through the AgYield Simulator, a platform built on AgYield’s years of market data and risk management expertise. Over 36 simulated weeks, student participants reacted to USDA crop condition reports, shifting futures prices, basis changes and yield estimate updates, making decisions across futures, options, cash contracts and crop insurance policies with real financial consequences.

Participants were drawn from more than 40 universities including Iowa State, the University of Iowa, Ohio State, Purdue, North Dakota State, the University of Illinois, Washington State, Virginia Tech and Illinois State. The breadth of participation reflects a growing recognition that financial literacy and market decision-making must be core competencies for the next generation of agricultural professionals.

“The response from students and universities in this first competition exceeded every expectation we had,” said Dan Dempsey, director of sales and business development at AgYield and board member of the AgYield NextGen Foundation. “We set out to build something that would create a lasting pipeline of financially literate agricultural leaders. What we saw this spring tells us the demand is real, the talent is there, and the Foundation has a meaningful role to play in shaping the future of American agriculture.”



Dan Dempsey is director of sales and business development at AgYield and board member of the AgYield NextGen Foundation, dedicated to preparing the next generation of agricultural leaders through financial decision-making and scholarship competitions.

Get Involved

The AgYield NextGen Foundation invites donors, agricultural industry partners and educational institutions to join in its mission. All donated funds go directly to student scholarships and to expanding the national competition. The Foundation will also host its [inaugural charity golf outing](#) on July 27, 2026, at Aurora Country Club, with sponsorships and foursomes still available. To learn more, donate, register for the golf outing or explore partnership opportunities, visit www.agyieldnextgen.org.

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About The AgYield NextGen Foundation

The AgYield NextGen Foundation is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit headquartered in Oak Brook, Ill. Founded by AgYield CEO Justin Kelly, the Foundation prepares the next generation of agricultural leaders through immersive learning, financial literacy programming and merit-based scholarship competitions. All donated funds are directed to student scholarships and the

expansion of the national competition. For more information, visit www.agyieldnextgen.org.

[About AgYield](#)

AgYield is an agricultural risk management and market strategy firm that helps producers and agribusinesses navigate volatility, manage uncertainty and make informed decisions. Drawing on real market data, analytics and deep industry expertise, AgYield supports clients across the agricultural value chain. For more information, visit www.agyield.com.

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