

PYFA GIVES AWARDS AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Senator Judy Schwank (D-Berks) was presented the Honorary Young Farmer Award for her work on behalf of agriculture and the PYFA throughout her career. She also presented a Resolution from the PA Senate in honor of PYFA's 56th annual Winter Conference. She stressed the importance of agriculture to Berks County and the successful agricultural preservation program that is first in the nation.



Outstanding Young Farmer Under 30 went to Mark Balmer of the Cedar Crest chapter. He is the operator of Hit-the-Mark Farm, milking 53 Holsteins in Lebanon. Mark stated he started farming “because I had an outstanding passion for cows and the life of farming, the tight knit community and the open ended opportunity to set your own goals and achieve them on your own terms. The detail of genetic improvements and watching my herd continue to succeed and grow better with each generation.” Mark is the 2015 chapter president of Cedar Crest YF.

Runner-up Outstanding Young Farmer was Matthew Schantz of the Kutztown chapter.

Ron and Mel Kurtz of the Kutztown chapter received the Outstanding Community



Service Award for their many activities in Young Farmers, their township, school, and church. Ron and Mel, along with their two children Rachel 23 and Eric 20, are third generation farmers living on the family homestead in Fleetwood, PA where they raise beef, replacement heifers, and have a grain business. They started an “Overtime” Committee at the High School that provides after each home sporting event a

“supervised yet fun place for the youth to gather, have fun, eat, dance and socialize in hopes to keep them off the streets and avoid mischief!” said Ron. He also serves as a township supervisor

in Richmond Township.

The Outstanding Agri-Business Person Award was presented to R&B Krieder Seeds, Richard and Brian Krieder of the Cedar Crest Chapter. Other nominees were Rob's Rations LLC, Robert Slingo III of the Rockwood chapter and Kurt Haas of the Kutztown chapter, employed by TIMAC.



The Richard Hoppes Award went to Ken and Denise Sanner for their lifelong



commitment and dedication to the PYFA. Both Ken and Denise are past state presidents, and Denise is the immediate past president of the National Young Farmers Education Association. They belong to the Kutztown Young Farmers chapter and Ken was the host chairman for this year's PYFA conference.