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Ohio AgriBusiness Association Announces 2023 Industry Excellence Awards Recipients

COLUMBUS, Ohio (Jan. 10, 2023) – The Ohio AgriBusiness Association is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2023 Industry Excellence Awards:

- 2023 Excellence in Customer Service – Doug Bayless, Consolidated Grain & Barge Co.
- 2023 Achievement as an Emerging Leader – Cristen Cramer, Legacy Farmers Cooperative

Award recipients will be recognized at the 2023 OABA Industry Conference on Feb. 1. Winners will receive a plaque and \$1,000 cash award, sponsored by Assured Partners – J.H. Ward Agency.

OABA has a distinguished history of serving the agricultural industry and its members through advocacy, policy leadership and educational programs. The Industry Excellence Awards honor excellence, professionalism and achievement among OABA member companies and their employees, and thereby encourage that same excellence in others.

“It is exceedingly important to take time to recognize exceptional individuals in our industry,” said Chris Henney, OABA president and CEO. “This year’s award winners set a high standard for all agribusiness employees across all levels to aspire to achieve.”

Excellence in Customer Service

The Excellence in Customer Service Award is presented to an individual who goes “above and beyond” in their service to customers in order to define what excellent customer service looks like and recognize those whose contributions may often go unnoticed. The 2023 award recipient is Doug Bayless of California, Kentucky.

Bayless, Control Center Operator at Consolidated Grain & Barge Co.’s Riverside barge-loading facility in Cincinnati, is the primary person responsible for interacting and communicating with farmer customers on a daily basis. He handles quality issues, controlling the operations of the grain handling system, segregating, and maintaining grain quality within the facility. Bayless is a 25-year veteran with CBG, serving at different points of his career in every role at the facility from maintenance to grain grading and scale operations, and barge loading to deck-hand and truck dumping.

“Doug exhibits two of the highest character traits – honesty and a positive attitude,” said Travis Algren, Senior Merchandiser for CGB. “He prioritizes solving customer issues and safety, helping new drivers or farmers at the facility, and always giving an honest answer with a follow-up solution when problems arise. His ‘glass half full’ attitude and his positivity are contagious amongst his colleagues and peers.”

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Achievement as an Emerging Leader

The Achievement as an Emerging Leader Award is presented to an individual who represents the spirit of leadership as a growing agribusiness professional. Leadership is often difficult to define in everyday business activities, but it remains an important ability to cultivate. The 2023 award recipient is Cristen Cramer of Genoa, Ohio.

Cramer, Branch Manager for Legacy Farmers Cooperative's Fostoria location, oversees budgeting, operational efficiency, project analysis and management, facility asset management, location safety, rail loading, customer service and management of the storage and blending of grain at an 8.5 million-bushel grain facility, as well as supervising all branch personnel. In addition, she coordinates and organizes personnel for all 10 Legacy Farmers Cooperative grain locations to enable efficiency in the grain division and cross divisions. Cramer is a leader in her job and her community, and an advocate for lifelong learning and positive mental health.

"Cristen's leadership is on display every single day," said Mark Sunderman, President and CEO of Legacy Farmers Cooperative. "She is always transparent with her team and works hard to enable them to grow and set goals, working with them to accomplish those goals. Cristen is a great mentor and coach."

2023 OABA Industry Conference

The three-day Industry Conference event, Jan. 31-Feb. 1 at the Columbus Renaissance Westerville, is packed with widely respected speakers and industry professionals, sharing their expertise on a variety of topics relating to agronomy, grain and feed, safety and more. More details are available at www.oaba.net/events_conference.

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About OABA

The Ohio AgriBusiness Association is the leading advocate for Ohio agribusiness by creating a sustainable business climate through collaborative policy leadership, continuous education and effective communication. OABA is a membership-based state trade association which includes the manufacturers and wholesale/retail suppliers of plant nutrient and protection materials, the grain warehousing and marketing industry, the feed and seed industry, as well as companies providing equipment, financing, insurance, consulting, and other products and services for the agribusiness industry. OABA is also the administrator of the Ohio Certified Crop Adviser Program, 4R Nutrient Stewardship Certification Program and Ohio Agricultural Council. For more information, visit oaba.net.