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**Annual awards, student contest winners announced at Soil Health Conference**

PIERRE, SD – South Dakota State University Extension Soils Field Specialist Anthony Bly was presented with the 2022 Friend of Soil Health Award during the 2022 Soil Health Conference hosted by the South Dakota Soil Health Coalition, Jan. 18-19, in Aberdeen, SD.

Coalition Board Member Dan Forgey said that Bly’s work has touched just about everyone in South Dakota agriculture.

“He has done a tremendous amount for the Coalition,” Forgey said. “Every time we turn around and need something, he’s always there.”

Bly noted that while soil health was a “forgotten science for many years,” many people are beginning to recognize its importance. “It’s really great,” he said. “I’m living the dream!”

**Legacy Award**

Jorgensen Land and Cattle in Ideal, SD, was also announced as the 2022 Legacy Award winner. The Jorgensen operation includes Bryan Jorgensen, his son Nick, his brother Greg, and his nephew Cody. Together they operate a hunting lodge, a diverse cow/calf and bull development operation, as well as a 12,000-acre no-till crop operation growing feedstuffs, feed grains, and certified seed. In addition to no-till practices, the Jorgensens use cover crops, diverse crop rotations, livestock integration on cropland, and minimal insecticide applications. The family has been adept at documenting the benefits of their soil health practices and sharing that information with others.

The Legacy Award was created to honor past board member Al Miron who passed away suddenly in November of 2017. He left behind a lifelong legacy of conservation and commitment to increasing soil health.

**Student contests**

As part of the Soil Health Conference, the Coalition conducted student photo and essay contests. Each contest had three categories: post-secondary, high school, and middle school. The awards for the post-secondary category were \$400 for first place and \$200 for second place. The awards for the high school and middle school categories were \$200 for first place and \$100 for second place. All first and second place winners will also receive hoodies.

In the photo contest, students could submit photos that portrayed one of two different contest themes: diversity and legacy. In the post-secondary category, Ashilyn Hulstein of South Dakota State University, won first place and Riley Leeson of SDSU won second place. In the high school category, Karlie Stiefvater of McCook Central High School won first place, and Kayla Jordan of Clark High School won second place. In the middle school category, Izaak Richards of Bon Homme Middle School won first place, and Addison Timmons of Deuel Middle School won second place.

In the essay contest, students could submit essays to explain how soil health will affect their future careers or how soil health practices make agricultural operations more resilient. In the post-secondary category, Nicole Baumann of SDSU won first place and Ashilyn Hulstein of SDSU won second place. In the high school category, Matt Mork of Webster High School won first place, and Seth Schoon of Sunshine Bible Academy won second place. In the middle school category, Izaak Richards of Bon Homme Middle School won first place, and Sienna Martinell of Deuel Middle School won second place.

All winning student contest entries can be found at [www.sdsoilhealthcoalition.org/soil-health-conference/students/](http://www.sdsoilhealthcoalition.org/soil-health-conference/students/).

The South Dakota Soil Health Coalition thanks all sponsors, speakers, panelists, attendees, and viewers for making this year's conference a success.

The 2023 Soil Health Conference will be held Jan. 24-25, 2023, at the Best Western Plus Ramkota Hotel in Sioux Falls, SD.

To learn more about the Coalition and its efforts to promote soil health and increase sustainable agriculture production, visit [www.sdsoilhealthcoalition.org](http://www.sdsoilhealthcoalition.org).



*SDSHC photo*

SDSU Extension Soils Field Specialist Anthony Bly received the Friend of Soil Health Award from South Dakota Soil Health Coalition Board members during the 2022 Soil Health Conference.

To download a high-resolution version of this photo, visit <https://bit.ly/3uPyHhP>.



*Courtesy photo*

South Dakota State University student Ashilyn Hulstein won first place in the 2022 Soil Health Conference Student Photo Contest post-secondary category with this photo of her father walking through a soybean field. “He has taught me so much about agriculture and has shown me that it isn’t just about planting a seed and harvesting the crop, but it’s also about protecting and taking care of the land as well,” Hulstein said.

To download a high-resolution version of this photo, visit <https://bit.ly/3Bn2dgd>.