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## **Awards Announced at Soil Health Conference**

PIERRE, SD – During the Tenth Annual Soil Health Conference, Jan. 13-14 in Aberdeen, SD, the South Dakota Soil Health Coalition announced the winners of its two annual awards as well as the winners of its student essay and video contests.

Doug Sieck was named the 2026 Legacy Award winner. He was a founding member and the initial chairman of the SDSHC Board of Directors. In this role, he was instrumental in growing the SD Soil Health Coalition from an idea to a highly active non-profit organization working to promote regenerative agriculture across the state. He shares his time and knowledge generously to help anyone he can, and his deep care for both the land and his fellow humans is evident in his every word and action. Sieck is the owner and operator of Deep Root Ranch in North Central South Dakota.

Peter Sexton was named the 2026 Friend of Soil Health Award winner. He is an associate professor at South Dakota State University, supervisor of the Southeast Research Farm, and a SDSU Extension sustainable cropping systems specialist. In addition to serving as an outstanding advisor to students and overseeing excellent field research, he also shares his time and knowledge at several Coalition events to help further sustainable agriculture education throughout the state.

### **Student contests**

To spark an interest in soil health among young people in South Dakota, the SDSHC incorporated student essay and video contests into this year's Soil Health Conference. In the post-secondary division of the essay contest, Chitra Sudalaimani of South Dakota State University won \$400 for first place. In the high school division, Harmony Eberhart of Herreid High School was awarded \$300 for first place. In the middle school division, Kathryn Scott of Spearfish Middle School won \$200 for first place.

The video contest consisted of one division open to all K-12 students in South Dakota. Katy Scott of Whitewood, SD, and Leela Bosworth of Spearfish, SD, won \$750 for first place. A team from the Webster FFA Chapter won \$500 for second place. A team from Sunshine Bible Academy, SD, won \$250 for third place.

The winning video and essays are available to view at [www.sdsoilhealthcoalition.org/soil-health-conference/students/](http://www.sdsoilhealthcoalition.org/soil-health-conference/students/).



*SD Soil Health Coalition photo*

Doug Sieck was named the 2026 Legacy Award winner at this year's Soil Health Conference in Aberdeen, SD.

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