

News Release
For Immediate Release

Contact:

Katie Greenwood

kgreenwood@coloradoffafoundation.org

Colorado FFA Foundation Announces Four Hall of Fame Inductees for 2027

Greeley, Colo. -- The Colorado FFA Foundation is pleased to announce four inductees representing excellence in conservation, research, leadership and extension, into the Colorado Agriculture Hall of Fame. Jay Fetcher (Clark), Darrell Hanavan (Castle Pines), Gene Manuello (Sterling), and Jeff Tranel (Pueblo) will all be formally honored and inducted into the Colorado Agriculture Hall of Fame on February 25, 2027 at the annual Colorado Agriculture Hall of Fame Banquet. The Colorado Agriculture Hall of Fame is presented by the Farm Credit Associations of Colorado.

"These inductees have established lasting legacies in Colorado agriculture. They each exemplify the innovative, resilient, and hard-working spirit of Colorado's agriculture community," said Dr. Dale McCall, chair of the Colorado FFA Foundation. "We are honored to publicly thank them by inducting them into the Hall of Fame for all they have done and continue to do for agriculture."

Mr. Jay Fetcher grew up on his family's ranch in the Upper Elk River Valley near Steamboat Springs, where he developed a lifelong appreciation for the importance of conserving working lands, open spaces, and wildlife habitats. He became a highly respected rancher and conservationist in Colorado, renowned for his pioneering efforts to introduce conservation easements as a tool to support farming and ranching families while balancing the interests of agriculture and conservation. Fetcher is often referred to as "The Conservation Cowboy." His vision, along with that of other leaders from the Colorado Cattlemen's Association (CCA), led to the establishment of a land trust in 1995 that addresses the conservation needs of Colorado's farming and ranching families and serves as a blueprint for similar initiatives in other states.

Mr. Darrell Hanavan was raised on a family farm in eastern Colorado. As a young staffer for the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, his emerging talents were recognized and landed him in a leadership position in the Colorado Wheat industry. For over 34 years, he worked with wheat producers and many associated agribusiness and research entities. Hanavan's 50-year career revolutionized Colorado agriculture through visionary leadership, establishing world-class wheat breeding and weed science programs at CSU via landmark agreements, including a \$20 million research partnership, ensuring long-term viability. Representing 8,000 wheat farmers, he doubled producer assessments, expanding research and market development, delivering the "Halt" wheat variety. Hanavan expanded Colorado wheat exports by hosting international trade teams and participating in trade missions to 20+ countries, securing sustained CSU wheat research funding. His dedication earned him Wheat Leader of the Year in 2016 and honorary memberships in three prestigious national scientific societies. His legacy is the permanent, innovation-driven foundation for CSU's wheat breeding program.

Mr. Gene Manuello is a third-generation farmer and cattleman who has dedicated his life to managing his family's agricultural operation, which began in 1928 on Colorado's Northeastern Plains. This

diversified operation features a 3,000-head feedlot, 1,400 grass calves, 900 irrigated acres, and a custom silage business that produces nearly 100,000 tons annually. At 81 years old, Gene serves as Vice President of Manuello's Inc., a title he holds out of respect for his 102-year-old mother, who is the President. A former President of the Colorado Cattlemen's Association, Gene continues to lead Colorado agriculture as the President of the Sterling Irrigation Company and as a board member of the Colorado Ag Water Alliance. His decades-long commitment to responsible water conservation and management helps secure the future of agriculture in the region and ensures that the next generations can continue the family legacy.

Mr. Jeff Tranel was raised on a ranch in northwestern Colorado and southcentral Wyoming. He has served as a dedicated Extension Agricultural Economist at Colorado State University for over 35 years. Jeff is a nationally recognized expert in risk management, estate and succession planning, and financial decision-making. His leadership in these areas has led to numerous presentations and workshops throughout Colorado, the U.S., and in 11 other countries. Tranel has guided countless farm and ranch families through complex issues related to taxes, estates, succession, and financial matters with clarity and compassion. He is highly respected across the nation for developing educational programs, conducting applied research, and providing valuable resources that continue to benefit rural agricultural operations and families nationwide.

The honorees will join 129 other outstanding Colorado agriculturists who have been similarly honored since 1989. All Agriculture Hall of Fame members' portraits are displayed in the Colorado Agriculture Hall of Fame (presented by Farm Credit Associations of Colorado) in the CoBank Center for Agricultural Education at Colorado State University.

Hosted by the Colorado FFA Foundation, the induction ceremony is held yearly to induct members into the Agriculture Hall of Fame who have significantly contributed to Colorado's second-largest industry. A unique, multimedia presentation will highlight the life of each new inductee during the ceremony.

More information about the Colorado Agriculture Hall of Fame, presented by the Farm Credit Associations of Colorado, is available here: <http://coloradoffafoundation.org/farm-credit-colorado-agriculture-hall-of-fame/>.

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The Colorado FFA Foundation is a non-profit organization that raises funds to support the more than 9,500 FFA members in Colorado's 135 chapters. FFA is a national organization of over 1 million members preparing for leadership and careers in the science, business, and technology of agriculture.