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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OHIO AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL ANNOUNCES 2025 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

COLUMBUS, Ohio (May 16, 2025) – The Ohio Agricultural Council (OAC) is set to honor the 2025 awardees who have significantly contributed to the advancement of Ohio’s agricultural industry. The 2025 OAC Hall of Fame ceremony will celebrate the achievements of John H. Davis of Carrollton, the late Bill Isler of Prospect, John Linder of Edison, and the late Steven D. Maurer of Botkins. Each has uniquely impacted Ohio agriculture through service, innovation, and commitment to community.

“Each of these individuals have left a meaningful and lasting imprint on Ohio agriculture,” said Tadd Nicholson, president of the Ohio Agricultural Council and executive director of the Ohio Corn & Wheat Growers Association. “With representation from the farm gate to education and state agencies, our 2025 inductees have given of their time, talent and leadership to advance the interests of our Industry and have served with distinction.”

The ceremony, marking its 59th year, is expected to draw over 600 attendees, including community leaders, industry professionals and family members who will gather to pay tribute to the inductees’ lifelong dedication and service to Ohio’s agricultural industry. With these inductions, the Ohio Agricultural Hall of Fame proudly honors a total of 257 individuals since its inception.

John H. Davis – Carrollton, Ohio

John H. Davis has spent his life advancing agricultural education and literacy across Ohio. A Carroll County native, he began as a vocational agriculture teacher, later becoming a state supervisor and then Director of Ohio FFA Camp Muskingum. Under his leadership, the camp grew from a seasonal facility to a year-round center with over 11,000 annual participants and launched programs like Nature’s Classroom and Project Reach.

As assistant director for Agricultural Education at the Ohio Department of Education, Davis oversaw \$20 million in funding for 325 programs and supported more than 650 teachers. After retiring, he continued advocating for ag literacy as Ohio’s state contact for Project Food, Land & People.

Beyond education, Davis served as a Carroll County Commissioner and held leadership roles in civic and ag organizations, championing farmland preservation and rural development. His contributions earned him numerous honors, including the Honorary American FFA Degree, National FFA VIP Award, and several distinguished service awards. Davis’s legacy is one of hands-on leadership, deep-rooted service, and a lifelong dedication to strengthening Ohio’s agricultural community.

Bill Isler – Prospect, Ohio (posthumously)

Bill Isler was a pioneering pork producer and lifelong advocate for Ohio agriculture. A third-generation farmer, he co-managed Isler Farms in Marion County, helping grow it into a nationally respected swine and crop operation. Among the first to adopt artificial insemination and achieve SPF herd status, Isler earned a reputation for genetic excellence and herd health, drawing buyers from across the U.S. and abroad.

He held leadership roles with the Ohio Pork Producers Council, National Duroc Board, and SPF associations, while mentoring youth through FFA, 4-H, and the Ohio State Fair. His pigs earned top honors at major shows, and he helped develop genetic evaluation programs that advanced the industry.

Isler was inducted into multiple halls of fame and received national recognition, including the Purebred Master Seedstock Producer Award and National SPF Producer of the Year. For over two decades, he also supplied hogs for groundbreaking human medical research. A quiet, generous leader, Isler served as a church elder and also gave through mentorship and community service.

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John Linder - Edison, Ohio

John Linder has demonstrated servant leadership in agriculture from Morrow County to the global stage. A fifth-generation grain farmer, he works alongside his family raising corn, soybeans, seed soybeans, and wheat—balancing land stewardship with decades of industry leadership.

He served as chair of Ohio's Corn Checkoff and held numerous roles with the National Corn Growers Association, eventually becoming President. In that role, he defended U.S. market access, challenged trade restrictions on biotech, and built global alliances through MAIZALL, working especially with leaders in Brazil and Argentina.

Linder also served two terms on the AgCredit board and remains active on the Morrow County FSA committee, advocating for practical farm program implementation. A devoted church member, he led youth-focused service projects and supported Ohio's first state-approved parochial ag program. Known for his steady leadership, humility, and results-driven mindset, Linder is both a champion tractor puller and a champion for Ohio agriculture.

Steven D. Maurer - Botkins, Ohio (posthumously)

Steven D. Maurer devoted his life to public service—in the military, elected office, and Ohio agriculture. A Shelby County native and Vietnam veteran, he earned the Bronze Star with double oak leaf cluster and the Army Commendation Medal before returning home to teach and later serve as mayor of Botkins.

As a state senator, Maurer championed the Linked Deposit and Amusement Ride Safety Programs. He later led the Ohio Department of Agriculture, helping create the Grain Indemnity Fund, Ohio Grape Industries Program, and the state's first Organic Standard of Identity—naming the Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA) as the first organic certifier. For 16 years, he served as Ohio's State Executive Director for USDA's Farm Service Agency under two presidents, overseeing Farm Bill implementation and expanding farm loan access. He also helped launch the Lake Erie Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.

Maurer was respected for his intelligence, fairness, and strong sense of duty, also serving in key roles at the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, the Ohio Farmers Union, and OEFFA. His legacy is one of visionary leadership and unwavering service.

For further information or to be a sponsor in honor of the inductees and in celebration of Ohio agriculture, contact the Ohio Agricultural Council at 614-794-8970 or via email at info@ohioagcouncil.org.

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Editor's note: Photos of inductees are available upon request.