



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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WV Agricultural Catalyst Team Announces Competition Finalists

The West Virginia Agricultural Catalyst Team is excited to announce the category winners for the inaugural WV Ag Student Innovation Challenge. Over 80 student teams submitted entries in the six Agriculture categories

Congratulations to the following West Virginia category winners!

- Plants Systems - Hayden Kestner from Sherrard Middle School;
- Animal Systems - Ryan Anderson and Johnny Slattman from South Harrison High School
- Environmental and Natural Resources – Ivy Ward, Catie Walton, Cole Anderegg, Nathaniel Bailey Buckhannon-Upshur High School
- Power, Structural and Technical – Levi Hamrick and Colby Grose from Clay County High School
- Food Products and Processing – Clarissa Keiffer from Clay County High School
- Agribusiness Systems – Abigail Schoonover, Leighvi Cummings, Shayna Bennett from Clay County High School

“We received submissions from schools across WV and are thrilled to announce these statewide category winners now competing for grand prize,” said Jason Hughes, State FFA Director. “Students from across West Virginia have submitted really innovative ideas to improve agriculture. We are excited about the level of creativity.”

The WV Ag Innovation Challenge was created by the WV Agricultural Catalyst team including Eastern WV Community & Technical College, the Robert C Byrd Institute, the WV Department of Education and the WV Department of Agriculture to infuse entrepreneurial and innovative thinking in agricultural education.

As part of the competition students in grades 7-12 grade students have developed creative strategies to address pressing issues and problems facing agriculture using innovation including technology and unique problem solving. Each team submitted an application which was scored by a panel of judges from across the state, the top applications were then notified and the teams developed a pitch for their innovation. On November 2nd twenty-six teams pitched to a panel of judges where the winners of each category were selected.

“This contest is about two things. The first is helping students uncover new ideas. The second is about teaching students across West Virginia to engage in entrepreneurial mindsets and innovative design thinking,” said Dr. Chuck Terrell, President of Eastern. The winning team will be awarded \$500 from Eastern, business coaching and prototype development by RCBI.

The finalists will compete on November 17 in Huntington, WV at the WV AG Innovation Showcase. The event will again be held at the **Marshall Memorial Student Center** on campus at MU.

For more details or to register for the WV AG Innovation Showcase please contact Tina Metzger at tina.metzer@easternwv.edu.