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News Release

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Richland County High School Agricultural Educator Selected for National Award

Mark Steber recognized by the National Association of Agricultural Educators for exemplary performance and dedication to agricultural education.

NASHVILLE, Tennessee – Mark Steber, agricultural educator at Richland County High School in Olney, Illinois is one of six agricultural educators nationwide who received the 2025 National Association of Agricultural Educators' Teacher Mentor Award. The award was presented during the 2025 NAAE Convention, December 8-12, in Nashville.

The NAAE Teacher Mentor Award is presented to an NAAE member who has excelled in preparing beginning agricultural educators into the profession by offering advice and guiding them to their own professional strengths. The NAAE Teacher Mentor Award is sponsored by iCEV.

During his 34-year career in agricultural education, Steber has mentored 17 student teachers, guided five early-career educators through Illinois' state mentoring program, and inspired eight former students to pursue careers as agricultural educators themselves. Known for his practical and reflective mentoring style, he creates safe and supportive spaces for professional growth—whether co-teaching in the laboratory, providing curriculum feedback, or helping teachers navigate supervised agricultural experiences (SAEs).

A former president of his state agricultural educator's association and past NAAE Region IV Secretary, Steber has strengthened the profession at every level. Through mentorship, partnership-building, and a steadfast commitment to lifelong learning, he continues to leave a lasting impact on agricultural education and the educators he supports.

NAAE is the professional organization for agricultural educators with over 10,000 members nationwide. The organization advocates for agricultural education, provides advancement through professional development for agricultural educators, and works to recruit and retain agricultural educators in the profession. NAAE offers a variety of programs and services to support this three-pronged mission. The mission of NAAE is "professionals providing agricultural education for the global community through visionary leadership, advocacy and service." NAAE is headquartered in Lexington, Ky.

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