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**For Immediate Release**

Contact: Christin Kamm  
402-471-6856

### **AG EDUCATOR MATT KREIFELS RECEIVES AWARD OF MERIT, NAYC'S HIGHEST HONOR**

LINCOLN – Matt Kreifels, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Practice at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, and long-time ag educator, was recently selected by the members of the Nebraska Agricultural Youth Council (NAYC) to receive the Council's highest honor. Kreifels received the Nebraska Agricultural Youth Institute's (NAYI) Award of Merit during a special awards luncheon at UNL's East Campus Union in Lincoln. The Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) oversees NAYC and NAYI.

"Teaching agriculture is one of the best ways to make a positive impact on current and future ag educators," said NAYC Advisor Christin Kamm. "Throughout his career, Matt Kreifels has mentored, encouraged, and inspired people to teach and be a part of the ag industry. This Award of Merit is a token of our appreciation to Matt for his constant support of agriculture, education, and the next generation of ag leaders."

Kreifels earned his bachelor's degree in agricultural sciences from UNL, his master's degree in curriculum and instruction from Wayne State College, and his doctorate's degree in human sciences/leadership studies from UNL. From 2010-2018, he served in a dual appointment between UNL and the Nebraska Department of Education as the State Director of Agricultural Education. Before coming to UNL in 2010, Kreifels taught agricultural education courses and served as the FFA advisor for nine years at Blair High School.

Through his role at UNL, Kreifels leads the agricultural education teacher preparation program, coordinates professional development for current Nebraska agricultural education teachers, manages the Nebraska Beginning Teacher program, and coordinates the Nebraska Career Development Events.

"Matt is dedicated, knowledgeable and passionate about agriculture and makes a difference every day in the lives of ag educators across the state and country," said Kamm. "We want to congratulate Matt on receiving this award and thank him for his dedication to the youth of Nebraska and for all he does for the ag industry."

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### **Scholarships Awarded to Youth**

Scholarships in the amount of \$500 each were awarded to two recent graduates who participated in NAYI this year as returning delegates. Returning delegates have additional responsibilities during NAYI designed to enhance leadership abilities and organizational skills.

The two scholarship recipients are Ceiden Childears of North Platte, and Levi Huffman of Maxwell. These two students are planning to attend the University of Nebraska this fall and be a part of CASNR.

NAYI is a week-long event for high school juniors and seniors interested in agriculture. NAYI includes motivational speakers, ag education, networking with peers and industry leaders, leadership experience and information on ag careers. In its 53<sup>rd</sup> year, NAYI is the longest running program of its kind in the nation.

NAYI is made possible through generous donations from agricultural businesses, commodity groups, and industry organizations. To learn more about NAYC or NAYI, visit <https://nda.nebraska.gov/nayi/>.

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**NOTE TO MEDIA:** Photos of award recipients are available by emailing NDA's webmaster at [agr.webmaster@nebraska.gov](mailto:agr.webmaster@nebraska.gov).