

*For immediate release*

**2015 OYF Memorial Scholarship winners named**

**Churchbridge, SK [January 21, 2016]** – Jenny Markewich of Hafford, Saskatchewan and Morgan McNeil of Hantsport, Nova Scotia are the 2015 recipients of Canada’s Outstanding Young Farmers (OYF) Memorial Scholarships. Jenny and Morgan will each receive $1,000 to support their post-secondary agricultural studies in Canada.

When Jenny Markewich learned that she had won the OYF scholarship, she immediately called her dad and brother to tell them the good news. She’s enrolled at the University of Saskatchewan’s agronomy program where she continues her studies this year.

Jenny’s dream job has always been to work as an agronomist. She grew up on a mixed farm with 100 head of beef cattle, 1,300 acres of grain and 1,000 acres of pasture. Jenny can hardly contain her excitement about pursuing a career in agriculture. “I’m eager to learn the variables that affect the outcomes of the growing season,” says Jenny. “Being accepted to the University of Saskatchewan’s college of agriculture makes me ecstatic to think that I’m on the path to my dream job.”

Morgan McNeil is completing her undergraduate degree in Plant Science with a minor in food science and technology at Dalhousie University. She’ll graduate this spring and is still deciding if she will continue her studies or start working.

The fact that Morgan didn’t grow up on a farm didn’t stop her from seeking out direct connections with agriculture. She joined the 4-H program at the age of 10, completing projects in gardening and dairy clubs. “I grew mixed vegetables and worked with cows on local farms to prepare for showmanship and confirmation classes,” says Morgan. She has just finished her 12th year as a member of the youth development program. “My involvement in 4-H encouraged me to pursue a post-secondary education in agriculture.”

Since 2009, Canada’s Outstanding Young Farmers (OYF) program supports agricultural education for young Canadians through its Memorial Scholarship fund. The OYF Memorial Scholarship was established by the late Martin Streef, recipient of both Ontario’s and Canada’s OYF awards in 1996 Martin was president of Streef Produce Ltd., a family-run fresh fruit and vegetable business in Woodstock Ontario – to help future generations of Canadians pursue their passion for agriculture. He died in April 2008.

The award now includes two annual scholarships – one to an individual who has completed at least one year of post-secondary study in agriculture, and the other to someone who has completed high school and is enrolling in a post-secondary education in agriculture. Applicants are asked why they are passionate about agriculture in Canada, as part of the application process.

“Our industry must continually attract the next generation to support innovation and progress for Canadian agriculture,” says Luanne Lynn, president of Canada’s OYF program. “It is so inspiring to provide scholarships to agriculture students that will help drive fresh ideas and approaches. Morgan and Jenny have come to agriculture from different backgrounds, but share a passion for their role in our industry. This is the energy that OYF is so proud to be able to support through the OYF Memorial Scholarship.”

Jenny Markewich and Morgan McNeil will be formally presented with their 2015 OYF Memorial Scholarships at 2016 OYF regional events in Saskatchewan and the Atlantic region, respectively.

Full details and application forms for the OYF Memorial Scholarships are available at [www.oyfcanada.com](http://www.oyfcanada.com) under “Scholarships”. The deadline for nominations for the 2016 scholarships is June 30, 2016.

Celebrating 36 years, Canada’s Outstanding Young Farmers’ program is an annual competition to recognize farmers that exemplify excellence in their profession and promote the tremendous contribution of agriculture. Open to participants 18 to 39 years of age, making the majority of income from on-farm sources, participants are selected from seven regions across Canada, with two national winners chosen each year. The program is sponsored nationally by CIBC, John Deere, Bayer and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through Growing Forward 2, a federal, provincial, territorial initiative. The national media sponsor is Annex Business Media, and the program is supported nationally by AdFarm, BDO and Farm Management Canada.

Canada’s Outstanding Young Farmers for 2016 will be chosen at the National Event in Niagara Falls, Ontario from November 29 – December 4, 2016.

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