

The Nebraska Corn Board presented its annual awards to six Nebraskans during its Cooperator and Awards Dinner in Lincoln recently.

The agricultural awards pay tribute to outstanding representatives of Nebraska's grain elevator, livestock, and ethanol industries.

Additional recognition goes to a member of the Nebraska media and to recognize overall achievement in agriculture.

The Ag Achievement Award annually honors those who have supported and expanded Nebraska agriculture over the long term.

This year's award was presented to two recipients: State Senator Tom Carlson of Holdrege and Rick Leonard, research analyst for the Agriculture Committee of the Nebraska Legislature.

Senator Carlson was instrumental in helping pass the legislation that allowed the corn checkoff rate in Nebraska to increase to a level that is better aligned with the current state of the corn industry and with the challenges and opportunities that exist for Nebraska corn farmers.

Carlson has also been a leader in exploring ways to help commodity checkoff programs and other agriculture organizations in the state work more efficiently and cooperatively.

Leonard conducted the critical background work required to introduce legislation in support of the corn checkoff revision. He was also involved in the interim study that looked at changes in the structure of the Nebraska Corn Board and continues to be engaged in the legislative process in this regard.

The Elevator Industry Appreciation Award was presented to George Hohwieler, CEO of Aurora Cooperative, headquartered in Aurora. Hohwieler was recognized for his company's commitment to agriculture and to the development of young people in agriculture.

He was also supportive of partnering with Nebraska corn farmers for the Red Cross grain donation program. With this, he supported sending two of his board members with the Corn Board to Japan for relief efforts and a Nebraska corn-fed beef trade mission after the earthquake and tsunami in 2011.

The Livestock Industry Appreciation Award was given to Willow Holoubek, organizational director for the Alliance for the Future of Agriculture in Nebraska (A-FAN).

Holoubek has been a champion for animal agriculture in Nebraska, helping consumers appreciate the value of the livestock industry in the state—and supporting efforts to expand livestock production in Nebraska.

The Ethanol Industry Appreciation Award was presented to Seth Harder, plant manager at Husker Ag, LLC of Plainview.

He was recognized for his leadership in working with retailers to install flex fuel pumps in northeast Nebraska and for his involvement and engagement in ethanol advocacy groups on both a statewide and national basis.

The Media Appreciation Award was presented to Robert Pore of the Grand Island (Neb.) Independent.

Pore was recognized for his commitment and depth of understanding of agriculture and biofuels issues—and his ability to effectively communicate these stories with the general public.

The Nebraska Corn Board is responsible for investing the corn checkoff dollars contributed by Nebraska's 23,000 corn farmers and managing programs focused on market development, research, education, and promotion.

