

The Good Farmer Award U.S. 2026 Edition - AWARD GUIDELINES

Overview

Launching on **Farmer Awareness Day, October 12, 2025**, and culminating with the award presentation on **Earth Day, April 22, 2026**, Davines North America, a subsidiary of Davines Group, is proud to continue its partnership with Rodale Institute for the **2nd Annual Good Farmer Award U.S.**

Building on the success of the inaugural award in both Italy and the U.S., this program celebrates **Beginning Farmers**, those with **10 years or less of farming experience**, who are advancing or aspiring toward sustainable farming practices that strengthen community well-being and environmental health.

Submissions should highlight active interest or current implementation in environmentally responsible practices that boost biodiversity, promote long-term resilience, garner community engagement, and advance sustainable and equitable systems.

The award recipient will receive \$10,000 from Davines North America to invest in equipment and initiatives that elevate their agroecological efforts, along with an all-expenses-paid trip (valued at \$5,000) to the European Regenerative Organic Center (EROCC) in Parma, Italy—a premier research and training hub connected to the Davines Group Village.

The second place award recipient will receive \$5,000 from Davines North America to invest in equipment and initiatives that elevate their agroecological efforts, along with an all-expenses-paid trip (valued at \$2,500) to Rodale Institute in Kutztown, PA. The third place award recipient will be provided free access to [Rodale Institute Education Resources](#), including online courses and workshops, and free registration at Rodale Institute's annual field day on **July 2025**.

By championing forward-thinking farmers, this initiative reaffirms Davines Group and Rodale Institute's shared commitment to promoting regenerative organic agriculture.

How It Works

The Good Farmer Award U.S., which originated in 2024 with Davines Group's Good Farmer Award in Italy, is funded by Davines North America and facilitated by Rodale Institute.

To be eligible, farmers must meet the [USDA Beginning Farmer](#) requirements and be able to demonstrate a strong commitment to regenerative organic practices on their farm or ranch.

Eligibility specifics: This award program seeks a '[Beginning Farmer](#)' based in the U.S. who has been in operation for 10 years or less. Submissions should demonstrate active involvement or ongoing efforts in environmentally responsible practices that enhance biodiversity, foster

long-term resilience, encourage community participation, and support the development of sustainable and equitable systems.

A panel of judges, including representatives from Davines Group and Rodale Institute and external experts, will select one grantee, along with second and third place finalists which will be announced on Earth Day, April 22, 2026.

As part of the application process, the applicant must clearly indicate how award money will be used. The applicant must select one or a combination of categories listed, detailing the items, cost estimate and description of how the prize money will be used across one or more categories. (Item, Description, Cost Estimate / Percentage of budget)

Categories:

- **Environmental Impact:** Prize money will be used to help aid sustainable, resilient farming practices that reduce environmental footprints and restore ecosystems, examples include: irrigation systems that promote water efficiency, no-till farming, agroforestry, cover cropping.
- **Community Engagement:** Prize money will be used to help strengthen local economies and foster community relationships by prioritizing transparency, accessibility, and mutual support, examples include: direct-to-consumer models such as farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs, and local school or grocery partnerships.
- **Equipment & Infrastructure:** Prize money will be used to purchase tools and equipment that contribute to efficiency, adaptability, and sustainability, examples include: no-till drills and seeders, roller crimpers, advanced composting systems, energy-efficient coolers, solar panels to power infrastructure.

THE GOOD FARMER AWARD U.S. 2026 - DETAILS

Purpose

Aligned with the European Regenerative Organic Center (EROC), the U.S. award will highlight farmers/ranchers who are committed to environmentally responsible practices that boost biodiversity, focus on promoting long-term resilience through strategies that mitigate climate change, reduce environmental degradation, and support the adaptive capacity of communities and ecosystems.

Submissions should also emphasize efforts to garner meaningful community engagement by involving local stakeholders, fostering collaboration, and building awareness and advocacy for environmental stewardship. The award program will look for candidates who prioritize

advancing sustainable and equitable systems that balance ecological health with social and economic needs, ensuring that benefits are shared inclusively across diverse populations and future generations.

Timeline

Submission of applications: October 12, 2025 – January 16, 2026

Awards Announcement & Ceremony: April 22, 2026

Jurisdiction

Open to eligible participants in all 50 states and U.S. territories

Initiative Targets

The Award is aimed at '[Beginning Farmer](#)' who have operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 consecutive years. This requirement applies to all members of an entity on the application deadline date (January 16, 2026).

Participation Requirements:

Application Submission

To apply, you will need to complete all parts of the application form available at <https://rodaleinstitute.org/us-good-farmer-award-2025/> starting at 12:00 a.m. on 10/12/2026 and until 11:00 p.m. on 01/16/2026.

The application form requires the following fields to be filled in, each of which determines the score assigned by the Jury:

Section 1 - General applicant information.

Section 2 - Farm/Ranch Overview and Practices. *(Brief description of farm/ranch, regenerative practices used, details regarding specific regenerative farming practices, number/type of certifications, current challenges/barriers to farming.)*

Section 3 - Project Proposal - Use of award money. *(Cost estimate and description of how award money will be used across one or more categories, specific goals and timeline.)*

Section 4 - Supporting documentation. *(Business plan (optional), photos of the farm/ranch. (before and after shots of any projects, if applicable), 2 Letters of recommendation or testimonials from mentors, customers or community members.)*

Section 5 - Personal Statement. *(Farming journey and passion for regenerative organic farming.)*

Section 6 - Declaration and Signature. *(Acknowledgment of regulation guidelines and agree to adhere to all requirements and expectations.)*

Please also note that once the form is submitted, no changes can be made.

Award Stages and Award:

The selection process to identify the final awardee is carried out at the sole discretion of the Jury and consists of primarily three stages:

Stage 1: Check Eligibility Requirements

At the close of the application submission deadline (11:00 p.m. on 1/16/26), the team of Davines Group and Rodale Institute will check the applications received for compliance with the eligibility criteria. Applications deemed eligible will then move on to the second stage of evaluation.

Stage 2: Evaluation and Scoring

Applications will be evaluated by an internal review team and the Jury (see “JURY COMPOSITION” section) comprised of experts in farming, agriculture, biodiversity protection, and agroecology. The jury will assess production strategies based on innovation and the application of practices, assigning each submission a score from 1 to 5.

Scores will determine a ranked list, recorded up to the 4th position. The top entry will be declared the award recipient, with 2nd and 3rd serving as alternates if the selected candidate declines the grant (as outlined in the section below - NOTICE AND CONFIRMATION OF AWARD RECEIPT).

Stage 3: Notice and Confirmation of Award Recipient

Awardees will be notified via email by **h.kleinert@davines.us** and must keep the award confidential until the Award Ceremony on April 22, 2026, to avoid interfering with event communications and press activities.

The awardee must confirm acceptance of the award by responding within 3 days of receiving the notification. Failure to do so may result in the award being given to the next candidate in the ranking.

If an awardee declines the distinction, they must notify Davines North America promptly. This decision is final and cannot be revoked. The waiver must be formalized in writing via email, after which Davines North America may proceed to offer the recognition to the next candidate in the ranking.

The award recipient will receive \$10,000 from Davines North America to invest in equipment and initiatives that elevate their agroecological efforts. They will also receive an all-expenses-paid trip (valued at \$5,000) to the European Regenerative Organic Center (EROC) in Parma, Italy—a premier research and training hub connected to the Davines Group Village.

The awardee will gain significant visibility through Davines North America and Rodale Institute communication channels, including a dedicated campaign, media outreach, website announcements, social media posts, and their respective newsletters.

Participants acknowledge that recipients may be photographed, filmed, and interviewed to promote The Good Farmer Award U.S. and advance awareness of regenerative organic farming. These materials may be used for media relations and Davines North America and Rodale Institute social media. Awardees will be required to sign a release for image use, in compliance with applicable regulations.

Jury Composition

The Jury consists of a diverse panel of experts drawn from various fields related to farming, agriculture, biodiversity protection, and agroecology. This includes professionals with extensive experience in sustainable farming practices, agricultural innovation, as well as specialists in conserving ecosystems and protecting biodiversity. The panel features thought leaders and practitioners in agriculture, known for their expertise in integrating ecological principles into farming systems to promote sustainability, resilience, and environmental health. Together, this multidisciplinary jury ensures a comprehensive and informed evaluation process, bringing diverse perspectives and deep knowledge to the assessment of submissions.

Contact

If you have any questions, or experience any technical difficulties submitting the application form, please contact: **GoodFarmerAwards@rodaleinstitute.org**.