

Contact: Karen Jones
Phone: 309/557-6184
E-mail: kjones@growmark.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GROWMARK Announces 2017 Wisconsin Essay Contest Winner

Casey Kroening of Ladysmith, Wisconsin, has been named the Wisconsin state winner of the 2017 GROWMARK essay contest for FFA members. The theme of this year's contest was "What value do cooperatives provide to today's farmers?"

In his contest entry, Kroening said: "The value of cooperatives is immensely important to today's farmers, and is more than what is seen at a business level. Farmers who join and utilize the services are the ones who receive the benefits. Advantages are given straight to the members, helping financially and economically. Members of a cooperative, while working together, can achieve new markets and opportunities previously inaccessible to them."

Kroening is a student at Bruce High School and a member of the Bruce FFA chapter. His FFA advisor is Sam Behrends.

As the contest winner, Kroening will receive a \$500 award from GROWMARK at the Wisconsin FFA State Convention in Madison, held in June. The Bruce FFA chapter will also receive a \$300 award in honor of his accomplishment to help future students.

Four state runners-up will each receive a \$125 award. The runners-up and their FFA chapters are, in alphabetical order: Taylor Adleman, Medford FFA, Medford, Wisconsin; Allison Bragger, Independence FFA, Independence, Wisconsin; Kendra Gillett, Beaver Dam FFA, Fall River, Wisconsin; and Alexis Harper, River Ridge FFA, Glen Haven, Wisconsin.

This is the 24th year for the program, sponsored by the GROWMARK System and FS member cooperatives, in conjunction with state FFA leaders, to help young people develop their writing skills, learn about current issues in agriculture, and understand the unique role of cooperatives.

GROWMARK is a regional cooperative with annual sales of \$8.8 billion (FY 2015 data) providing agronomy, energy, facility planning, and logistics products and services, as well as grain marketing and risk management services in more than 40 states and Ontario, Canada. GROWMARK owns the FS trademark, which is used by affiliated member cooperatives. More information is available at www.growmark.com

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