



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Ohio Poultry Association Announces 2019 Award Recipients**  
*Three individuals, one organization honored for their dedication to  
Ohio's egg, chicken and turkey communities*

**COLUMBUS, Ohio** – The Ohio Poultry Association (OPA) announced its 2019 award recipients during the organization's annual meeting and banquet held April 12 in Columbus. This year there were four awards that honored individuals and organizations who have made significant contributions to Ohio's egg, chicken and turkey farming communities.

"This time of the year is so special for our organization because we get the opportunity to publicly recognize the hard work and achievements of the outstanding people who make up the Ohio egg and poultry community," said Jim Chakeres, OPA executive vice president. "I'm honored to work with such talented individuals who have worked tirelessly to advance agriculture in Ohio."

Awards and recipients at the 34<sup>th</sup> annual OPA Banquet and Industry Celebration included:

**Golden Egg Award: Tom Stoller**

The Golden Egg Award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated their commitment to advancing the mission and values of the poultry community. This year's recipient was Tom Stoller of Van Wert, Ohio. Stoller grew up on his family's fourth-generation commercial layer operation that has transformed since the 1920s from a small hatchery into one of the nation's leading table egg farms. He has embraced his role as a farmer by being a responsible neighbor, steward of the environment, and providing a safe and wholesome product for consumers. As a passionate member of the Ohio egg and poultry industry, he proudly served as a past president of OPA and member of the American Egg Board. His commitment to the advancement of the poultry and agriculture communities has been recognized numerous times during his career by acting as a leader in addressing environmental issues in Ohio.

**Good Egg Award: Cindy Kirkland**

This award is presented to a person who has the best interest of the Ohio poultry industry in mind every day. This year's honoree was Cindy Kirkland of Dublin, Ohio. Kirkland has been a trusted partner to OPA for many years and has played an instrumental role in countless culinary projects and campaigns including OPA's most recent initiative, Dish on Eggs, in which she leveraged her extensive culinary expertise to create, test and photograph numerous recipes. In addition to her role with Dish on Eggs, Kirkland has assisted with the planning and preparation behind the Ohio Agricultural Council's Hall of Fame Breakfast that takes place each year during the Ohio State Fair. She has also been a longtime judge for OPA's culinary competitions at the Ohio State Fair and often works behind the scenes to prepare all materials for TV cooking demonstrations and other OPA culinary initiatives.

**Meritorious Service Award: Dr. Keith Honegger**

The Meritorious Service Award is given each year to someone in the academic field who has made a significant impact on the regional egg and poultry community. This year, OPA was pleased to honor Dr. Keith Honegger, of Bluffton, Indiana with this award. He has served as a prominent veterinarian in the poultry industry for more than four decades. For the last five years, Dr. Honegger has worked with Elanco as a poultry technical consultant. In this role, he develops effective vaccination schedules and provides veterinary support to commercial layer and broiler companies in disease diagnosis, serological testing, and vaccine application training. During his 43 years serving as a poultry veterinarian, Dr. Honegger has remained focused on addressing the needs of his customers, no matter the company he represents, and advancing and supporting the OPA community.

**Industry Partner Award: Ohio Pork Council**

The Industry Partner Award honors an organization that supports the mission of OPA and its members. This year's recipient was the Ohio Pork Council for their longtime partnership and support of the state's egg, turkey and chicken farmers. The Ohio Pork Council has worked side-by-side with OPA on an array of projects throughout the years. Most recently, OPA has worked with the Ohio Pork Council, along with other Ohio livestock commodity organizations, to lead statewide efforts on water quality. By working together, OPA and the Ohio Pork Council will succeed in advancing and sustaining Ohio agriculture for generations to come.

Ohio's egg, chicken and turkey farms are significant contributors to the success of the state's economy. Ohio is one of the leading countries in egg production and produces about 9 billion eggs each year with an estimated retail value of \$480 million. Ohio is also a leader in chicken and turkey production with more than 526 million pounds of chicken and 280.7 million pounds of turkey produced annually. Ohio's egg, chicken and turkey farms create nearly 19,000 jobs generating \$593 million in earnings for the state's economy.

For more information, visit the OPA website at [www.ohiopoultry.org](http://www.ohiopoultry.org).

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