2026 COMMUNICATION AWARDS

PURPOSE:

The MAAFS Communications Contest recognizes excellence, creativity, and innovation in the promotion of fairs, shows, and agricultural organizations. The contest provides members an opportunity to showcase their best work, share successful ideas, and inspire continued growth and improvement in communications throughout the fair industry.

OJECTIVES:

- Strengthen agricultural education and awareness programs.
- Identify ways to be of service to exhibitors, the fair-going public and agriculture industry.
- Recognize fairs which excel in agriculture programming and promotion.

HOW TO ENTER:

All entry forms must be submitted to katieweko@yahoo.com no later than November 1, 2026.

Please read the following rules and the category submittal forms carefully.

DEADLINE:

All entries must be pre-entered by November 1, 2026.

Entries will be accepted in person at the convention on Friday, November 6, from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

GUIDELINES:

1. Entries in all the categories must be from the 2026 fair season.
2. Each entry must be original concept or program of the fair submitting the entry.
3. Each fair may submit only 1 entry per category (unless otherwise noted). A specific program/event/theme/exhibit may only be submitted in one category.
4. Entries must be submitted using the appropriate category formats.

DIVISIONS

Based on 2026 reported Fair attendance

1. Fairs with an attendance of up to 30,000
2. Fairs with an attendance of 30,001 - 75,000
3. Fairs with an attendance of 75,001 – and above

CATEGORIES:

Category 1: Newspaper/Magazine Advertisement – Submit up to 2 items

Category 2: Poster Advertisements

Category 3: Promotional Advertising

Category 4: Printed Promotional Material – Multi-page Publication, Brochure/Flyer or Series

Category 5: Advertising Specialties/Merchandise

Category 6: Promotion Event

Category 7: Premium Book – electronic/printed If electronic, USB must be submitted

Category 8: Photo series - A photo series that shows an informative, interesting, or unique scene from your fair's non-animal competitive exhibit classes. No less than 3 photos; no more than 5 photos. Captions are required (limit of 30 words per photo).

Category 9: Scrapbook

Category 10: Successful Non-Fair Event at your Facility produced or co-produced with staff - Recognition of a successful non-fair event taking place in the facility which is produced in conjunction with a partner. Event should have taken place in the 12 months prior to the awards judging (which is approximately Nov 1 of the current year). A photo with an attached description must be submitted to enter.

Category 11: Social Media - Must be a "Targeted Campaign" (i.e. Ticket Tuesday, Concert Announcements, etc.). May be over multiple platforms (Facebook, twitter, Instagram, etc.). No minimum or maximum number of posts required but must fit within the 2 page limit. Print example of posts.

Category 12: Sponsorship Innovation - Fairs must demonstrate a distinct new method or unique approach to sponsorship activation, partnership, or initiative. This category is designed to show how a fair has stepped out of the box to create a unique sponsorship or perhaps given an existing sponsorship a new twist. Entries should include supporting material to meet the judging criteria outlined with special focus on why the entry is innovative.

Category 13: Newly established or evolving program/exhibit at your fair which promotes agriculture or a current agricultural issue to the fair-going public - Entrants will describe an innovative exhibit, event, program, theme, or competition designed to communicate an agricultural message(s) in an entertaining and/or educational format to the fair guests. Entrants should also explain relevance and detail partnerships involved, resources used, and the success of the program.

Category 14: Agriculture Individual Photo: Livestock - Submitted photo should depict a scene from the competitive agricultural program or special agricultural event/program at the annual fair. The fair name and competition reflected should be included on the mat. Picture should be submitted in a matted 8X10 frame. Plastic sleeves will be provided.

Category 15: Agriculture Individual Photo: Horticulture/Crops - Submitted photo should depict a scene from the competitive agricultural program or special agricultural

event/program at the annual fair. The fair name and competition reflected should be included on the mat. Picture should be submitted in a matted 8X10 frame. Plastic sleeves will be provided.

Category 16: Agriculture Individual Photo: Event - Submitted photo should depict a scene from the competitive agricultural program or special agricultural event/program at the annual fair. The fair name and competition reflected should be included on the mat. Picture should be submitted in a matted 8X10 frame. Plastic sleeves will be provided.

Category 17: Agriculture Individual Photo - Ag Education (4-H/FFA) - Submitted photo should depict a scene from the competitive agricultural program or special agricultural event/program at the annual fair. The fair name and competition reflected should be included on the mat. Picture should be submitted in a matted 8X10 frame. Plastic sleeves will be provided.

Category 18: Agriculture Individual Photo: Misc. - Submitted photo should depict a scene from the competitive agricultural program or special agricultural event/program at the annual fair. The fair name and competition reflected should be included on the mat. Picture should be submitted in a matted 8X10 frame. Plastic sleeves will be provided.

JUDGING:

All categories will use the following criteria while ranking entries:

1. Theme or Goal
2. Promotion of Agriculture
3. Goal Achievement, Participant Reaction
4. Originality
5. Overall Achievement

All entries will be judged Saturday, November 7, 2026 by noon using the criteria outlined and an evaluation scoring form. Entries in noncompliance with specific instructions and/or entries not meeting minimal standards will be reflected in judges' final scores and placing or may be disqualified. The judges reserve the right to move entries to more appropriate categories if deemed necessary.

AWARDS:

First place winners will receive a certificate and a ribbon; 2nd and 3rd place winners receive ribbons.