FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Agri-Marketing Association Honors Outstanding Professionals with 2026 Awards of Excellence

LEAWOOD, Kan. (September 2026) – The National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA) has announced the recipients of the 2026 Professional Development Awards of Excellence (PDAE), recognizing two exceptional members for their achievements and contributions to the agricultural marketing industry.

The Professional Development Awards of Excellence honor NAMA members for outstanding achievement in the areas of Marketing Communications, Product/Species Management, Public Relations or Sales. The 2026 awards will be formally presented during **NAMA Nexus, October 13-15 in Des Moines, Iowa**.

This year's honorees are:

- **Doug Monson, Vice President of Agriculture, Forward Minded Media – Award for Marketing Communications**
- **Laura Rustmann, Director of Marketing and Sales, J.L. Farmakis, Inc. – Award for Sales**

Doug Monson, Forward Minded Media – Marketing Communications

As Vice President of Agriculture at Forward Minded Media, Doug Monson has played a pivotal role in building the agency's agriculture practice from the ground up. During the past 18 months, he has generated more than $1 million in sales while developing a growing department, expanding the agency's client portfolio and establishing Forward Minded Media as a credible national partner in agriculture.

Drawing on more than 25 years of experience in journalism, publishing, agricultural communications and marketing, Monson brings a consultative approach to his work. His ability to understand clients' business challenges and connect strategy, creative, public relations,

digital media, publications, events and other services has helped the agency develop and expand relationships with agricultural organizations and agribusiness clients.

Monson's commitment to the industry also extends to NAMA. He serves on the national Student NAMA Committee and was recently named vice chair. He also participated in NAMA's 2025-26 mentoring program, helping a communications professional new to agriculture better understand the industry, expand their network and identify opportunities for professional growth.

Laura Rustmann, JL Farmakis – Sales

As Director of Marketing and Sales for J.L. Farmakis, Inc., Laura Rustmann has distinguished herself as a high-performing sales and communications professional with a talent for developing strong relationships throughout agricultural marketing. During her more than nine years with the company, she has consistently grown existing accounts and generated new business while serving as one of the organization's leading salespeople.

Rustmann has excelled at developing efficient multimedia packages for advertising clients and has grown sales of the firm's group-buy bundles by more than 50% over the past two to three years, including 20% growth in bundled sales in 2025. Her interest in innovation, technology and digital media has also helped J.L. Farmakis and its local publication and radio partners expand their digital marketing solutions.

In addition to her sales responsibilities, Rustmann leads J.L. Farmakis' year-round external marketing efforts, helping double the company's exposure over the past three years. Her work includes building visibility for the firm and its local media partners at major agricultural industry events, managing industry and trade marketing relations projects and expanding the company's social media presence.

Rustmann has also demonstrated a longstanding commitment to NAMA. An active member of the Gateway Chapter for more than 15 years, she has regularly attended NAMA's national conferences and served multiple years on the Fall Conference Planning Committee, including as vice chair in 2023 and chair in 2024.

"Doug and Laura represent the talent, leadership and commitment that make the agri-marketing industry so strong," said Jennifer Pickett, CEO, NAMA. "Their accomplishments demonstrate excellence in their respective disciplines, but just as importantly, both have invested their time and expertise in strengthening NAMA and developing others in our industry. We are proud to recognize them with the 2026 Professional Development Awards of Excellence.

About NAMA

The National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA) is the largest U.S. association for professionals in marketing and agribusiness. NAMA provides education, networking and professional development opportunities for its members while recognizing outstanding achievement and innovation in agricultural marketing. For more information contact jennyp@nama.org.

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