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Inaugural national service award recognizes fourteen state agriculture commissioners, secretaries and directors

PORTLAND, Maine – The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture commenced a new, annual “Years of Service Ceremony” to honor NASDA members for years of service to their states and the organization at its [2026 annual meeting](#).

Three members were given awards for more than 20 years, five members were recognized for at least 15 years of service and six members for at least 10 years of service.

“Having served in these roles over 10, 20 to nearly 30 years, adds up to countless hours members have worked day-in and day-out with farmers to find the best ways to innovate how we grow our food and fiber, care for our environment and support local communities in good times and hard times,” NASDA CEO Ted McKinney said. “Going beyond service to their local farmers, ranchers and food producers, these members have given their experience and expertise to NASDA to help hone federal regulation and craft policy that works better for all Americans, farmers, ranchers and consumers alike. We thank them for their dedication and working with us to ensure American agriculture continues to grow ‘deep roots’ for a ‘bountiful future.’”

20+ Years of Service Award recipients

- Former Chief Ken Ayers, Rhode Island Division of Agriculture (Ayers retired this year after 28 years of service)
- Commissioner Steve Troxler, North Carolina Department of Agriculture (20 years)
- Commissioner Hugh Weathers, South Carolina Department of Agriculture (22 years)

15+ Years of Service Award Recipients

- Commissioner Doug Goehring, North Dakota Department of Agriculture
- Commissioner Louis Peterson, Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture
- Secretary Karen Ross, California Department of Food and Agriculture
- Commissioner Mike Strain, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry
- Secretary Jeff Witte, New Mexico Department of Agriculture

10+ Years of Service Award Recipients

- Commissioner Richard Ball, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets
- Commissioner Sid Miller, Texas Department of Agriculture
- Director Doug Miyamoto, Wyoming Department of Agriculture
- Secretary Russ Redding, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
- Director Derek Sandison, Washington State Department of Agriculture
- Secretary Wes Ward, Arkansas Department of Agriculture

NASDA also recognized John Baugh, former Purdue University Director of Agricultural Services and Regulations, who worked with NASDA members to serve U.S. farmers and ranchers throughout his



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career. Baugh recently retired after serving in that role for over 30 years.

NASDA has been convening the nation's commissioners, secretaries and directors of agriculture to serve as a unified voice on our nation's most important agricultural issues from all 50 states and four territories for over 100 years. Going forward, NASDA will recognize members for their years of service from 10 years to over 25 years. Learn more about NASDA members and their work at [NASDA.org](https://nasda.org).



NASDA President Amanda Beal (left), NASDA CEO Ted McKinney (right) and Illinois Director of Agriculture Jerry Costello (left, middle) stand with South Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers as he is honored for 22 years of service.



NASDA President Amanda Beal and NASDA CEO Ted McKinney stand with NASDA 10+ Years of Service Honorees. From left to right: NASDA President Amanda Beal, Commissioner Richard Ball (New York), Secretary Russell Redding (Pennsylvania), Commissioner Sid Miller (Texas), Director Derek Sandison (Washington), Director Doug Miyamoto (Wyoming), NASDA CEO Ted McKinney.



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NASDA President Amanda Beal and NASDA CEO Ted McKinney stand with NASDA 15+ Years of Service Honorees. From left to right: Secretary Jeff Witte (New Mexico), Secretary Karen Ross (California), Commissioner Mike Strain (Louisiana), Commissioner Doug Goehring (North Dakota), NASDA CEO Ted McKinney.



NASDA CEO Ted McKinney shakes hands with NASDA 15+ Years of Service Honorees.

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NASDA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit association which represents the elected and appointed commissioners, secretaries and directors of the departments of agriculture in all 50 states and four U.S. territories. NASDA engages state departments of agriculture to strengthen U.S. agriculture and allied industries through policy, partnerships and public outreach. To learn more about NASDA, please visit www.nasda.org.



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