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## Hamilton named Young Farmer Association's Member of the Year

By Don Wilkins Messenger-Inquirer  
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Daviess County farmer Cole Hamilton is pictured with a Case tractor that he'll be using in the field this growing season. Hamilton was named the Kentucky Young Farmer Association's Member of the Year at the 65th annual convention held Feb. 24-25 in Louisville.

By Mayme Hunt

When it comes to farming, Cole Hamilton has always considered himself an underdog.

However, Hamilton, a 27-year-old first generation Daviess County farmer, recently caught the attention of his peers by being named the Kentucky Young Farmer Association's Member of the Year at the 65th annual convention held Feb. 24-25 in Louisville.

"It's been kind of a dream of mine since I became a part of the association about seven years ago," said Hamilton about winning the award.

Hamilton was up against Warren County grower Chris Bowen, who farms more than double the acres of Hamilton and runs an orchard operation.



To win the award, judges visited each farm to view the overall operation while also considering factors such as community and Young Farmer Association involvement.

Hamilton said he's "still shocked" that he won.

"The guy I was running against, he's a generational farmer; he's around 1,900 acres of row crops, and then he's got a peach orchard," Hamilton said. "I've always viewed myself as the underdog just because I'm a first generation farmer; my parents didn't farm; my grandparents didn't farm. So going into it, I had no idea that I'd win."

The grand prize was a paid six-month lease on a new tractor from AgRevolutions.

Hamilton, a 2014 Daviess County High School graduate, earned his associate's degree from Owensboro Community & Technical College's agricultural program before receiving his bachelor's degree in agronomy from Western Kentucky University in 2017.

Hamilton began farming six years ago.

Last year, he grew 510 acres — 260 in corn and 250 in soybeans.

Along with winning the top award, Hamilton also took second place in bottom land soybean production at the convention.

Hamilton said he's been able to upgrade equipment and secure more land, allowing him to expand for the upcoming growing season.

"We'll be close to 700 acres this year," he said.

## 2023 Young Farmer Association's Convention

During the two-day meeting, participants were also greeted by Ag Commissioner Ryan Quarles and toured the Kentucky Derby Museum.

On the second day, there were presentations from Jason Morris of the Kentucky State Police and Adam Butler with Kentucky Department of Agriculture Farm and Home Safety. There were also breakout sessions hosted by Kenny Burdine on risk management, Kristie Guffey and Natalie Gupton on stress management and Josh Wilson on estate planning.

Lunch was held with ag internet influencer Gavin "Popcorn Farmer" Spoor. There was also an entrepreneurship panel discussion with Gavin Spoor, Grayce Emmick, Savannah Robin, Mark Thomas, Daniel and Danielle Hayden, Chris Bowen and Janella Miller.

The convention wrapped up with announcing of the 2023-24 state officers — Brandon Winkler was named president, and Austin Glenn was named Green River area vice president.

Brian Fischer won first place in the mechanical skills tests.

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