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**Illinois Agricultural Teacher Named
 “Ag Educator of the Year”**

*Seneca’s Kent Weber honored as Illinois’ Golden Owl Award grand prize winner after being named one of 5 state finalists*

**Des Moines, IA** – Agricultural educators across the nation are devoted to making meaningful connections and encouraging the development of their students. In Illinois, 5 exceptional ag teachers were named as finalists for the Golden Owl Award® for their positive impact in the classroom and industry overall. Of the finalists, Kent Weber, an agricultural teacher at Seneca High School, was named Illinois’ 2021-2022 “Ag Educator of the Year.”

Nationwide, in partnership with the Illinois Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers (IAVAT), Illinois Association FFA, Farm Credit Illinois, and Compeer Financial recognized Kent Weber as the 2021-2022 Golden Owl Award grand prize winner during the IAVAT 100th Anniversary Conference. In addition to the title of Illinois’ Ag Educator of the Year, Mr. Weber will receive the coveted Golden Owl Award trophy and a $3,000 Nationwide-funded donation to further Seneca’s agricultural education efforts.

One of Weber’s nominations stated, “When you look at his success in and out of the classroom over the years, you will find nobody better. As he has said in the past, ‘If an Ag Teacher is getting it done in the classroom, then the FFA success will follow.’… He is there for all teachers and students, and really can’t be beat.” Mr. Weber’s recognition as the 2022 Illinois Agricultural Educator of the Year coincides with his retirement from a 32 year career at Seneca High School.

As the number one insurer of farms and ranches in the United States1, Nationwide established the Golden Owl Award with its state partners to shed light on the contributions of Illinois’ leading agricultural teachers and provide additional resources to support their programs.

“Nationwide is proud to recognize the dedicated men and women who are educating and inspiring students to pursue careers in agriculture,” said Brad Liggett, Nationwide’s president of Agribusiness. “We’re honored to have the opportunity to appreciate their contributions, highlight the growing need for their services, and supply additional resources to help provide students with optimal learning experiences.”

Nationwide supports the future of the ag community through meaningful sponsorships of national and local organizations. In conjunction with the Golden Owl Award, Nationwide is donating $5,000 to each participating state’s FFA, including the Illinois FFA, to further support the personal and professional growth of students, teachers and advisors alike.

The Golden Owl Award is the result of a partnership between Nationwide, the California FFA, California Farm Bureau, Illinois FFA, Illinois Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers, Farm Credit Illinois, Indiana FFA, Farm Credit Mid-America, the Iowa FFA Foundation, New York FFA, New York Farm Bureau, Ohio FFA, Ohio Farm Bureau, Pennsylvania FFA, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, Compeer Financial and AgCredit.

For more information, visit www.goldenowlaward.com.

1 Source: A.M. Best Market Share Report 2021

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