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**SOUTHWEST BADGER SELECTS FINALIST FOR 2018 BEGINNING FARMER AWARD**  
Video contest will determine the winner of \$1000 honorarium in February

DODGEVILLE, WI – JoEllen Frawley will compete as a Finalist for the Beginning Farmer of the Year 2018 award from Routes to Farm (routes2farm.org). JoEllen is owner of Cozy Creek Ranch where she raises beef cattle in Richland Center, Wisconsin.

According to Robert Bauer, Grazing Broker for Southwest Badger RC&D, “JoEllen is an innovator in her community because she has partnered with her family, neighbors, Richland County Land Conservation Department, and USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service to care for her land. As she describes in the video, she has learned a lot over the past year with the support of her grazing mentor Claudia Berres, such as to how to seed, fence, and develop livestock water systems.”

As a Finalist in the competition, Frawley will receive honorable mention, a \$100 honorarium, and a free pass to the Good Food EXPO in Chicago during March 23, 2018. The winner of Beginning Farmer of the Year will receive a \$1,000 honorarium, award at the public ceremony, a free pass to the Good Food EXPO, and partial travel support to the event.

“Caring for the soil by preventing erosion is important for me as a livestock farmer. If I am selected as beginning farmer of the year I will invest the honorarium in working to prevent erosion on my land by improving the access road up the hill and putting riprap along the stream” says Frawley.

Angelic Organics Learning Center and Upper Midwest CRAFT of Caledonia, Illinois launched the Beginning Farmer of the Year award in 2013 to celebrate individuals who enter farming.

“We’re excited to celebrate our partnership with Cozy Creek Ranch and beginning farmer JoEllen Frawley. We plan to support JoEllen and her family in the future as she grows her farm with contract grazing, or raising livestock for others on her own land” said Bauer.

Routes to Farm serves farmers in the "foodshed" of Chicago by providing resources to farmers who are launching or growing their farm businesses. Southwest Badger joined Routes to Farm in 2016 to support farmers through the Mentorship Program for Future Livestock Farmers, funded by a grant from USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

The video and farmer bio is available to watch online at [www.facebook.com/SWBadger](http://www.facebook.com/SWBadger) or [www.swbadger.org/beginning-farmers#award](http://www.swbadger.org/beginning-farmers#award).

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