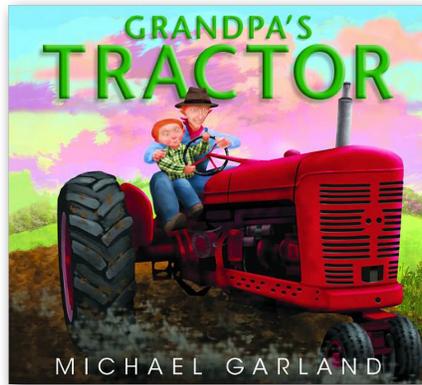


# 2011 Agricultural Book of the Year Winners



## Grades K-3

Once, the farmer's best friend was a red tractor. Back then, the pastures were filled with cows and the fields were full of corn. Today, the cows are gone and the rows of corn have been replaced with row after row of identical houses.

Grandpa Joe brings his grandson Timmy back to the site of the family farm, where the old house and a ramshackle barn still stand. The visit evokes many memories for Grandpa Joe, which he shares with Timmy – in particular, the majesty of his own father's shiny red tractor – now rusting in the forgotten fields.

Lyrical text and evocative artwork come together to create a heartfelt homage to a bygone era.

Michael Garland has had a long career as a fine artist and illustrator, but he has found his greatest success in writing and illustrating children's picture books, including the New York Times best seller *Miss Smith* and the *Haunted Library*. The first book in the *Miss Smith* series, *Miss Smith's Incredible Storybook*, won the California and Delaware state reading awards. He has also illustrated best-selling books by celebrity authors such as James Patterson and Gloria Estefan. Garland's illustrations for Patterson's *SantaKid* were the inspiration for Saks Fifth Avenue's 2004 Christmas window display in New York City. Garland's other books include *Last Night at the Zoo* and the award-winning *Leah's Pony* by Elizabeth Friedrich.



## Grades 4-5

After years of waiting, it is finally Libby Ryan's turn to shine at the Practical County Fair. Libby is filled with excitement as she and her granddad pick out two calves for her to raise on her family's cattle farm, in hopes of winning the annual steer competition.

Against her father's advice, Libby gives the calves names, even though both steers will eventually be auctioned off. After a few months of preparing for the Practical County Fair, Libby finds that she is growing closer to her steers with each passing day, and the pressure to win Grand Champion is mounting.

Luckily, Libby can count on her best friend to get her through most of the county fair chaos. Yet once reality sets in and she realizes that her steers will soon be sold to the highest bidder, the chaos in Libby's heart becomes too much to bear.

Michelle Houts lives and plays on a family farm in West Central Ohio. She shares her days with her three children, the farmer of her dreams, some cattle, hogs, a whole lot of barn cats, a golden retriever, and a goat who thinks he's a golden retriever. She enjoys reading, cooking and hiking any place that has hills because where she lives it is very flat. An eternal student, Michelle has degrees in special education, early childhood education, and speech-language pathology. *The Beef Princess of Practical County* is Michelle's first novel for middle grade readers. It received the 2010 International Reading Association Children's Book Award for intermediate fiction and was a finalist for the 2010 Buckeye Children's Book Award and the 2011-12 Indiana Young Hoosier Book Award.

# **CRITERIA FOR NEBRASKA FARM BUREAU AWARD FOR AGRICULTURAL BOOK OF THE YEAR**

## **TERMS**

The plaque shall be awarded annually to the author of the book, grades K-3 and grades 4-5, considered to be the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children. This publication must have an agricultural theme and have been published for the United States market during the preceding two-year period. There are no limitations as to the character of the book considered except that it is original work. The selection committee in its deliberations is to consider only the books eligible for the Award, as specified in the terms.

## **DEFINITIONS**

1. “Contributions to American literature” implies that the committee shall consider all forms of writing – fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Reprints and compilations are not eligible.
2. A “contribution to American literature for children” shall be a book for which children are a potential audience but the book may not be exclusively for children. The book displays respect for children’s understandings, abilities, and appreciations. Children are defined as persons of ages 5-8 for the K-3 grade award and 9-10 for the 4-5<sup>th</sup> grade award and books for these age ranges are to be considered.
3. “Agricultural theme” is defined as:  
Describing activities related to agriculture including: aquaculture, forestry, pertaining to food and fiber system and nontraditional processes. The theme might portray any aspect of the process of producing goods through marketing to the consumer.

Note: Webster Dictionary definition of agriculture: the science, art or practice of cultivating the soil, producing crops and raising livestock and in varying degrees the preparation and marketing of the resulting products:  
Farming.

Farming is defined as: the practice of agriculture or aquaculture.

**Ranching is defined as: change for 2009**

4. “Distinguished” is defined as:
  - a. Marked by eminence and distinction: noted for significant achievement
  - b. Marked by excellence in quality of text and design
  - c. Marked by accuracy in portraying agriculture
  - d. Individually distinct

5. “Author” may include co-authors and illustrators (s). The author may be awarded the plaque posthumously.
6. In defining the term, “original work,” the committee will consider books that are traditional in origin, if the book is the result of original research and the retelling and interpretation is the writer’s own.
7. “American literature published in the United States,” means that books may have originally been published in other countries and are now also printed for the U.S. market.
8. “Published...in the preceding two-year period” means that the book has a publication date in those years, was available for purchase in those years, and has a copyright date no later than those years. A book might have a copyright date prior to the years under consideration but for various reasons, was not published until the years under consideration.
9. The term “only the books eligible for the Award” specifies that the committee is not to consider the entire body of work by an author. The committee’s decision is to be made following deliberation about the books of the specified calendar year.

## **CRITERIA**

1. In identifying distinguished writing in a book with an agricultural theme for children: Committee members need to consider:

### Text

- a. Interpretation of the theme or concept
- b. Presentation of information including accuracy, clarity and organization
- c. Development of plot
- d. Delineation of characters
- e. Delineation of setting
- f. Appropriateness of style
- g. Appropriateness for children

(Note: Because the literary qualities to be considered will vary depending on content, the committee need not expect to find excellence in each of the named elements. The book should, however, have distinguished qualities in all of the elements to it.)

### Illustrations

- a. Interpretation of the theme or concept
- b. Creativity
- c. Design
- d. Appropriateness for children
- e. Appropriateness of style

2. Each book is to be considered as a contribution to literature. The committee is to make its decision on the text and the illustrations that should enhance the portrayal of agriculture.
3. The book must be a self-contained entity, not dependent on other media (i.e. sound or film equipment) for its enjoyment.

(Note: the committee should keep in mind that the award is for literary quality and quality of presentation for children on the subject of agriculture.)

---

NOMINATIONS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO NEBRASKA FARM BUREAU  
FEDERATION, AG PROMOTION PROGRAM, 5225 S. 16<sup>TH</sup>, LINCOLN,  
NEBRASKA 68512 BY SEPTEMBER 15, 2008.