

INELIGIBLE

**ZAJKOWSKI, JAKE
2024 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT**

2025 NAFB Foundation Scholarship Application

Jake Zajkowski

4111 Herdmans Circle
Maumee, OH 43537
jjajko77@gmail.com
5/8/2003

Parents/Guardians:

Chad and Amy Zajkowski
4111 Herdmans Circle
Maumee, OH 43537
419-367-5147
bg79@bex.net

Background:

Suburban upbringing. Agriculture skipped a generation in my family, but I spent most of my life working on farms, greenhouses, and running a landscaping business.

Farm Type: Small vegetable smalls, and tomato greenhouses

Have you received an NAFB Foundation Scholarship in the past? Yes (2024)

College/University: Cornell University

Academic Classification: Bachelors degree

Vocation/Major: Agriculture Science, concentration in policy analysis, minors in horticulture and public policy

Expected Graduation: 5/20/2026

GPA: 3.52

GPA Score: 10

Tuition & Expenses: \$71000

Expenses Include: Tuition, housing

Financial Support:

National ELKS Foundation 1000

Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association 2000

Cornell Tradition Fellowship 2000

Total Scholarship/Financial Support: \$5,000

Financial Needs Score: 13

Describe your plans and career goals upon graduation.

After graduating with my agricultural science degree from Cornell University, I aim to continue covering news, whether in the American agriculture industry or the global food system.

I enjoy writing, investigating events and situations, and using digital media to communicate the advancement and progress of the agri-food sector. I would particularly enjoy covering agriculture policy in Washington, D.C., and being a part of a TV broadcast team. Many sectors in agriculture have yet to tell their stories to the fullest capacity - through storytelling and science communication. Accurate and balanced news coverage is needed now more than ever as First Amendment rights and journalism are under attack around the world.

In the last year, I have covered international stories while living abroad and have found a great need and opportunity for reporting on global trade, politics, and agriculture as our current trade partners are shifting. If an opportunity to work and write abroad arose, like I did for half a year in 2025, I would consider this path, continuing to freelance. There are

many components of learning that I hope to incorporate into my career: media marketing, foreign languages, storytelling, and increasing access to public media. Agriculture is the perfect market to achieve these goals.

One day, I hope to return to a farm of my own, putting years of knowledge and advocacy into practice. Until then, my goal is to equip the food system with the knowledge and news needed to transform it.

Describe what activities have been most meaningful to your personal development.

Several activities recently have been most meaningful to my personal development.

Immersing myself in international agriculture, I believe, was a crucial step in truly understanding our food system. Farm broadcasters' audiences are American farmers, yes - but our work should also be about understanding the movers and shakers around the world. If agriculture says, "we feed the world," let's report on the world. From January to July of this year, I lived in Europe for a semester of school in Vienna, Austria, and also spent a few months traveling to over 12 countries to speak. I spent that time with farmers, shippers, rural residents, and government officials. Some interesting environments I found myself in included the halls of the European Parliament in Brussels, joining foreign press groups, befriending journalists from 20-plus countries, asking hard questions, and hearing about the positive and consequential decisions made in the U.S. and their impact abroad.

Freelancing as a journalist has been an extremely valuable experience to learn about the news and publishing industry. From different writing styles to pitching processes, it continues to challenge me professionally, working in a competitive, creative world. Since finishing my Agri-Pulse internship in Washington, D.C. last summer, I have been able to take political reporting and general feature writing to other publications across the country. It has given me the flexibility to cover stories that interest me and to pursue a life of adventure that involves writing about those experiences. In Ohio, I write for Ohio Country Journal, The Springfield Hub, The Toledo Blade, and Farm & Dairy. Nationally, I highlight topics I think deserve more attention in AgDaily and Agri-Pulse. Internationally, my work can be found in Melk de Langs, a Netherlands dairy magazine.

This year, I started a blog on Substack, an opportunity to continue reporting and writing opinion pieces on issues I think are important in the world. The page, called Glasshaus, is all about the heat of politics, life under glass, and the shared economy of people and nature - food and agriculture. From travel to food, news to opinion, I connect with people who want to hear my thoughts. One day, I hope a writing platform like this could grow into a real publication. Daily writing has been valuable in improving my skill.

School is a privilege for me. I always find it fascinating how the most eager learners and seasoned thought leaders meet in the middle - in the form of a classroom. My education has provided flexibility to follow my dream and an avenue to pursue almost every idea that has popped into my head. Admittedly, I took many risks to pursue new paths that had never been achieved at my educational institution, but change requires pathfinders. Industry conferences during school semesters have been a successful part of my career, especially NAFB. Because I work and study agricultural communications in the Northeast quite independently, it has been extremely valuable for me to connect with communicators in Kansas City.

How did you learn about the NAFB Foundation Scholarship?

I have been a member of NAFB for three years, and have been a previous internship and scholarship recipient at convention.

JAKE ZAJKOWSKI

(419)-779-3678 | jzajko77@gmail.com | Maumee, Ohio |

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

A driven communicator with experience in news journalism, food systems communication, agricultural media marketing, video editing, and media strategy. Passionate about rural communities, agriculture, and the future of our food plate.

EDUCATION

Cornell University, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Bachelor of Agriculture Science. Minors: Public Policy; Horticulture

Proficient: AP style writing, Adobe lightroom, audition, and premiere pro.

EXPERIENCE

International Freelance Journalist

September 2024 – present

- Contributor to AgDaily, Agri-Pulse Communications, Ohio Country Journal, Farm & Dairy, Toledo Blade.
- Reports on environmental and Great Lakes issues in Ohio, national food policy, and international trade and labor.
- Public relations management for clients: Cornell Turfgrass Program, Cornell Global Development, New York Youth Institute, and Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins County (CCE).

Communications Assistant

Cornell Food Systems and Global Change || Ithaca, New York

September 2023 – September 2024

- Wrote articles and produced long form video content on economic and predictive food system models.
- Managed content creation efforts of grant-based projects: EAT LANCET 2.0 Commission, IPBES Nexus Assessment, Wild Futures, and True Cost of Food projects.

Editorial Intern

Agri-Pulse Communications || Washington D.C.

May – September 2024

- Wrote articles for a weekly newsletter and contributed to daily breaking news coverage on agriculture, environment, and food policy developments on Capitol Hill.
- Hosted segments on Agri-Pulse's TV show *Newsmakers* and the podcast *Drivetime*.

International Dialogues Intern

World Food Prize Foundation || Des Moines, Iowa

August – December 2023

- Prepared logistics and web content for dignitary and stakeholder experiences in North America.
- Managed relationships at Borlaug Dialogues with private sector food and science investors.
- Developed copy write for food security conference sessions and international food aid events.

Farm Broadcaster and Field Reporter

Ohio Country Journal & Ohio Ag Net || Columbus, Ohio

December – August 2023

- Wrote news articles and media packages on international trade, farm bill negotiations and conservation.
- Recorded and produced commodity market analysis reports for nationwide radio broadcast.

ENGAGEMENT

State President

Ohio FFA Association/ Ohio Department of Education || Columbus, Ohio

2021 – 2022

- Wrote and facilitated leadership development curriculum/keynotes for audiences of 20-11,000.
- Managed leadership team to 600+ educators, 28,000 students and 300+ foundation sponsors.

Director of Operations

StartHuddle || Toledo, Ohio

2019 – 2022

- Maintained relationships by managing activity for boards, advisory committees and private partners.
- Expanded Toledo partnerships with 4+ corporate sponsors and 6+ education consulting companies.

Cornell University

Office of the University Registrar
Ithaca, NY 14853-2801
univreg@cornell.edu

RECORD OF: Jacob William Zajkowski
RECORD DATE: 5/1/2025

CORNELL I.D. NO.: 5232287
PAGE: 1 of 1

COURSE TITLE	SUBJECT/NUMBER	MEDIAN	TOTAL ENROLLED	UNITS	GRADE	COURSE TITLE	SUBJECT/NUMBER	MEDIAN	TOTAL ENROLLED	UNITS	GRADE
FALL 2022 Program: Agriculture and Life Sciences Plan: Plant Sciences						SPRING 2024 Program: Agriculture and Life Sciences Plan: Agricultural Sciences					
DAIRY INDUSTRY TOPICS & ISSUE	ANSC 1200	(A)	(28)	1.00	A	BUSINESS & ECON OF FOOD	AEM 2310	(N/A)	2310	3.00	B
FOUNDATIONS OF BIOLOGY	BIOG 1140	(B+)	(119)	4.00	B	CONSUMER BEHAVIOR & FOOD IND.	AEM 5480	(N/A)	5480	0.00	W
INTRODUCTION TO GEN CHEMISTRY	CHEM 1560	(B)	(139)	4.00	C	ADVANCED MEDIA WRITING	COMM 3050	(N/A)	3050	3.00	A
CHEM APPLICATIONS IN PLANT SCI	PLBIO 1560	(A+)	(22)	2.00	A+	FOOD SYS AND SUSTAINABLE DEV	GDEV 2300	(N/A)	2300	3.00	B+
PLANT SCIENCE AND SYSTEMS	PLSCI 1101	(A)	(74)	4.00	A-	PLANT GENETICS	PLERG 2250	(N/A)	2250	4.00	B+
EXPLORATIONS IN PLANT SCIENCE	PLSCI 1110	(N/A)		2.00	SX	FAR BEYOND ITHACA: SPRING TRIP	PLSCI 3402	(N/A)	3402	2.00	SX
TRANSFER CREDIT FROM BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY APPLIED TOWARD AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES PROGRAM						INFORMATION POLICY	PUBPOL 3460	(N/A)	3460	3.00	A+
Transfer Totals:				9.00		FALL 2024 Program: Agriculture and Life Sciences Plan: Agricultural Sciences					
SPRING 2023 Program: Agriculture and Life Sciences Plan: Plant Sciences						AGRICULTURAL FINANCE	AEM 2050	(N/A)	2050	3.00	B
FWS: CULTURE, SOCIETY, & POWER ANTHR	1101	(A)	(75)	3.00	A	ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE	GDEV 3311	(N/A)	3311	3.00	B+
COURSE TOPIC(S): FWS: RIGHT TO THE CITY	EDUC 2210	(A+)	(18)	4.00	A+	ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY PROCESSES	NTRES 4300	(N/A)	4300	0.50	A-
DESIGN/FACILITATE LEARNING	PAM 2300	(B+)	(30)	4.00	A-	PRINCIPLES OF VEGETABLE PRODUCE	PLSCI 3575	(N/A)	3575	3.00	A-
INTRO TO POLICY ANALYSIS	PE 1245	(N/A)	(44)	1.00	SX	SIPS PEER MENTORING & LEAD DEV	PLSCI 4975	(N/A)	4975	1.00	SX
INDOOR STATIONARY CYCLING	PLSCI 1420	(A+)	(101)	3.00	A	COURSE TOPIC(S): AG SCIENCES PEER MENTORS					
FUNCTIONAL PLANT BIOLOGY	VLEN 2340	(A+)		1.00	A	WORLD FOOD SYSTEMS	PUBPOL 3135	(N/A)	3135	3.00	A
CIDER						INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW	PUBPOL 3764	(N/A)	3764	3.00	B
DEAN'S LIST						WINTER 2025 Program: Agriculture and Life Sciences Plan: Agricultural Sciences					
FALL 2023 Program: Agriculture and Life Sciences Plan: Agricultural Sciences						ENVIR POLICY PROCESSES II	NTRES 4301	(N/A)	4301	1.50	A-
MEAT	ANSC 3500	(N/A)		3.00	A	SPRING 2025 Program: Agriculture and Life Sciences Plan: Agricultural Sciences					
SCIENCE WRITING FOR MEDIA	COMM 3020	(N/A)		3.00	A	SEMIESTER ABROAD	OVST 3000	(N/A)	3000	0.00	
INTRO MICROECONOMICS	ECON 1110	(N/A)		3.00	D+	COURSE TOPIC(S): BOKU: VIENNA					
TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN PLSCI	PLSCI 4980	(N/A)		3.00	A+	Cumulative GPA:	3.552				
SOIL SCIENCE	PLSCS 2600	(N/A)		4.00	A-						
INTRODUCTION TO WINES & VINES	VLEN 1104	(N/A)		3.00	A+						

END OF TRANSCRIPT

SEND TO: Jake Zajkowski
jwz29@cornell.edu
DOCID:TE601PFG

RHONDA K. KITCH, PH.D.
UNIVERSITY REGISTRAR



Academic Calendar – Cornell University operates on a semester calendar consisting of standard fall and spring semesters, and with summer and winter sessions of varying lengths.

Accreditation – Cornell University is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) as a degree-granting institution at the baccalaureate, master's, professional, and doctoral levels. Various departments and programs within the University are also accredited by various agencies. Detailed information about these agencies and the accreditation process is available from the Dean's office of each academic unit.

Class Rank – Cornell University does not calculate or support a class rank for students.

Course Titles and Descriptions – Full course titles and course descriptions are provided in the Courses of Study/Catalog.

Credit Hour Definition – Credits are equal to semester hours. One credit is equal to one semester hour. A student will receive one credit by satisfactorily completing a course that requires at least fifteen hours (15) of instruction and at least thirty hours (30) of supplementary assignments. Hours are adjusted proportionately for the other formats of study, e.g., laboratory, studio, research, problem-based learning, and independent study. Winter and summer session courses and study abroad experiences vary in length but are reported in semester hours.

Dean's List – Posting the Dean's List notation began with the Fall 1971 term. Dean's List awards are posted for most undergraduate schools/colleges.

Definition of an Official Transcript – An official transcript is one that has been received directly from the issuing institution. It must bear the University seal, date, and signature of the university registrar. A transcript received that does not meet these requirements should not be considered official.

Degrees and Credit Awarded by Other Institutions – Any information displayed reflecting degrees awarded by, or transfer work accepted from, other institutions should be verified with the original institution for accuracy.

Grade Point Average (GPA) – The GPA is computed by dividing the total grade points by the total of credit hours in which grade points were recorded. GPAs are displayed to three decimal places. Courses taken at external institutions are not included in the Cornell University GPA. Coursework in graduate school and law careers do not include a calculated cumulative GPA. If a student has enrollment in multiple career levels, the cumulative GPA is associated with credits completed at each respective career level.

Issuing Campus for Transcripts – Each campus has the authority to produce and issue a complete transcript that contains all courses attempted. Official transcripts may be issued from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York; from Weill Cornell Medicine in New York, New York; or from Weill Cornell Medicine in Doha, Qatar. Official transcripts include the complete academic record of all credit-based courses taken at the respective campuses indicated above, which may include undergraduate, graduate, professional, and/or non-degree coursework.

Language – All courses are taught in English with the exception of certain language courses.

Leave of Absence/Withdrawal - Students may request a voluntary Leave of Absence (LOA), or a college may place a student on a leave of absence or withdraw a student from the University at their own discretion. A notation regarding the leave of absence/withdrawal is included within the academic term of the leave.

Median Grade – Median grades were posted on transcripts for all undergraduates enrolled Fall 2008 – Spring 2023. Median grades were not reported for all courses.

A black and white or color copy of this document is not an original and should not be accepted as an official institutional document. This document cannot be released to a third party without the written consent of the student. This is in accordance with The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. Any questions regarding the validity of the information you are receiving should be directed to: Cornell University, 245 Day Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853, univreg@cornell.edu, Telephone: (607) 255-4232. Alteration of this document may be a criminal offense.

Release of Information – In accordance with U.S.C. 438(6)(4)(8). The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, you are hereby notified that this information is provided upon the condition that you, your agents, or employees will not permit any other party access to this record without consent of the student.

Transcript Accuracy – The official transcript is accurate as of the print date indicated on the front of the transcript.

Transcript Validation – All transcripts from this office are official documents. Alteration of this transcript may be a criminal offense. A transcript is printed on tamperproof paper, eliminating the need for signatures, raised seals, or stamps on the back of envelopes. Electronic PDF transcripts bear the Adobe® Blue Ribbon certification and a GlobalSign CA for Adobe® electronic certificate.

Current Course Symbols

- FWS – First-Year Writing Seminar
- H – "HONORS" for LL.M. candidates
- HH – "HIGH HONORS" for LL.M. candidates
- INC – Incomplete
- NG – Non-graded
- NGR – No grade reported; instructor has not submitted a grade for this course
- R – In Progress; represents multi-term course not graded until the end of the sequence
- S/U – "S" means C- or above; "U" means D+, D, D- or failure
- SX/UX – Indicates that a course is graded exclusively on the "S" or "U" basis
- V – Visitor-Audit; course taken on a non-credit basis
- W – Indicates withdrawal from course after drop deadline
- * – In the grade field – indicates that the course was originally graded INC and has subsequently been completed. Asterisk inclusion ceased Summer 2023.

Current Grading System – Grades are on a letter scale: A+ through D-, pass; F, failure. The grades of S (satisfactory) or U (unsatisfactory) may be used when no greater precision in grading is required. Grades of S or U are not assigned numerical value and thus are not averaged with other grades in computing grade point averages. Letter grade values are combined with course credit hours to produce an average based on a 4.3 scale. For the purpose of computing semester, year, or cumulative averages, each letter grade is assigned a quality point value as follows:

A+	= 4.3	B+	= 3.3	C+	= 2.3	D+	= 1.3
A	= 4.0	B	= 3.0	C	= 2.0	D	= 1.0
A-	= 3.7	B-	= 2.7	C-	= 1.7	D-	= 0.7
F	= 0						

Beginning with Fall term 1983, Law School Averages are computed using the following point values:

A+	= 4.33	B+	= 3.33	C+	= 2.33	D+	= 1.33
A	= 4.0	B	= 3.0	C	= 2.0	D	= 1.0
A-	= 3.67	B-	= 2.67	C-	= 1.67	D-	= 0.67
F	= 0						

For information about historical course symbols, grading systems, and additional context for coursework, refer to <https://registrar.cornell.edu/grades-transcripts/transcript-keys>

Scholarship Committee
National Association of Farm Broadcasters
1100 Platte Falls Road P.O. Box 500
Platte City, MO 64079

Greetings:

I'm writing in support of Jake Zajkowski's application for the National Association of Farm Broadcasters 2025 scholarship.

I was first introduced to Jake last year by Dr. Frank Rossi, our turf specialist and director of Cornell's undergraduate Agricultural Sciences Major. Frank recruited Jake to write the article [Agricultural Sciences Major celebrates student leadership](#) that I posted in our College of Agriculture and Life Sciences news feed just ahead of our May 2024 festivities. I'll admit that I was skeptical that an undergrad could pull this off on a tight deadline. But Jake's copy was impressively clean and his project management skills are unusual for someone at this stage of their career.

Late last year, Jake was back in touch to loop me in on plans that he was working on with Frank and staff to take their turf outreach, extension programming, and agriculture science academic program marketing up a notch. Frank has always been an energetic and enthusiastic communicator, and an early adopter of audio podcasts, vlogs, and regular webinars with the advent of the pandemic. Jake has amplified his vision to a level noticed across the industry, even being recognized by the Turf and Ornamental agriculture communicator group.

Jake has stepped up this year to coordinate a media outreach campaign that does justice to Rossi's message and methods. He details those plans in this recently published article, [Cornell Turfgrass Program launches new media resources as spring approaches](#).

I also turned over the keys to the [Cornell Turfgrass Program](#) website and audio broadcasting so that he could coordinate this spring's media push with our existing online resources. I look forward to seeing how Jake's efforts increase our extension program's reach and effectiveness.

What has impressed me most about working with Jake is that he has formulated a clear vision of how our communication and broadcast strategy could be improved, has worked closely with staff to gain their trust and support, and looped me in as needed. But he has done this work with a level of independence and creative craft that is very admirable.

It's my pleasure to recommend him for the NAFB Scholarship for his work in agriculture and turfgrass communications—two sides of the same coin in the green industry.



Craig D. Cramer
Communications Specialist
cdc25@cornell.edu

Dear Scholarship Committee,

I'm writing to recommend Jacob Zajkowski for an NAFB scholarship.

My name is Andrew Huneke. I am the producer of Agri-Pulse Newsmakers, Agri-Pulse's weekly television show focused on ag policy. Prior to that, I spent nearly 10 years in the news industry producing daily newscasts in Baltimore and Washington D.C.

I worked with Jake last summer while he was our intern. During his time with us, he played a key role in our weekly coverage of agricultural happenings in Washington D.C., whether that be attending hearings, or writing articles for our weekly newsletter.

One that stood out was the research he did for our annual CEO compensation report, where Jake had to go through nearly one-thousand IRS reports and find information on salaries for CEOs in ag and food organizations. It is one of our most viewed reports on a yearly basis and Jake took responsibility for last year's report.

Jake also spent time with me with our weekly Newsmakers show and featured in some of our shows during his time as an intern. I noticed he was well prepared, open to feedback and willing to work hard to put out a good product. He spent time in radio so doing television reads was something new to him, but he continued to show improvement and a willingness to help me put out a good final product on a weekly basis, which I was thankful for.

If you decide to award Jake with a scholarship, I have no doubt he will turn out to be a professional and well-rounded communication leader for the ag industry moving forward. I've spent quite a lot of time seeing young people begin their professional careers in the media and broadcast industries, particularly from my time in a newsroom, and Jake is right up there with the ones who are very passionate about their work and willing to work hard.

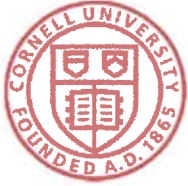
I'd be happy to provide more information on my time working with Jake if necessary.

Sincerely,

Andrew Huneke

Andrew Huneke

Producer, Agri-Pulse Newsmakers



Cornell University.

College of Agriculture & Life Sciences

Jeffrey Perry, PhD

Senior Lecturer, Education & Extension

Global Development

B70 Mann Library

Ithaca, New York 14853

607.220.6139

jap255@cornell.edu

May 10, 2025

NAFB Foundation

Dear Review Committee Members:

I am writing to strongly recommend Jake Zajkowski for his outstanding work in agricultural broadcasting and communications. Jake has demonstrated exceptional talent in journalism and research, making him uniquely positioned to educate others about the industry.

In my role, I support students pursuing careers in agricultural leadership, communications, and education. Jake stands out for his sharp analytical skills and strong research foundation, which have allowed him to thrive in his work with Cornell CALS. This semester, he has successfully balanced academic coursework with freelance reporting on agricultural trade and U.S. farm policy.

Jake has taken a thoughtful, well-rounded approach to his education. After gaining hands-on experience through his Agricultural Science degree, he pursued additional studies in economics and public policy to better understand how farm policy shapes the lives of farmers, food producers, and the environment. He brings a global perspective to his work, having built professional relationships with international leaders at food security conferences, policymakers on Capitol Hill, and most importantly farmers.

Jake has an innate ability to identify what matters to his audience and translate complex issues into accessible, compelling storytelling. I am confident he will continue to grow as a communicator and leader in agriculture. Jake's strengths lie in his leadership, integrity, and ability to manage complex projects with clarity and purpose. This scholarship would further support his contributions to the agriculture industry and amplify the voices of farmers and food producers. Thank you for your consideration of Jake Zajkowski for this award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeffrey A. Perry".

Jeffrey A. Perry