

British journalist named 'world champion' in 2006 Star Prize

British journalist Andrew Blake has won the 'world championship' of farm reporting – the 2006 IFAJ Star Prize for Agricultural Journalism.



The Guild of Agricultural Journalists (GAJ) member won the prestigious International Federation of Agricultural Journalism award for a story published last year in *Farmers Weekly*.

Sponsored by John Deere, the award was announced at the 50th IFAJ congress in Norway. However Blake could not attend the event and had to wait until last month to receive his trophy which was presented by GAJ President Baroness Hazel Byford at the British Guild's Harvest Lunch in London before a record attendance of more than 140 members and guests.

Blake's story "No crops is an SFP 'no go'" was published on February 18, 2005.

The judges commented: "He has written a story about the changes on a farm influenced by agricultural policy. The journalist has got a good story because he visited the farm twice. He also interviewed an advisor which gives more depth to the story. It is a fine article that gives a good overview. Good balance, good writing, fine style, and structure."

Andries Gouws of South Africa won second place in the contest for his story, "Game farmer turns problems into profit." The article was published in *Landbouweekblad*. Gouws is a member of South African Agricultural Writers Association.

Andrew Blake received 750 Euros and a crystal trophy for his winning entry. Andries Gouws received a trophy and 250 Euros for second place.

Described as the 'world championship' of agricultural journalism, the prize is contested by national finalists selected by guilds from around the world. Most guilds affiliated with the IFAJ now have writing contests to make their selection. Seventeen entries contest the 2006 prize.