

Young journalist wins prestigious Star Prize



A young Dutch journalist has won this year's prestigious international Star Prize for Agricultural Journalism for a story written after just months as a working journalist.

An extremely surprised and delighted Marleen van Sleuwen was in the audience when the award was announced at the 2007 IFAJ Congress in Japan in September.

She focussed on the ethical dilemmas facing farmers when managing unhealthy piglets in her prize-winning article, "Patch up or eliminate? Killing weak pigs can reduce infection sources", published in *Boerderij* in May 2006.

"Animal welfare is very high up on the agenda.

Even if it is not economical, many farmers do everything they can to get their piglets healthy when they are sick," she said. "Advisors say that it could be more economically correct to kill the weak piglets, but that creates an ethical dilemma."

Van Sleuwen wrote her article after only five months as a working journalist.

"I did not expect it, not at all but I am very happy of course," she said. "It is a great feeling!"

Runner-up in the competition was Crystal Albers from the *Angus Beef Bulletin* in the USA, for her article, "Don't let your cattle get lost in translation".

Judges for the award were Aad Vernooij from the Netherlands, Hugh Maynard from Canada and Niels Jørgensen from Denmark.

Sponsored by John Deere, the Star Prize is organised annually by the IFAJ to honour excellence in print journalism. National guilds affiliated with the IFAJ select finalists to represent member countries.

Further information is available on the IFAJ website at www.ifaj.org, or by contacting writing prize coordinator Marina Tell (marina@grandalen.se).

Above: Marleen van Sleuwen (centre) at the IFAJ Congress in Japan with IFAJ president David Markey and Star Prize coordinator Marina Tell.

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