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Winter 2015-16



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WINTER 2015-16

FFA NEW HORIZONS™

18



12



22

FEATURES

8 Q(uestions) and A(griculture)
We sit down with U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack.

12 Crops from the Classroom
FFA chapters provide fellow students, communities with farm-fresh food.

18 The Gift of Blue
More FFA members are wearing the blue jacket thanks to this important program.

22 This Job's For the Birds
Florida FFA member helps rehabilitate threatened birds and wildlife.

DEPARTMENTS

4 Scrapbook
Celebrate FFA achievements and good deeds.

6 FFA Faces
Meet six outstanding FFA members from across the country.

17 Ag 101
Get the buzz on honeybees.

26 National Officer Q&A
Find out the strangest gift the 2014-15 officers have ever received.

28 Premier Leadership
Iowa FFA chapter takes the lead to establish position for second ag instructor.

30 Personal Growth
Learn to cope with anxiety in high school.

32 Career Success
A new report shows a positive outlook for agriculture careers.

33 Living to Serve
FFA chapter hosts prom for developmentally disabled community members.

ON THE COVER
Anastasia Sturgis of the Orlando-Colonial FFA Chapter cares for rescued birds in Geneva, Fla.
PHOTO BY JEFFREY S. OTTO

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FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MISSION
Agricultural education prepares students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in the global agriculture, food, fiber and natural resource systems.

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FFA NEWS FROM ACROSS THE U.S.

A place to celebrate your FFA achievements, chapter successes and good deeds



BRANCH AREA CAREER CENTER FFA, MI

Gleaning for Good

After harvest, vegetable fields are often left with product that may not meet the requirements for the regular market, and organizations are invited in to glean (which means harvest) the remainder.

The Branch Area Career Center FFA partnered with local farmers in 2015 to glean 680 pounds of peppers and 1,080 pounds of potatoes, donating them to the Al Provost Branch Area Food Pantry. The food pantry serves more than 2,000 families and provides 3,000 holiday food boxes each year.

MORE ONLINE
Visit FFAnewhorizons.org to learn more about how gleaning works.



HOLTWOOD FFA, PA

FFA IGNITES LEADERSHIP

Joseph A. Wesolowski doesn't just use the strong work ethic and leadership skills learned in FFA for his various SAEs. In addition to his market swine project, Joe spends his time responding to barn fires, house fires, brush fires and medical assistance calls with the Rawlinsville Volunteer Fire Company.

The blue corduroy jacket has given him the drive and dedication to don the firefighter's uniform.



2015 NATIONAL FFA CONVENTION & EXPO

Hunger Heroes Challenge

FFA's Hunger Heroes Challenge aimed to donate 2.5 million meals by the start of the 2015 National FFA Convention & Expo in October. Tyson Foods joined the challenge and became the third-quarter sponsor winner by donating thousands of dollars to shelters and food pantries across the country. Among their other generous donations, Tyson Foods also gave $30,000 to Feeding America/No Kid Hungry through Rachael Ray's Yum-O Foundation, which will provide 30,000 meals. We're proud to call Tyson Foods one of our FFA sponsors!

MATTABESET FFA, CT

Project MIGHT

Mattabeset FFA is using their $2,500 National FFA Food for All grant to feed the people of Middletown, Conn. The title, *Project MIGHT*, stands for Middletown Insecurity, Gardening, Hydroponics and Tilapia. Over an eight-month timeframe, the chapter grew a variety of vegetable seedlings in their greenhouse and explored hydroponics. They also raise tilapia in their fish lab to donate to St. Vincent de Paul's food pantry and soup kitchen.

WASHINGTON, D.C

FFA on Display

Even the Smithsonian Institute knows the power of an FFA jacket! The American Enterprise exhibit at the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., features the FFA jackets of illustrious FFA alumni, including former President Jimmy Carter.

The exhibit, which opened in July 2015, highlights the nation's business evolution and its agricultural roots. Learn more at **americanhistory.si.edu**.



YOUR TURN

Keep us informed! This is your chance to be a part of *FFA New Horizons*. Send us a short article about your latest chapter activities, awards you've received or even your involvement outside FFA.

Want an easy way to send your story? Email a photo, your story and contact information to newhorizons@ffa.org. All photos need to be in color and a minimum of 1 MB in size.

Or, mail to:
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MEET SIX FFA SHINING STARS

Wrangler, the sponsor of FFA Faces, will award a pair of jeans to featured members



Kenneth González Otero
LOS LLANOS, ARECIBO, PR

At the 84th National Convention & Expo, Kenneth González Otero proudly represented the Puerto Rico delegation as a flagman. He served as Puerto Rico State Sentinel and hopes to study agricultural education in college.



Emily Grant
BARTOW FFA, FL

A senior at Bartow High School, Emily has been a member of FFA for the past seven years and has raised high-quality ornamental plants for the past four years. Emily maintains a 4.0 GPA while being enrolled in college-level classes.



Alexandra Ruwe
MAROA FORSYTH FFA, IL

As a junior, Alexandra Ruwe won both the state specialty animal production proficiency and the job interview career development event. Alex has created a job shadowing program and organized seasonal member outings.



Liz Shroeder
ALBANY FFA, WI

Liz Schroeder has served as president, treasurer and reporter for her FFA chapter. She participated in the dairy products CDE and was the 2013-2014 Albany Dairy Queen, serving as an ag ambassador to the community.



Joshua Todd
OCEAN COUNTY FFA, NJ

Participating in FFA has given Joshua Todd the confidence and leadership skills to become chapter president. He is dedicated to helping the younger members and serving his community.



Clint Beel
STEWARTS CREEK FFA, TN

An avid beekeeper, Clint Beel is responsible for the health and productivity of his family's nine hives. He is active in his local beekeepers association and hopes to become a certified state beekeeper.

Nominate yourself to be considered for FFA Faces by following the steps below. Questions? Email ffanation@jnlcom.com.

1 GO ONLINE
Visit www.ffafaces.com and click on Nominations. You can nominate yourself or another current FFA member.

2 DESCRIBE
Fill out the form to tell us about you – your FFA involvement, school activities, future plans and more.

3 UPLOAD
Find a great photo of yourself – head and shoulders photos work best – and upload it as part of the nomination form.


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Q(UESTIONS) AND A(GRICULTURE)

A conversation with U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack



As U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack knows the importance of our farm, food and fiber industry. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) oversees the American farming and agriculture industry, from helping farmers secure new domestic and foreign markets for their products to inspecting food to ensure its safety for American consumers.

Secretary Vilsack understands the important role FFA members can play in securing a strong future for our industry. He recently sat down to share some of his thoughts about the next generation of agriculture leaders (you!) and a few tips for career planning. Read on for our exclusive interview with Secretary Vilsack.



NAME: Tom Vilsack

POSITION: 30th U.S. Secretary of Agriculture

TENURE: 7 years, appointed by President Barack Obama in 2009

ORIGINALLY FROM: Pittsburgh, Pa.

EDUCATION: B.A. in History from Hamilton College and a law degree from Albany Law, both in New York

CAREER PATH: Served two terms as Governor of Iowa, in the Iowa Senate, and as the mayor of Mt. Pleasant, Iowa

QUESTION: When you think about the next generation of farmers, ranchers, foresters and other agriculture professionals, what are you the most excited about?

ANSWER:

The enormity of opportunity. Obviously someone has to grow, raise and harvest our food, but think about everything that goes into that: the research, the engineering, the marketing, the long-term planning, the processing and packaging, the selling of the product itself. The future of agriculture is going to be as diverse as agriculture itself – there are opportunities for young men and young women, veterans, retirees, people brand new to farming. We recently put out a report that suggests there are more new jobs than there are new college grads to take them. That creates huge opportunities for FFA members who have the advantage of an early understanding and appreciation for agriculture. You have to think about the entire field – not just farming, but all of the parts that go into getting the food from the farm to your plate. Each part is an employment opportunity.

Q: What can FFA members do to positively impact public perception of agriculture?

A:

FFA members need to have the totality of the message down, the elevator speech – how would you describe agriculture if you had just 30 seconds? I think FFA members are extraordinarily articulate and can create opportunities to tell the story of agriculture in its many forms. Absent a better education for consumers, I think the American public misses a lot of this story and perhaps does not appreciate our farmers and ranchers as much as they should.

Q: FFA members are very passionate about the issues of nutrition and food insecurity. Can you talk a little bit about your work on these challenges?

A:

We have two principal threats to the overall security and advancement of our country. One is the obesity epidemic. The other is the fact that today, despite nutrition assistance programs, we have 17 million young people who live in food insecure homes. It's important for USDA, in concert with organizations like FFA, to continue to support a variety of programs and efforts to improve food security in this country. We have to improve early health and early understanding of nutrition. We have to make sure families make good nutritious choices. We have to minimize the prevalence and impact of food waste. FFA is a good partner in all of this work.

One major focus has been revising the school meal options so more healthy foods are offered and available at schools.



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Applications will be accepted from high school seniors and college students November 15, 2015 – February 1, 2016.

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America's Farmers Grow Ag Leaders is administered through the National FFA Scholarship program. Students need not be members of FFA to apply. Farmers can endorse a student at FFA.org/scholarships or by calling 1-877-267-3332 until February 8, 2016. Farmers must have the student's scholarship application ID in order to complete the endorsement. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. ©2015 Monsanto Fund.








COURTESY OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack meets with FFA leadership.

Ninety-seven percent of schools are now serving a variety of healthier foods, which is a huge opportunity both to establish those healthy habits at an early age and for farmers, who are the ones ultimately responsible for meeting the demand for those foods – fruits, vegetables, whole grains, dairy and protein – in schools and at home.

We're beginning to see some early signs that kids are getting healthier as a result. Healthier kids do better in school, which has long-term implications for their ability to learn, be productive and get a good job, and live longer, healthier lives. I'm proud of that.

Q: What is the best career advice you've received?

A:

Find a vocation where time doesn't matter – where you're so focused and excited about what you're doing that you don't spend much time looking at the clock. Once you find that vocation, pursue excellence. You'll feel good about what you're doing, and the money will come. Too many people spend a long time, sometimes their entire lives, trying to figure that out. I think many FFA members have already discovered that in agriculture, which makes them very fortunate.

Q: What's your favorite part of being Secretary of Agriculture?

A:

The opportunity to learn and see this country and our world from many different perspectives. Most people probably don't understand the amount of USDA investment in each state to support the work of farmers and ranchers, to work with them as they implement good conservation practices; to conduct cutting-edge research; and to support rural and economic development in communities across rural America. I am constantly impressed and amazed by the ingenuity and creativity of Americans and American agriculture. Being able to see that in action is pretty incredible.

Tom Vilsack is the nation's 30th Secretary of Agriculture and holds an honorary American FFA degree. To learn more about USDA's work and services for young farmers, visit usda.gov/results.

ABOUT THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related issues based on public policy, the best available science, and effective management.

USDA works to:

- Support the American agricultural economy to strengthen rural communities.
- Protect and conserve our natural resources.
- Provide a safe, sufficient and nutritious food supply for the American people.

For more information about USDA resources for new and beginning farmers, check out **usda.gov/newfarmers**.

USDA

CROPS FROM THE CLASSROOM

FFA chapters provide fellow students, communities with farm-fresh food

FFA chapters and members across the nation are redefining the term, farm-to-table. Taking growing matters into their own hands, they're delivering fresh, school-to-table food to their peers and communities.

HOLMEN HIGH SCHOOL

Take, for example, the Holmen FFA Chapter in Wisconsin. Students raise chickens to be fed to the school community at a special dinner event, aptly named Winner Winner Chicken Dinner.

"We realized as an FFA chapter, that society wants to have more of a stake in where their food comes from," says Roger King, agriscience instructor and FFA advisor at Holmen High School.

The program began in 2014 after the chapter decided there was a hole in their agricultural offerings to the school. They had already been growing fresh produce, such as hydroponic lettuce, Brussels sprouts, tomatoes and more, that were used in the cafeteria year round, but the members wanted to provide locally raised meats as well.

"We had an FFA member who raised chickens as part of his SAE (supervised agricultural experience), and we wondered what it would take to raise chickens for school lunch programs," King says. The chapter received a grant through Seeds of Change, and from there, began building portable pens, looking at square footage and figuring out details to get the project off the ground.

At the first dinner event in early 2015, the chapter fed close to 3,000 students with the locally raised chicken, plus potatoes, sweet corn and lettuce all grown by the chapter. They plan to continue the event each year.

Laura Munger, a senior at Holmen and vice president for the FFA chapter, says that along with feeding fellow students, raising the chickens also helped the chapter members learn more about the poultry industry.

Growing food for school cafeterias is a growing trend for high school agriculture programs, including those at Hagerstown High School in Indiana (top) and Liberty Technology Magnet School in Tennessee (bottom right).


Review
Fence Buildings
-Brace Posts
+
End Posts
Fence









"We were able to see the whole process," she says. "We learned how they inspect birds and what they look for before harvesting. It opened up a new avenue of information for us."

King adds that the program shows students throughout the district exactly what agriculture means in terms of feeding a family.

"They see how much food it takes to feed people," he says. "It takes 365 birds to feed one family for a year."

HAGERSTOWN JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

At Hagerstown Junior/Senior High School in Wayne County, Ind., FFA students are bringing the beef. The chapter raises beef cattle to provide the entire district with hamburgers year round through the "Where's the Beef" initiative.

The school first obtained cattle to help keep the grass down on a little-used piece of school property. Agriculture teachers Nathan Williamson and Kara Hendrickson saw the opportunity to put an educational spin on it, giving the chapter a hands-on lesson in beef production.

"My kids are involved in the 'Where's the Beef' program daily, whether we are figuring out how much feed we need or how many head to buy for the next year," Hendrickson says. "The kids love it. They're learning what it takes to raise cattle from weaning to slaughter."

The district's hungry students love it too – since they get to enjoy locally raised and processed hamburgers offered on the lunch menu.

"Imagine a pretty good steak – that's what it tastes like," Williamson says, adding that the program also saves the school money while promoting the connection between farm and food.

LIBERTY TECHNOLOGY MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL

The FFA chapter at Liberty Technology Magnet High School in Jackson, Tenn., aims to show the community what eating healthier looks like with freshly grown produce.





Left: Hagerstown High School student Kendell Combs feeds the school's beef cattle.

Right: Produce grown by Liberty Technology Magnet School students gets served in the school's cafeteria.

Through the school's Farm to Tray program, students grow tomatoes, cucumbers and lettuce that are served in the cafeteria and sold to the Jackson-Madison County School System School Nutrition Department to be distributed to other schools in the district.

The program began in 2009 as a way to prepare students for food production in a changing world, says Teresa Crouse, Liberty Tech agriculture teacher and FFA advisor.

"FFA students participate in planting the seeds, analyzing the vegetables as they grow under specific conditions, and are heavily involved in harvesting, packaging, serving, marketing and conducting nutrition education," she says.

The veggies are produced in the school's three greenhouses, which encompass nearly 3,000 square feet.

And Liberty Tech's program continues to grow, as they partnered with Delta Faucet to expand, adding broccoli, cauliflower, beans and corn to the crop lineup, as well as an eventual tilapia farm. When the expansion is complete, the school expects to supply all 28 cafeterias in the district with fresh produce.

A SHARED MESSAGE

Both the Liberty Tech Farm to Table program and the Holmen chicken program have gained national accolades, and all three schools are doing their part to spread the word to peers on the importance of the agricultural connection to their everyday lives.

Kendell Combs, a senior at Hagerstown Junior/Senior High School says it best: "The most rewarding thing is to show people how food gets to your table."

– Rachel Bertone

more on our app

Many FFA chapters use hydroponics to grow tomatoes and other produce. Learn how this growing process works on the *FFA New Horizons* app. Look on page 2 for download details.

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What's All the Buzz About?

Honeybees have two main jobs – pollination and producing honey



Honeybees are tiny little creatures that seem to spend most of their time buzzing around the pool and garden. But do you know the important work they do?

The two most important roles of a honeybee are pollinating and making honey. Honeybees pollinate plants by carrying pollen from one plant to the next.

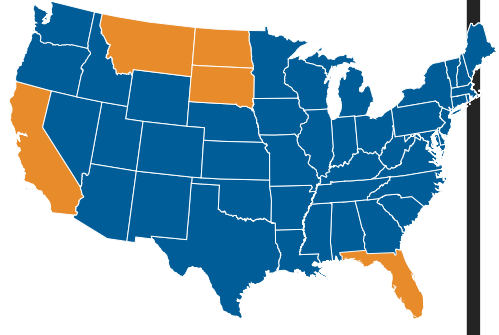
Honeybees are essential for pollination of many fruits and vegetables as well as seed crops. Approximately one-third of the total human diet is derived directly or indirectly from insect-pollinated plants (fruits, legumes and vegetables), and the USDA has estimated that 80 percent of this insect crop pollination is accomplished by honeybees.

Luckily, we also get to enjoy the delicious fruits of their labor. In 2014, there were 2.74 million active, honey-producing colonies that produced more than 178.3 million pounds of honey across the U.S. The honey was valued at roughly $385.2 million.

– Melinda Perkins

Top Honeybee States

There are an estimated 120,000 beekeepers across the country. Most are hobbyists, while commercial producers (those with 300 or more hives) represent about 2,000 of the total.



Top bee states are North Dakota, California, South Dakota, Florida and Montana.

19%

Honey production increased 19% in 2014.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture

The Power of Honey

1 **ALLERGIES:** A tablespoon of local honey each day will help with springtime allergies. The only catch is that the honey needs to be from the same area where you live in order to help with your allergies.

2 **BRAIN FUNCTION:** Honey contains all the necessary ingredients to sustain life, including enzymes, vitamins, minerals and "pinocembrin," which helps improve brain function.

3 **SKIN CARE:** Raw honey that has not been pasteurized helps moisturize your skin and fight aging and bacteria.

4 **WOUND CARE:** The antimicrobial assets in honey lower your risk for infection when applied to wounds and burns.

5 **RELAXATION:** Honey can calm your nerves and make you ready for restful sleep. Drink a honey and water tea, or add honey to a bowl of oatmeal.

GIVE THE GIFT OF BLUE

More FFA members are wearing the blue jacket thanks to this important program







Casey Custer, a member of the Waterford FFA chapter in California, received his first FFA jacket in 2015 as part of the Give the Gift of Blue program.

The smile on Casey Custer's face should have given away that this sunny morning in central California was special. A senior at Waterford High School, Casey looks like your typical teenager. Jeans-clad, well-worn boots on, baseball cap firmly in place. He strolled into the humid auditorium from his FFA chapter's shop class, a little winded and cheeks ruddy.

"I was cleaning the shop class for the big day," he greeted the handful of people who immediately circled him, welcoming hands patting him on the back and giving him high-fives. No, Casey didn't score the winning touchdown in Friday's big game. Nor did he become his high school's homecoming king. Today marked something bigger.

Casey would zip up his very own FFA jacket for the first time.

"The blue jacket means a lot to me," Casey says. "It represents the opportunity to gain experience and knowledge, especially as I play a role in our Waterford's FFA Ag Mechanics team."

Casey was the 1,000th FFA member to be gifted an FFA jacket through the Give the Gift of Blue program, which began in 2014. For years, the iconic blue corduroy jacket has been the continuous thread woven through a fabric of generations, from the young farmer living in the rolling hills of Missouri to the roof-top gardener high above New York City.

But for many reasons, not everyone can afford a jacket, including more than 50 percent of the now 629,367 FFA members who don't have one. That's more than 300,000 members who can't wear the jacket to official functions at the local level and for state and national conventions, competitions and special events. The Give the Gift of Blue is changing that. The purpose of this program is to provide students who couldn't otherwise afford a jacket the opportunity to have a jacket.

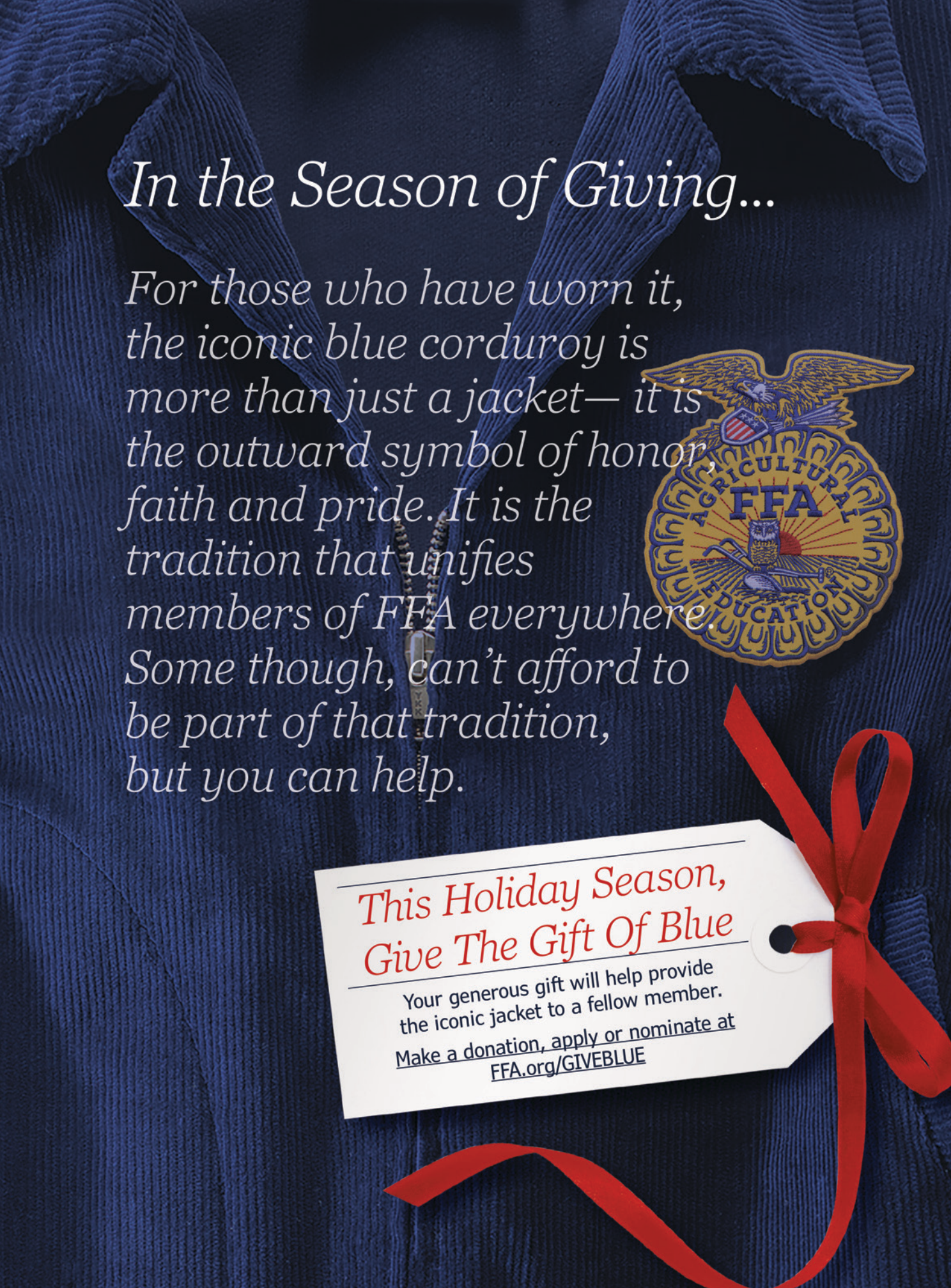
> "The blue jacket means a lot to me. It represents the opportunity to gain experience and knowledge."
> *– Casey Custer, Waterford FFA member in California*

"For so many, the blue corduroy gives a sense of belonging," says Joshua Bledsoe, the chief operating officer for the National FFA Organization. "Thanks to this program, we are able to bring this sense of pride and belonging to more of our members, who are part of our FFA family."

Members apply for a jacket by visiting **FFA.org/giveblue** to share their story of what the jacket means to them. Along with an essay, members also share information on what they have been doing in FFA, their communities and in their schools. New this year, others can nominate members they believe should be gifted a jacket. A student can nominate another student, a grandparent can nominate a grandchild or an advisor can nominate a student. Since going live in August, more than 50 percent of the applications coming in have been by nomination. During just one week in September, FFA approved 60 jackets to be gifted to students of need.

"We've had so much success with the program," says Lee Anne Shiller, merchandise and membership services division director at National FFA. "We thought this would be a nice addition to the program and let others share stories of what our FFA members are accomplishing."

Shiller has the privilege of reading every essay that is submitted through the program. To date, more than 1,200 jackets have been distributed to nearly 400 different chapters in 44 states across the country. The program comes at an ideal time.


In the Season of Giving...
For those who have worn it, the iconic blue corduroy is more than just a jacket— it is the outward symbol of honor, faith and pride. It is the tradition that unifies members of FFA everywhere. Some though, can't afford to be part of that tradition, but you can help.
AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION
FFA
This Holiday Season, Give The Gift Of Blue
Your generous gift will help provide the iconic jacket to a fellow member.
Make a donation, apply or nominate at FFA.org/GIVEBLUE





Above: Joshua Bledsoe, chief operating officer for the National FFA Organization, speaks to FFA members about the Give the Gift of Blue program.

MORE JACKETS NEEDED

More than 50 percent of the 629,367 FFA members across the U.S. don't have an FFA jacket. That's more than 300,000 members without their very own blue corduroy.

"You'd be surprised at how many of our chapters have more than 50 percent of their students on free and reduced lunch," Shiller says. "Forty-three percent of our schools have 50 percent or more of their students on free or reduced lunch. That's over 3,000 of our chapters with 50 percent or more of their students in the school on free and reduced lunch. So the need is huge out there because you know if our members can't afford to buy lunch every day, they can't afford to buy a jacket."

Many of the essays reflect that fact.

"Honestly I have not purchased a jacket because I did not want to put that financial responsibility on my parents," said one applicant from Texas. "I know that it is hard on them providing the necessities for my siblings and me. So far I have had to borrow a jacket from the chapter or another member if I wished to participate."

The funding for the program is thanks to corporate sponsors – CSX Transportation, Valent U.S.A. Corporation and their parent company Sumitomo, Ram Trucks, Tractor Supply Company – and donations from individuals. In addition, a $500,000 endowment created by Donald and Mira Ball continues to fund the program.

Don Ball credits his more than 50-year-career as a public servant to FFA. As a member during the 1950s, he wore a hand-me-down jacket. Now, because of his endowment, up to 400 jackets are awarded annually.

"With the momentum we have going on right now, we'll probably gift 2,000 jackets by January or February of next year," Shiller adds. The first 1,000 jackets were gifted in 18 months; the next 1,000 will probably be handed out in eight months. It's very exciting."

That's good news to the applicants who just want to be a part of something bigger than themselves.

"To own my own FFA jacket would mean that I am taking part in an organization that has been standing strong for 88 years," wrote one Kentucky FFA member in the application. "I want to represent the National FFA Organization because anyone, no matter how you look, where you come from or what you wear, can be part of this organization. If you are the emo kid, the athlete, the farm kid or anything in between, we all can 'fit' into the FFA jacket.

"Without this opportunity, I would not be able to afford the FFA jacket. I come from a large family, and money is scarce in my house. We live in an extremely poor community; I do not want fifty dollars to stand between me and being a bigger part of the FFA. To own my own FFA jacket would not make me look cool, or connect me with friends who are also members, but to me, the FFA jacket would mean representing this organization by honoring those members in the past who have worked hard to make the FFA what it is today."

MORE ONLINE

For more information on how to apply and donate to the program, visit FFA.org/giveblue.



THIS JOB'S FOR THE BIRDS

Orlando FFA member helps rehabilitate threatened birds and wildlife







Anastasia Sturgis works with endangered birds for her FFA supervised agricultural experience program.

Anastasia Sturgis of the Orlando-Colonial FFA Chapter in Florida has an unusual weekend hobby. Instead of hitting the mall or the beach like many teenage girls, Anastasia spends her Saturdays caring for rescued parrots, macaws and cockatoos at the Seminole County Parrot Rescue & Sanctuary in Geneva, Fla.

Anastasia, a 2015 graduate from Colonial High School, started an internship at the parrot rescue center in 10th grade, and now she plans to make a career out of rehabilitating endangered wildlife. Her interest in birds started when she was only 5 years old.

"I've always loved the zoo and all kinds of animals. Steve Irwin is my hero, and I spent every weekend growing up watching *Crocodile Hunter*," Anastasia says. "When I was 5, my parents bought me a duckling, and I raised him. Then I got a gecko and two rescued cockatiels, one of which had an injured wing. Working with those two little guys sparked my interest in the pet bird trade."

FRIEND OF ANIMALS

Because she lives in a residential area, Anastasia didn't have space to keep many animals. But that didn't stop her.

"In middle school, I joined 4-H and started getting more animals and keeping them at a friend's farm," she says. "I went there every day to take care of them."

Anastasia discovered the internship opportunity at the parrot rescue center via social media after her freshman year of high school, and she jumped at the chance to get more hands-on experience with wildlife. Ellen Sherman, owner of the rescue center, invited her out to look around. The property is home to more than 100 parrots, as well as pigeons, crows, tortoises and exotic birds.

"I got to meet all her birds and learn their stories," Anastasia recalls. "A lot of the birds are sweet and calm, but a few are aggressive because they've been neglected or abused. Nearly all of them are former pets."

Anastasia's favorite residents are the Eclectus parrots – small, colorful parrots known among bird enthusiasts for their sexual dimorphism, a distinct difference in the appearance of males and females of the same species.

"The females are bright ruby red with purple tips, and the males are bright emerald green with blue and orange accents," Anastasia explains. "For a long time, researchers thought they were two completely different birds."

Some of the resident birds can talk, including a crow named Hoppy who grew up around parrots and learned to talk like they do.

"He jumps around and says, 'Hi, Hoppy!'," Anastasia says, laughing. "He's so funny."

Sherman says Anastasia has been a big help with cleaning up after the birds and interacting with them.

"She's a smart girl who picks up on things quickly, and she's not afraid of hard work," Sherman says. "It's hard to find young people like her who are so on top of things. Anastasia has a mind that absorbs everything, so she will be successful at whatever career she chooses."



FFA INVOLVEMENT

Colonial High School is fortunate to have a large agriculture lab where Anastasia and her dad, Gil, built an aviary. She keeps her own breeding pair of wood ducks, a pair of Mandarins and a pair of pintail ducks at the aviary.

"I'm working on breeding them, and my goal is to sell them," she says. "People enjoy having them just for pleasure but they also like conserving the breed. Wood ducks used to be endangered."

In 2014, Anastasia won the small animal production and care proficiency at the National FFA Convention & Expo. She is now attending the University of Florida and study Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, and she credits FFA for inspiring her to reach for her goals.

"My FFA advisor, Timothy App, arranged a field trip for me to visit the University of Florida and meet with the dean of the Wildlife Ecology and Conservation Department," she says. "He has always pushed me to step outside my comfort zone. The public speaking and other FFA experiences I've had are already helping me reach my career goals."

Anastasia's experience at the parrot rescue center has also been valuable.

"I've learned how to handle the birds and catch them safely," she says. "When we have new birds come in, they are nervous and scared, so it's important to know how to handle them."

The best thing about working with wildlife, Anastasia says, is changing an animal's life for the better.

"I love it when we get an animal from bad circumstances and we're able to get them back on track both nutritionally and personality-wise," she says. "To see those animals enjoy themselves, be happy and get a second chance at life is an amazing thing."

– Jessica Mozo

MORE ONLINE

See more photos of the birds Anastasia helps rehabilitate at FFAnewhorizons.org.

SIX FUN FACTS ABOUT PARROTS

1 There are more than 300 species of parrots worldwide – ranging in length from about 4 inches up to 40 inches.

2 Some species of parrots can live for more than 80 years in the wild.

3 In the wild, parrots live in flocks and communicate with loud screeching and squawking sounds.

4 All parrots are zygodactyls. This means they have four toes on each foot, two pointing forward and two projecting backward. Their sharp claws allow them to climb and perch on trees.

5 Most species of parrots in the wild build their homes in holes in trees, rock cavities, tunnels in the ground and termite mounds.

6 Only parrots kept as pets mimic people and noises. African Greys are the best mimics of human speech. African Grey parrots have also been taught to count, identify objects and speak short sentences in response to questions.

GET TO KNOW YOUR NATIONAL FFA OFFICERS

WHAT'S THE STRANGEST GIFT YOU'VE EVER RECEIVED?

ANDY: For Christmas one time I got a coin collecting book, which was really neat, except I don't really collect coins.

VICTORIA: A golden toilet plunger – long story.

RUTH ANN: Gag gifts are a big tradition in my family, and one year I received a pair of VERY large women's underwear.

KRISTEN: A few years ago one of my friends elaborately wrapped a nickel in beautiful paper and gave it to me for my birthday. No note, no cutesy story … just a nickel. I still have it.

STEPHEN: My brother, Andrew, gave me a bread maker for Christmas one year.

CALEB: On April 18, 1996, I was given another person. This is the day my amazing little sister was born! She is one of those gifts that keeps on giving!

WHO IS YOUR PERSONAL HERO AND WHY?

ANDY: Hero of my heart and soul? Jesus Christ. My hero here on Earth? My sister. She put up with me during my awkward years (which are still going on), challenges me to better myself and always encourages me.

VICTORIA: Anyone who can look at life as something bigger than themselves and tries to use whatever talents or resources they've been given to leave the world better than they found it.

RUTH ANN: A man named Andy Ferrell. He was my babysitter as a child and was a true man of his faith, taught me how to love unconditionally, and showed me that there's always time to have fun and be silly.

KRISTEN: Jesus! He is obviously a very important example for me to model my walk with God after. Even when we look at Him as just a man, He is a tremendous example of servant leadership, loyalty, humility and perseverance; those are all qualities I really admire and desire to emulate in my everyday life.

STEPHEN: My dad, Mark McBride. He's always challenged himself to become better at everything he's tried, and he is a great example of a humble leader in our household, in his career and in life.

CALEB: My personal hero was the inspiration for the movie *American Sniper*, Chris Kyle. He is a past FFA member from Texas. His heart for service and our country and his family is immeasurable and inspirational!

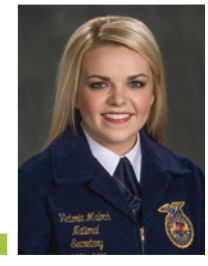
Andy Paul
NATIONAL FFA PRESIDENT

This Georgian credits FFA for teaching him self-confidence and presentation skills. Andy hopes to impact the lives of future FFA members as an agriculture teacher.



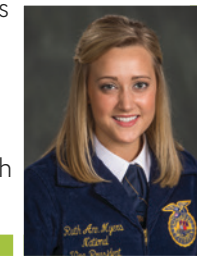
Victoria Maloch
NATIONAL FFA SECRETARY

Victoria grew up on a Brangus cattle farm in Arkansas and lettered for four years in track and field. Her future career plans are to work in agricultural policy.



Ruth Ann Myers
NATIONAL FFA EASTERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT

Hailing from Kentucky, Ruth Ann is an agricultural education major and volunteers for cancer research fundraisers. Her career plan is to teach agriculture.



WHAT DOES THE FFA JACKET MEAN TO YOU?

ANDY: An extension of myself. Our jackets have OUR name on them for a reason. WE get to fill it with OUR memories. Not anyone else's.

VICTORIA: A place to belong. No matter where we are from, our background, our economic status or our race, gender, etc. we all become equal when we zip up that blue corduroy. We are all FFA members and we are all given the same opportunity to succeed when we put on our FFA jackets.

RUTH ANN: It's a classic tradition meant to unite the members of our organization.

KRISTEN: Peace of mind in knowing that the stock that I bought in a large deodorant company will flourish "wherever corn grows and FFA members meet." Just kidding! The jacket is a symbol of tremendous tradition. It represents the memories and miles that I was blessed to experience as a member, as well as the experiences of the millions of other folks who have worn it over the years. It is almost like a common thread that connects all FFA members, past, present and future to the lessons and growth achieved through our organization.

STEPHEN: The blue corduroy is the symbol of what I love about this organization. The ridges in the fabric, the emblems on each side, the yellow stitching; each of these things, to me, represents all of the traditions, friendships and memories that will stick with me forever.

CALEB: Our blue corduroy jacket means we are a piece of something greater than ourselves, something that helps us open new doors of opportunities for us to amplify our passion and purpose.

FOND FAREWELL

This amazing team of National FFA Officers retired from office during the 2015 National FFA Convention & Expo. But not before they presided over each general session and each delivered an inspiring, motivational speech.

Visit **FFA.org/convention** to watch the officers' retiring addresses and other great videos from the convention & expo, along with articles, photos, social posts and more.

We also say hello to the 2015-16 National FFA Officers and will interview them in the Spring 2016 issue of *FFA New Horizons*. Have a question for the new officers? Email it to **newhorizons@ffa.org**.

MORE ONLINE

Read more Q&A with your national FFA officers at FFAnewhorizons.org.

Kristen Schmidt

NATIONAL FFA CENTRAL REGION VICE PRESIDENT

This Colorado native was once a national finalist in the FFA Job Interview CDE. Kristen is majoring in animal science and agribusiness in college.



Stephen McBride

NATIONAL FFA SOUTHERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT

Stephen grew up on a beef cattle farm in Tennessee and is an agribusiness major in college. He plans to work as an agriculture lobbyist in his future career.



Caleb Gustin

NATIONAL FFA WESTERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT

This three-sport athlete (basketball, football and track) grew up raising swine and sheep in New Mexico, focusing on learning about animal nutrition.



Two Is Better Than One

Iowa FFA chapter members take lead to establish position for second ag instructor

With 127 members, the FFA chapter at Sibley-Ocheyedan High School in Iowa is one of the largest in the state. For a chapter that big, two agriculture instructors might seem like a given necessity. But it wasn't until students took action that two ag teachers – and the opportunity to expand their ag program – became a reality.

"Sibley-Ocheyedan High School had two agriculture instructor positions from 1993 to 2000, but in recent years, there has been only one," says Brian Gottlob, agriculture education instructor at Sibley-Ocheyedan High School. "When I began teaching here in 2013, it was a great program, thanks to the previous teacher, Mike Earll, who had built it well over his 30 years of teaching.

Gottlob realized the challenge and took it head on. He says he had great students to work with. Throughout the first 18 months, the students added countless programs, such as blood drives, local Greenhand camps, a chapter orchard and several events to build the program to an even higher level. The students quickly realized in order to continue to support the school's growing FFA and ag programs, their teacher, Mr. Gottlob, would need help. But he didn't expect that help to come from his teenage students.

"Two of our senior FFA members came to me one day in the fall of 2014 and said they understood my stress. They saw a need for change and asked if a second instructor would help," Gottlob says. "I recommended they talk to a local business leader to coach and guide them on the process of making that happen."

The students already had a relationship with a local bank president, Karl Bormann, a longtime supporter of FFA.

"Our chapter officers would periodically visit with him to talk about his industry and how it relates to agriculture, and he would buy them dinner," Gottlob says. "He has been a great friend of our chapter."

The students asked Bormann for help creating a presentation to present to their school board petitioning for a second ag instructor.

"At that point, the school board told them it would not be possible to fund a second position because they were having to cut staff due to lack of funding," Gottlob says. "It was discouraging, but the students went back to Mr. Bormann and told them they didn't get the answer they needed."

Bormann helped them gather supporters from the community, including local realtor and insurance salesman Wade Ellerbroek and 2014-15 Iowa Soybean Association President Brian Kemp. They created an advisory board that included past FFA members, agriculture community members and students. Together, they came up with a plan to raise enough money to support a five-year contract for a new teacher. Their goal was $380,000.

"These discussions started in November 2014, and by March 2015, the money was there," Gottlob says. "It was an amazing show of support. Private donations and five-year commitments were made. A local business even donated a toolbox that our students sold raffle tickets to win."

In spring 2015, the students approached the school board a second time. After two hours of debate, the board approved the proposal in a 3-2 vote. The new ag instructor started in time for the 2015-16 school year.

Josh Wagenaar was one of the senior FFA members who helped make it happen. He is now studying animal science at South Dakota State University.

"We did it for the future of the ag program. Half of our high school was involved in FFA, but we only had one ag teacher," Josh says. "It was intimidating to approach the school board because we knew that although we had supporters, not everyone recognized the need. But those people in the community who supported us gave us the confidence to get it done."

Sara Eggink, a senior and Sibley-Ocheyedan FFA reporter, says she is already seeing great changes to their ag program.

"Now ag education will be offered in middle school, where before it was only offered in high school," Sara says. "Our ag teacher is less stressed, and we are able to have ag classes in specific areas like horticulture, small and large animal science, agronomy, and dairy science. Before, we only had general ag classes. Now students have options that will help them decide what they want to do with their career instead of waiting for college to dig deeper into agriculture."

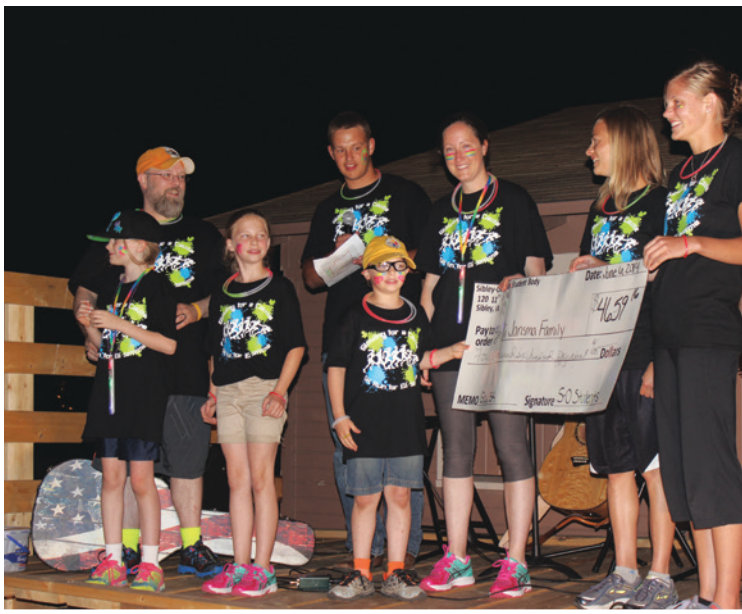
Josh and Sara agree that the community support they received was key to their success.

"Community members donated money, but equally important was that they had our backs through the entire process," she says. "When they learned we needed a second teacher, they said, 'Let's do this.' "

Gottlob says their chapter has been receiving calls from nearby school districts asking for advice on expanding their agriculture programs, too.

"I'm utterly speechless. This was a major undertaking, and our students worked exceptionally hard to take our ag program to the next level," he says. "They took a huge amount of initiative and did this not for themselves, but for the benefit of future ag students."

– Jessica Mozo







TELL YOUR STORY ONLINE

Has your FFA chapter shown premier leadership? Tell us your story at FFAnewhorizons.org/submit-your-story.



Sibley-Ocheyedan FFA is one of the largest – and busiest – chapters in Iowa. Chapter members have organized 5K runs, built an orchard and hosted petting zoos.

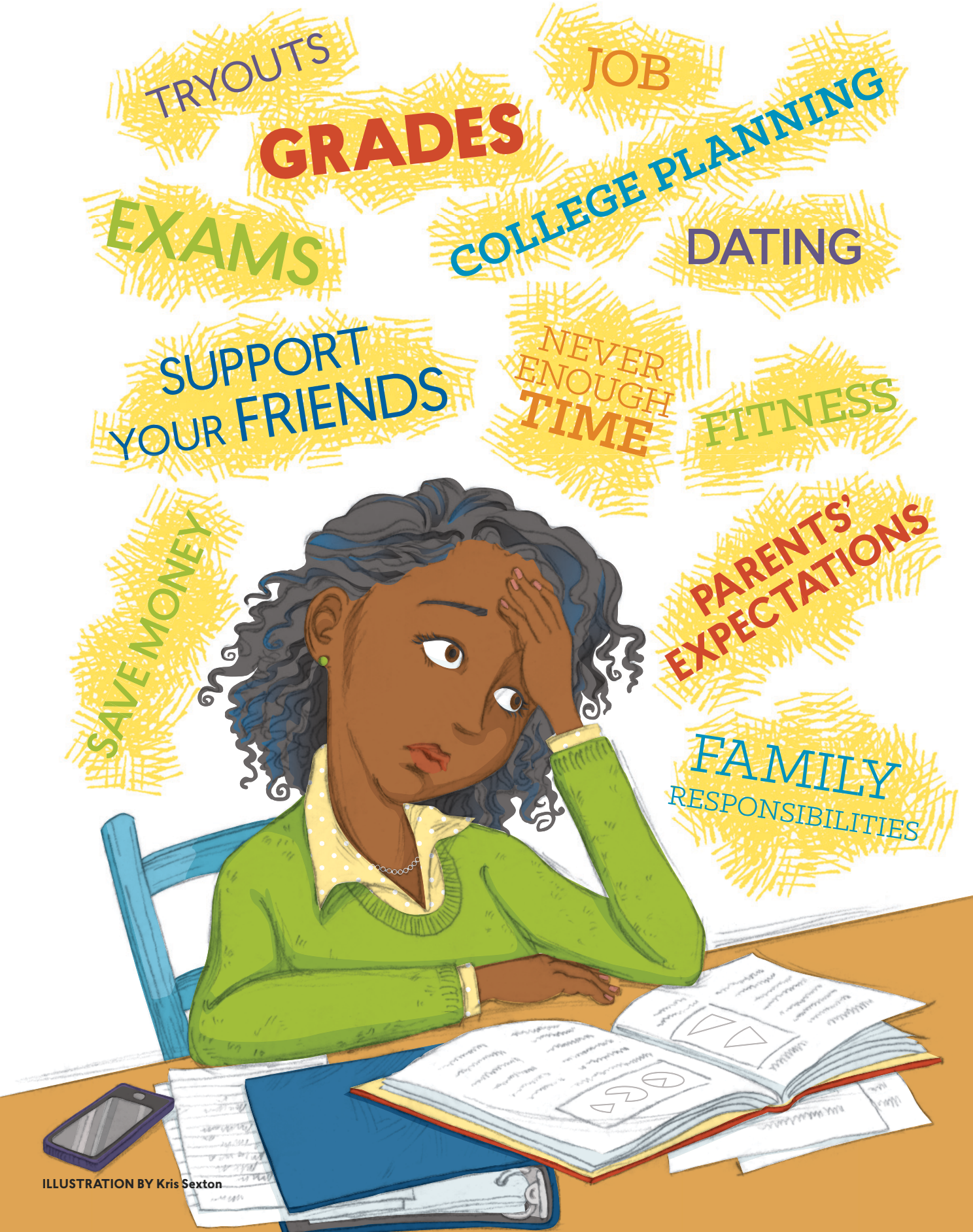


ILLUSTRATION BY Kris Sexton

Stress Busters

Six ways to cope with anxiety

Stressed out? You're not alone. According to a 2014 survey by the American Psychological Association named Stress in America, more than a quarter (27 percent) of teens say they experience "extreme stress" during the school year.

Teens blame their high stress levels on things like school grades, time management to balance all their activities, work responsibilities, social interactions, and relationships with friends and family.

"Everyone experiences some stress, and it's necessary," says Leah Lennox, a clinical mental health therapist. "If you never got nervous before a test, you would never study. Learning how much stress is too much can be the tricky part."

Lennox offers six tips on how to deal:

ENGAGE IN ACTIVITIES THAT BRING YOU JOY.

"Find something you have mastery over, such as drawing, singing or a physical activity, and make it part of your daily routine," she says. "That's a healthy coping skill. Focus on your strengths."

SHARE YOUR STRUGGLE.

"It can be difficult to share struggles with others for fear of rejection. But when you open up with a friend, you may find they struggle with the same things as you. That can lead to more meaningful friendships," Lennox says. "Choose friends who accept you and love you for who you are, and remember the adults in your life were once teenagers, too. They can help you see the light at the end of the tunnel."

SLEEP.

Lack of sleep has been proven to contribute to stress, trouble concentrating and feeling sluggish, sad or depressed. Try to get at least eight hours every night.

EAT HEALTHY FOODS.

This may sound like a no-brainer, but nearly one quarter (23 percent) of teens surveyed reported skipping meals because of stress. Not getting the nutrients your body needs can lead to irritability and lack of motivation. On the other hand, overeating or indulging in unhealthy foods causes teens to feel disappointed in themselves or to feel bad about their bodies.

KEEP IT IN PERSPECTIVE.

Consider if what's stressing you out will even matter five or 10 years from now. "Teens tend to have tunnel vision, only seeing the here and now," Lennox says. "It's helpful to set attainable goals and focus on how you can reach them."

KNOW WHEN TO SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP.

"When anxiety is affecting your daily activities and you no longer enjoy participating in things you once enjoyed, that's a good indication you need to reach out to a school counselor or therapist for help," Lennox says. "Sometimes, you may just need help sorting out your feelings. It can be scary to ask for help, but when you feel scared and brave at the same time, that's when you become courageous."

– Jessica Mozo

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F. Total distribution (sum of 15C and 15E)	691,802	664,232
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16. This statement of ownership will be printed in the Winter 2015-16 issue of this publication.
17. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

Julie Woodard, National FFA Organization

A Good Outlook

USDA releases report showing an increase in available agriculture jobs

If you want to pursue a career that's in high demand and only growing stronger, agriculture is the answer.

In May, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released a new employment outlook report that shows there are an estimated 57,900 job openings in the food, agriculture, renewable natural resources and environment fields each year.

There are an average of 35,400 new U.S. graduates with a bachelor's degree (or higher degree) in agriculture-related fields – 22,500 short of the jobs available each year.

What does this mean for you? In short, lots of opportunity and strong certainty for job placement – if you pursue and train for careers in our important industry.

Employers have reported that they prefer to hire graduates with agriculture-related degrees, but the analysis found that these graduates currently only fill about 60 percent of the expected annual openings.

When releasing the report, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack said, "There is incredible opportunity for highly-skilled jobs in agriculture. Those receiving degrees in agricultural fields can expect to have ample career opportunities. Not only will those who study agriculture be likely to get well-paying jobs upon graduation, they will also have the satisfaction of working in a field that addresses some of the world's most pressing challenges. These jobs will only become more important as we continue to develop solutions to feed more than 9 billion people by 2050."

The report anticipates that the strongest agriculture-related career demand will be for STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) jobs, including plant scientists, food scientists, sustainable biomaterials specialists, water resources scientists and engineers, precision agriculture specialists, and veterinarians.

Demand will also be strong for e-commerce managers and marketing agents, ecosystem managers, agricultural science and business educators, crop advisors, and pest control specialists.

Want even more career opportunity? The report shares that graduates who are willing to move and have work experience (don't forget to count your FFA supervised agricultural experience program) will be in even greater demand.

All this points to an incredibly important conclusion: Your future looks bright ... in agriculture.

50%

Women represent more than 50 percent of the higher-education graduates in the U.S. within the agriculture, renewable natural resources and environment industry.

MORE ONLINE

For more findings and links to the full report, visit FFAnewhorizons.org.

CALCULATED OPPORTUNITY

Let's do the math.

There are **57,900** job openings in the food, agriculture, renewable natural resources and environment fields each year.

Subtract **35,400** new U.S. graduates with a bachelor's degree (or higher degree) in agriculture-related fields.

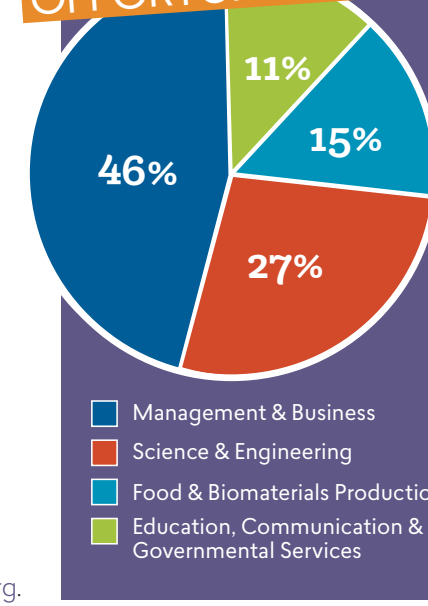
That means our industry is **22,500** graduates short of the jobs available each year.

TOP CAREERS TO CONSIDER:

These STEM job titles present some of the best career opportunities:

- Plant scientists
- Food scientists
- Sustainable biomaterials specialists
- Water resources scientists and engineers
- Precision ag specialists
- Veterinarians

TOP EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES



A Night to Remember

Shenandoah FFA Chapter hosts prom for developmentally disabled community members

For most people, going to prom is the culmination of their teenage years, with the flashing cameras, elegant outfits, and hours of dancing and revelry. But for some, attending prom isn't always in the cards.

Indiana's Shenandoah FFA Chapter, the 2014 National FFA Model of Innovation winner for community service, has been hosting seasonal parties for the developmentally disabled members of their community for more than 30 years.

The chapter activity has brought joy and excitement to the residents of 22 local group homes including Snug Harbor Home Health Inc.

"We do this for our community, for a chance to brighten someone else's day instead of only being concerned with ourselves," says Chapter Sentinel Ellie Rider. "It gives our members a chance to step out of their comfort zones and to see what we can do to make a difference."

In 2009, chapter members decided to change things up a bit from their previous parties and host an actual prom.

"We have done parties with them for years and some never get the opportunity to go to prom, so we thought giving them that memory would be a lot of fun," says Chapter Secretary Shelby Lockhart. "Snug Prom is a more fulfilling kind of fun than a school prom because people don't have to worry about the superficial things and can really have a good time and enjoy the company of our guests."

On the night of the prom, both the residents and the FFA chapter members get dolled up in formalwear that has been borrowed or generously donated.

As the approximately 150 guests file in, they are greeted by 45 to 50 members and given a tiara or medallion. These tokens signify that each and every attendee is a prom king or queen for the night.

Throughout the evening the residents and members have their photos taken in a photo booth, cut a rug and enjoy a variety of finger foods.

The memories made on the dance floor will stay with the FFA members and residents for years to come.

"The members all have stories of dancing with guests, having guests propose to them, or of awesome karaoke moments," says Chapter Advisor Tammie Gadberry. "One man in particular loves Michael Jackson, and you can always count on him to show us his best moves when one of M.J.'s songs comes on."

Although these events are held to benefit the developmentally disabled, everyone walks away with a smile on their face and a renewed faith in their community.

"I love hearing the kids tell me it was the most fun they have had all year because doing for others should be fun, and these moments are ones I hope they hold on to for a lifetime," Gadberry says.

– Hannah Patterson



> "We have done parties with them for years and some never get the opportunity to go to prom, so we thought giving them that memory would be a lot of fun."
> *– Chapter Secretary Shelby Lockhart*



SCHOLARSHIPS

Through the National FFA Foundation, corporations, businesses and individuals stepped up to provide more than $2.2 million in scholarship opportunities.

One of every four members who applied received a scholarship.

Don't miss this great opportunity to help prepare for higher education!

Apply online from Nov. 15, 2015 through 5 p.m. EST, Feb. 1, 2016.

Visit *FFA.org/scholarships* after Nov. 15 for more information.

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California FFANEWS

WINTER 2015
VOL. 4 • NO. 2

CONTENTS



6 A Member's Memories of Life in the Barn



8 Why I Teach Ag: Dane White, Galt FFA



16 State Officer Team On The Go!

+ Confessions of a State Officer

Regional Updates

Chapter Scoops, Scoops and More Scoops!

6 Outstanding Chapter: East Nicolaus

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We want to hear from you...

We are always looking for great stories about members and alumni around our state. Know of a story that we should feature in CA FFA News? Please email news@californiaffa.org.

Submission deadlines:
Fall..... June 1st
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Spring ..... December 1st
Summer..... March 1st

Stay in touch... "California FFA"

Opps! Did I Do That?

CONFESSIONS OF A STATE FFA OFFICER



BREANNA HOLBERT, SECRETARY

You want to talk about embarrassing? Hands down, running for chapter office my junior year was my most embarrassing FFA moment. When all of the candidates and I sat in the agricultural mechanics shop waiting for our interview, the school bell began ringing like crazy. Doesn't a school bell kind of sound like the fire alarm? That's what I thought too from the way I was flailing my arms to and fro, running around the sharp and dangerous tools, and frantically screaming "IT'S A FIRE DRILL!" It wasn't until the wrestling coach next door stared me down with the look of 'watcha doin', Felicia?' that I realized my mistake. I became the alarming butt of jokes for weeks!



SYDNEY SOUSA, V. PRESIDENT

It was January 29th. I was a freshman in high school and at 6:30 AM we were headed to our first creed practice contest. Aside from the nerves, glazed over eyes, and stomachache from my ag teacher's driving, I was accompanied by crutches and a bright pink cast on my leg. When we finally arrived, I jumped out of the van (that was my first mistake) and headed towards the contest. At the bottom of the stairs stood all of the contestants, parents, and creed judges. I was wondering how I would get down the stairs to join everyone with my cast. Well, gravity took care of it for me. As I took my first step, I tumbled and my crutches made it to the bottom and I followed right behind them. I guess that's one way to conquer two flights of stairs! Oh yeah, and January 29th, that's my birthday. What more could I have wanted my first day as a fifteen year old?

JOELLE LEWIS, PRESIDENT

During regionals my senior year I was able to make it into the finals of the Prepared Public Speaking contest, meaning that I would give my speech on stage in an auditorium full of people - yikes. I spent the time before pacing back and forth running through my speech in my head, and hoping I would be able to answer my questions adequately. Moments later the lapel microphone was attached to my jacket and I began to speak. Eventually the nerves subsided, and I got through the entire speech and questions - in fact I felt pretty confident in my delivery and answers. I walked off of the stage feeling good, and went to share my excitement with my advisor. Come to find out, instead of nailing my last question, I had done quite the opposite. I guess I had been so ready to give an answer that I forgot to actually process what the judge was asking. And as a result what I said made absolutely no sense. It's funny because I can remember thinking how easy that question had been, when in fact that was not the case at all. And it all happened in front of about 200 people.



{ Continued on page 3 }



My senior year on the South Coast Regional Officer Team I served as the reporter. I was in charge of the social media accounts and encouraging others to be vocal about their chapters through social media. The day was September 6, 2014, the final day of our Sectional Officer Leadership Conference. We were feeling pretty pleased with how the weekend went, that was until "the hashtag." What is "the hashtag" you ask? Well it all started with a small task, Mr. Beard told me to tell everyone at the conference to hashtag any pictures taken over the weekend at the conference with "#scrffa or #scrsolc." Simple right? That's what I thought too, until I attempted to make this announcement and completely butcher it. I sounded like a toddler learning how to say my alphabet, saying every letter but "scrffa" or "scrsolc." I was constantly reminded about "the hashtag" throughout the year, serving as a friendly reminder of how much we grow from our mistakes.

TREVOR AUTRY, TREASURER



My most embarrassing FFA moment came when I was at Superior Region's Chapter Officer Leadership Conference (COLC). Dani and I were facilitating our routine leadership workshops and I was overcoming a cold that I had caught two weeks prior. As I stood on a chair to yell out a direction set with enthusiasm, my voice decided to crack as if I were in middle school. Needless to say I was embarrassed. With a red face and injured pride, I tried to play it off with a joke...nobody laughed.

TIM TRUAX, SENTINEL

DANIELLE DIELE, REPORTER

During the first few months of high school, I had volunteered to help out with our chapter's nacho night FFA meeting. As a greenhand member, I was new to the agriculture department and had just started getting to know the chapter officers - let alone the chapter advisors. I offered to carry two huge bags of tortilla chips (the long 10lb bags) from the ag truck to the meeting room with a few of my friends. While I was waiting for my friends to grab their bags, I somehow thought it would be a good idea to spin in circles with the two large bags in each of my hands-so I created a helicopter type spiral. Although looking back, this alone is embarrassing enough... at the age of 13, all I wanted to do was keep spinning faster and faster! I was not paying attention to anyone except myself and how much fun I was having. I started to pick up more speed, and then...SMACK! I had hit my new advisor straight across his face with one of the large bags of chips. I had just met him nearly a week before AND I had only been a student in the ag department for a little over a month! I quickly apologized as tons of older FFA members stared and shared mixed emotions of laughter and that, 'oh no she didn't!' face. Safe to say, I was extremely embarrassed. •



Central Region Update

From the Regional Officer Leadership Conference to planning yearly events, the Central Region Officers have truly united as a team. The theme for the Central Region this year is Experience. Evolve. Empower. These three powerful words encompass what we believe to be a life skill of the FFA. The experiences you gain in the blue jacket are invaluable and are guaranteed to stand the test of time. It is from our experiences that we evolve into the leadership positions that we are called upon to fulfill. Finally, it's when these two philosophies combine that we empower others to follow in our footsteps.

At our recent Sectional Officer Leadership Summit, thirty-six sectional officers completed challenging teambuilding games hosted by the State Officers, planned for our COLC, and even played a rigorous game of capture the FFA jacket. Follow us on Instagram @ centralregionffa to see how these members will use the skills they have learned in their sections.

Above all things, the Central Region Officers are excited to meet their region's members. Members are truly the face of the Central Region and we, as a team, can't wait to meet you! We challenge the members of the Central Region to reflect on the achievements of their past and look ahead to strive for future success. How will you make this year memorable?

Respectfully Submitted
Mark Borges, Central Region Reporter •



Regional Update • Regional Update • Regional Update •

OUTSTANDING CHAPTER

East Nicolaus FFA



In 1929, with the growing number of chapters being chartered for FFA, East Nicolaus had the honor of being the 55th chapter chartered in California. In 1933, Mr. James Taresch was the chapter's first State FFA Degree Recipient and State FFA Officer. Since then, participation has skyrocketed and many traditions continue the East Nicolaus FFA legacy. Today, there are 135 State Degree recipients, 40 American Degree recipients, and four past State Officers.

The East Nicolaus FFA chapter has thrived so well all these years because of the continuous support from the community. The strength of the chapter is due to the loyalty and support of the small community, the members of the chapter try to show their respect and gratitude by giving back as much as they can.

With only having about 300 students in the whole school, 212 of those students are currently enrolled in Agricultural Education, making FFA the largest student organization on campus. This is probably because the students in the neighboring elementary schools are incredibly important to the students in the FFA program. One of the ways that the East Nicolaus FFA chapter shows support to the incoming students is by hosting the Annual Elementary Basketball Tournament. By allowing the middle school students to come and play at the high school, FFA is giving support to the younger potential members. East Nicolaus FFA also shows support to the future FFA members by hosting an annual Easter Egg Hunt. Every year, kids look forward to finding eggs filled with candy, seeing the Easter bunny, and winning raffle baskets full of toys and goodies.

Providing food for local families in need is very important to the members of the East Nicolaus FFA. From adopting a family at Christmas and creating approximately 20 dinner baskets for the holidays to providing Farm to Fork on campus; East Nicolaus FFA members are ready to serve.

Another program created through a Senior Project, is Wool for a Worthy Cause. Local sheep breeders bring in their small flocks to the animal science unit and the students vaccinate and deworm ewes following being sheared. The wool is sorted by color and sacked for the WWC organization to pick up. The wool is then processed and delivered to a school for the blind to make blankets and the blankets are then provided to military families.

The strength of the chapter is due to the loyalty and support of the small community...

{ Continued on page 5 }









East Nicolaus is a small town that is always willing to do what they can to help their local FFA program. Because of this unlimited support, East Nicolaus FFA members are always thinking of new ways to give back and thank the community; the 2015 Labor Day Parade float theme was "OUR FARMERS, OUR HEROES!"

Just like other chapters in the state, East Nicolaus FFA participates in various leadership conferences, CDEs, and SAEs. However, East Nicolaus FFA has placed in the top four in the state for a consecutive 23 years, earning 10 State Champions during this time. The scrapbook has been a great way to showcase the various events and support from our community. OUR FARMERS, OUR HEROES!



Photo captions

Opposite page, clockwise starting at top:

- *2015 Yuba Sutter Fair Photo: 50 members exhibited at the 2015 Yuba Sutter Fair- Where Fun Grows!*
- *Farm to Fork Photo: Students harvest tomatoes and deliver to the ENHS Food Service Program to use in preparing lunches for the students.*
- *Officer Retreat Tube Photo: Officers floated down a river in Dunsmuir as a team building activity!*

This page, clockwise starting at top left:

- *Watermelon photo: National FFA Week Competition – Watermelon Smashing Contest!*
- *James Gallagher Photo: EN FFA members serve at an event with the Past Chapter President (1999), Assemblyman James Gallagher.*
- *Browns Elementary Photo: Browns Elementary Girls' Team Champions of the 2015 FFA Tournament!*
- *Greenhand Initiation Photo: Freshmen members dye their hands green and make a t-shirt with their green handprints for GREENHAND INITIATION! •*



LIFE IN THE BARN



BY CONNER VERNON • NIPOMO FFA

When the alarm clock goes off at 5:30 in the morning, my day begins at my favorite place, the barn. From the looks of it, the barn isn't anything special on the outside, but the memories it holds on the inside are my most treasured. My Grandfather originally built the barn out of old scrap wood and secondhand materials because he didn't have much as a Portuguese immigrate to this country. Although money was limited, he provided for his six children through hard work and resourcefulness. Over time the old barn has changed but one thing has remained the same; it has been the place where livestock are cared for, important breeding decisions are made, the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat are shared.

My barn journey began by helping my grandfather do chores; feeding pigs, goats, sheep and an occasional drop calf. I wasn't much help in the beginning as I could barely see over the fence, but it is where my dream of livestock ownership began. My dream became a reality, like most 4-H members, at the age of nine when I received two ewes, Jaime and Spot, as family gifts. They were just ordinary ewe lambs that I showed at my very first fair, but they became the matriarchs of my sheep flock. Spot never won herself, but she has produced several champions. She is seven years old now, and my most cherished possession. I love that ewe! Between my brother, Kyler, and I we own 38 ewes.

Although my family is known for raising sheep, I had the desire to create my own path. So I ventured into the swine barn and I quickly fell in love, with pigs of course. The swine portion of the barn was awesome because I didn't have to share livestock with my younger brother. To date, I have six sows and two gilts and I have been showing swine for the past seven years.

Working with my livestock every day has helped me in many ways. I have to make business decisions about which animals I keep or sell. It is not always easy, but my livestock judging skills have improved. I put these skills to work on the Nipomo FFA Livestock Judging Team. Last year I was humbled to win the High Individual in the state and our team was crowned the State Champions in the Livestock Judging Contest.

If you want to do anything well, it takes dedication, patience, and hard work. I spend many hours in the barn working with my animals practicing showmanship, fitting and managing their health and nutrition. These animals depend upon me. While I enjoy it, I have to make difficult choices and sacrifices about other activities like hanging out with friends or playing sports. Although these sacrifices have been difficult, I wouldn't trade my time in the barn, fairs, shows, or fields days, for anything. This is where I have learned life lessons, gained lifelong friends and found the true meaning of an abundant life.

{ Continued on page 7 }



Photo Captions. Opposite page: A boy and his tractors; this old beauty is at my Uncle Jaime's sheep ranch. He gave me one of my first ewes, for that she was named Jaime. ***This page clockwise starting at top:*** *Although my official love for pigs didn't begin until I was ten, they have always been a part of my life; Doing chores is a necessity, rain or shine. Proper nutrition for our mature ewes is vital; it is a balancing act between keeping them in good condition but not too fat that the lambs need to be pulled. These ewes are scheduled to lamb December 2015; My mom's love for sheep sparked our involvement. From an early age, Kyler and I would help our mom at the barn feeding, working with sheep, or lamb out ewes. Now she is my agriculture teacher and she's helped me develop my SAE into what I have today; My very first market lamb, Dusty, was purchased from Mr. Dustin Snyder and was heavier than I was. I was thrilled with the outcome, but so nervous because Mr. Snyder came to watch and I didn't want to mess up; and Every summer I looked forward to showing at Pee Wee Showmanship at our local county fair. It was a family event with my brother and many cousins.* •

North Coast Region Update

With the mission to minimize the 487-mile gap between our diverse region in mind, this year the North Coast Region Officer Team is looking forward to implementing chapter visits to each of the 33 chapters in our region. The chapter visits will range from attending chapter banquets, fundraisers, to sectional events, and meetings, all beginning after COLC. One goal for the visits is to be able to highlight each chapter in a chapter scoop that will be posted on the region's Instagram page. We hope that this will generate ideas and support amongst the chapters in the North Coast Region! Secondly, the team hopes that the chapter visits will build more of a sense of comradery throughout the region and build a stronger network of connections between the sections and chapters. As a team, we look forward to reconnecting with each chapter and showcasing what makes each one unique!

Respectfully Submitted,
Emma Manoukian,
North Coast Region Secretary •











San Joaquin Region Update

In mid-August, chapter leaders all over the San Joaquin Region came to Camp San Luis Obispo to participate in our annual SJR Boot Camp! The leaders from each respective chapter were challenged mentally, emotionally, and physically. Here, they had to overcome obstacles that helped each chapter realize their team's potential! Boot Camp was also an environment where chapter leaders were able to open up with one another and bond as a team. This year's Sectional Officer Leadership Conference was very successful. The Sectional Officers had the opportunity to be a part of the Regional and State Officer workshops. At SOLC, we challenged the Sectional Officers to gain skills and apply them within their team to further their impact in their section. The meaning of our theme, "It Starts With YOU," is individualization; in the aspect that one must have the desire within them to pave their path in agricultural education. There are endless opportunities for us to take advantage of. It is our choice to take those opportunities and shape ourselves so that WE can impact others.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kelsey Swall,
San Joaquin Region Secretary •







DANE WHITE
GALT HIGH SCHOOL

Michael Jordan's protégé, David Beckham's second coming, ophthalmologist, environmental lawyer or fisheries biologist. As a 14-year old I weighed the plentiful options for my future career, I realized the possibilities for a fulfilling life were nearly endless.

Like anyone reading this magazine, I spent many years being told that I could be anything I wanted to be; no matter the scope of my talents or interests. However, the path to identifying what that would be was much more difficult than I imagined.

I interned at a doctor's office, fished on the weekends and played basketball with my friends, but I didn't like any of those things enough to consider living them day-in and day-out as a job. I had become enthralled with vocational possibilities based on their prestigious-sounding titles, not realizing that the title of a career tells us little about the actual qualities of that occupation.

"Agricultural educator" may not turn heads for its prestige or international fame, but the qualities of this career do in fact make for a pretty outstanding life.

I had the chance to serve as a keynote speaker at the State FFA Conference this year, and I shared a similar message regarding the beauty of choosing a career in agricultural education.

> ...the qualities of this career do in fact make for a pretty outstanding life.

Foremost, you laugh a lot. I know that sounds shallow, but who doesn't want a job where you get paid to crack up all the time? Sure, the hours can sometimes be long and the challenges can wear on you, but being surrounded by 150 or so awkward teens bent on hijinks and

{ Continued on page 9 }

Why I teach Ag...
CHOOSE AG ED!



laughter ensures the worries fade and the good times keep rolling. Perhaps the hardest I've ever laughed in my life was with my Ag Issues team at National Convention last year the night before we competed. How can any of us ask for more than to have our career filled with gut-busting laughter?

Finally, the qualities of agricultural education ensure you have a purpose-rich existence. Research consistently indicates that the single key to life fulfillment is to serve something greater than yourself; I can think of few other career choices that embody that idea more than an agricultural educator. I know how dramatically Sandy Lovfald, my Ag teacher, changed my life. You may be saying the same thing about your Ag teacher. Imagine your name being remembered as the "life-changer", the "difference-maker", because it will likely happen should you choose to join our ranks. Perhaps now more than ever students need positive role models, disciplined mentors and compassionate leaders in their lives. You could do that; you could use what you have been given to purposefully and decisively make the lives of people who need you SIGNIFICANTLY better.

Laugh a ton and do good works for our fellow mankind? Sign me up! The title of the career likely won't win any awards for its prestige, but what we DO on a daily basis is what really indicates the merit of the career. So, think about what you want in your life-what really matters to you. If you realize you want to do something worth doing each day and you want to laugh while doing it, then please join our ranks in agricultural education.

Photo Captions. Opposite page: Pushing kids to experience their limits is beyond fulfilling, even when it happens outside the FFA jacket. Here, three Galt FFA leaders coordinate the Galt High School Homecoming Rally. Top: Dressing up in 70's attire and hitting up a local skate night with 40 of our best and brightest brings non-stop laughter and memory making! •

South Coast Region Update

"We've got the beach, we've got the sun, South Coast Region is number one!" The South Coast Region has had an amazing past few months 'Diving In!' This year we want to challenge you to 'Dive In' to each and every challenge and experience you meet with passion, dedication, and leadership. By 'Diving In' you can reach your full potential. At ROLC in July the regional leaders learned many new skills and team building activities that they put into action at our SOLC in September and our COLC in October. Over the past few months we have grown close to so many of our members and we cannot wait to see how each of you will 'Dive In' to help better your chapter and communities. Let us know how you are 'Diving In' by tagging us on Instagram @southcoastregionffa and using the hashtag #SCRFFADiveIn.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kayla Erath,
South Coast Region Reporter •



Chapter Scoops

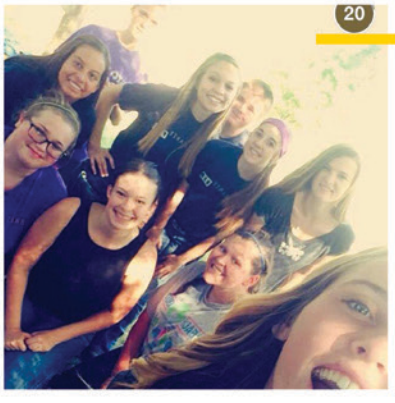
WINTER 2015 EDITION



ATWATER FFA
Cultivating Success

Submitted by Jeff Clark

Each year, more than 12,000 individual plant plugs are transplanted along with thousands of "mother stock" transplants to stock up for the school year. The opportunity to grow plants serves as a chance to get students excited and interested in the horticulture industry. It also offers the potential to develop skills associated with marketing and sales as Atwater High School holds two primary plant sales each year. In addition to the plant sales providing funds to run the horticulture program, the "hands-on" approach and enthusiasm towards horticulture has resulted in increased campus pride with the student efforts in utilizing school-grown plants and creating beautiful flowering landscape gardens all over campus.
For more information, log onto www.AtwaterFFA.org



BRETE HARTE FFA
Oysters and Oinkers

Submitted by Kari Farwell

Up here in little-old Angels Camp, home to Bret Harte FFA, we have a fundraiser over the summer called Oysters and Oinkers The chapter raises money for the entire year with this year having an enormous emphasis as we tried to raise extra money to send our State Champion Poultry Judging Team back to Nationals in Kentucky. Our local businesses donate items for a silent and live auction to be placed in baskets and raffled off. The items we receive range from a signed Colin Kaepernick jersey to a couple bottles of wine. The entire community attends this event in order to supports us. The event includes a 50-50 raffle in which half the proceeds go to the chapter and the other half to the winner. At the end of the night the infamous Busta Groove rocks out for all of the community to enjoy.



CENTRAL CATHOLIC FFA
Rooted in Christ

By Lisa Archuleta

Central Catholic FFA has been busy working to make our very first year one to remember. With the help of our amazing advisor, Mrs. Nicole Morris, and Ag Pest Coach, Mr. Matthew Terra, four students from Central Catholic High School were not only able to compete at State Finals for Agriculture Pest Control, but won the State Champion Title. Central Catholic FFA's success did not stop there; we were also triumphant at the Stanislaus County Fair. We had 14 members exhibiting livestock projects with many members placing in the top of their market and showmanship classes. With our new officers in place Central Catholic FFA is looking forward to fun meetings, fundraisers, and exciting new classes. Our program has more than doubled in our second year, and we not only want to make a difference in our chapter, but also make a difference in our community. By being Rooted in Christ in everything that we do, our members know that we will be able to handle any challenges this year and look forward to growing our program.

Your Chapter FFA
Let Us Know Your Chapter's Scoop! Here's how...

1) Submit a 100-150 word article about your chapter's recent activity.
a. Please do not include members or advisors names within the article.
b. The article should be about an interesting/unique type of FFA activity. This is an opportunity to showcase new and innovative chapter activities.
2) Attach a GREAT quality digital photo.
a. Photos should be in color and help further explain the submitted article.
b. Photos must include members with appropriate clothing & behavior.
c. Photos must be sent as individual jpeg files.
3) Email the above information to news@californiaffa.org.
The Subject of the email must include your chapter's name. In the email, please include the author of the chapter scoop and title of the article.
4) Please reference page two for CA FFA News Submission Deadlines



DEL ORO FFA
Discovery Program

Submitted by Mackenzie Leal

This past year, Del Oro FFA launched a new recruitment program known as Discovery, which invites 7th and 8th graders to get involved and learn about the chapter. The Discovery program illuminates the future of agriculture by utilizing Del Oro's agricultural scholars as educational role models for the younger generations. The program meets once a month and is taught by active FFA members. At the meetings, the future Del Oro FFA members are exposed to concepts like how to show animals, Career Development Events, the aquaponics system, and greenhouse production. A Discovery alumni currently enrolled in the Del Oro FFA chapter notes, "The Discovery Program helped me learn about how agriculture doesn't just benefit me, but benefits the whole world".



EUREKA FFA
United as One

Submitted by Austynn Gallagher

On the dates of August 11th, 12th and 13th the Humboldt/Del Norte section came together as one for a Sectional Officer Retreat. As the three days progressed, they hosted specialized workshops for each office that included extensive teaching of the skills that are needed to fulfill their duties as chapter officers. They gathered as teams to collaborate with each other, work as one during games, and act out situations that enabled the teams grow as an "FFAmily." Lastly, they separated into their chapters to plan out their FFA meetings and events for the upcoming year. Within those three days, they agreed to grow together as officers, chapters, and as one.



FIREBAUGH FFA
Teenagers and Kiddie Pools

By Paola Gonzalez

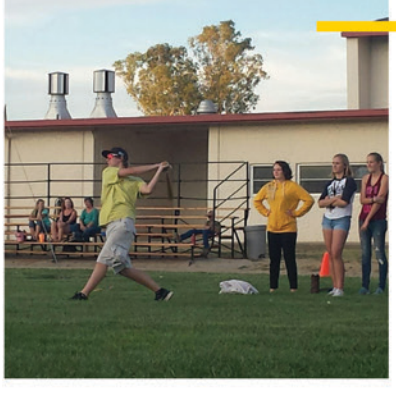
If someone mentioned that an FFA event would have kiddie pools, slip-n-slides and kickball they might be thinking, "How cool is that!" Well it was very cool in fact. In August, the Firebaugh FFA hosted a Welcome Back Barbecue to not only its FFA members, but also staff, family, and community. This was a little something to welcome back our members to the new school year, but most of all, to introduce parents to the FFA program. At the meeting, we served hot dogs, played music, but most importantly, we played the best game ever invented, Kiddie Pool Kickball. With the kiddie pools set up as the bases and the field made up of slip-n-slides, our members along with some of our amazing ag teachers, enjoyed every single moment.



CORDOVA FFA
Chapter Retreat

By Jordan Mallory

This is our fifth year as a chapter. This year we had our second annual Officer Retreat. For the retreat we went to South Lake Tahoe for camping. During our camping trip we did team building activities and chose our theme for this year "A Big Difference Starts Small". We also sat down and planned out our activities for the year. We planned our big event of the year called "Kiss a Critter" where we have teachers run against each other to raise the most money. The person who raises the most money has to kiss an animal. Our chapter has grown so big that we have decided to create committees for our projects throughout the year. This year we also revised our constitution. We went to the lake and played fun card games. This was a great way to get to know each other.



DELTA FFA
Eighty Years

Submitted by Lillian Deak

Eighty years of FFA in our small town is a big deal. Our community is tight knit and the FFA is a huge part of all of our lives. To start our eightieth year off, Delta FFA has thrown a Back to School Chapter BBQ & Softball Game! Around sixty students attended, as well as parents, younger siblings, advisors, and other teachers to participate in the evening's fun! The softball game ended with two amazing teams facing off, The Cute As Can Be Cinderella's, and the Mighty Pooh Bears! Right as the sunset in the last inning, the Cinderella's came in for the win with a home run!



SOLEDAD FFA
The Future of Agriculture

Submitted by Angelita Cisneros

Being in the south end of Monterey County, Soledad FFA members have the opportunity of being surrounded by Salinas Valley's agricultural mecca. This past spring, members had the opportunity to practice the FFA Motto in "Living to Serve." The school's agricultural area was opened up to more than 500 elementary school students within the Soledad Unified School District. Members held hands-on learning labs that covered topics related to the agriculture industry, such as how to plant seeds, milk a cow, walk a lamb, and show rabbits. Members applied their leadership skills through extensive preparation and presentation of these topics. It was fun to see kids excited for agriculture and express their desire to possibly follow in the footsteps of their family and friends.



SUNNY HILLS FFA
Welcome BBQ

Submitted by Emily Colby

On August 27th, the Sunny Hills FFA Chapter had our first social of the year, a Welcome to the Agriculture Department BBQ. There were 109 people who attended, a new record for our chapter! At this event, there was a relaxing atmosphere, where members could enjoy themselves while being welcomed into the FFA. We served food and drinks for the students and enjoyed socializing with everyone. After socializing and eating, the students were offered in a friendly game of mud tug-of-war. It was amusing to watch students play both regular and mud tug-of-war. A few duos played against each other, which was pleasing to watch because they were enthusiastic about it! Chapter officers also joined in and played against the members. Overall, the first social of the year was a success because the members had a good time and were welcomed into the FFA!



TURLOCK FFA
Fair Success

Submitted by Bobby Marchy

Turlock FFA had a spectacular year at the Stanislaus County Fair. All exhibitors were able to see their hard work, dedication, and passion for their exhibits pay off. From the early days to the long nights of hard work, Turlock FFA members were exhilarated to find out at the awards ceremony, that they had won the Thurman award. The Thurman award is given to the chapter that has the most points out of all exhibits over the two week span of fair. Students of Turlock FFA, motivated by their leaders to work together and accomplish their goals, ended up going home more motivated and determined to work harder than before to keep progressing in their exhibits.



TULARE FFA
Golden Milk Can

Submitted by Kelsey Swall, Tulare FFA Reporter

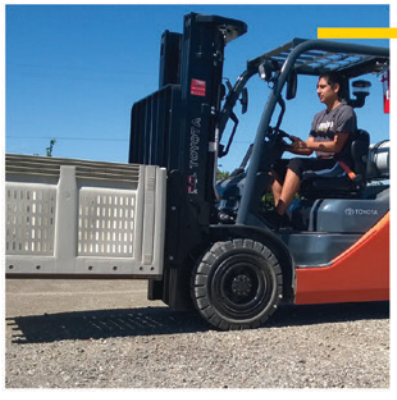
The Tulare FFA Chapter is unique in that it is made up of three high schools, with almost 1000 members! Every year, the chapter hosts a meeting at the beginning of the year just for the incoming freshman. Freshman parents attend as well, and learn about the opportunities in FFA and Booster club activities. During that time, the members split up by school, allowing the officers to connect with the incoming freshman members. Afterwards, the three schools compete in a relay race; which consists of games, activities, and challenges! The members love competing against each other in hopes of winning the golden milk can, and representing their school! The officers believe that it makes the freshman members feel comfortable and welcome during their first month in the rather large Tulare FFA Chapter!



GOLDEN VALLEY FFA
Plant Now, Harvest Later

Submitted by Adrianna Davis

As the 2015-2016 school year approached, the Golden Valley FFA officers eagerly prepared for our chapter's schedule of events. Over the summer, the officers got together for countless hours of brainstorming new ideas and ways to interact with our community. Golden Valley FFA chose the theme "What You Plant Now, Will Harvest Later." We want to spread this message not just to our chapter, but also to the campus and the community as a whole. Our main goal this year is to grow even bigger and inspire our members to think. This year our chapter has over 400 members and our department offers over ten different agricultural courses.



HAMILTON CITY FFA
New Tools for Success

Submitted by Mori Leveroni

After another year of service, the Hamilton High Ag Department was fortunate enough to be awarded equipment grants last spring. With this, we were able to add a new livestock trailer, pallet bins, and a forklift to our school farm inventory. These new tools will allow Hamilton High to work more efficiently and add a new educational opportunity for our students. We plan to certify a few eligible students for the forklift. They will be able to practice with our new pallet bins which the grant also supplied. Hamilton City FFA would also like to show special thanks to Deseret Farms and Friends of HC FFA for helping contribute.



FORTUNA FFA
Shines in Livestock Lead

Submitted by Haley Benbow

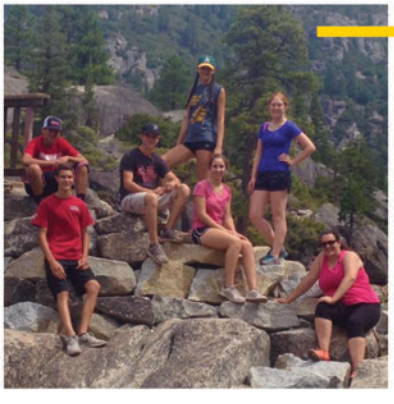
One of the most memorable events at the Humboldt County Fair is the Youth Livestock Lead Contest. The Livestock Lead was created in 2012 by members of Fortuna FFA as a fun opportunity for exhibitors to dress up their animals and creatively promote agricultural industries. The contest is open to beef, sheep, swine, and market goat exhibitors. Contestants include a costume that demonstrates how the animal is used in today's world and a creatively written explanation to accompany it during the show. Participants parade around the show ring similar to a beauty pageant and are awarded prizes for their efforts. This year, Fortuna FFA members featured a sheep as a tennis player, a sheep as a baseball player, and a steer as a bandit with his handler as the sheriff. We are proud of our Fortuna FFA members for representing our chapter in such a unique way!



GREGORI FFA
Salida Festival and Parade

Submitted by Emily Mihelis

On Saturday August 22, 2015 Gregori FFA participated in the Salida Town and Country Festival and Parade. The festival and parade have been held on the fourth Saturday of August for the past 15 years. The parade, which kicks off the festival, begins at 10:00 am and is open to all who want to participate. There is also a car show that takes place. This year's event included craft, food, and informational booths. The parade included community vehicles, farm equipment, local school bands, clubs- such as Gregori FFA, and cultural dances. After the parade everyone was invited to meet at the park for live music and food.



GUSTINE FFA
Chapter Officer Retreat

Submitted by Nico Marsigli

On August 5th through August 7th, the Gustine FFA officer team and Agriculture teachers went to Pinecrest for a chapter officer retreat to discuss the upcoming year. Throughout the duration of the trip topics such as teamwork, officer responsibilities, and the importance of each individual were acknowledged and discussed. The officers also planned out new activities and events that will go on throughout the upcoming year. In addition to this, the officers participated in team building and leadership forming activities and workshops. The retreat was very beneficial to the officer team because of the strong relationships that were built, and because we were able to learn new things about one another's weaknesses and strengths.

Southern Region Update

On June 5th, the Southern Region Officer Team began their journey going on retreat to Big Bear, CA. We had a blast! From going grocery shopping, to staying up watching The Hunger Games, the group bonded with team building activities and conducted a list of goals. Soon after the retreat, the team met again ready for an eight-hour drive to ROLC. We spent five days in beautiful Tomales Bay where we met the regional and state officers, the State FFA Staff, and learned new skills that we can bring back to our region. In August, the Southern Region Sectional Officer Leadership Summit was held at Cal Poly Pomona. Sectional officers learned icebreakers and participated in the workshops presented by the state officers, national candidate, and Dr. Miller to prepare for their year of service. We even introduced our theme, "Strike A Spark, Ignite Your Passion." Throughout everyone's journey, they will encounter a time where they'll capture something as a motive, a stepping-stone, or better yet, a spark. A spark will guide, set a goal, and ignite a passion that burns bright. This year, the regional officer team's passion is to help members find their very own spark!

Respectfully Submitted,
Angel Carillo,
Southern Region Officer •



Southern Region Sectional Officer Leadership Summit



PLEASANT GROVE FFA
Ag Olympics

Submitted by Olivia Schaub

Pleasant Grove FFA recently held its fifth annual "Ag Olympics." This annual event consists of four different events: hay bucking, feed sack races, skateboard plunging, and a HUGE obstacle course. Each event features a "battle of the classes," with one member from every grade level competing in each event. Following the class competition, members have the option to compete in each individual event for an opportunity to earn an individual medal of gold, silver, or bronze. This competitive event is growing each year with an enormous, energetic group of more than 300 members competing in this year's Ag Olympics. Following the tough rounds of competitions, members enjoyed a delicious ice cream sundae bar to celebrate their hard fought wins.



PATTERSON FFA
Centuries of Farmers to Come

Submitted by Xandra Carter

The Patterson FFA chapter takes "learning to do" to another level through their Third Grade Ag Day. It has become an annual tradition for Patterson FFA members to volunteer for a day and introduce local third grade students to agriculture. During this event, the students are divided into groups and a group leader guides them to different stations. At these stations the students learn about different agricultural aspects from a pair of volunteers that specializes on that topic. Here they get to learn about tractors, how to care and interact with livestock, how to plant crops, and much more. Third Grade Ag Day not only informs younger generations about agriculture, but it also gives these young students an opportunity to experience it in a new and dazzling way. Patterson FFA is handing our future farmers the key and inspiration to begin their journey.



JOHANSEN FFA
New Traditions

Submitted by Ernesto Gonzalez

This past June, Johansen FFA hosted a Jackpot Competition at our school farm. The Jackpot was open to other schools as well, to simulate how the county fair was going to be in the next month. This was a great idea because it was excellent practice for everyone. True novice students got to practice and learn what to expect with fair right around the corner. The jackpot was treated as if it was a real competition. We had an experienced judge and prizes. It was also a great fundraiser for our chapter as well with our small entry fee. We also provided food for the exhibitors. It was an overall great turnout! This a new tradition at our chapter.



NORTH HIGH FFA
Livestock Showcase

Submitted by Daniel Moreno

Every year during the summer, students from our chapter have an opportunity to raise and sell livestock animals for our local county fair. Students spend countless hours on the farm training their animals to show at the fair. To help the students understand how the competitions would be, our chapter holds a Livestock Show to showcase the work of the students to their parents, peers, and a judge from the industry. Students receive critique and are asked questions about their livestock as they would be in the show ring. The Livestock Show helps the students understand how the competition will run, as well as a chance to win a trophy as a grand prize for first place. The Livestock Show is a great way to showcase their hard work from throughout the summer!



MERCED FFA
Partnering with Industry

Submitted by Amacia Martinez-Howell

The Merced FFA chapter has partnered with Merced Ewing Irrigation and Landscape Supply, to test out a new product. Holganix is an organic bionutritional supplement that the horticulture class has decided to use, as well as studying the effects it had, on their plants. The students understand that the ingredients in this solution are completely plant based, and have found that the results of this product are similar to that of the natural forest environment, which relies on decomposed debris from trees and other organisms, to provide nutrients to the soil. They have also found that less water is needed to keep the plants well and alive when using the supplement. This experiment has allowed the chapter to work with their community, testing products that are used in the industry. They are exploring new and innovative aspects to the future of agriculture, and allowing students the opportunity to learn by doing.



LOS BANOS FFA
New Beginnings

Submitted by Taylor Torongo

The Los Banos FFA Chapter hosted our treasured first meeting of the year. Our first meeting was a time to connect and mingle with not only our chapter, but with the Pacheco FFA Chapter as well. This meeting consisted of a BBQ prepared wonderfully by our Ag boosters, as well as a discussion about old and new business. The Los Banos FFA Chapter had over 175 member and 200 parents present. For the 2015-2016 FFA year we plan on showing our pride for the blue and gold.

Superior Region Update

Five days, over 450 members, and thousands of memories made; Superior Region Chapter Officer Leadership Conference was a major success. From August 21-25, Superior Region Officers, as well as various sectional officers and representatives, hosted COLC where we challenged officer teams from schools throughout the region to "Suit Up For Service." In addition to various team building activities, like a volleyball and softball tournament, members attended a number of workshops, including stage presence, mixers, and a workshop specific to their office. Each chapter was assigned a topic to create a skit; Live Oak FFA with "FFA's Funniest Home Videos," Wheatland FFA with "Farmer's Only," and Placer FFA with "Pitch Perfect" were announced the winners of the competition. Dinner, was something many students and teachers would not have expected. The Superior Region officer team mimicked an experience unlike any other from a national conference: The Poverty Dinner from Washington Leadership Conference. This dinner opened the eyes of FFA members to the levels of poverty and need for service using stories and situations that could happen in real life. Following dinner National Officer Candidate, Haley Warner, lead each group of students in reflections, asking each chapter officer team to create a service statement for the year. COLC was a big hit.

Respectfully Submitted,
Hailey Traynham, Superior Region Reporter •



Regional Update • Regional Update • Regional Update •

STATE OFFICERS ON THE go

WRITTEN BY
DANIELLE DIELE
STATE FFA REPORTER

The title couldn't say it any better…the state officers have definitely been "on the go" since the last issue of New Horizons! Since mid-June when we first moved in, we have been on numerous adventures-all of which tie back to our theme for the year: Illuminate. This year, our team strives to shine a light on the "me, we, and industry" aspects of our association. Some of the experiences we have had thus far include trainings and conferences like BLAST OFF ((Building Leaders and State Teams of Officers), NLCSO (National Leadership Conference for State Officers), in Bryce Canyon, Utah, and the Regional Officer Leadership Conference. We also have met many sectional and chapter leaders at SOLC's and COLC's. At these, we have enjoyed learning about the different regions in our state and the members within them. However, during this portion of our year in state office, we feel extremely blessed to be given the unique opportunity to focus on illuminating the agricultural industry.



We have gone on many tours, where we see all areas of agriculture first-hand. During these tours, we strive to learn more about agriculture so that we can become well-rounded advocates for the industry. We hope to build relationships with industry leaders, as well as broaden our knowledge on all aspects of agriculture. Although we went on many amazing tours, some of our favorites consisted of touring Bayer CropScience, Full Belly Farms, as well as Central Valley Meats, Inc. Each gave us a unique and different insight.



At Bayer CropScience in West Sacramento, CA, our team was amazed by how much research and technology is behind plant disease prevention and recovery. Even before crops are planted, scientists at Bayer CropScience are constantly looking forward into the future, in hopes of providing a sustainable world. Besides this, we were able to see just how much Bayer CropScience cares about agriculture. It is said that Bayer CropScience has "the head of the scientist with the heart of a farmer." During our visit with Full Belly Farms, we were able to see the true journey from farm to fork. On their 400-acre farm, Full Belly Farms grows over 400 different varieties of organic crops. Here, we were able to milk a cow by hand and drink the milk raw. We collected eggs from laying hens that we later consumed for breakfast, and pick the fruits and vegetables that we cooked for dinner that night. During this tour, we were enlightened on the farm's educational program that connects students to agriculture through weeklong summer camps. What is awesome about this educational component is that the camp stemmed from an SAE project years ago! On the other spectrum of things, we were able to tour Central Valley Meats, Inc., a harvesting facility for dairy and beef cattle. This gave us an appreciation for the amount of labor that goes into agriculture-from the cattle rancher to the processor! Central Valley Meats, Inc. harvests meats for many companies, including In-N-Out. It was interesting to see the behind the scenes work that goes into California's favorite hamburger.



Through each experience, we became extremely grateful for the bountiful and diverse state we live in. We hope to illuminate the agriculture industry and inspire the chapters within our associations to do the same. We hope to bring the knowledge we have gained from industry tours into our next adventures as officers-chapter visits! •

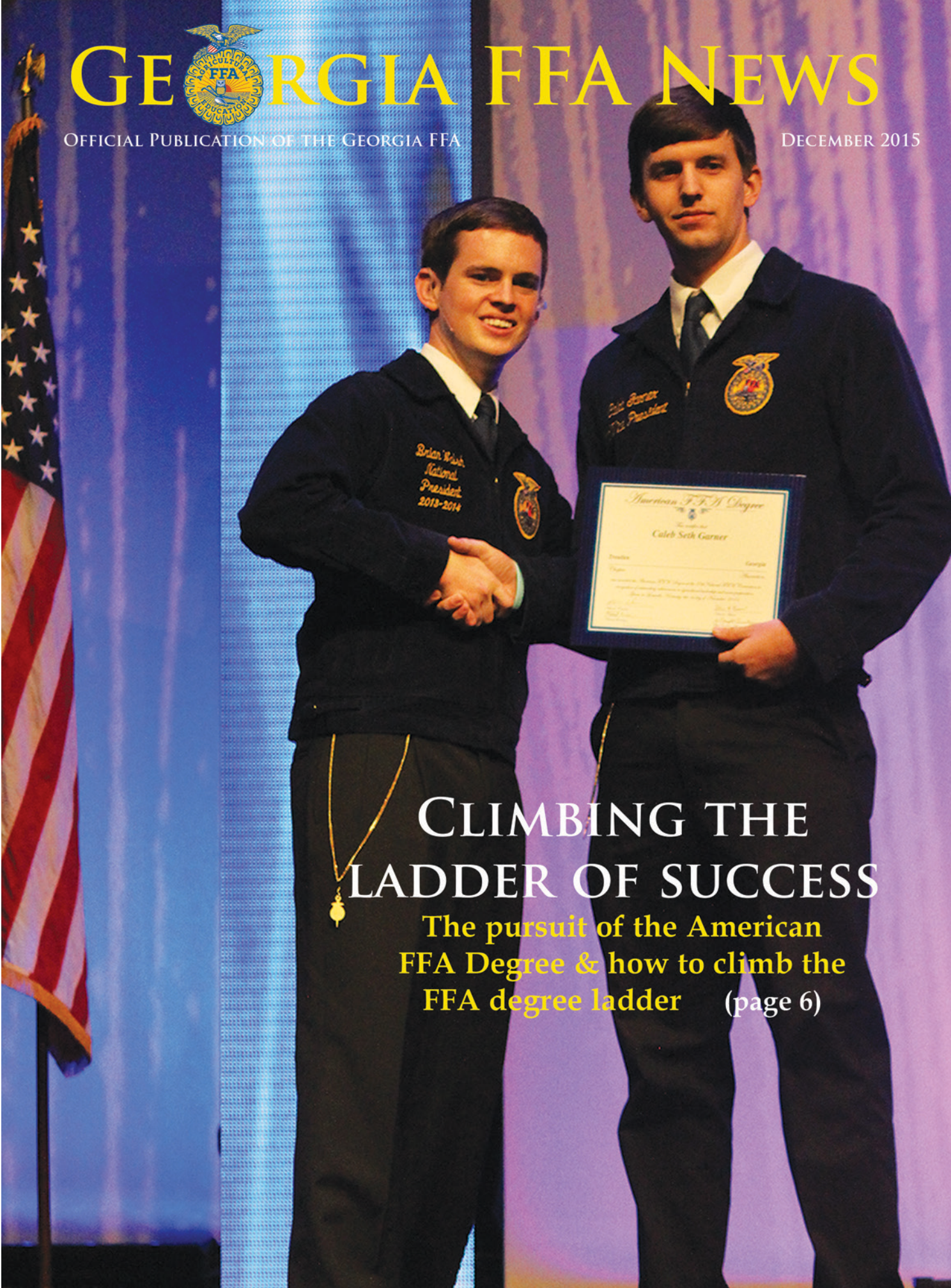




Georgia FFA News

Official Publication of the Georgia FFA

December 2015



Climbing the ladder of success

The pursuit of the American FFA Degree & how to climb the FFA degree ladder (page 6)

Still Believing

FFA members celebrate 85 years of the historic FFA Creed

At the recent 88th National FFA Convention, FFA members from across the nation celebrated the 85th anniversary of the FFA Creed. The FFA Creed, written by E.M. Tiffany, was adopted at the 3rd National Convention of the FFA in 1930. It has twice been revised, first in 1965 and again in 1990.

Reciting the FFA Creed has become, in its own, unique way, a rite of passage. FFA members in every state have learned and recited the Creed in local agricultural education classrooms since its adoption. The FFA Creed officially became a national Career Development Event (CDE) in 1999. In the seventeen years of the national CDE, two Georgia FFA members have been named national Creed CDE winners, Elizabeth Mulkey (Bainbridge – 2004) and Newt Gilman (East Jackson – 2009).



Professor Erwin Milton Tiffany, the chief teacher in the Department of Agricultural Education at the University of Wisconsin, wrote the FFA Creed in the summer of 1928. Tiffany was developing an exhibit for the first FFA convention. He had prepared several charts and tables showing the various programs of instruction in Wisconsin.

Tiffany later wrote about the Creed, "Somehow, I got the idea that a statement of ideals for the FFA might fit in with the exhibit. The Creed is the result of that idea. It was lettered on sign cloth and included with the rest of the exhibit materials that were shipped to Kansas City."

When his creed was adopted in 1930 at the third FFA convention, Tiffany was pleased. However, he wanted to make sure credit was placed where he felt it was due. In a statement clarifying his thoughts, Tiffany wrote, "I have often said that it is the organization that has made the Creed what it is, and it is the work of the members and the leaders that has made the organization what it is. Without these, the Creed itself would be meaningless. With them, it may, and I fervently hope that it does, contribute vitally to the spirit which is essential to achievement."

The ceremony recognizing the 85th anniversary of the FFA Creed at the recent National FFA Convention featured a video of the FFA Creed, including historic footage of former FFA member and President of the United States, Jimmy Carter, delivering Tiffany's powerful words. The complete video of Carter delivering the Creed will be debuted at the 88th Georgia FFA Convention in April of 2016.



Bainbridge FFA member, Elizabeth Mulkey won the National Creed CDE in 2004 at the 77th National Convention.



East Jackson FFA member, Newt Gilman won the National Creed CDE in 2009 at the 82nd National Convention.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Celebrating 85 years of the FFA Creed.....2
Meet the 2015-2016 Area Officers.....4
Climbing the FFA Degree ladder.....6
How to earn the American FFA Degree.....7

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ON THE COVER: Treutlen County FFA member Caleb Garner received his American FFA Degree from National President Brian Walsh at the 87th National Convention in 2014.

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From Ag Hill... TO CAPITOL HILL

Multiple Georgia congressional offices offer

paid, 12-week summer fellowships in Washington.

CAES Congressional Agricultural Fellows see agricultural policy up close by attending committee hearings, preparing briefs, conducting research and meeting with constituents.



"While I always knew I wanted to attend UGA, my involvement in FFA lead me to CAES. As a CAES student, I was able to further develop the public speaking, writing and leadership skills I learned as an FFA member though internships, studying abroad and an on-campus job. Interning at a congressional office opened my eyes to a whole new world of opportunities. Without the CAES Congressional Agricultural Fellowship program, I never would have considered a career on Capitol Hill."

—Mary C. Cromley
Staff Assistant for Sen. Johnny Isakson
BSA – Ag and Applied Economics, '15

THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
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GEO

2015

AREA 1



Front Row (left to right): Morgan Kellogg (Pickens County), Dalton Green (Gordon Lee) & Autumn Lankford (NW Whitfield).
Back Row (left to right): Daylon Smith (North Murray), Colby Cochran (North Murray), Hunter Stillwell (Gilmer County), Cole Lowery (Heritage) & Caroline Ridley (Bagley Middle)

AREA 2



Front Row (left to right): Justin Daniel (North Oconee), Makayla West (Madison County) & Jared Daniel (Oconee County).
Back Row (left to right): Kellie Smith (Franklin County), Hannah Watkins (Stephens County), Samantha Neal (Franklin County) & Lexie Reynolds (East Jackson). Not pictured is Cora Jade Edwards (White County).

AREA 3



Front Row (left to right): Lizzi Neal (Perry), Nick Nelson (Jones County) & Sierra Cannon (Union Grove).
Back Row (left to right): Hayden Roberts (Upson-Lee Middle), Katie Keen (Northside), Conner Johnson (Locust Grove), Sydney Dyer (Crawford County) & Travis Tingler (Peach County).

Area

GEORGIA

2016

Officers

AREA 4



Front Row (left to right): Austin Beard (Effingham County), Alyssa Rauton (Burke County) & Justin Stevenson (Islands).
Back Row (left to right): Makenzie Cioffi (Cross Creek), Kaylee Coleman (Montgomery County), Jansen Killian (Montgomery County) & Amber Miller (Effingham County).

AREA 5



Front Row (left to right): Sammi Bowen (Irwin County), Brentley Odom (Thomas County Central) & Charlee Coker (Baconton Charter).
Back Row (left to right): Katibeth Mims (Seminole County), Willie Sizemore (Lee County), Tyler Wise (Wilcox County), Kirk Beacham (CA Gray) & Sydney Thomas (Miller County).

AREA 6



Front Row (left to right): Ben Murray (Berrien County), Courtney Barber (Ware County) & Jacob Hamm (Lanier County).
Back Row (left to right): Brycen Lee (Appling County), Shaina Flowers (Brantley County), Katie Ricketson (Coffee County), Emily Leonard (Echols County) & Christopher Cook (Appling County).

Climbing the FFA Degree Ladder

Getting started... What is an SAE

A Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program is something that each agricultural education student should develop outside of regular class time. SAEs allow students to implement the skills and knowledge learned in their agricultural education courses into real-world scenarios. SAEs can be **Entrepreneurship** (student ownership), **Placement** (student keeps up with hours they work for someone else), **Research** (student documents hours spent in agriscience research), or **Exploratory** (student explores varieties of agriculture as an introduction).

An SAE is any activity that has a student active in some form of agriculture and allows the student to manage money and/or time, and develop skills and knowledge.

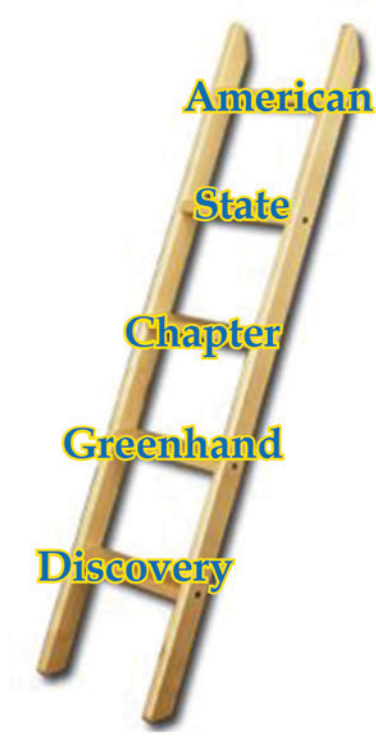
Have a plan & set your goals

Stephen Covey, successful entrepreneur, says, "The key is to begin with the end in mind." That is great SAE advice!

One of the most important steps in an SAE is understanding the FFA degree ladder. It is important to realize each rung of the ladder, and what it takes to achieve each step. The top rung (American Degree) is not achieved simply in the final year. The top rung is reached by those who, early on, identify what it takes to reach each rung along the way.

To grow your SAE, set goals for money earned, skills developed and hours worked. Begin with the end in mind.





"The key is to begin with the end in mind."

- Stephen Covey



SAE Ideas

- Livestock
- Greenhouse work
- Work at hardware/feed/ floral store or nursery
- Crop production
- Lawncare
- Firewood
- Fish production
- Water/Pond mangement
- Ag research
- Wood working
- Ag Mechanics/ Welding
- Agricultural Sales or Service
- Small animal/ Veterinary service
- Wildlife food plots
- Radio/TV/website/ social media for agriculture

Take Action.... & take pictures

Once you understand the SAE you have the resources to develop, and set your goals, then start climbing. Don't have the money needed to put your plan into action? Apply for an SAE grant through the National FFA, or apply for an student loan through the Farm Service Agency. Like farming but don't have land or a tractor? Find a local farmer and go to work for them. Identify a problem or question and research it. Own a lawnmower? Start mowing grass for your neighbors and grow a customer base. Along the way, be sure to keep records of the money you're making, the hours you're working and the skills you're developing.

As you're working, be sure to capture the moment by getting pictures of everything. You will need those pictures for the next step!

Finish the Drill...fill out the application(s)

You've done the work, now take time to complete the degree and/or proficiency award application. Why put in all that effort and not seek the reward? There are 47 different proficiency award categories, Middle School record books, and all five FFA degrees.

If you keep accurate records along the way (hours worked, money earned, skills developed), then take that information, add the story of your SAE journey and try to earn your portion of the thousands of dollars available in SAE awards.

FFA award applications are available on Georgia FFA and National FFA websites.



The Final Rung

Aiming for the prestigous American FFA Degree

The American FFA degree is the top of the mountain! It is the final rung of the FFA degree ladder. Less than 1% of FFA members earn the prestigous American Degree. Some don't receive it because their SAE did not meet the qualifications. Others, however, don't receive the American Degree simply because they do not apply!

If you are an FFA member who is or has taken time to build a solid SAE, then why not apply for the American FFA Degree? That is like taking the time to climb a huge mountain, testing your physical and mental toughness, risking bodily harm, and then, as you approach the breathtaking summit, simply climbing back down rather than standing at the summit to enjoy the view. If you have, or are climbing the mountain, then make time to soak in the beauty! Apply for the American FFA Degree when you are eligible.



To receive the American Degree in 2016, be sure to apply by April 1. Applications are available through the National FFA website using your MyFFA login. Don't have your MyFFA ID anymore? Contact your agriculture teacher today.

American Degree Requirements

1. Earn the State FFA Degree
2. Earn at least $10,000 and invest at least $7,500 **OR** earn and invest $2,000 and work 2,250 hours beyond scheduled class time.
3. Volunteer at least 50 hours in 3 different community service activities.
4. Maintain at least a "C" average in school.
5. Maintain FFA membership on chapter roster.
6. Be graduated from high school at least 1, but not more than 3 years.

Steps to apply...

1. Login to MyFFA
2. Go to Application Center
3. Select American Degree application
4. Use menu on left side to complete the application, page by page.

FFA members, are you.....

...an FFA member who has graduated from H.S. within the past 3 years?

YES → Review the American degree requirements, stay on your chapter FFA roster & apply by April 1st.

NO ↓

...a 12th grade FFA member?

YES → 1) Apply for your State Degree. 2) Make plans for how to continue your SAE after graduation. How can you gain more hours & more earnings?

NO ↓

...a M.S. or H.S. FFA member in grades 6-11?

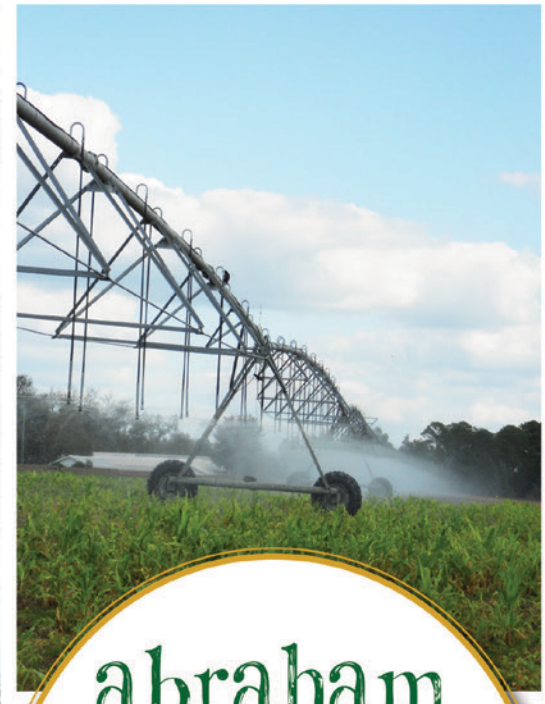
YES → Seek ways to expand and diversify your SAE; pay attention to your hours & earnings, and seek growth!











abraham baldwin agricultural college

Former National FFA President Andy Paul made ABAC his college of choice. Follow his lead and add some ABAC green to your FFA blue and gold. Make plans to attend a Stallion Day on February 13 or April 2.

ABRAHAM BALDWIN
AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE
Tifton, Ga.

abacinfo@abac.edu • 229.391.5001 • www.abac.edu/stalliondays

ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION FFA

Winter 2015-16





Table of Contents

PAGE B:
Illinois FFA 2015 CDE Results

PAGE D&E:
Section Presidents
2015-16 State Officer Team

PAGE F&G:
FFA Builds Chapters

Visit us at www.illinoisffa.org

ILLINOIS FFA 2015 CDE *Results!*



Congratulations to all teams competing in the 2015 Horse Career Development Event held at Black Hawk College East Campus in Galva! Thank you to BHC faculty, staff and students for conducting an excellent event!

HORSE REASONS DIVISION

In the Reasons Division, 18 Schools, 17 Teams and 66 Individuals competed.

RANK	CHAPTER	SCORE
1st Place	Central Burlington FF	1378
2nd Place	Edwardsville	1358
3rd Place	Marshall	1339
4th Place	Prairie Central	1299
5th Place	Cambridge	1287
6th Place	Ottawa Twp	1286
7th Place	Peotone	1262
8th Place	Gibson City-Melvin-Sibley	1244
9th Place	Eureka	1238
10th Place	Bureau Valley	1226

RANK	INDIVIDUAL	SCHOOL	SCORE
1st Place	Elena Chapa	Central Burlington	498
2nd Place	Monique Garrett	Edwardsville	473
3rd Place	Mara Swapp	Edwardsville	464
4th Place	Emily Bernard	Ottawa	459
5th Place	Grayson Cottrell	Prairie Central	456
6th Place	Carter Daugherty	Marshall	452
7th Place	Addie Shotts	Marshall	450
8th Place	Jill Hanmston	Stockton	448
9th Place	Hannah Brudi	Stockton	447
10th Place	Richelle Janes	Peotone	441

HORSE NON-REASONS DIVISION

In the Non-Reasons Division, 56 Schools, 46 Teams and 184 Individuals competed.

RANK	CHAPTER	SCORE
1st Place	Grayville High School-FFA	1114
2nd Place	Normal Comm West HS-Normal	1098
3rd Place	Roanoke Benson	1095
4th Place	Geneseo	1095
5th Place	Orion	1076
6th Place	West Prairie	1068
7th Place	Farmington Central	1064
8th Place	Edwardsville	1047
9th Place	Lena Winslow	1040
10th Place	New Berlin Comm	1033

RANK	INDIVIDUAL	SCHOOL	SCORE
1st Place	Reid Deichman	Mt. Vernon	390
2nd Place	Kaylyn Hall	Grayville	389
3rd Place	Lilly Schierloh	Lena Winslow	382
4th Place	Ellie Korthals	Geneseo	380
5th Place	Logan Pyles	Midland	380
6th Place	Teddy Beauchem	Oregon	378
7th Place	Bailey Wight	Normal West	378
8th Place	Cali Pontnack	Winchester	376
9th Place	Kamryn Aylesworth	Mount Pulaski	375
10th Place	Madison Gerdes	Roanoke Benson	375

Congratulations to all teams competing in the 2015 Illinois FFA State Forestry Career Development Event held at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale! Thank you to SIUC faculty, staff and students for conducting an excellent event!

FORESTRY TOP TEAMS AND INDIVIDUALS

11 Schools, 11 Teams and 53 Individuals competed in this year's Illinois State Forestry CDE. Congratulations to the Top 3 Teams and Top 10 Individuals competing in this year's contest!

TEAMS

RANK	TEAM	SCORE
1st Place	Prairie Central	1629
2nd Place	Cumberland	1579
3rd Place	Olney	1560

INDIVIDUALS

RANK	TEAM	PARTICIPANT	SCORE
1st Place	Prairie Central	Trenton Edelman	558
2nd Place	Olney	Seth Mitchell	551
3rd Place	Prairie Central	Brandon Edelman	540
4th Place	Cumberland	Josie Brockett	535
5th Place	Prairie Central	Mitchel Lanz	531
6th Place	Cumberland	Kendra Flood	525
7th Place	Olney	Adam Brewer	519
8th Place	Cumberland	Ryley Brown	519
9th Place	Liberty	Rachel Buyck	510
10th Place	Prairie Central	Loretta Knapp	506

FFA Advisors and FFA Members:

Thank you for allowing Central Illinois Ag to partner with your FFA Chapter and help increase funds for your agriculture program. We at Central Illinois Ag understand the importance of agriculture education and we are excited to assist your chapter in creating further opportunities with the proceeds of these raffle tickets.

For tickets, please contact me at the information below. There are three sections to the tickets – one for the buyer, one for your chapter, and one for CIA. Your chapter will keep the portion with the FFA emblem and return the portion with the CIA logo to us by mail (200 Sharon St., Atlanta, IL 61723). If preferred, local chapters can arrange a way for pick-up/drop-off after each event's tickets are sold.

Ticket prices are one for $5 or five for $20. If an individual purchases five tickets, please mark those five ticket stubs reflecting that the purchase was for $20 and not $25. The money you collect from these sales will be kept with your chapter. Do NOT send us money back in the mail. The tickets stubs we have returned will allow us to calculate how much money you have collected. At the end of the school year we will present a large poster check to each chapter with the amount that you have earned. You will have already deposited the money, so no money will be transferred between us and the chapter.

The ticket stubs sent back to us will be placed in a container to be entered into the raffle. The raffle will be drawn at the 2016 FFA State Convention. We have not confirmed with the Illinois FFA Center what date and time the raffle will be drawn.

Text (217-828-0081) or email (acoers@centralilag.com) photos and information about what your chapter is doing with the tractor raffle and I will promote you on our social media pages! Be sure to connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and now Instagram @LiveWorkGrowCIA!

We look forward to helping each of your chapters obtain and succeed your goal. Please contact me (Abby Coers, Central Illinois Ag Marketing Coordinator) with any questions you may have. Thank you!





Sincerely,

Abby Coers
Marketing Coordinator
Central Illinois Ag
Office: (217) 648-2307
acoers@centralilag.com

ILLINOIS SECTION

Presidents





Jordan Oellerich
SECTION 1

Chapter: Lena-Winslow
Parents: Curt & Lisa
Future plans: I plan to earn a degree in agricultural communications and have a career in public relations in the dairy industry.



Zach Becker
SECTION 2

Chapter: Amboy
Parents: Steve & Karen
Future plans: I plan on going to a four-year university to major in agricultural economics.



Allison Hand
SECTION 3

Chapter: Alwood Parents: Jeremy & Kelli
Future plans: I am currently attending Black Hawk East and will be transferring to a university to major in agriculture education to become a high school agriculture teacher and FFA advisor.



J.C. Campbell
SECTION 4

Chapter: United
Parents: Russ & Shari
Future plans: I plan to attend a community college for two years and then transfer to a four-year institution to major in agricultural technology management.



Caroline Downey
SECTION 5

Chapter: Midland
Parents: Jonathan & Rhonda
Future plans: I plan to attend the University of Illinois or Kansas State University and major in pre-veterinary medicine.



Cody Suddeth
SECTION 6

Chapter: Indian Creek Parents: Neil & Jodi
Future plans: I plan to attend the National Academy of Railroad Sciences in Kansas City to train to become a railroad conductor and eventually become an engineer for Union Pacific Railroad or BNSF Railway.



Kassidy Kimpling
SECTION 7

Chapter: Woodland
Parents: Kyle & Lynn
Future plans: I plan to attend the University of Illinois to major in an ag-related field.



Shannah Marshall
SECTION 8

Chapter: CHSAS
Parents: Sherry Hickman & Derrick Marshall
Future plans: I plan to attend a four-year land grant university double majoring in agricultural business and music.

NO PHOTO

Kagney Collins
SECTION 9

Chapter: Flanagan-Cornell



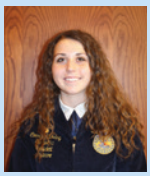
Brooke Schafer
SECTION 10

Chapter: Clifton Central
Parents: Dennis & Barb
Future plans: I plan to attend either Purdue University or the University of Illinois for plant genetics, breeding and biotechnology. After college, I hope to work for a seed company.



Kira Eidson
SECTION 11

Chapter: Payson-Seymour
Parents: Barry & Vicky
Future plans: I plan to attend a university to study public relations and then continue on to law school in order to serve as a representative for a nonprofit organization.



Corrine Harding
SECTION 12

Chapter: Farmington Parents: Darren & Julie

Future plans: I plan on continuing my education at Illinois Central College while double majoring in ag-business and ag-communications then transfer to ISU to finish my education. Advocate agriculture and FFA to public.



Lori Woods
SECTION 13

Chapter: Western



Nathan Mayfield
SECTION 14

Chapter: Athens

Parents: John & Anne

Future plans: I plan to attend the University of Illinois and major in agribusiness.



Aidan Groves
SECTION 15

Chapter: Carlinville

Future plans: I plan to attend Iowa State, Purdue, University of Illinois, or Southern Illinois University Carbondale. And after college I plan to return home to farm. Also, I plan to remain active in our chapter alumni and be a voice for the agricultural industry and farmers.



Brodie Scribner
SECTION 16

Chapter: Sullivan

Parents: Dave & Brenda

Future plans: I plan to attend Lakeland Community College to get general classes out of the way and then transfer to another college or university.



Lacie Butler
SECTION 17

Chapter: Gibson City-Melvin-Sibley

Parents: Brian & Cynthia

Future plans: I plan to attend junior college then transfer to Oklahoma State University and double major in agriculture education and farm management and minor in agriculture leadership.



Karla Madden
SECTION 18

Chapter: Shiloh

Parents: Vicki Dunn & Tom Madden

Future plans: I plan to attend Lakeland for two years majoring in ag business then transfer to University of Illinois also for ag business.





Cara Thiems
SECTION 19

Chapter: Greenville

Parents: Larry & Holly

Future plans: I plan to obtain an associate degree from Kaskaskia College in an agricultural field and then move on to a four-year school.

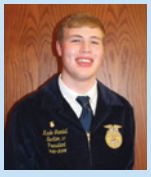


Kendra Flood
SECTION 20

Chapter: Cumberland

Parents: Randy & April

Future plans: I plan to attend Southern Illinois University and major in ag education and minor in forestry.



Kade Gambill
SECTION 21

Chapter: Sandoval

Parents: Steve & Carla

Future plans: I plan to attend Kaskaskia College in Centralia, Illinois for my associate degree. I then plan to transfer to a four-year university and make my way to law school.



Alexis Hartman
SECTION 22

Chapter: Waterloo

Parents: Anita & Kenneth Jr.

Future plans: I plan to attend a four-year university to study in crop science and/or agribusiness.



Nicole Jordan
SECTION 23

Chapter: Cisne Parents: Steve & Marjorie

Future plans: I plan to graduate from Frontier Community College, then transfer to a university for two years to continue my sports career and then transfer to my graduate school to major in chiropractic and minor in physical therapy.



Kelsey Smith
SECTION 24

Chapter: Pinckneyville

Parents: John & Karen

Future plans: I am currently attending SIU Carbondale majoring in biological sciences hoping to one day be a geneticist.



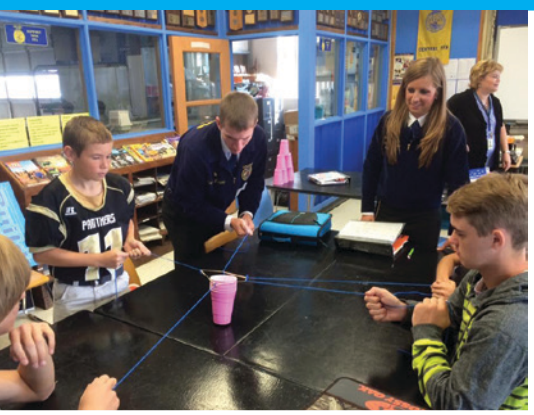
Paxton Morse
SECTION 25

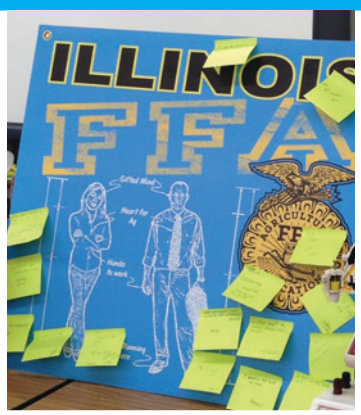
Chapter: Eldorado

Parents: Scott & Shelly

Future plans: I plan to attend SIU Carbondale and major in agriculture education.

ILLINOIS FFA *Builds* CHAPTERS







CHAPTER VISITS 2015 – a GREAT tradition – seen through the eyes of your officers ...

Chapter visits are in full swing for the Illinois Association FFA! I myself have had the opportunity to visit schools in Section 16 and Section 23. Aspiring to someday be an agricultural teacher, my favorite part of chapter visits has been the opportunity to experience a wide variety of classrooms, students and schools. Each agricultural program does it differently, and I think that is so awesome! Having the opportunity to work with students and potential FFA members across the state has only fortified my dream of becoming an agricultural teacher.

Kade Hill
Illinois FFA State President

I cannot get over how quickly chapter visits are flying by! I feel like I was just getting prepared for them and now we are almost finished! I have truly enjoyed going around the different sections and visiting with the people. Hearing all of the stories that people have to tell me and seeing how different every place I visit is are truly so much fun. Getting to know the different section officer teams is obviously a nice bonus! I am having an amazing time with visits, and look forward to seeing what is next!

Connor Carmody
Illinois FFA State Vice President

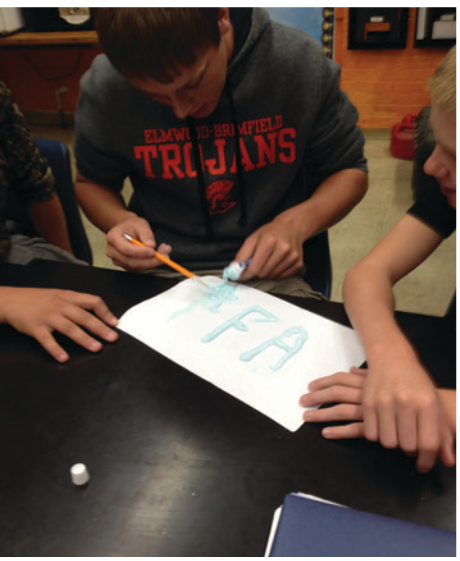
When I ran for state office my campaign speech was all about getting to know the members ... and boy, that is exactly what I have been able to do! The past few weeks I have had the experience of traveling around the state of Illinois and putting on workshops for students in the classroom. We call these chapter visits. I think of what I have been able to experience at these schools. Experiences that I will never forget. Finding out what students are learning about is really interesting. I have had the opportunity to learn about drones and even how to saddle a horse. The opportunity to learn about the wide range of agriculture is astounding. Getting to know the members from across the state has been the highlight of my year so far. I love hearing about the diversity of agriculture across the state. When I hear members say they are excited to take advantage of opportunities we talk about in visits, it makes me feel like I am not only doing my job, but also helping them write their own FFA legacy. As I think back over chapter visits I don't only think about the classroom, but I also think of the lifelong friendships I have made. I am excited to continue to travel around the state.

Kolton Kimpling
Illinois FFA State Reporter













Chapter visits are in full swing! Traveling from central Illinois in Section 16 to down south in Section 22, and now up to Section 8, I have seen a variety of different agriculture education programs. Each program is unique, and that's why no two visits are ever the same. I have enjoyed meeting members from across the state and discovering sites exclusive to each section. But my favorite part of visits has been confirming my aspirations to become an agriculture education instructor. With three weeks in the books and three more to go, I am looking forward to the coming weeks and treasuring every moment of this incredible experience.

Susie Thompson
Illinois FFA State Secretary

As our team set out to plan chapter visits, we had one thought on our minds: Build. After much deliberation during our July state officer meeting, we selected "Build" as our theme for this year. Our hope is to build you as individuals, your chapters and our state association as a whole. During visits we discuss some characteristics that FFA members might possess, including a gifted mind, a heart for ag, hands for work and feet for running the race. While developing these characteristics, we put our construction hats on and set out to make blueprints for a great year! Thank you for your active participation and allowing us into your "construction zone" classrooms!

Jordan Johns
Illinois FFA State Treasurer

THE NEXT STEP

after hanging up the blue jacket

Illinois FFA Alumni Annual Meeting

January 15-16, 2016

Decatur Conference Center



ACTIVITIES:

Networking, idea exchange, workshops, and a live & silent auction with all proceeds benefiting FFA members through scholarships!

LIVE AUCTION:

Saturday, January 16th
12:30 p.m.

JOIN!

Only two requirements to join are to pay your dues and be passionate about supporting the young men and women in the blue jackets!

THE IMPACT

ANA FFA NEWS INDIANA FFA NEWS INDIANA FFA NEWS INDIANA FFA NEWS INDIANA FFA NEW



FFA members from District II working together to complete one of the activities during District Kick-Off!

WINTER 2015-16



LIVE FROM TRAFALGAR

By Mason Gordon

What's it like to be a state officer? My teammates and I get asked this question quite frequently. Whenever I am asked, a million things pop in my mind to describe this once in a lifetime experience. So far, the best way that I can describe it is: crazy. Crazy in a good way, of course!

Visiting chapters, having a blast at district kickoffs, planning for conferences, sleeping wherever we are welcome (sometimes it is a twenty minute nap in a school parking lot), and spending many hours on the road have consumed our month of September. For most of us, our travels have taken us to places that we have never been before. During our travels we may close our eyes to the scenic trees and hills in District X, and open them to the enormous, blinking wind turbines of District IV.

After kickoffs and chapter visits, we will welcome hundreds of young, excited FFA members to the FFA center for our conferences. My fondest memories at the FFA center, before I called it home, came from interacting with state officers during conferences. I cannot help but smile at the thought that we will soon have the opportunity to create those memories for members.

Before we realize it, October will be coming to a close, every combine will be running, and we will have our eyes set on National Convention. My teammates and I have all attended National Convention many times during our FFA careers, but we still get crazy excited when we think about the opportunity to represent our state in Louisville. We will meet delegates from across the country while attending delegate sessions, cheer for Josh as he receives his American Degree, be there to support Annalee, Sean, and Kenzie in their respective national contests, and proudly watch Indiana members represent our superior state.

We were given 365 days to impact members and make memories. Our time as state officers has flown by at breakneck speed. We are over 100 days into our journeys. The memories are piling up like the autumn leaves that are beginning to fall. What's it like to be a state officer? Well, that was a glimpse at just September and October and we cannot wait to see what craziness lies ahead.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

OUR MEMBERS MAKE US SHINE!

BY JOSHUA CALHOUN

Cameron Matthews



Chapter: Shenandoah
Favorite CDE: Extemporaneous Public Speaking
SAE(s): Swine Production Entrepreneurship, Beef Production Entrepreneurship
Favorite Quote: "Show pigs are like potato chips, one is never enough."
FFA has taught me: to be well spoken, a team player, and agriculture knowledge.

Jared Stillwell



Chapter: Clinton Prairie
Favorite CDE: Livestock Skill-a-Thon
FFA has taught me: life lessons such as developing better leadership skills, make the most out of every opportunity, and cherishing those special moments with family and friends.
Activities outside of FFA: showing and raising show lambs, playing baseball and basketball

Moriah Seifert

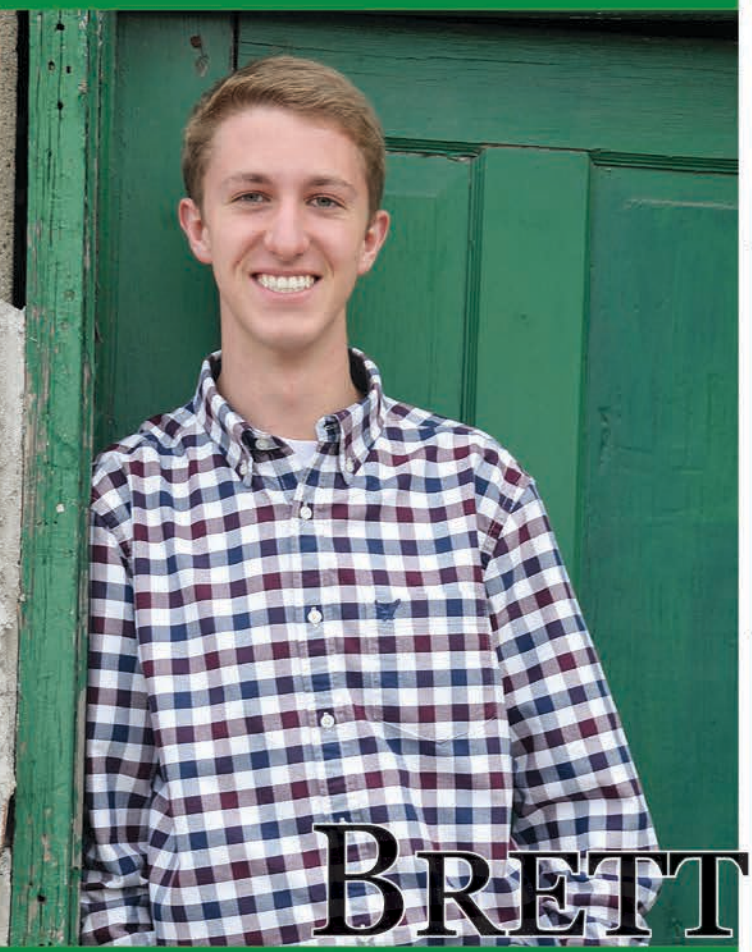


Chapter: Mt. Vernon @ Mt. Vernon
SAE: Diversified Crop Production
Favorite CDE: Plant and Soil Science Demonstration
Favorite Quote: "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader." –John Quincy Adams

Averi Kucera



Chapter: : North Newton
Favorite CDE: Animal Science CDE
SAE: Equine Science
FFA has given me: to have a voice and to be me.
Activities outside of FFA: riding horses and playing softball



Brett Roberts

State Northern Region Vice President

By Sean Harrington

GET THE FACTS

Birthday: April 24, 1997
Parents: Brian Roberts and Alissa Roberts
Siblings: Alivia Roberts and Ashley Easter
Hometown: Columbia City, Indiana
FFA Chapter: Columbia City
Advisors: Sarah Furthmiller & Jesse Kimmel
Favorite Food: Beef & noodles w/ mashed potatoes
Favorite Movie: The King's Speech
Favorite Sport: Basketball
Favorite Animal: Giraffe
Favorite Color: Green
Favorite Music: Pop

BRETT'S TIMELINE

Freshman Year:
- Chapter Greenhand Representative
- Livestock Evaluation
- Freshmen Prepared Public Speaking
- Novice Parliamentary Procedure Team

Sophomore Year:
- Chapter Treasurer
- Horse Evaluation
- Quiz Bowl
- Poultry Evaluation
- Parliamentary Procedure Team

Junior Year:
- District III Vice President
- Chapter President
- Horse Judging Evaluation
- Animal Science Demonstration
- Parliamentary Procedure Team

Senior Year:
- District III President
- 1st Place State Leadership Ambassador
- Ag & Farm Business Management Demonstration
- Parliamentary Procedure Team

FUTURE PLANS

Attend Purdue University to study Ag. Communications and Ag. Economics with a minor in Political Science

THE TEAM VOTED BRETT...

Most likely to apologize for something he didn't do

Brett has this huge heart filled with care and concern for all. He knows no stranger and it is really hard to find people like that these days. He takes the time to get to know or connect in some way with everyone he meets. He has this way of listening to you that makes you feel truly listened to and he has a way of talking to you that leaves you feeling truly special afterward. He is someone that you can go to and trust with anything. Brett is extremely gifted when it comes to working with people and has always stood out as a natural leader in whatever he is doing because of it. Brett sees his gifts as a call to action for a life of service.

-Gabby Anglin, Friend

Making Progress at the 2015 Farm Progress Show

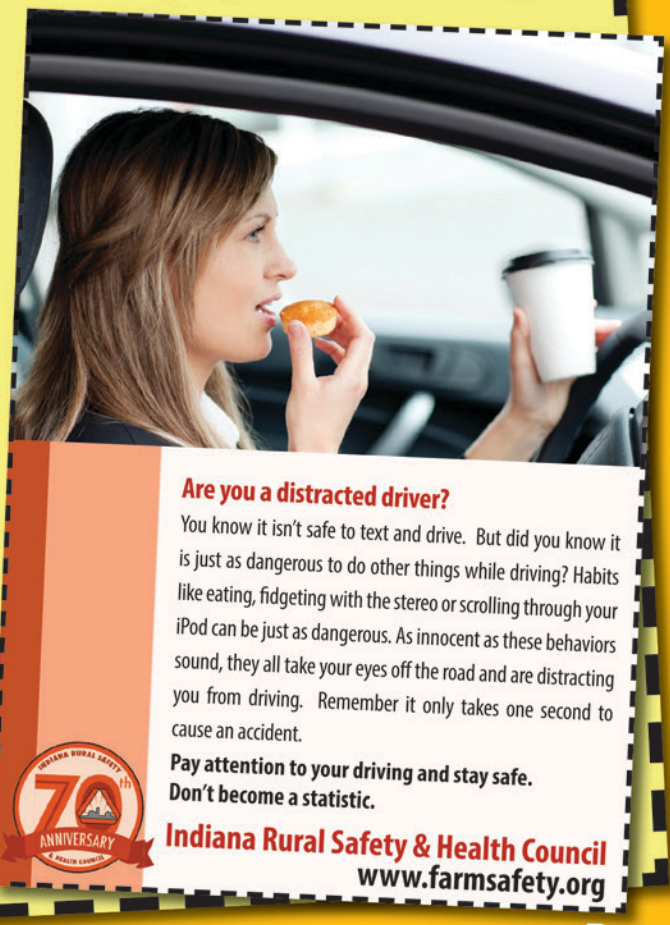
By Courtney Adams

Every other year, the Indiana and Illinois FFA Associations pair up for a tire auction sponsored by Titan Tire. The whole team was psyched for this new experience that only a few teams before us had the chance to take part in. None of us had ever been to the Farm Progress Show before, so that in itself was an exciting opportunity for us. We were also pumped for the opportunity to meet and get to know the five Illinois State Officers. These were the things we chattered on about as we packed up a couple of cars to make our way to Decatur, Illinois.

When we arrived in Illinois the first night, we walked around the grounds to get familiar with the lay of the land. Both of the following days had the same routine. In the morning we spent our time soliciting vendors for donations to sell in the auction, alongside the tires. Some vendors were unable to donate any product, but others gave us generous donations of merchandise, seed, and toy tractors. At noon, we would return to our tent and the auction would begin. During the auction, the Illinois and Indiana officers split the responsibilities. Some of us would call for the auctioneer, some would read the products off of the clipboard, and some would display the product for the buyers. We would then close up the shop after the auction crowd cleared out and head to our hotel rooms.

After two days of asking for donations and sweating in the heat, both teams had a greater appreciation for all that it takes from our Foundations to raise money from sponsors. The experience was everything we could ask for and more. Between just being at the Farm Progress Show, raising the money that we did, and meeting new friends, it was an awesome way to spend the last week in August.







Mason Gordon

State Southern Region Vice President

By Sean Harrington

GET THE FACTS

Birthday: August 1, 1996
Parents: Sandy Christian & Mike Gordon
Siblings: Mady & Andrew
Hometown: Rushville, IN
FFA Chapter: Rushville FFA
Advisors: Blair Orme, Travis Harvey, Quinn Wicker
Favorite Food: Grandma Sandy's Pancakes
Favorite Movie: Happy Gilmore
Favorite Pastime: Being an old man
Favorite Sport: Green Bay Packers Football
Favorite Animal: Rubber Duck
Favorite Color: Orange
Favorite Music: Classic Rock

MASON'S TIMELINE

Freshman Year:
- Greenhand President
- Creed Speaking
- Livestock Evaluation

Sophomore Year:
- Chapter Reporter
- Livestock Evaluation
- Meats Evaluation

Junior Year:
- Chapter President
- Livestock Evaluation
- Livestock Skill-a-thon

Senior Year:
- District IX President
- Livestock Evaluation
- 2nd Place State Leadership Ambassador
- Meats Evaluation

FUTURE PLANS

Attend Lincoln Land Community College to livestock judge for 2 years, then transfer to an undecided university and major in Agricultural Education

THE TEAM VOTED MASON...

Most likely to own exclusively button up shirts.

He is a very serious young man who is not only committed to an undertaking, but goes all out to make sure the task is completed with precision and accuracy. He is a polite, hard-working young man with a touch of assertiveness followed by a large dose of inspiration. He inspires those around him to be their very best, because he models this same level of commitment in everything he does.

- Mr. Orme, Advisor

Mason is one of the best friends a guy could ask for. He shows a true passion in everything that he does. He is the type of person that is there to lend a helping hand and look out for others. I know for sure that he will amplify the lives of FFA members all across the state.

- Austin Hubbell, Friend



Stationed by the Owl

Advisor Spotlight

By Kenzie Kretzmeier

Quick Facts

1. Has taught for 17 years
2. One of Mr. Kluemper's favorite awards is an "Outstanding FFA Advisor" plaque made by his students
3. Favorite Quote: "The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted." Matthew 23: 11-12
4. Advice to new teachers: People get their rush from all kinds of things; skydiving, sports, racing, etc.. I get that same rush from teaching. It can be very scary..a sweaty, nauseous kind of scary. If you can conquer that fear and a classroom of rowdy freshmen, you can conquer anything!

Mr. Daryl Kluemper

Pike Central FFA

"Mr. Kluemper has impacted me by never being negative. He makes the best of every situation. He's very respectful, and always makes class as fun as possible which I absolutely love!"

- Ivy Davis, Student

"Mr. Kluemper is not just a teacher or ag advisor; he is a role model to each individual student, past and current. He leads his students on a path to success. I know I wouldn't be where I am today without the help he gave me."

-Emily Schlomer, Student

Sponsor Shout Out!

By Annalee Witte

Kicking off the Year in *Style* One District at a Time!

IVY TECH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Everybody gets excited for the kickoff at a football game on fall, Friday nights. However, the type of kickoff the State Officer Team gets excited about is slightly different.

This type of kickoff is an event that brings together FFA members, in their respective districts, for fun, fellowship, and a celebration of the coming year. District kickoffs are a great opportunity for students and advisors to gather together and get ready for the next year in FFA.

However, none of the 12 district kickoffs would be possible without the help of a very important sponsor—Ivy Tech.

Ivy Tech Community Colleges generously sponsors every single district kickoff in the state of Indiana. We are very appreciative of their support of these events. We hope that our partnership continues to grow in the future. Thank you, Ivy Tech, from the over 11,000 FFA members of the Indiana Association!

Instagram



indianaffa
The Indiana FFA Leadership Center
1h



BY BRETT ROBERTS

National FFA is rolling out a brand new hashtag that will connect FFA members across the nation! #SpeakAg is a new social media initiative that is designed to connect young agriculturists with individuals who may not know much about the industry we love. This is an opportunity for YOU to share your story in agriculture and FFA in order to educate the public as well as connect with FFA members across the nation!

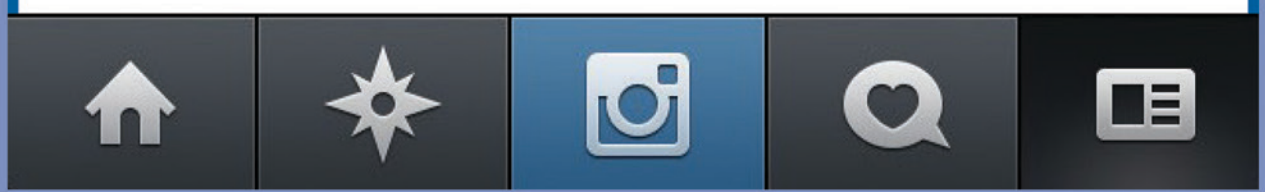
Here are some suggestions on how to #SpeakAg:

- Post a picture of you and your SAE
- Post daily or weekly facts about agriculture and FFA
- Show you and your chapter preparing for a CDE
- Post a short summary of what you learned in Ag Class that day
- Share why agriculture is important to your community
- Invite others to follow agriculturally related pages that #SpeakAg
- Last but not least, share YOUR experiences in agriculture and FFA

We can't wait to see what you'll share on social media as FFA members across the nation #SpeakAg!!



1,575 likes



The Michigan FFA Creed

Winter 2015



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Staff Editor: Tyra Jonas

D Check this Out!
Learn about Saddle Cattle, a little known use for cows.

G Say What
Members share their thoughts on the use of biotechnology.

H Learning to Do
Hear about an advisor who made a huge impact on his students.

I Doing to Learn
Explore a new CDE focusing on the need for AFNRE Teachers.

J Earning to Live
Emily Erffmeyer shoots her way to the top.

K Living to Serve
Discover how Hantz Farm works to lift up communities in Detroit.

N Member Highlights
FFA members from across the state highlight their SAE and experiences.

M State Officer Stats
Check out what the 2015-2016 officers have in common with you.



Aim to be MORE.

We face opportunities and challenges everyday of our lives. Those who are able to seize these opportunities and overcome the challenges are the ones who truly understand the meaning of aiming to be more.

Don't just sit back and watch life fly by, but instead take action. Winning or losing is not what matters. What matters is that we do not give up, and that we continue to always give more. We all give more in different ways, and together that is what makes us great as not only individuals, but also as an organization.

Some of us give more through serving our communities, some of us give more by being a listening ear to everybody around us, some of us give more by being a positive role model to our peers. There is no right or wrong answer. We each can aim to be more in our own individual way.

Michigan FFA, it is always our own decision on what we want to aim to be in life, but together we can all aim to be more.

-2015-2016 Michigan FFA State Officer Team

DID YOU KNOW

The average American farmer feeds 155 people.



In 2014 Michigan Farmers harvested 2.2 million acres of corn.



One acre of soybeans can produce 82,368 crayons.



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Check This Out!

Saddle Cattle - Man's *Oldest* Best Friend?

By: Paula Blough

Cattle have been working alongside man since 4,000 BC before horses were even domesticated. In fact there are more working cattle in the world today than total horses. It's only natural that humans would take this partnership to more than just pulling things.

In the early 1900s, an ox-back cavalry existed on the island of Madagascar. News articles from that time state that for some unknown reason, horses kept on the island became too weak to use. A 1904 article in the Pittsburgh Press reads, "The oxen are neither slow nor easily frightened and they have proved most intelligent, learning their part of army life with remarkable rapidity and taking to it as naturally as a regular veteran charger. They are powerful beasts and possess great fortitude and endurance." It goes on to say that cavalrymen start each morning with drills on their oxen. "[The oxen] soon learn to respond of their own accord to bugle call, and it is not unusual for a well-trained ox to trot off to roll call unmounted if its owner happens to be oversleeping."



This intelligence is one thing that draws people to cattle. People with riding cattle do not understand the phrase "as dumb as an ox." Cattle catch on to things quickly and retain it. A cow can be left with the herd on pasture for a year, and training can resume right where you left off.

Around the world, "riding steers" or "saddle cattle" are gaining popularity. Some people just think cows are cute, which they are, but reasons people have given for preferring riding cattle over horses are that cattle are less flighty, more affectionate, less maintenance, hardier, unique, and safer. Safer because cows rarely bite, do not rear, and are less likely to kick. They also prefer to stay in one place when spooked, so there is less likelihood of the rider falling off.

Despite what it would seem, cattle are actually a smooth ride. People that have ridden both cattle and horses have found cattle to feel more like a gaited horse. They describe it as "more comfortable than most of the horses I've ridden."



It is important to keep in mind that cattle are not horses. Horses have long, thin heads; ears that stick up, and lips. Bridles and bits do not fit properly on cattle. Many cow riders just use a halter and attach reins. Some riders use a nose bit, but it is a controversial topic in the small world of cattle riding. Cattle have straighter, shorter backs than horses which makes them more suited structurally for riding than horses, but it does trying to find a saddle that will fit a cow. Just like horses, cattle come in

all shapes and sizes. There are miniature cattle, and there are Italian-style Chianina oxen that regularly get over 19 hands and 3,000 pounds. There is not one style of saddle that will fit all



cows. Treeless and English saddles seem to be the easiest to find to fit a cow, but they are also comfortable to ride bareback. Britchen and cruppers are types of saddles often used because cattle do not have high withers to keep the saddle from sliding forward.

Pretty much any breed of cattle can or has been used as a riding animal, but there are a few breeds that are the most commonly ridden. The Texas Longhorn is a popular choice in the United States. This breed is a rarity in other countries. Their massive horns, array of coat colors and patterns, and temperament have led to their popularity. Holsteins are another common breed. They have high availability, are easily trained, and have a good disposition. Jerseys and other dairy breeds are common too.

As noted in the term "riding steers," most cattle kept for riding are steers. Steers are popular because they are less valued in the dairy industry and do not have the issues that heifers and bulls do. Bulls are too unpredictable for riding. Many deaths by bull attacks are from someone's pet who just turned on its owner one day without any warning. Cows and heifers can get a little crazy when they are in heat and are often more valuable producing a calf or milk. These cows are ridden too, but will need a maternity leave at some point if bred.

Saddle cattle can already be found doing many traditionally equine tasks. Many people ride in parades or perform at rodeos. Trail riding is a popular leisure activity for owners of riding cattle. They are involved in ranch work such as checking fences, herding sheep, sorting cattle, and roping. They have competed in jumping



contests and cart contests. The potential uses for saddle cattle are almost limitless, but most of all owners of these cattle enjoy their companionship.

Check out Riding Cows on Facebook for more pictures of saddle cattle in action. ‡

Say What?

By: Tyra Jonas
State Reporter



Loren King
Branch Area Career Center

Loren believes that biotechnology is something that benefits today's agriculture. Without biotechnology the world wouldn't be advancing as fast. "I'm really passionate about biotechnology because I saw how much it helped my family improve their business and how it helps feed the world."

Austin believes there are tons of benefits to biotechnology, but the largest benefit is that it allows us to produce food more efficiently. "We are able to produce more food with less land. The farmer is able to produce more, higher quality produce for the consumer."

Austin Haywood
Hastings





Seth Randall
Laker

Seth says that biotechnology has come a long way because it now includes many different things. "Advancement is happening, and will continue to happen in biotechnology." He thinks it will help improve agricultural products.

The question: What are your thoughts on biotechnology?

He believes that use of biotechnology is good. "By the year 2044 the world population is estimated to be 9 billion people. In order to feed all those people we need to find innovative ways to feed the population on the land that we have."

Kyle Markley
Byron





Emma Snook
Ravenna

"It's really cool that we can improve plants with biotechnology." She thinks why it is viewed in a bad way is because of the amount of false information we release. As FFA members it is our job to spread positive things about this topic.

Brett thinks that biotechnology will always be improving. Biotechnology is helping the farmer produce more and in an efficient way. It is manipulating products to make them last longer and add nutrients.

Brett Windemuller
Carleerline Tech Center



12 years ago, FFA members answered this exact question with these responses:

Brent Warner
Homer

Further studies and tests should occur prior to the wide-spread use of biotechnology. For example, we need to make sure it is not linked to certain health risks. Once tested and proven safe, I think biotechnology should be used.

Kristen Dunham
Chesaning

I think biotechnology is creating extensive problems for producers. We don't know what effect certain chemicals will have or how genetically modified crops will affect consumers. Ideally we would stick to traditional production methods.

Landon Church
Byron

I feel biotechnology is good in many ways, such as helping crops gain resistance against insects. On the flip side, it might also cause harm to people who consume genetically modified crops.

Janice Foor
Alpena

I think it's wrong to use genetically modified plants. We should just produce crops the traditional way. I believe it would be a lot healthier. It's been tested, and it works.

Learning to Do

By: Connor Ewald
State President

Our advisors are individuals that we hold to extremely high standards. They hold special places in our hearts, and we look up to them for support and guidance. It is never easy to say goodbye to an advisor, especially when that advisor taught and led that chapter for forty-two years. The Laker FFA had to do just that this past spring. Don Wheeler, a man known throughout the state as a legend in the FFA, stepped down after this past school year, leaving Laker with countless state championships, degree winners, and of course - leaders.



I remember my first time ever giving a speech for Mr. Wheeler. I was a freshman and my topic was wind turbines. After I was finished giving it to the entire class Mr. Wheeler just stared at me for what seemed like forever before bluntly stating, "that was stupid, but in a good way". That was one thing about Mr. Wheeler; he never gave up on a student who truly wanted to succeed. It was also well known that if he picked on you it meant you were doing something right.



Saying goodbye to someone like Mr. Wheeler is never easy.



At the Laker FFA Spring Banquet, Mr. Wheeler and his wife Donna were greeted with two standing ovations by a crowd of nearly six hundred. As a surprise, it was announced that night that Mr. Wheeler was finally going to have his chance to graduate as a Laker student, since he was not originally from the area. In June, Mr. Wheeler walked across the stage at the Laker High School Commencement Ceremony, receiving a diploma and finally completely the journey of becoming a member of the Laker family.

Mr. Wheeler had the chance to impact the lives



of thousands of individuals over his forty-two year reign as Laker FFA Advisor. While it is very certain that he will always be welcome in the ag room back at Laker he will be missed greatly.

I would like to take the time to say congratulations to Mr. Wheeler from the entire Michigan FFA Association. Something will be missing at future FFA contests, conferences and conventions. He had the unique ability to touch the lives of every single person he came in contact with, and that is the legacy that he now leaves in FFA members across the state. ‡

Doing to Learn

By: Dustin Dufort Petty
Michigan FFA Alumni President

At this year's Fall Leadership Conference, six students had the opportunity to further develop their potential for premier leadership.

On October 15th, the first Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (AFNR) Education Career Development Event (CDE) was held in Lansing.

FFA members from throughout the state created and submitted lesson plans and videos of their classroom execution to a panel of judges in September. The top six were invited to present their lesson plans to judges and a mock set of students at the Fall Professional Development Institute.

The winning member received a trophy to keep, that will travel each year to the winning AFNRE program, and a $2,500 scholarship provided by the Michigan FFA Foundation to support the winning participant in becoming an AFNRE teacher. Michigan is one of the first states to host an AFNR Education CDE.



This CDE was yet another move by the stakeholders of Michigan AFNR Education to educate and inform students about careers teaching secondary agriculture, food, and natural resources.

"Nationally and within Michigan, the numbers of students taking up the profession of AFNRE teaching continues to decrease," said Dr. Michael Everett, a member of the MSU AFNR Education team and the academic adviser for AFNRE students at the University. "All states are facing the same dilemma and we need to find passionate young people to meet the needs for the classroom."



During the summer, nine Michigan FFA members participated in the Challenge 24 Teacher Academy and Scholarship Program at MSU. For two days in July, the students met with the MSU AFNRE team, toured campus, and learned about developing lesson plans in the context of agriculture, food, and natural resources.

Students who participated in the Challenge 24 event are guaranteed scholarship money when they attend MSU and study AFNRE.

Katie Hill, AFNR educator and FFA advisor at Careerline Tech Center in Holland, said "What we're seeing is a concerted effort to change the trend of decreasing numbers in AFNR education. Being a teacher is hard work but it's rewarding, too. I think the more we talk to students about how rewarding this profession is, the more new teachers we'll see."

If you're interested in becoming an AFNR educator, speak to your chapter advisor and reach out to Dr. Michael Everett at everettm@msu.edu. ‡

Earning to Live

By: Alexandria Schnabelrauch
Michigan Farm Bureau

When Emily Erffmeyer first called for a clay pigeon while shooting trap at the age of 9, she had no idea the one-time outing with her dad would turn into an FFA Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE), lifelong passion, and potential Olympic bid. In fact, she couldn't even keep her eyes open while pulling the trigger.

"I shut my eyes and prayed I'd hit it," Emily remembered. "Even though I couldn't hit the broad side of a barn at first, I absolutely loved shooting! Every Thursday night, I'd slip on an oversized hot pink shooting vest and head to the local shooting club to try again."
After that first outing, Emily shot diligently every week, hitting only two clay pigeons her first year. But with a lot of practice and a new gun, by the age of 11 she had drummed



up the confidence to shoot competitively. In the height of her preparations, she spent over 30 hours a week perfecting her craft—eight hours practicing and 25 hours loading shells.

In 2012, Emily competed in the 10-day Grand American, shooting trap with competitors from Brazil to England. After breaking 24 of the 25 clay pigeons in the first round of a nine-person shootout, only two competitors remained. Shot after shot, Emily broke clay after clay, hitting 25 consecutive targets and earning second overall in the all-ages, ladies division. What followed was a seemingly endless stream of radio and TV interviews accompanying a $15,000 check. While earning the title took immense shooting prowess, the interviews put another set of skills to the test – skills Emily attests came not from her pink shooting vest, but her blue corduroy jacket.

"Serving as my FFA chapter's secretary and competing in contests helped me transform from a shy girl into a professional young woman, able to articulate my thoughts with poise in front of reporters," she explained. "FFA helped push me outside of my comfort zone. My Outdoor Recreation SAE helped me discover opportunities to turn my passion for shooting into a potential career path."

In 2013, the same year she was named Michigan FFA state winner in the Outdoor Recreation Proficiency, Emily earned the chance to compete for a spot on the U.S. Olympic Team. Unfortunately, she took eighth, two places shy of the Olympics. Far from discouraged, Emily still manages to make time to shoot trap as a sophomore at Grand Valley State University. She plans to utilize her FFA experiences to help coach kids with diabetes as a registered dietician.

Each year, thousands of FFA members, like Emily, earn $4 billion while discovering their passions through SAEs. Thanks to generous support from individuals, businesses, and stakeholders investing in agriculture's future, the Michigan FFA Foundation is able to bestow proficiency awards to these high achieving students. ‡

Living to Serve

By: Kyle Forbush
Region IV State Vice President

Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live, Living to Serve. We live this motto every time we participate in FFA events. But does our time of service end when we hang up our blue jacket?



HantzGroup was started by John Hantz 14 years ago when Detroit was booming economically. Since the auto industry almost crashed in 2008, Detroit has not been the same. People started leaving, houses were sold to buyers who didn't show up, and houses for sale remained vacant. These vacant houses attract crime, fire, and can be eyesores with weedy front yards. Burnt or old houses sit and age while vines grow all around. Detroit owns about one-third of the city's lots through foreclosure. These lots cost the city of Detroit $9 million per square mile each year due to lost taxes and house maintenance. A sum that Detroit can't afford.

Hantz Farms started when John Hantz joined with Mike Score to carry out Hantz's dream of beautifying the city. Hantz was once quoted saying, "Instead of being part of the problem, I want to be part of the solution. I'm going to try to make a better situation in a little part of the world."

Hantz farms started lobbying for Detroit to sell vacant land to them in 2009 and finally received a yes in February 2014 with the conditions of tearing down 50 homes, regularly mowing, and planting 5000 trees. This was all required to be completed in 2 years starting in February 2014. The 3.5 acres in a 5 acre block sold to Hantz Farm was cleared in May with over 400 tires and 150 cubic yards of trash cleared out all thanks to the help of volunteers coming from as far as Boston. By November 2014, 15,000 trees were planted and 50 homes were removed. This was one year and three months ahead of schedule. Mike Score is the president of Hantz Farms and when asked about service, he said this:



"I enjoy serving others. In fact, if I cannot clearly see how benefits will flow through me to meet the needs of others I restructure the way I am doing my work or I pass the work on to someone for whom the work will be an act of service. Service is the foundation of human experience."

Just recently, Hantz Farms purchased more vacant land from the city of Detroit. They have also started working with local schools such as Southeastern High School for more ideas on using new land. Land has turned from useless, weedy, run down lots to neatly mowed lines of healthy trees. Hantz Farms also helps neighbors maintain yards to create large healthy areas of Detroit suburbs where crime can't hide and kids can safely walk to school. This past May 2,200 volunteers planted 5,000 trees on more land acquired from the city. Hantz Woodlands recently purchased 150 acres from Detroit.

Our time to serve never truly ends even if our time in the blue and gold does. We have the power to positively impact others no matter where we live. ǂ

impact
advocacy
education
agriculture
youth
lead
volunteer
community
mentor
support
service
success
development







Michigan FFA Alumni

In communities across the state, FFA alumni members are coaching, mentoring, fundraising and preparing the next generation of leaders and agriculturalists.

Join them. No jacket required.

For more information on creating your own alumni affiliate or to join one already established, contact alumni@michiganffa.org.



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Help empower tomorrow's farmers, scientists, communicators and food processors. Purchase a redesigned, Pure Michigan Agricultural Heritage license plate! You are making an investment in our future – Michigan's youth. For just $35, you can help prepare the next generation of agriculture leaders by supporting FFA and K-12 agricultural education programs.

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www.michiganffa.org

Member Highlights

By: Tyra Jonas
State Reporter



Sidney Linck

Landscape Management

Ravenna FFA Chapter

Sidney owns a business called Leaf It to Us. In the business, she manages small home gardens for people who do not have the time, skill, or knowledge to do so. She got involved with this after taking an interest in plants. Linck began to landscape after receiving a $1000 grant from the FFA. She plants flowers, fruits, and vegetables. Sidney is in charge of weeding, fertilizing, rototilling, and harvesting them. Her biggest challenges are remembering the amount of shade the plants need and measuring distance between plants so they do not overbear each other.

Cailyn Hines

Diversified Livestock

Branch Area Career Center FFA Chapter

Cailyn is known for having many different kinds of animals. She owns goats, sheep, ducks, steers, feeder steers, and her all-time favorite - swine. Throughout her town, she is known for competing nationally with her pigs. She began her journey of showing animals when she was four years old. The reason she continues to show pigs and raise other animals is because she enjoys the challenge and the self-discipline that she gains from it. One of Cailyn's biggest challenges is finding more time to work with her pigs during basketball and soccer season.



State Officer Stats



Connor Ewald
State President

Chapter: Laker

College: Central Michigan University

SAE:Vegetable Production

Theme Song: “I Feel Good”

Favorites

Sport: Baseball

Movie: Anything Disney

T.V. Show: Castle

Candy: M&M’s



Tyra Jonas
State Reporter

Chapter: Ravenna

College: Michigan State University

SAE: Vegetable Production

Theme Song: “I Hold On”

Favorites

Sport: Softball

Movie: The Maze Runner

T.V. Show: Empire

Candy: Sweet Tarts



Kelly Elsass
Region II State Vice President

Chapter: Jackson Area Career Center

College: Michigan State University

SAE: Viticulture

Theme Song: “The Eye of the Tiger”

Favorites

Sport: Baseball

Movie: Charlotte’s Web

Book: To Kill a Mockingbird

Candy: Reese’s



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MISSOURI FFA TODAY
Winter 2015

Making the Most of Proficiencies

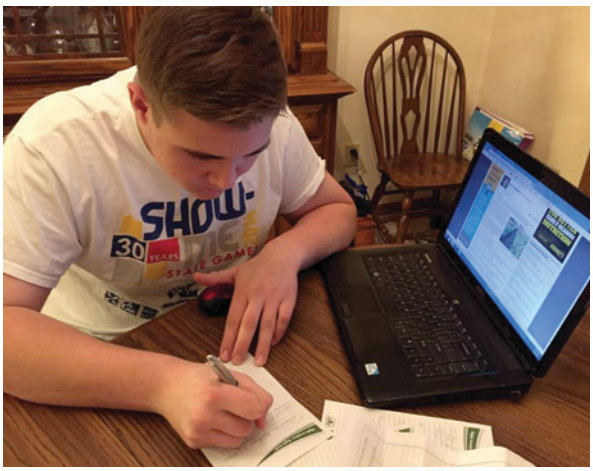
Missouri's national finalists speak out

STEP UP YOUR SAE

BY ALISON BOS

Proficiency awards can be attained by any FFA member who has developed specialized skills through his or her Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) at the chapter level and beyond.

SAE's can be distinguished into a specific category recognized by the FFA in order to be considered for a proficiency award. Activities that may qualify members for a proficiency award include placement, entrepreneurship and agriscience research.



FFA members may receive proficiency awards at the local, state and even national level. Award winners are selected by skills learned that relate to the agricultural field, financial achievements, personal growth, evidence of student accomplishment and communication skills.

Applications highlighting accomplishments and the details within an SAE are submitted and ranked at the local level. Top applications are selected and have the opportunity to advance to the state level. Top

CONTINUED ON PAGE D

Mark Twain high school senior Clayton Robinson was a national finalist in the Grain Production – Entrepreneurship proficiency. Making management and production decisions played an integral role in the success of his proficiency area.

Table of Contents

PAGE B
The President's Post

PAGE G
Missouri Agribusiness Academy

PAGE H
State Officer Q&A

PAGE J
Beyond FFA Week

PAGE L
In Their Words

PAGE N
FFA Calendar

THE PRESIDENT'S POST

Today's determination leads to tomorrow's success

2015-16 State FFA Officers

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3	Hadley Williams Green City
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14	Braxton Hoemann Union
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BY ADAM KIRBY
STATE FFA PRESIDENT



We've all heard the saying over and over again, "If you want something, you will have to work hard for it." Mindset is key, as well, in this notion to success. Another necessity is one's determination, which happens to be crucial to the success of any endeavor no matter what it is. Of course, we all think that if we work hard and are determined, then we will be successful. However, I recently met an outstanding individual that surpassed all of my expectations on determination.

When I was visiting my county fair earlier this year, I meandered through the livestock barns with a good friend when we stopped to talk to some other individuals. While we were standing there, a young boy came up and began ecstatically telling us about his lambs, Wooly and Roo. I had just met him, but I soon found myself arm wrestling with him. Needless to say, he beat me very, very badly. I quickly found out that he was nine years old, and his name was Layton. Layton could not stop telling us how much he loved his lambs and how much work he had put into getting them ready for his first summer of showing livestock. He was beyond excited that he was going to show the next day, and he was determined to do his very best. He never said he wanted to win. Instead, he told me, "I want to have fun with Wooly and Roo, and I want them to have fun, too." That alone made me so proud. After all, that's what it's all about.

Layton shows Wooly and Roo in a much different manner than most. You see, Layton was born with Cerebral Palsy, which affects both of his legs and his left arm. This means he remains in a wheelchair when he goes out of the house. Still, this nine-year-old boy was happier than anyone I had ever seen before. Thanks to his grandpa, he had successfully developed a "showing rack" so he can safely lead his sheep. More than anything, Layton loves to tell his story about how he has overcome, and continues to

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THE PRESIDENT'S POST FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

overcome every obstacle placed in front of him. He was determined to walk on his own, so he did. He was determined to be in track, so he was. When I think about Layton, a quote by Maya Angelou always comes to mind: "You may not control all of the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them."

Layton has been reduced by nothing, and has worked extremely hard to get where he is today. He has been successful in his life because he has been determined to reach his goals. It is hard enough to show livestock, but imagine doing it from a wheelchair. I have never seen anyone more inspirational in my life. It is important for us to remember that no matter what the obstacle, we can overcome it. Not everything in life will be easy; that's just part of life. We will have challenges in school, sports, FFA or our daily lives. But, it is up to us, and no one else to make the most of those challenges. Layton didn't choose to have Cerebral Palsy, but he has embraced it and has done so fantastically. Ask yourself, are you living like Layton? Are you living your life to the fullest? Do you love every day? Layton has changed my perspective on life and determination, and will always remain one of the most inspiring people I know.

To see more of Layton's amazing journey find him on Facebook under *The Life of Layton*.



Making the Most of Proficiencies

Continued from Page A

proficiencies within the state are then ranked as bronze, silver, gold and national finalists.

Winning a proficiency award at any level is a great achievement; however, being selected as a national proficiency award finalist is a huge accomplishment. This year, Missouri had six national proficiency finalists. These finalists are proof of how far FFA members can take their SAE's and develop them into competitive proficiencies.

Proficiency awards provide FFA members with the opportunity to take their SAE's a step farther. Milan FFA member and North Central Missouri College student Derick White, is a national finalist in the Agricultural Mechanics Energy Systems – Placement/ Entrepreneurship division. Through his work experiences at North Central Electric Co-Op, Derick has learned how to set poles, wire meter boxes and fix transformers, as well as other valuable life skills.



Bolivar FFA member Jacob Noblitt earned national finalist status with his proficiency in Agriscience Research-Animal Systems. His SAE includes raising poultry for show and production, selling eggs, working at a local veterinary office and participating in agriscience fairs with his agricultural research.



Stephanie Borgman, a member of Slater FFA, worked as a pollinator for Dupont Pioneer as part of her SAE. She was a national finalist in the proficiency area of Emerging Agricultural Technology – Entrepreneurship/Placement.

"FFA members should take their SAE a step further by applying for proficiencies because they get the opportunity to win awards and meet new people," White said. "I think all the hard work I have put into my SAE has really helped me in being named a national finalist."

Stephanie Borgman, a member of the Slater FFA Chapter and student at Northwest Missouri State University, encourages all FFA members to take the step and fill out a proficiency award application.

"By filling out the application myself, I was able to truly evaluate and appreciate my SAE and all the benefits it has presented me,"

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Borgman said. "When I initially filled out the proficiency award application for my area in March, I never would have imagined making it this far."

Borgman is a national finalist in the Emerging Agricultural Technology – Entrepreneurship/Placement division. Her SAE included three summers of employment at Dupont Pioneer where she was a pollinator. Her work assisted the company in its development and research of new technologies in the corn industry.

Clayton Robinson, a senior at Mark Twain High School, is a national finalist in the Grain Production – Entrepreneurship division. His SAE includes a wide array of agricultural activities; however, his grain entrepreneurship proficiency was selected based on his experience and accomplishments in corn production. His corn operation evolved from him being more of a hired-hand to being the person making production and marketing decisions. He also has learned the importance of going above and beyond what is required.



Mackenzie Stumpe's SAE in sheep production taught her skills such as responsibility, time management, record keeping and finance. A member of the Mexico FFA Chapter, she was a national finalist in sheep production entrepreneurship proficiency.

"My SAE has taught me the importance of drive – drive to find

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE





Making the Most of Proficiencies

Continued from Page E

work to do, even without direct orders to work," Robinson said. "It has taught me to go above and beyond requirements in order to achieve success."

Proficiencies showcase the skills FFA members have developed through their agricultural experiences. Mackenzie Stumpe, Mexico FFA member and University of Missouri-Columbia freshman, explains that her sheep production SAE taught her skills such as responsibility, time management, record keeping and finance. Plus, she has learned "hands-on" skills including knowing how to properly give a shot and being able to identify sick animals. She also gives credit to her record book in her achievement as being selected as a national finalist in Sheep Production – Entrepreneurship, as well as staying persistent in applying for proficiency awards.

"Keep up with your record book," Stumpe explained. "FFA members should apply for proficiency awards every year because you never know what is going to happen."

Bolivar FFA's Jacob Noblitt is a national finalist in the Agriscience Research-Animal Systems division. The high school junior's SAE consists of raising poultry for show and production, selling eggs, working at a local veterinary office and participating in agriscience fairs with his agricultural research. His research findings and success has already led to national recognition and now has landed him as a national proficiency finalist.

"All FFA members should apply for proficiency awards because it allows them to have more opportunities," Noblitt said. "I am completely humbled by this opportunity and I plan to represent Missouri well."

State proficiency applications are due in February, and area applications are due prior to that. Check with your chapter advisor for specific deadlines and application information.





Missouri Agribusiness Academy Set

Applications due Feb. 1

LEARN ABOUT AG CAREERS

The Missouri Department of Agriculture is giving 30 high school students representing 4-H clubs and FFA chapters, as well as farm families, throughout Missouri the opportunity to explore careers in agriculture through the 2016 Missouri Agribusiness Academy – a competitive program for sophomores interested in pursuing agriculture-related college degrees and careers.

The 2016 Missouri Agribusiness Academy will be held June 6-10, and marks the program's 29th year. Students may apply to participate through Feb. 1, 2016.

In 2016, the students selected have the opportunity to learn about the many unique opportunities for careers in the Springfield region.

Since 1988, the Missouri Agribusiness Academy has awarded more than 800 academy memberships through a competitive application and interview process. Applications for students interested in becoming part of the 2016 class are available online at agriculture.mo.gov.

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State Officer Q&A

Who's that underneath the blue corduroy?



HUNTER CORMAN

FFA Chapter: Willow Springs

Hometown: Pomona

College/Major: College of the Ozarks/Agribusiness

SAE: My SAE involves working on my family farm. We raise crossbred Angus cattle and our farm is home to some of the first Charolais cattle that were introduced to south central Missouri. I also raise market hogs during the summer with my brother Chris. In addition, we have a vegetable garden, raising specialty crops like pumpkins and gourds, which I sell during the fall. I show these items on the local, district and state levels.

What motivated you to want to become a Missouri FFA Officer? I was motivated to become a state officer because I wanted to be an individual who inspires and leads people so they, too, can make a difference in their homes and communities.

Who is your hero and why? My brother Chris is the biggest hero in my life because he has been with me through thick and thin, has taught me to never give up and always pursue my dreams. Chris has a mild to moderate form of autism. He also has many physical handicaps. Although he has many struggles and obstacles to face, he always seems to overcome them. He is going to be receiving his American Degree at the 88th National FFA Convention.

What are your plans for the future? In the future, I hope to open a farm-to-table restaurant. This style of restaurant can demonstrate how the food has gone from farm to the plate. We live in a society where many do not know or understand where their food comes from. Educating and advocating would be the goal of my business. It could also give students in urban areas an opportunity to have their very own SAE. I know that this would leave a lasting impact on my home and community.

What is something unique or interesting that few people know about you? There are two things Missouri State FFA officers are known to be able to do. Most state officers listen to country music and they also are very good at dancing. What's interesting is I do not do either of those things. I dance like a chicken with its head cut off. I also do not listen to country music. I listen to a lot of Christian hip-hop. It's just proof that our organization is truly diversified with many unique members, myself included.

Advice to FFA Members: My advice to FFA members would be to relentlessly pursue their dreams and goals. Fear kills more dreams than failure. Always remember it is not how good you are, but rather how good you want to be.



BRAXTON HOEMANN

FFA Chapter: Union FFA

Hometown: Union

College/Major: East Central College

SAE: My SAE involves Equine Science Placement, where I am employed on our family farm. We have 22 horses that we breed, train, sell and trade.

What motivated you to want to become a Missouri FFA Officer? I simply want to help others become involved in the FFA.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

The past state officers is one of the biggest reasons why I wanted to become a state officer. I could not get over the fact that they were so kind and friendly. They wanted to get to know who I was. After going to two FFA summer camps and getting to spend time with them, it made me decide that I wanted to help influence others the way those state officers had influenced me.

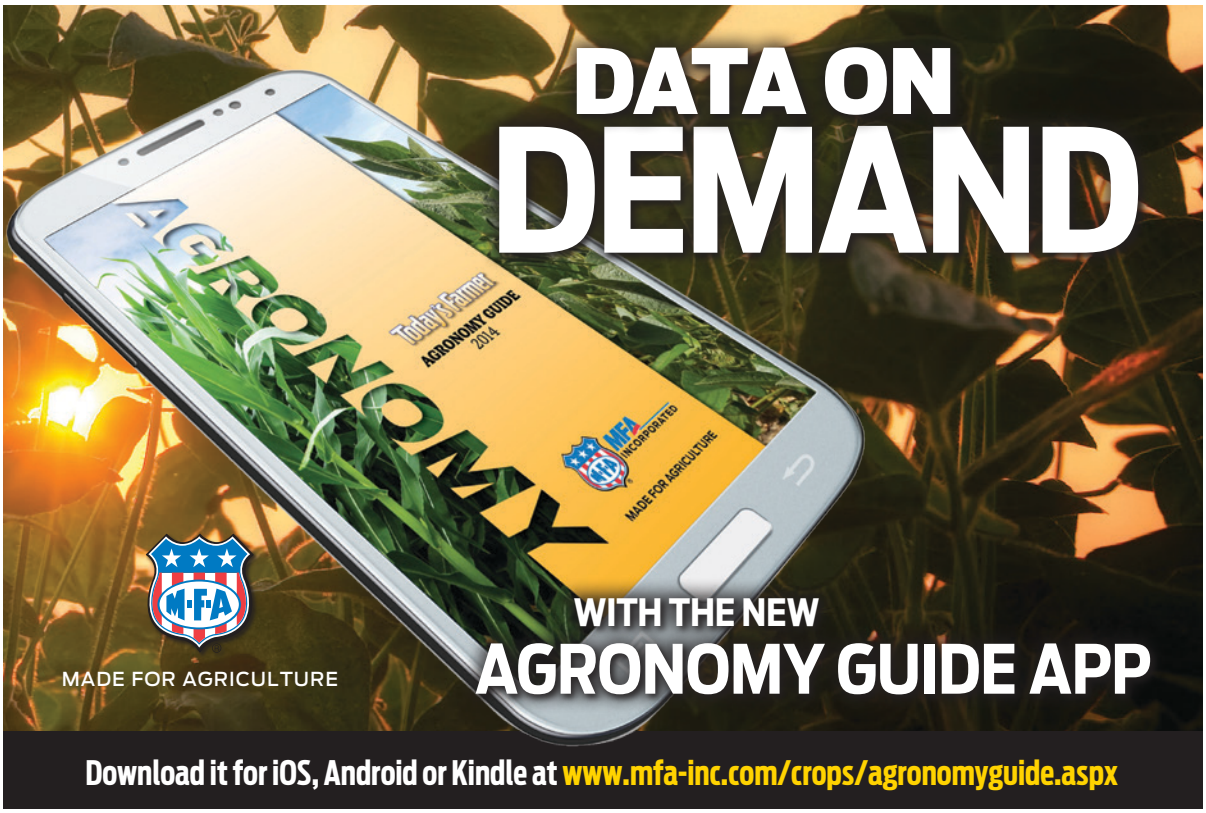
Who is your hero and why? My heroes are my FFA advisors. They pushed me to my max and helped me achieve awards that I thought I never could. If it weren't for them, I wouldn't have the FFA career I do now.

What are your plans for the future? I plan to earn a degree in criminal justice and farm management. Eventually, I want to become a Missouri State Highway Patrolman and own a small livestock farm.

What is something unique or interesting that few people know about you? I am a huge nerd when it comes to Harry Potter and Lord of The Rings, despite being a country boy and living on the farm.

Advice to FFA Members: My advice to FFA members is to make friends and have a good time, but also put forth 110 percent in all that you do in the FFA.

TEACH AG



Beyond FFA Week

Promoting your chapter's mission

DEVELOPING SAE'S

BY ALISON BOS

Each year, FFA chapters participate in FFA Week activities and promote what the organization represents within their chapter, their school and their community. In addition, chapters participate and host a variety of activities throughout the school year which showcases the mission of the FFA organization.

To honor and recognize chapters' achievements, the FFA has developed a National Chapter Award Program, which includes the Model of Innovation Award. To be considered, a chapter must submit an application and complete activities that incorporate quality standards within the divisions of student, chapter and community development.

Last year, the top five chapters in the state were Marshall, Troy, Sweet Springs, Paris and Aurora. Three Missouri chapters were selected as finalists in the Model of Innovation category of National Chapter Awards. Marshall, Troy and Seymour FFA Chapters competed earlier this fall at the 2015 National FFA Convention. These chapters were selected based on their efforts in planning and completing activities throughout the year that promote the FFA motto and mission – including those activities hosted during FFA Week.

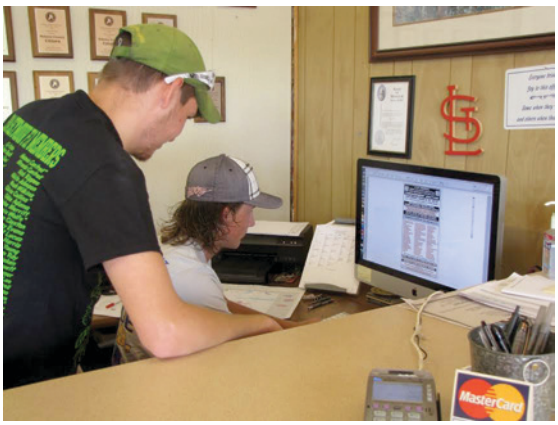
Paris FFA Advisor Josh Bondy explained their chapter activities are based on member involvement and increasing their percentage of active members. For FFA Week, students participated in activities that promote the organization such as FFA Sunday, America's Monday, FFA Supporters Breakfast and FFA Official Dress Day.



Seymour FFA's Learning to Build project and equipment consignment sale are among the activities that boost the chapter's recruitment, finance, public relations and cooperation efforts.

"We plan our activities around the mission to increase members' premier leadership, personal growth and career success," Bondy said.

The Seymour FFA Chapter was selected as a national finalist in the chapter division which includes activities based on chapter recruitment, finance, public relations, cooperation and support group. They also host a variety of activities during FFA Week which include FFA Sunday, Conservation Dress Day, FFA Apparel Day, Ag Industry Day, FFA Appreciation Luncheon and Farmer Dress Day.



FFA's National Chapter Award program honored Seymour FFA as a national finalist in the chapter division - Model of Innovation category.

Tiffany Kauffman, Seymour FFA advisor, said their chapter also hosted other activities throughout the year including Helping Hands, Learning to Build, Annual Spring Equipment Consignment Sale and a number of recruitment activities. Seymour FFA's Spring Annual Consignment Sale is one of their largest events where members work with alumni to organize a farm equipment sale.

"It takes a well-rounded and active chapter to be selected," Kauffman said. "The more activities we do, the larger the positive impact the FFA makes on its members and the community."

Model of Innovation for Student Development is for chapters that go above and beyond in providing opportunities for their members, according to Troy FFA Advisor Matt McCrory. He said his chapter also uses FFA Week to promote the organization by providing leadership opportunities for members and hosting a community breakfast. The chapter also hosts its annual Greenhand/Chapter FFA Degree Ceremony during FFA Week.

In addition to activities held during FFA Week, Troy FFA works throughout the year to promote FFA's mission and motto. Perhaps the chapter's most notable recognition is the Troy Agribusiness Leadership Experience (TABLE) where 32 of its members traveled to agricultural businesses in the St. Louis area to learn about careers in agriculture. Troy has conducted other activities, including its Go Out and Lead (GOAL) campaign, and it plays host to a number of sports tournaments.

"We are proud of our members and the vast array of opportunities that we are able to provide to our members," McCrory said. "We are lucky to have support from our administration as well as our community to make such opportunities possible."

The Marshall FFA Chapter also sponsors activities that promote student development within the FFA. Advisor Randy Plattner said students plan and conduct the activities, which develops a sense of purpose and drives them to succeed. Their Learning to Lead program encourages FFA members to develop leadership skills by attending a variety of conferences and experiences. Marshall also conducts a Making the Grade program that focuses on academic efforts and an Operation Beautiful program that focuses on encouraging students to think positively about themselves and others. According to Plattner, their efforts are reflections of the dedication that members possess and proof that students are more than capable of developing outstanding activities.

"Our students work very hard to accomplish the goals they have set for themselves and the chapter," Plattner said. "Their determination and dedication to making a difference in the lives of others is inspiring to see as advisors."

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In Their Words

Up close with your Missouri State FFA Officers

HADLEY WILLIAMS

As I entered my freshman year of high school, I never really had that one friend group. I was in choir, played softball and enjoyed hanging out with everyone. Honestly, though, I never really fit into any specific group at school until I joined FFA. I always knew that I wanted to be an FFA member because my dad was, as well as both of my sisters. I didn't know anything about the organization or where to start. I grew up on a dairy farm, and I thought that FFA would be for farmers only. Little did I know that it would be so much more.

I decided my freshman year to get involved and attend some FFA activities, but I was just going through the motions. Then, I ran for a chapter officer. I was elected chapter reporter my sophomore year and was able to attend the Missouri Agribusiness Academy (MAbA). It was through the help of my FFA advisor and MAbA that I realized the agriculture industry and FFA are more than just farmers. FFA, to me, means opportunities. You have the option of getting involved and stepping out of your box. I learned that my true passion in life is to teach others about agriculture. I was able to get out of my comfort zone and meet hundreds of different individuals who come from many diverse backgrounds.



HADLEY WILLIAMS
State V.P., Area 3

I walked into FFA not wanting to ever speak in front of a crowd of people and I have left high school as someone who has the ability to speak to groups of over 100 people. I have learned how to get a group of people involved and how to become a leader. You may have heard the saying what you put into something is what you will get out of it. That is exactly right. I wish that I would have gotten more involved in FFA at the beginning of my freshman year instead of waiting until I was a junior in high school. FFA is what you make of it, so take the opportunity that has been handed to you and run with it.

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MAURA BUTLER



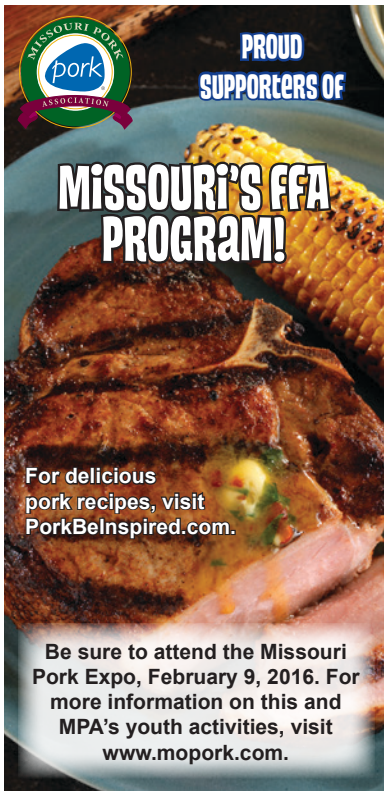
MAURA BUTLER
State V.P., Area 11

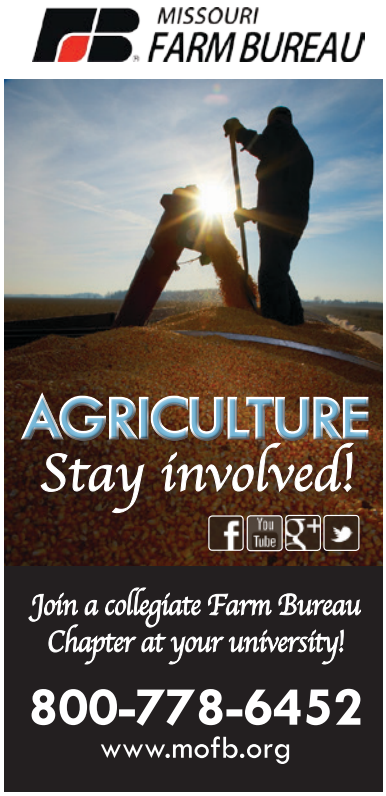
Through FFA, you can be involved in everything from agricultural communications to veterinary medicine. My proficiency area is beef production. With this activity, I have shown cattle at the local and district level since I was a small child. Livestock projects help you learn and develop skills such as responsibility and caring. Hard work is another lesson learned through caring for my livestock project. No matter what activity you are involved in, hard work is the driving force behind whether or not you will succeed. Whether you realize it or not, people notice the dedication that you have for what you are doing. I found this out first-hand at our annual 4-H/FFA livestock sale.

Typically, each county holds a sale for the exhibitors to sell their livestock projects. Some counties hold the sale at the last day of the fair, but my county holds its sale in the fall. Just a week before the sale, as I went to feed my calf, I found him dead. The proper thing to do was to inform the people in charge of the sale that I no longer had an animal to sell. The following week, I attended the sale as my younger brother was selling his calf. After the steer sale was completed, I was called to the ring where my FFA advisor proceeded to tell my story. He added that a local businessman had inquired prior to the sale about the absence of my name from the sellers list. My advisor informed all in attendance that this buyer wished to donate to my project, even though I had nothing to sell, as he had witnessed my hard work with my project at the fair. To my surprise, more and more people also started adding money. I learned that night that there will be some misfortunes in almost everything you do, but no matter what you do, you should do it to the fullest of your capabilities as you never know when someone will notice your hard work and dedication.

SCAN ME

Get the latest on what's happening with Missouri FFA!





FFA Calendar

Missouri FFA is on the move

DECEMBER

4-5 Missouri Livestock Symposium
Kirksville

6 Missouri Farm Bureau FFA Speaking Finals
Tan-Tar-A, Lake of the Ozarks

6 Missouri Sheep Producers Speaking Finals
Tan-Tar-A, Lake of the Ozarks

6-8 Missouri Farm Bureau Annual Meeting
Tan-Tar-A, Lake of the Ozarks

15 Youth Pork Ambassador Applications Due

16 Univ. of Missouri Scholarship Applications Due for In-coming Freshman

16-18 Governor's Conference on Agriculture
Tan-Tar-A, Lake of the Ozarks

JANUARY

GREENHAND MOTIVATIONAL CONFERENCES

Area 1 9 a.m., Jan. 5—MWSU, St. Joseph

Area 2 8 a.m., Jan. 6—NCMC, Trenton

Area 2 11:30 a.m., Jan. 6—NCMC, Trenton

Area 3 9:30 a.m., Jan. 7—TSU, Kirksville

Area 4 9 a.m., Jan. 8—MU, Columbia

Area 5 4 p.m., Jan. 7—Bowling Green

Area 6 12 p.m., Jan. 5—UCM, Warrensburg

Area 7 9 a.m., Jan. 5—UCM, Warrensburg

Area 8 8:30 a.m., Jan. 5—LU, Jefferson City

Area 9 9 a.m., Jan. 6—MSU, Springfield

Area 10 12 p.m., Jan. 6—MSU, Springfield

Area 11 9 a.m., Jan. 7—MSU, Springfield

Area 12 12 p.m., Jan. 7—MSU, Springfield

Area 13 2 p.m., Jan. 5—Waynesville

Area 13 8:30 a.m., Jan. 6—MSU, West Plains

Area 14 4 p.m., Jan. 7—Sullivan

Area 15 9 a.m., Jan. 7—SEMO, Cape Girardeau

Area 16 2:30 p.m., Jan. 6—TRCC, Poplar Bluff

JANUARY

8-10 Missouri Cattlemen's Association Convention & Trade Show
Tan-Tar-A, Lake of the Ozarks

9 Public Speaking Institute
MSU Darr Center, Springfield

16 Public Speaking Institute
MU Bradford Farm, Columbia

22-23 Ag Expo—Three Rivers Community College
Poplar Bluff

FEBRUARY

1 Missouri Agribusiness Academy Applications Due

1 Missouri State Fair Youth in Ag Scholarship Applications Due

1 National FFA Scholarship Online Scholarship Applications Close

5-6 Mo. Young Farmer/Young Farm Wives Annual Convention
Columbia

6 Mo. YF/YFW FFA Speaking Contest
Columbia

9 Mo. Pork Association Public Speaking Finals
Holiday Inn Exec. Center, Columbia

12-15 Missouri Farm Bureau Young Farmer & Rancher Leadership Conference
Kansas City

22 Univ. of Mo. CAFNR College & Career Exploration Day
Columbia

26 Registration Deadline Mo. Youth Livestock Grading & Judging Contest

26-28 Western Farm Show
Kansas City

20-27 National FFA Week

MARCH

1 HYMAX Academy Applications Due

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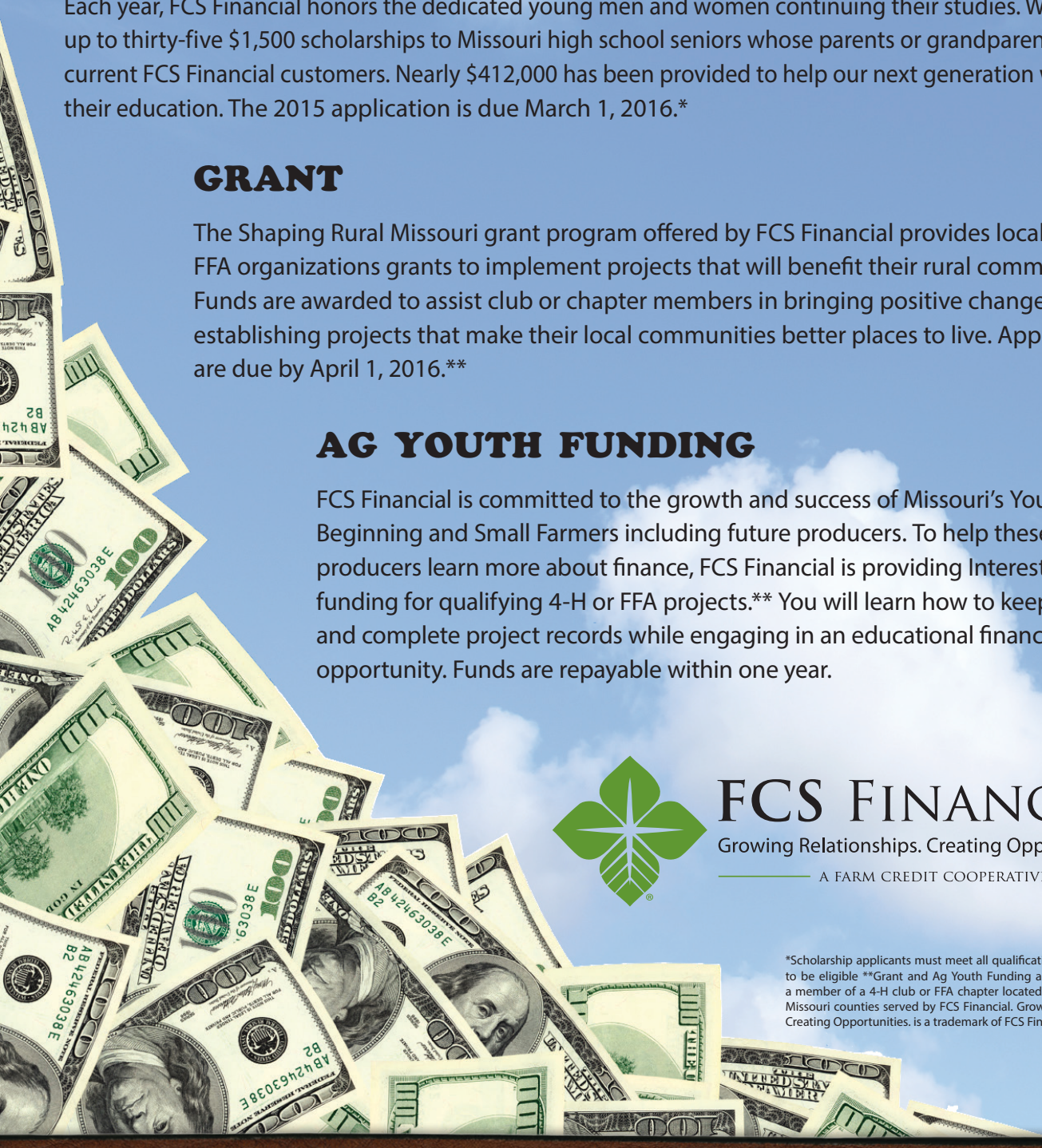
GRANT

The Shaping Rural Missouri grant program offered by FCS Financial provides local 4-H and FFA organizations grants to implement projects that will benefit their rural communities. Funds are awarded to assist club or chapter members in bringing positive change by establishing projects that make their local communities better places to live. Applications are due by April 1, 2016.**

AG YOUTH FUNDING

FCS Financial is committed to the growth and success of Missouri's Young, Beginning and Small Farmers including future producers. To help these future producers learn more about finance, FCS Financial is providing Interest-free funding for qualifying 4-H or FFA projects.** You will learn how to keep accurate and complete project records while engaging in an educational financial opportunity. Funds are repayable within one year.



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*Scholarship applicants must meet all qualifications in application to be eligible **Grant and Ag Youth Funding applicants must be a member of a 4-H club or FFA chapter located in one of the 102 Missouri counties served by FCS Financial. Growing Relationships. Creating Opportunities. is a trademark of FCS Financial, ACA.

Inside the Oklahoma FFA Chorus

"The Oklahoma FFA chorus isn't just a chorus, we are a team. We love, support and accept one another, and we come together to make the best performances we possibly can."

-- Caleb Eutsler, 2015 Chorus Manager, Porter FFA Chapter



Lots of state FFA conventions have state choruses; but few, if any, are as good as the ones from Oklahoma. They have a very distinct sound. They sing in tune, they obviously know and love the music. It's fun to hear them and watch them because it is clear they're really engaged.

Stan Kingma, director of the Oklahoma FFA chorus agrees. "In my opinion, the Oklahoma FFA Chorus is head and shoulders above many of the other states."



Mr. Kingma had been directing the National FFA Chorus for many years when he was invited to start a chorus in Oklahoma. That was 26 years ago. "We may have had forty or fifty kids in the group," he said. "We were rehearsing in the basement of the convention center in a corner of a room, and it just grew from there."



Between 150 and 225 FFA members audition to be in the Oklahoma chorus every year.

"They submit a recording of their voice, using their iPhone or something of that nature, and send in a CD so I can hear them. Then I listen to all of those and choose 90 to 100 singers."

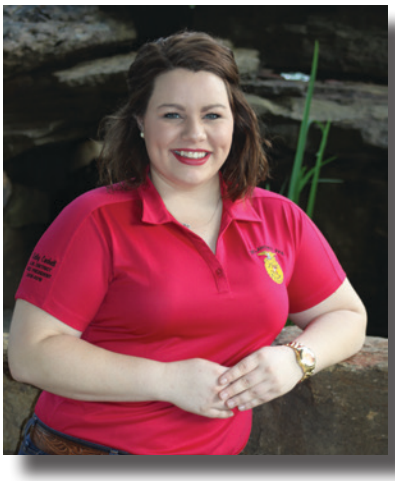
Taryn Caruthers, Chisholm FFA chapter, was the group's 2015 PR person. She first auditioned when she was in the eighth grade. "When I auditioned the first time, I was terrified for some reason, but after you audition once, the rest of the auditions go pretty smoothly."

Mr. Kingma said he is most interested in the students' vocal quality and confidence as a singer. He is less concerned with their ability to sight-read the music. "I don't really concern myself with sight-reading because knowing how to sight-read music, as opposed to being a good musician, are two separate things. Many

(Continued on Page H)

 Taryn Caruthers says, "No other musical groups I've been in are even on the same scale as the FFA Chorus."

Meet Your 2015-2016 State Officers







Kelby Corbett S.W. District Vice President

"Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and I – I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference."

The words of poet Robert Frost may have confused us a tad when we were first introduced to his poem "The Road Not Taken." But you see life is all about choices -- good choices, poor choices, smart choices and choices not made.

As FFA members, we encounter these choices on a daily basis. We must choose whether we are to be involved in our local chapter or if we choose to sit on the sidelines. We must choose to have the courage to try new things and the dedication to strive for new opportunities.

FFA members, do not be afraid to choose the road less traveled because you never know when it might lead to a new opportunity or help develop a new passion. It's OK to be afraid. It's all right to be unsure. Stepping out of your comfort zone allows you to grow as an individual.

My 11th-grade year, my FFA adviser encouraged me to try a new career development event. After some poking and prodding, I made my choice and selected the food science and technology CDE. I had no idea what I was doing and certainly didn't expect I would ever have a passion for it. But I did. I became more and more interested in the nutritional and marketing aspects of the food industry. And because of that positive experience, I have now decided to pursue a career in agriculture marketing.

I had an open mind, made a choice and tried something new. Yes, I have found one of my life passions by taking the road less traveled. And you can, too!

There will always be thorns and struggles along the way. Don't let that hinder your decision, however, to try new things, take on a new challenge or pursue a new opportunity.

Choices are what enable us to be ourselves. Do not be afraid to let your chapter, community, Oklahoma FFA and the world know exactly who you are.

Kelby is an excellent cook, most famous for her prize-winning Cowboy Chili.

Meet Your 2015-2016 State Officers







Kalee Horn Central District Vice President

It was a routine middle school sleepover that my friends Hayley, Sonnet and I had every Friday night. As usual, I expected to have a fun-filled night -- until the conversation took an unexpected turn. We were talking about what all we did during the past week and what our plans were for the weekend.

Hayley had been in the dance studio working on her solo in preparation for a competition on Saturday. She was nervous, but confident because she'd nailed it during practice the night before.

Sonnet had spent the week at private vocal lessons and was avoiding dairy products so that her vocal chords were ready for the All-State Chorus auditions. She sang her audition piece for us, and I found myself covered in goose bumps.

But then it was my turn. "So, Kalee," my friends asked expectantly, "what did you do this week?" My stomach churned. "Oh you know, the usual. Just doing my homework and stuff."

There it was: the familiar feeling of hopelessness. My friends radiated with passion and dedication, but I felt absolutely nothing. I remember praying that I would find something that I could be successful at. Little did I know God had a plan in mind for me, too.

Two years later I found myself in a similar situation. I was surrounded by pillows, snacks and my two best friends. This time, however, I felt a little different. I was hopeful and passionate. When my turn came, I shared with my friends how I had spent all week at speech practice preparing for the upcoming state speech contest. I told them about how I had met several new friends from all around the state and couldn't wait until I saw them next. I told them with tear-filled eyes how I had finally found my place and that my prayers had been answered.

FFA members, you too have a place. This organization is filled with people who want to help you find that place. Find what gives you passion. Find what gives you hope.

Kalee is obsessed with rings and wears seven of them every day.

Meet Your 2015-2016 State Officers







Hallie Barnes State Reporter

I was only about 7 or 8 years old when I was standing in our driveway with my older brother, K.C., about 40 feet away. He, being the ornery little boy he was, thought it would be a good idea to throw a big stick at me. I didn't think there was any way he could actually aim and hit me, but I found myself to be completely wrong. What did I do? I was crying, upset and ready to throw punches and go tattle.

But then, K.C. said, "Hallie, you broke the stick! You broke the stick with your head!" As I looked toward the ground where the now two pieces of stick were lying, I realized that, yes, I did break the stick. I began laughing and was proud of myself and made an agreement with K.C. that I wouldn't tell on him. My hard head broke through the whole 2-inch diameter of the stick. Maybe that's why everyone always tells me how hard-headed I am.

My initial reaction was to be upset and angry at K.C., but then he pointed out the positive of the situation: I broke the big stick! Of course he was just trying to get out of trouble, but without realizing it, he taught me a valuable life lesson. Sometimes I need to change my perspective in order to get the most out of something or to just have a little fun.

FFA members, you've probably been told that the glass is half full, rather than half empty. Believe it or not, this is very true. Every day, God gives us many blessings. But we cannot enjoy these blessings if we are only focused on the negative things.

There is no bad day; we just pick out all the bad things that have happened and choose to dwell on them, rather than cherishing the good. Instead of wishing for everything you DON'T have, be thankful for everything you DO have.

Living and being able to be involved in such an amazing organization as FFA are blessings in themselves. Changing your perspective just might turn your tears of sorrow into tears of joy.

Hallie is a 4th generation Hereford cattle producer. She also has 10 cats.

Meet Your 2015-2016 State Officers







Drake Boyce State President

What is your calling in life? That's a tough question to ask yourself. For some, the answer is not what they expected.

So many times as young people we are asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" When I was younger and asked myself this question, I weighed out my options, and there was only one logical answer. I wanted to be a daredevil. For several years, this was my answer. I felt pretty cool whenever I said that I was going to jump flaming cars with a dirt bike and skydive onto moving vehicles. I never thought much about how to become a daredevil. I just knew that I wanted to be one.

When I realized that being a daredevil probably wasn't going to work out, I switched to astronaut, then doctor, and I was even going to be ninja at some point. I never had a problem with dreaming big and setting my goals high, but for a long time I never factored in what God had planned for me.

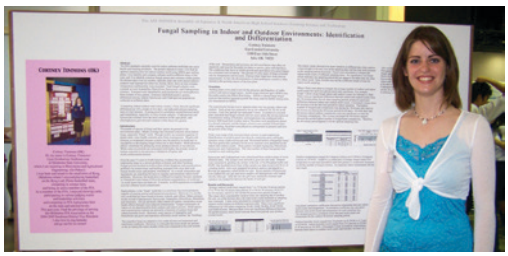
The first part of young people's lives are spent in school preparing for the real world. In a world that revolves around money, it makes sense to plan on going into a high-paying career. I mean, making the most money possible will make you happy, right? For a long time, I had this mindset. I made my plans and hoped for the best.

God had other plans for me. There is a difference between what you want to do and what you're called to do. I wanted to make the most money possible, but God called me to spread his word. Once I finally started listening to God and giving it all to him, that's when I realized where true happiness comes from.

God can use you in any field of work, but it is important to use God's plans and not your own. I encourage you, FFA members, whatever you do, do it for the glory of God and not your own personal gain. Then watch what He does in your life.

Drake's favorite thing: snowboarding in the winter.

An Agriscience Star



As a high school student, **Cortney Cowley** was the Oklahoma FFA Agriscience student of the year and a National Agriscience Award Winner. In college she was the most-decorated student in OSU history: a Truman Scholar, a Udall Scholar, a Wentz Scholar and a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellow. She recently completed her Ph.D. program at OSU and is now working for the Federal Reserve Bank in Omaha, Nebraska.

Cortney said she owes a great deal of her success to FFA in general and, in particular, to starting an Agriscience project when she was in 8th grade at Byng, Oklahoma. She went on to have a long and extremely successful history with the Agriscience Fair, winning first place at state four times and at nationals twice.

"My 8th grade year, I won at the State Agriscience Fair," she said. "I was awarded a trip to the National FFA Agriscience Fair, where I placed 4th." An 8th grader finishing 4th at Nationals!

In her freshman year, she won her category in the State Agriscience Fair and the National Convention. "My sophomore year I was beaten at state by a girl who went on to be the National Agriscience student of the year. So I didn't feel too bad about getting second to her."

She came back and won state and nationals as a junior. In her senior year, her project was on indoor and outdoor air quality. She won at state, but did not win at nationals because the judges didn't think her project had enough Ag focus.



But that year was not a total loss. The Toyota Corporation was selecting students at science fairs to accompany Toyota representatives on a trip to Japan. "I was one of three students selected to participate in that program. It was a nice consolation prize to get to go to Japan and present my research over there."

Cortney's FFA experience was not limited to Agriscience Fair projects. She was involved in many leadership activities as well. She was chapter vice president her junior year and chapter president as a senior. She participated in the Made for Excellence Conference, Alumni Camp, and Advanced Leadership Development. She eventually ran for state FFA office and was elected Southeast District Vice President in 2004.

As an undergrad at OSU, Cortney started presenting on developing and carrying out Agriscience Fair projects. She did workshops for both students and teachers on the state and national level. She also judged the state and national Agriscience Fairs.

Cortney was involved with the 2015 expansion of the Agriscience Fair competition in Oklahoma, which was managed by former state FFA President, Whitney Danker, and made possible by a significant sponsorship from Devon Energy.

As it turned out, the initial planning for this year's fair happened about the same time Cortney was accepting the job with the Federal Reserve and moving to Omaha, so she was only involved in one meeting between Devon and Oklahoma FFA, but she still played an important role. "I was there to provide the student's perspective on how Agriscience Fair works and the timeline when projects should be started. I provided some content for that and basic instructions and reasons why Agriscience Fair is a great opportunity for students."

This year's program was a huge success. Participation increased more than 200% to 135 projects entered by 185 FFA members representing 46 FFA chapters.

Cortney has never gotten too far away from FFA. She and her husband, a former ag teacher, work as a team helping FFA members by reading and listening to them deliver their speeches. She also helps FFA members prepare for leadership responsibilities like state officer nominating committee.

"FFA was the first place I found where I could be curious, take initiative to solve a problem, and then be rewarded for solving it. I think the confidence and validation I gained from being able to ask questions and find answers for myself was really empowering. That carries with you through whatever you do in life. You know that no matter how difficult the problem, if you're willing to work hard enough, you can solve it."

Cortney is a Regional Affairs Economist for the Omaha branch of the Kansas City Federal Reserve District.

2016 **OKLAHOMA FFA**

Agriscience Fair



Sponsored by Devon Energy

Jump-start your college career and explore the benefits of the oil and gas industry!

What: Devon Energy will provide financial awards for Agriscience Fair participants whose winning projects are selected for the Oklahoma State FFA Convention. Students are encouraged to select topics focused on technologies that agriculture and oil and gas have in common.

Why: Agriculture and the oil and gas industry share a commitment to conservation. Participating in the Agriscience Fair provides students opportunities to research and analyze new ideas to benefit both agriculture and the oil and gas industry in protecting natural resources.

- Boost your college application.
- Win scholarships.
- Enhance writing and communications skills.
- Explore potential careers in the oil and gas industry.

When: The State FFA Agriscience Fair competition will take place on the OSU campus Friday, April 22, 2016.

Download at **www.ffa.org/participate/awards/agriscience-fair**



Call for Entries

devon

Inside the Oklahoma FFA Chorus

(Continued from Page A)

students who are in the group do not read music at all. But they have quick ears, and they can hear a phrase, learn it and remember it. I rely on that."

The students get the music a week or two before they come to Oklahoma City for the convention. They also get links to recordings of the specific arrangements so they can hear the arrangement and sing along with it as they learn the music. They will ultimately be required to memorize the music, too. That's difficult for some people, but Mr. Kingma has developed a technique to make that less problematic. "Throughout the rehearsal time, I simply say, 'Okay, you have 15 minutes, go sit in a quiet space, and when you come back, I want you to have this set of lyrics, this story, memorized.' Once you have the story, it's very easy to remember the music because the story glues together your memory. That's how they can learn to memorize very quickly."

Mr. Kingma has very high expectations of the chorus members. "We tell them in advance that chorus is your life for the next three days. You will not have time to go to lunch with your chapter or visit with your parents. You're going to totally concentrate on this. The whole staff treats them as equals. They are not students. That's just how we look at it."

The chorus performs in 5 of the 6 state convention general sessions every year, Caleb told us. "General sessions are awesome. Singing in front of 10,000 people? It's nerve wracking, but it's empowering! So many of my friends out in the stands will take pictures of us and send them to us afterwards, putting them on Twitter or Instagram. It makes me feel like a celebrity. Your face is on that big screen and everything's on you. It feels good."





The chorus also performs an annual concert for lawmakers at our state capitol. "It is emotional and positive and reinforcing on both sides," Mr. Kingma said.

Taryn said going to the Capitol is her favorite part of the Chorus experience. "The representatives and senators love it! They are always so excited when we are there, they cheer and applaud and it makes you feel like you are some famous performer!"

Both the students had high praise for Mr. Kingma. Taryn said, "I have so much respect for him! He comes back every year and makes people who have never met make amazing music that just gives you goose bumps. That's pretty amazing if you ask me!"

Caleb summed it up this way, "Mr. Kingma is amazing. He has changed my life. He's so passionate with what he does and he loves every single one of us. I wouldn't have wanted any other person than him to lead us. He's just amazing."

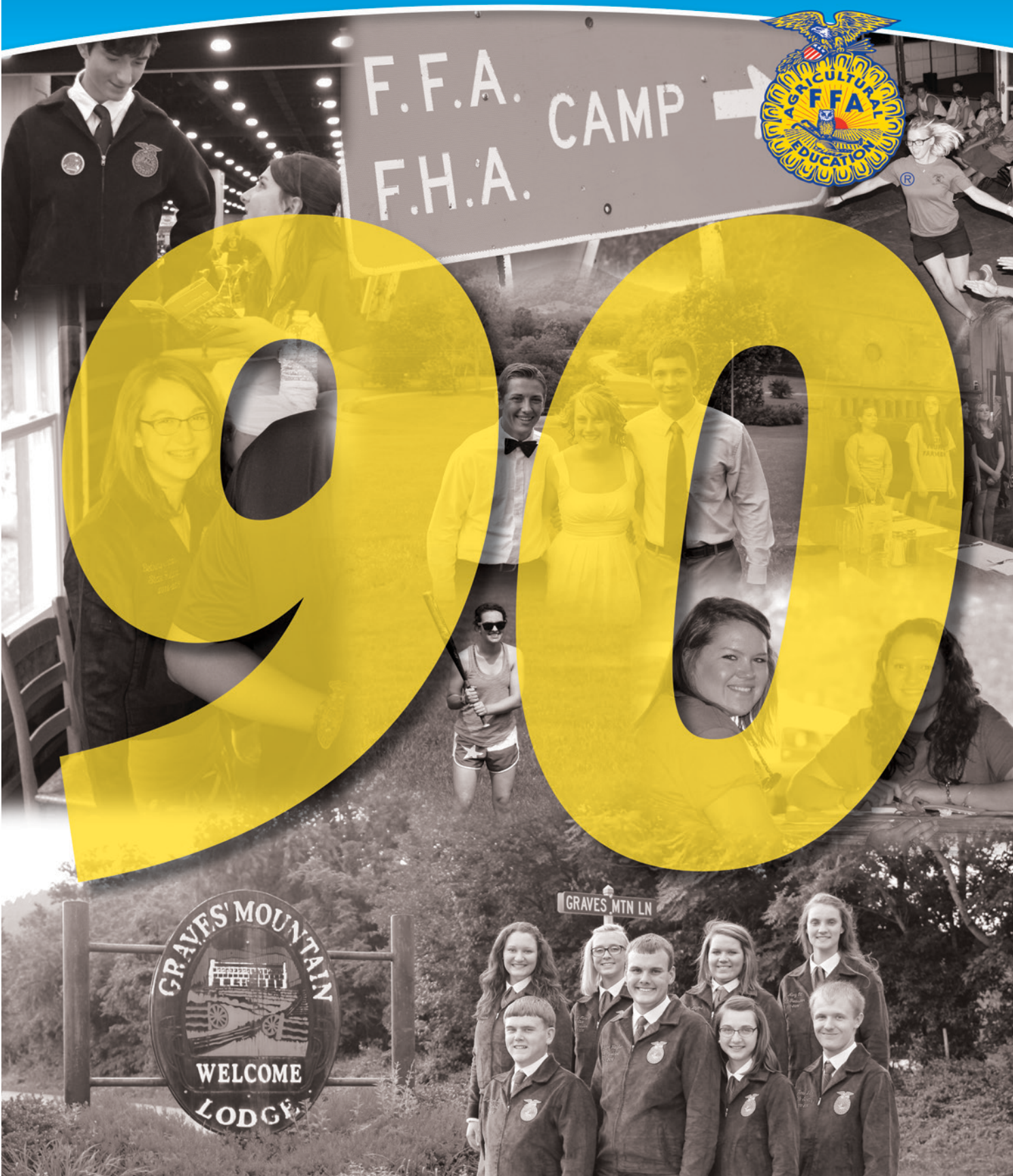
If you're interested in becoming a member of next year's chorus, you can download the application and instructions at www.okffa.org/BB/Applications.htm. Applications and CDs must be submitted no later than February 1, 2016.

Chorus photos by Dusty Oldenburg and Marilyn Kingma.

In the Spring issue: a preview of the 2016 Oklahoma FFA Convention!

Vision of Virginia

WINTER 2015



FEATURES

C: Do you know someone that should be in the Magazine?
D: FBYF Summer Expo; YF Summer Expo
E: SPC
F: Behind the Scenes
G: Chapter Chats
H: Big E Article
I: Big E Results
J: FFA Then & Now
L: Through the Lens
N: Student Spotlight;
O: Advisor Spotlight
P: VA FFA Foundation Highlight

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Get Published! Submit articles and photos of your chapter to vaffa.publications@gmail.com, or complete the Chapter Feature Form on the Virginia FFA website.

Congratulations FFA
90th YEAR!

Calendar of Upcoming Events

February 13:
Block and Bridle
- Horse Judging
- Hippology

February 20-27:
National FFA Week

March 5:
State Parliamentary Procedure

March:
Block and Bridle
- Stockmens
- Livestock Judging
- State Meats

NEW!

VIRGINIA STAR PROGRAM

We are excited to announce our new program designed to create a sustainable and effective recruitment and retention strategy for agriculture education teachers and agriculture education majors in our state.

TEACH AG

First year strategies include (2016):
1. Community College Outreach
2. Teach Ag workshop
3. State program tours
4. Scholarships to attend NAAE
5. Teach Ag webpage http://www.vaae.info/#!teach-ag/c144t
6. New Teacher welcome kit
7. Early Career Teachers Conference &Winter In-service

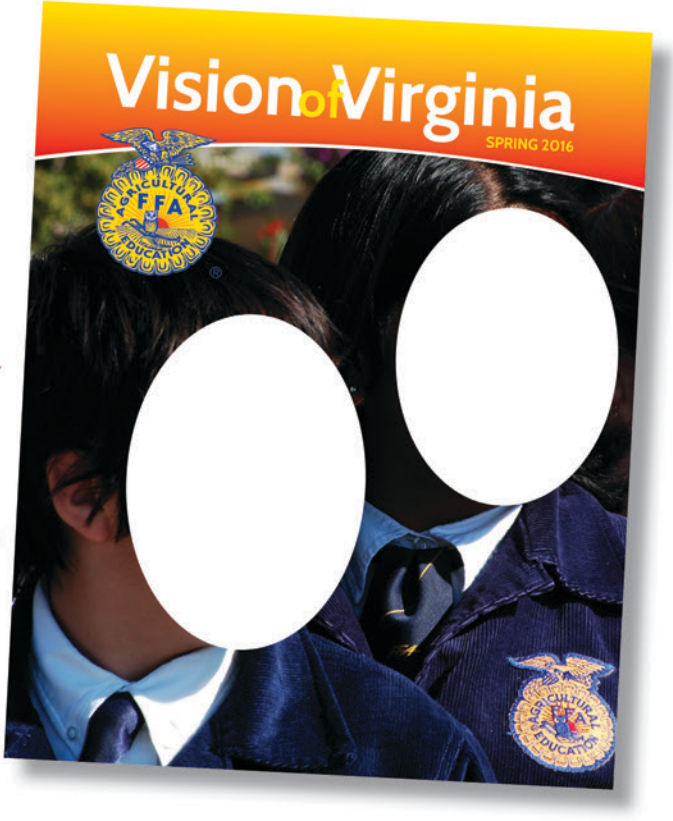
VA Star Team: Brian Fisher, Katie Reames, Cindy Blaha, Christy Kerr, Alison Sutphin, Elizabeth Duncan, Clint Jones, Carly Woolfolk (DOE), Dana Fisher (FFA Foundation), Dr. Larry Case (FFA Alumni), Ron England (VSU), Dr. Matt Spindler (VT), Dr. Donna Westfall Rudd (VT), Dr. Tim Durham (Ferrum), Ron Byrd (Young Farmers), Frank Saldana (FFA) , Ellen Thompson (Teach Ag)

Do you know someone who should be in the Magazine?

Has your chapter done something really *awesome?*

Would you like to see your advisor share some *words of wisdom* with the world?

Is there a fellow member who has really helped your chapter *excel?*





Help us share the Virginia "blue jacket experience" by submitting your suggestions for future magazine highlights. We WANT to FEATURE what matters to you! SO let us know what you would like to see!

If you have someone you would like to nominate, or if you would like to see an article you write featured in the magazine, we are accepting submissions for Chapter Chats, Advisor Highlight, and Member Feature! **Please email vaffa.publications@gmail.com with any submissions!**

Help share your Blue Jacket story!

Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Rancher's Summer Expo

by Emily Moyers
VA FFA 2015-2016 State Vice President



This summer, we traveled to the eastern shore of Virginia to attend the Farm Bureau Young Farmers Conference. The Farm Bureau Young Farmers is an organization of people between the ages of 18 and 35 that support agriculture through the production, involvement, education, and promotion of agriculture. Young Farmers is a great organization to join once you graduate high school to continue to stay involved with agriculture. Often when thinking of the Eastern Shore of Virginia, the first images that come to mind are beauty, beaches, and vacations, however, we were pleasantly greeted with a variety of production agriculture. One of the first farms we toured was a tomato farm, where acre after acre of tomato plants were steaked by hand. We ended our first night with dinner at Long Farms, and enjoyed freshly cooked crab and clams as an appetizer. For me, having never shelled a whole crab before, it was an eye opening experience. This new experience served as a great introduction to the vast world of aquaculture contributing to Virginia's agricultural industry. The following day, the group visited a green bean farm, an oyster production farm, and a huge commercial nursery. My favorite was definitely the oyster farm, where we were introduced to the growth and upkeep of the shellfish. We also had the opportunity to see oysters bred. From farm to table, oyster production is an interesting facet of agriculture! Overall, our members had a successful trip to the eastern shore, and I know we are all looking forward to attending next year's conference!



Young Farmers of Virginia

by John-Robert Helsley
VA FFA 2015-2016 State Sentinel

In mid-July, the Virginia FFA State Officer Team traveled to Rockingham County for the Young Farmers of Virginia Summer Conference. Along with the Young Farmers, the State Officers were given the opportunity to learn more about local agriculture as they traveled to multiple farms, agribusinesses, and research entities. Our first stop was to the Center for Wind Energy at James Madison University where we learned about this unique renewable resource and its up and coming future in the energy field. Next, we stopped at Bluestone Vineyard and learned about the necessities of owning and operating a successful vineyard. Finally, our last stop was at the Bridgewater College Equestrian Center where we learned about all of the amazing opportunities that are provided by the college for students who enjoy working with horses of all backgrounds and purposes. During these tours, we were able to learn a lot about the diversity of agriculture in Virginia and as well as the new and exciting opportunities that are made possible by dedicated individuals assisting in agricultural pursuits across the Commonwealth. The State Officers enjoyed our time at the summer conference and Virginia FFA is appreciative for the Partnership of the Young Farmers of Virginia.

State President's Conference



by Chandler Vaughan

VA FFA 2015-2016 State President

Each year, Virginia FFA sends their State President and Secretary to the State President's Conference in Washington D.C. This year, my teammate, Hunter Wimmer, and I traveled to the nation's capital to learn skills that we would bring back to our team, as well as, participate in the delegate process. At the five-day conference, Hunter and I were taught how to advocate for agriculture and occasionally sightsee around the district. Two of the biggest highlights of the trip were our congressional visits and participating in the National FFA Delegate Process. Throughout the week, we were taught how to promote a recent Career and Technical Education, or CTE, bill that would require high school students to take one CTE class before they graduate. Hunter and I were fortunate to meet with staff members of two Virginia Senators, one Representative staff member, and Rep. Robert Hurt from Virginia's 5th district. We discussed with him and his staff the benefits of CTE, as well as agriculture across our Commonwealth. Most of our trip was focused on the delegate process. As President and Secretary, Hunter and I had the chance to vote on which issues will be heard by the delegate body this October at the National Convention. Once those issues are voted upon at National Convention, they have the chance to become adopted by National FFA and change the organization for the better. This one-time experience was truly amazing! I can't wait to have the opportunity to see how the FFA will move forward this fall through the delegate process!







Behind the Scenes



by Mary Ott
VA FFA 2015-2016 State Treasurer

As we embarked on our journey as a team, we took part in training sessions as part of a conference with the goal of Building Leaders and Strong Teams of Officers (BLAST OFF). "Begin with the end in mind;" these words of advice marked our start for this incredible year ahead. Hearing this, we were encouraged to set goals to accomplish by the end of our year that would define our team. We spent most of our time working on how to be better organizers, speakers and leaders. We were able to learn more about each other as friends and develop our team. In order to guide our efforts in planning for the coming year of our organization, we were challenged with the task of coming up with something we could look to all year long to keep a positive attitude and remember our purpose: our team's mission statement. "We will serve to grow and develop potential in everyone to ignite their passion and get them pumped about the future." This will serve as a reminder of the great things we all can do as part of the Virginia FFA Association. The 2015-2016 Virginia FFA State Officer Team challenges everyone to take part in our journey, becoming more involved in our chapters and communities and setting the bar high for ourselves as far as leadership, teamwork and communication.

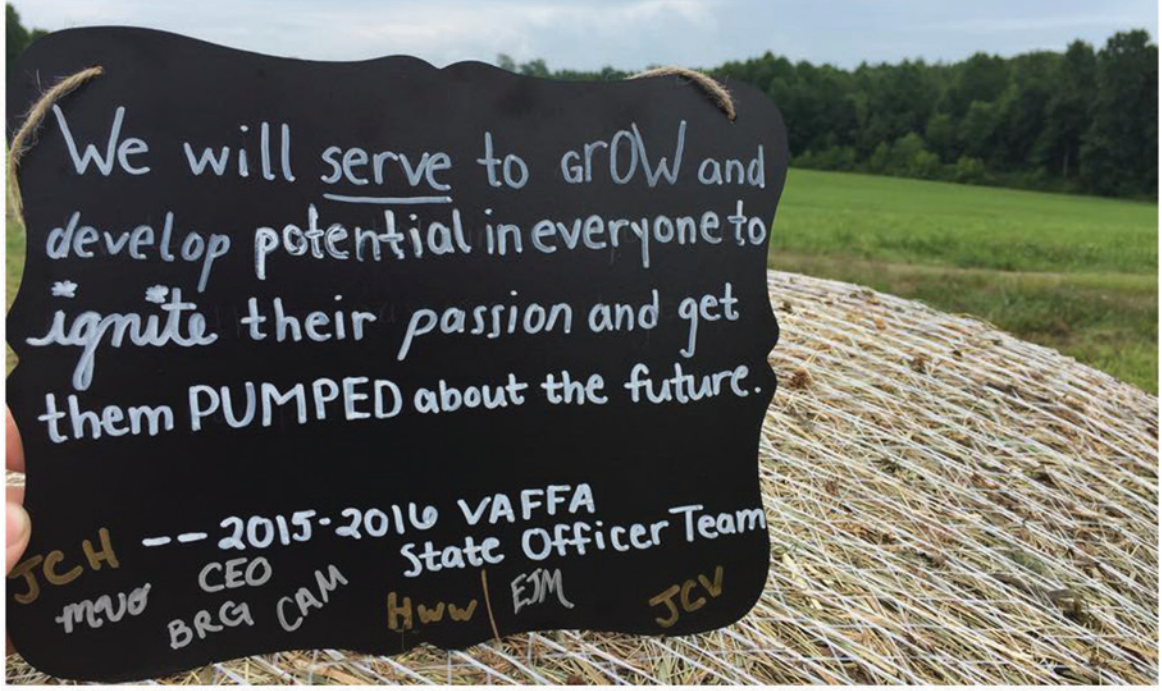
Our summer adventures continued as we headed up to Pennsylvania for the National Leadership Conference for State Officers (NLCSO). At the conference, we met state officers from five other states. We also were privileged to meet some incredible people from National FFA, who also happened to be our facilitators: National Officer Kristen Schmidt, Past National Officer Stephen Brockshus and National FFA Facilitator Isaac Valencia. During our time at NLCSO, we learned different ways to plan workshops, work with members, media, and sponsors, and we learned some cool tricks and tips about facilitation techniques. As a team, we were tasked with the project of planning our first workshop idea. We were very excited to set a goal at this event to get more people involved with the values of the FFA jacket: service, brotherhood, and agriculture.

The final segment of our training was the State Officer Facilitation Training (SOFT) conference. Here, we worked to improve facilitation techniques and learn new ways to inform the public about the agriculture industry. We were introduced to the relationship STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) curriculum has with improving the agriculture education. We were lucky to be joined by some special guests that week, including Matt Lohr, Megan Seibel and Sarah Hanks. With them, we discussed topics of agriculture and how to effectively encourage everyone to become more involved in the industry. As FFA members, it is our job to get more involvement in our chapters, schools and communities. We also learned about the relationship between the Virginia FFA Association and the Virginia FFA Foundation. We worked hard to come up with workshop ideas we want to bring to the members this year. At the end of our training, we were challenged to put our new skills into action, as we facilitated our first chapter visit at Radford High.

After all of this training, we are excited to finally begin our travels and see how Virginia FFA can grow this year, and for that, we need YOUR help! It takes everyone to make this year the best it can be!







Chapter Chats

® Appomattox Sr. FFA Chapter

by Oralia De La Cruz: Appomattox Sr. President and Cailin Orgen: VA FFA 2015-2016 State Vice President

School is back, which means a kick off to a great year of FFA meetings and fun! It may feel like summer just ended, but it is never too early to start getting ready for the holidays. The Appomattox Sr. FFA chapter hosts a "Holes for Hope" Corn-hole Tournament every year to raise money to adopt children for their local angel tree. The FFA chapter arranges three sets of corn-hole boards for students to participate during their lunch period. It costs 25 cents to throw one bag and $1 to throw five bags. Students receive points and prizes depending on the number of times they land a bag in the hole. At the end of the tournament, the student with the most points wins a $25 gift card. "Holes for Hope" allows the chapter to purchase clothing and a toy for each child they adopt. "This may not seem like much to some people," said Oralia De La Cruz (Chapter President), "but our chapter loves to help others and to a small child in our community that may not receive any other gift at Christmas, 'Holes For Hope' is a blessing."





The Big E



by Bethany Gochenour
VA FFA 2015-2016 State Reporter

The Eastern States Exposition, otherwise known as the Big E took place in West Springfield, Massachusetts. The Big E is a fifteen-day fair, highlighting the unique agriculture and culture of the following Eastern States: Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, Maryland, Ohio, Kentucky, West Virginia, Delaware, and Pennsylvania. Virginia FFA is represented at this event by teams selected at State Convention, who go on to compete against skilled individuals from across the eastern US. This year, our Association was proudly represented by 84 members and advisors. In addition to the awesome FFA competitions, Big E attendees have the opportunity to sample foods unique to states across the New England portion of the United States, shop at vendors, and mingle with fellow FFA members. The Eastern States Expositions is an exciting FFA event that we challenge every Virginia FFA member to aim to attend during their blue jacket career!

The Big E is a fifteen-day fair, highlighting the unique agriculture and culture of the Eastern States.



The Big E Results



STAR Program
John-Robert Helsley - Star Farmer
Elizabeth Rhodes - Star in Agribusiness

Livestock Evaluation
Central FFA - 1st Place
Gracie Bailey - 8th place
Jacob Coffey - 5th place
Jenna Kibler - 3rd place
John-Robert Helsley - 2nd place

Farm Business Management
Sarah Rash - 4th place
Jordan Fisher - 2nd place

Agricultural Mechanics
Randolph-Henry FFA - 4th Place

Horse Evaluation
Louisa FFA - 1st Place
3rd - Kristin Saye
2nd - Kelsey Bickley
1st - Lauren Smith

Creed Speaking
Claire Siebel - 3rd Place

Extemporaneous Public Speaking
Chandler Vaughan - 1st Place

Parliamentary Procedure
Fort Defiance FFA - 3rd Place

Milk Quality and Products
Fort Defiance FFA - 3rd Place
Anna Fohly - 6th Place

Poultry Evaluation
James River FFA - 4th Place
Davis Fenster - 5th Place

Tractor Operators
Anthony Houchens - 2nd Place

Veterinary Science
Rockbridge FFA - 3rd Place
Hannah Beerd - 1st Place

Environmental and Natural Resources
Strasburg FFA - 4th Place
Ashley Yanego - 9th Place

Forestry
Fort Defiance FFA - 2nd Place
9th Place - Jacob Lewis
7th Place - William Good
6th Place - Cameron Little



The Future Starts Now!

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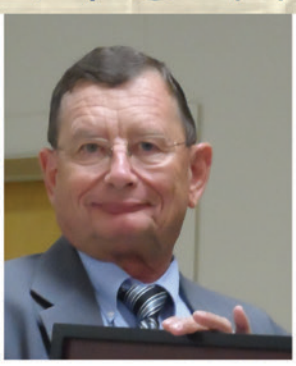
FFA Then & Now

Ron Byrd





Ron Byrd - Then & Now

He was born on a small patch of land, barely two acres and on a hill.

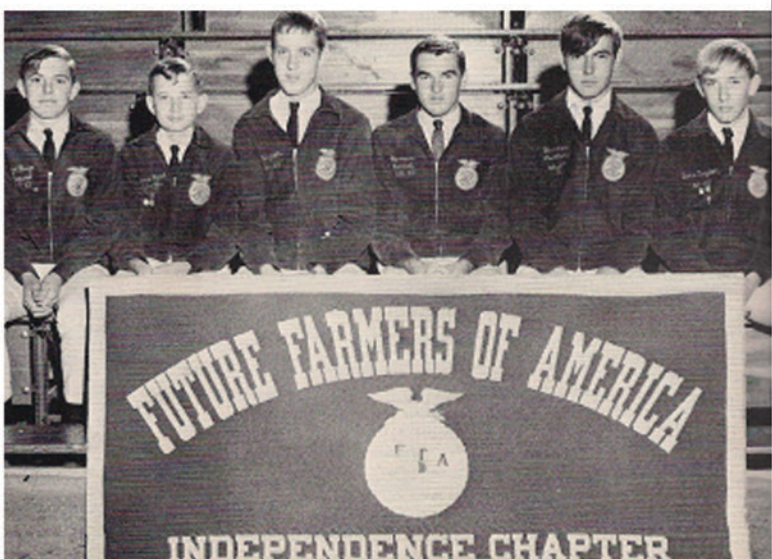
Half of it was woods, but there were farms all around his horizons. Not being raised on a farm didn't seem to be a reality for Ronald Byrd, for even as a youngster he was helping his uncles and neighbors around their agricultural operations. Ron Byrd was rich in his heritage but not in money. In those days, everyone milked a cow and every household had a garden. His first Supervised Agriculture Experience project began with his family's one Holstein milking cow. If one ran out of pasture in the summer or needed some hay, neighbors helped out and never charged for lending an extra hand. Those acts of service would hold true for the rest of his life, in Byrd living out the FFA Motto by "Living to Serve."

Ron first began taking agriculture classes at Independence High School, which is now Grayson County High School. The sequence of production classes spanned out over those four years as well as his FFA involvement. His guidance counselor tried to get him to switch out his vocational classes, saying those were not the classes he needed to be enrolled in if he wanted to go to college. But he knew he had to stand up to her, because he knew in his heart that they were the right classes for him.

Spending time helping other relatives on their farms was becoming a normal occurrence for little Ronald. His uncle gave him a runt pig one day for helping him on his farm. This was the first stepping stone in another Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) project of raising and selling his own litters of piglets.

Inside the classroom, Byrd began learning about other animals when he became part of his chapter's Livestock Judging team. Traveling to Virginia Tech for the very first time, he declares that seeing the old livestock judging barn on Plantation Road was one of the biggest things he had ever seen. Growing up with a modest lifestyle, his family never had the money to eat out. However, this first FFA field trip – along with many others – gave him a cultural experience, such as learning how to order his first steak that night in Blacksburg.

Those first moments in FFA were marked by many more to come in his journey. From being part of the Forestry judging team to being named Star Greenhand, he was becoming more confident and at ease with every new step. When he went from being Chapter Reporter one year to Chapter Secretary the next, he still kept and wore his first blue corduroy jacket. At twenty dollars back in that day, one jacket was all his parents could afford. But Ron found something that he could learn



through the FFA. He was never big enough to play ball, but FFA gave him something that he could do – there were things that he could do and learn to do well. The confidence he gained in himself helped him realize he could be successful where in other places, his chances were slimmer.

Looking back decades later, he never realized how these opportunities would have a profound impact on him. His high school teacher and advisor sparked an interest in him that he could be an ag teacher. Years later, he would in fact return to his own high school to work under him. The skills he learned from the FFA, like how to talk and be a leader among peers, have served him well and are ones he believes any young member will use for the rest of their life. "If Ronnie Byrd can do it, you can do it; anyone can do it."



When his ag teacher first asked him to think about what he wanted to do with the rest of his life, all Ronnie knew was that he wanted to go to college and that he liked agriculture. By attending state convention, he began to think about becoming an ag teacher even more. Meeting fellow members and teachers from other chapters helped him form contacts and a network of people that would help him later on down the road. These people and relationships in agriculture are what have served him well.

His sophomore year of college in the teacher education track, he was summoned to the draft when the government was conducting a lottery according to your birthdate to young and able bodied young males. Not only was he under 110 lbs., but he was also turned down due to a condition in his back called Scoliosis. That was a blessing in disguise in that it allowed him to return to Virginia Tech to complete his degree. His first teaching job was in Lee County, as it was the only ag teacher position open at that time in the state. From there he moved to Rocky Gap High School in Bland County. In 1980 he came back to Grayson County, still with Independence High School. He retired from agriculture education in 2005. But Mr. Byrd has not retired from being part of the agriculture world and helping the next generation of youth and FFA members. A familiar face to many, he fills many voids in his different roles across the state. Whether helping organize activities for ag teachers as the VAAE Executive Director or helping with programs for the Young Farmers of Virginia, he is never sitting still for very long.

Most beloved is perhaps his role as the State Director for the Virginia FFA Alumni Association. Perhaps the reason why he continues to remain engaged is because of his hope and belief in the youth of agriculture. "I believe there is always a future of agriculture, because it is the base industry



of our entire economy. It is important now, will always be important, and is something that we cannot live without." He believes agriculture is a lifestyle you cannot live without but is a calling and way of life. Besides simply being part of agriculture, we all have a responsibility to provide support and help others. "You are part of the world. So you have a responsibility to make it a better place than when you found it." Just because you are smaller or not as athletic, there is still something out there that you can do to use your talents. You just have to look for it, and agriculture is a great place to find it.

By reflecting back over his life, there is wisdom through his journey. In order to find something special, you must be willing to become part of life. In becoming part of FFA, you get opportunities to do just that. "If you don't reach out and take hold of opportunities, then you will not get anywhere." "You can find something that you like, so do that well. If you follow that path, that is the way to success." Even if it may not be in agriculture, the FFA will give you experiences to help you find out what you want to do, and how to prepare for it in life – no matter what may come your way.

Through the Lens
of a State Officer



by Chandler Vaughan
VA FFA 2015-2016 State President

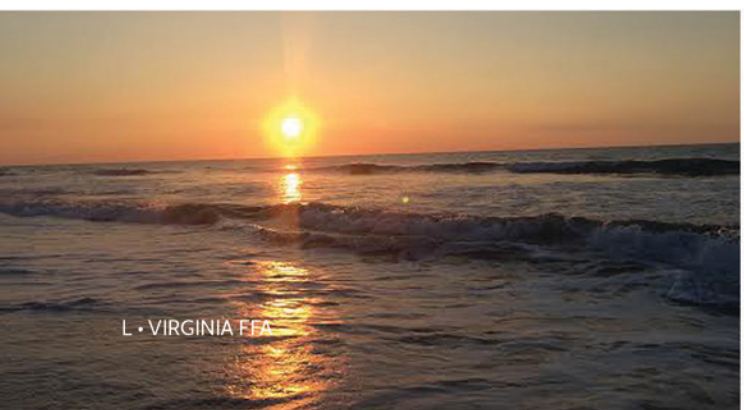
Shifting Gears - This shift knob goes to show all the gears we have, or will go through, as state officers. Although we go through way more than four gears throughout our year of service, the simple, brief directions on the knob represent what we go through as state officers and what we all go through as FFA members. On June 25, 2015, the day we were elected, we started in first gear. Then, we began our journeys, just like any other in our lives. Being fresh State Officers, we had to start out slow and get our feet under us. At the start of FFA camp however, we shifted into second. That week was our first major challenge as state officers. We were tasked with leading groups and conducting icebreakers which, at first, were kind of frightening. August 20th was the day we pushed into third, the gear we are in now. That day, we finished our official training as Virginia State Officers. With our first visit under our belts, we were ready to let off the clutch and speed away into our year as state officers. Many more connections can be made between state office and this shift knob. Sometimes in our year of service, we may finally drop down into fourth. Other times though, we may need to downshift, sometimes even going in reverse. Whatever the case may be, we pledge to help you shift gears forward. Virginia FFA, let's work to bring ourselves to the next level, because after all, we've all got that next gear to find.

by Cailin Orgen
VA FFA 2015-2016 State Vice President

"The rising sun is a token of a new era in agriculture." We listen to these words every time we hear opening ceremonies, but what does it mean? When my teammates and I visited the Eastern Shore this summer, we woke up early on the last day of the Farm Bureau Young Farmers Conference to drive to the beach and watch the sunrise. We walked along the shore line and watched the light rays start to break over the ocean as the sun began to rise, giving us a feeling of joy and promise for the future. Now that summer is over, our busy routines are starting up. Sometimes with our busy schedules it is easy to make mistakes and have a bad day or two. Whether it is getting a bad grade on a test or not winning a contest, we all have some days that seem to knock us down. My parents used to tell me that, "We learn from our mistakes," but I never saw my mistakes as an opportunity to better myself. This summer, as state officers, we realized that no matter how hard we try we will never be perfect. We will always have a day that might not go as planned, but we can still learn from our mistakes. The best part about a bad day, is knowing that tomorrow has the potential to be a fresh start. Watching the sunrise with my teammates that day on the beach inspired me to accept my mistakes and try harder to learn from them. The best way we can take advantage of our clean slate is to remember that yesterday's mistakes are tomorrow's opportunities and to always remain positive. Look to every day as a new day and know the promise of greatness awaits!

by Cayla Mutschler
VA FFA 2015-2016 State Vice President

This picture was the last time I had ever competed in a CDE. It was in this very moment I thought my FFA career had come to an end. If you would have told me four years ago that I would join FFA, compete in CDE's, and become a state officer I would have told you that you had lost your mind. When I look back on my FFA career, I think of all of the great times with even better people, and the amazing lessons I have learned. Each time I think back I am thankful to be a part of this huge family; this picture doesn't show the end of a journey, it captures a clip, a small piece, of a lifelong one. Just as my FFA career goes on as I serve Virginia FFA this year, you too can continue your journey, whether running for a state officer or becoming part of an FFA alumni chapter. I encourage each and every one of you to carry on with your FFA careers because there are so many new chapters to be written. Stay forever blue Virginia FFA.





by Hunter Wimmer

VA FFA 2015-2016 State Secretary

Driving through the great state of Virginia has truly been amazing; seeing all the different types of agriculture along the highway has been an eye opening experience. Every time I drive back home, I see fields like these and they remind me of a story about two farmers who were in trouble. These two farmers had been in a drought for a long time and desperately needed rain. Both men prayed for the rain to come, but only one prepared his fields. After several days of praying and working in his fields, the rain appeared and the farmer had one of the best crops in years. The farmer that didn't prepare his fields received no rain, and sadly his crop diminished. This is a lot like our FFA journey this year. We will be faced with hard times that might set us back; maybe a CDE didn't go our way or maybe your project at home isn't as great as your vision. However, the lesson we should carry with us, comes from those two farmers: as long as you have faith and give it your all, the rain will come. Everything happens for a reason, so don't give up when things are a little dry. Yes, it will be a little tough, but your friends, parents, advisors, and supporters will be there for you along the way. When you finally get that rain and look back at all that you have accomplished, you will be thankful for the drought you went through. Virginia FFA, never lose that faith that keeps you going!

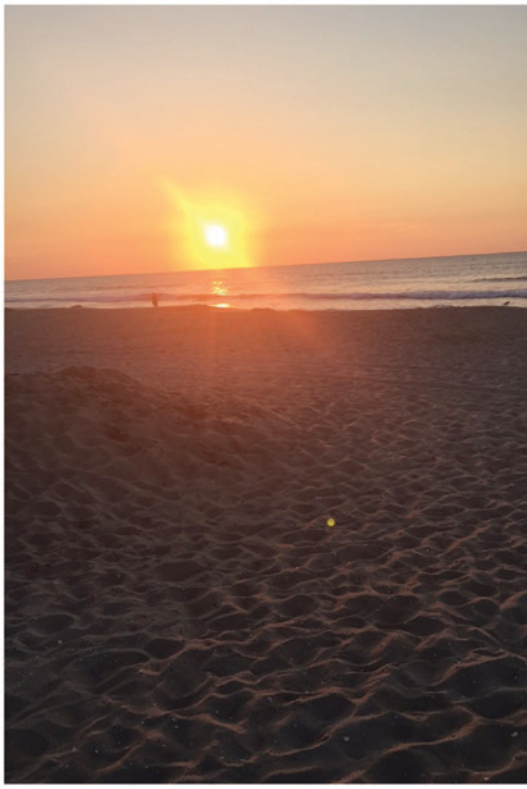




by Emily Moyers

VA FFA 2015-2016 State Vice President

As the sun comes up, it signifies the start of the new day and new beginnings. Let's think about this beach sunrise for example. Before this beach became public access the sand was unmarked by humans, only to be touched by nature. It was a blank slate, and just like the dawn of this sunrise we can each reflect on our own waters and sands, as we have the opportunity to make those first impressions. This year is a time of learning, exploring, and paving the way. Throughout this year, the State Officers will be working to paint our picture, but the most exciting part is that Virginia FFA members are the artists that inspire us. Your skills, FFA knowledge, and personalities shed light on the real reason why we love to do what we do. Here is the time where we strive to work for a better tomorrow while painting a book of memories to last a lifetime! Paint on, Virginia FFA!



by Mary Ott

VA FFA 2015-2016 State Treasurer

As we move through life, we often feel as though we are being caught in a whirlwind of activities, responsibilities and struggles. We may find ourselves swimming in sadness, guilt or frustrations. We often look to the side and think we want to quit trying when we have problems or when that "something" happens to us that makes us lose hope in happiness. Fortunately for us, though, we have the opportunity to keep moving and to keep swimming through life with hopes of a better tomorrow. We have the opportunity to choose between overcoming those obstacles or succumbing to the pressure of our lives. It is important to understand, however, some obstacles cannot be overcome all by ourselves. In these cases, we must rely on our family, friends and teammates, and we too must help when others are becoming affected by unforseen circumstances in their lives. We are all affected by situations beyond our control. It comes down to a matter of what type of person we want to be and what impression we want to leave on others: positive or negative. It is our job to overcome these obstacles and move on to prepare for a better future. It is our job to keep swimming, and to make sure everyone else stays afloat.

by Bethany Gochenour

VA FFA 2015-2016 State Reporter

Everyday might not be good, but there's something good in every day. Living by this life motto allows us, as FFA members, to remember that each day presents a new opportunity to succeed and fly high towards our wildest dreams. By taking every day as an adventure, we can assure that our time will be valuable. For FFA members that can be taking a chance and competing in a contest that we do not know much about, or risking boldly in class by offering your input to the discussion. There is no growth in a comfort zone, and no comfort in a growth zone. FFA members embrace this through maximizing their time and taking flight. Personally, as a senior in high school, I found it difficult to enjoy simple activities due to all the stress from school, scholarship applications, and other commitments. With the help of my family, my FFAmily, and many close friends I was able to see the benefits of wiping the slate clean each and every day, and not let the stresses of the previous day drag me down. By relying on your own strong support system, you too can create a better day and fly to your fullest potential each and every day.





by John-Robert Helsley

VA FFA 2015-2016 State Sentinel

"Through this door pass many friends of the FFA." Wow! What an experience these past few months have been. All of the people I have met, the experiences I have had, and unforgettable moments shared with others have been absolutely incredible. When I decided to run for State Office in 7th grade, I would never have imagined that it would have been like this! Even though I have only been at it for a short time, it has truly been unbelievable. I have heard that it is not about the destination, but rather about the journey it takes to get there. You can shape your life however you want through your actions. You can make the choice of what doors you want to open up or which paths you want to take. The opportunities that I have this year are a part of that journey to a destination yet to be discovered. Every time I see a door and connect it to those words of opening ceremony, I think of the people I have met and talked to, the journey that has brought me to exactly where I am.

Star Member
Caylan Moore

by Cayla Mutschler

VA FFA 2015-2016 State Vice President



One of the first members I met as a State Officer was a young lady who took no hesitation to offer me a warm welcome, a handshake, and a smile. This young lady was so incredibly proud of her chapter and our organization as a whole. Caylan Moore, from Appomattox Middle School is an 8th grader with a huge heart for people. After talking with her more, she told me that she competed in many CDE's including Small Animal Care and Agriscience Technology Mechanics. After only talking with Caylan for a few minutes, I could tell that she has so much passion for the FFA. I asked Caylan's teacher, Miss Gaulden, what Caylan wanted to do when she grew up and she said, "She wants to do something with animals and travel the world." Caylan has BIG plans for her life, and I am confident that she will achieve all that she sets her mind to. Throughout life we constantly face the idea of "I'm one person" followed by the question, "What difference could I make?" Even though Caylan is just one person, she has had an enormous impact on the people in her world, including me. Just like one raindrop can make a huge ripple, we can all go out there and make the ripple we want to see in the world, just like Caylan has made a ripple on my life. Way to go Caylan!

Advisor Highlight

by Mary Ott: VA FFA 2015-2016 State Treasurer
and Bethany Gochenour: VA FFA 2015-2016 State Reporter

Mr. Russell Jennings

Advisor - *Fluvanna FFA*



Q: How many years have you been an advisor?

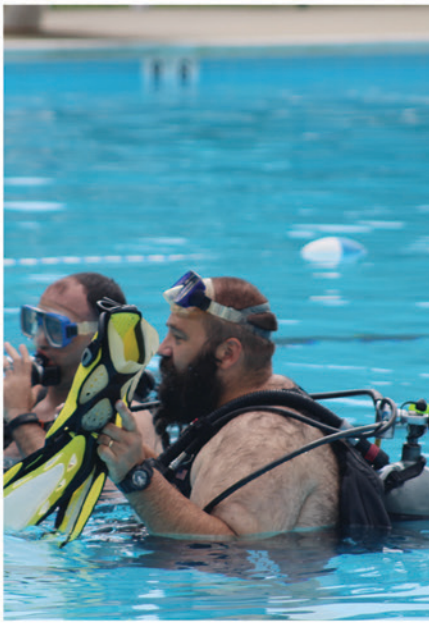
A: This will be my sixteenth year teaching. However, it is my third year since an advisor, since we really just reactivated our chapter after 20 years. It has been a great experience so far, and I am looking forward to what the future years will bring!

Q: What made you decide to become an advisor?

A: My Ag teacher was really who inspired me. It was always evident that my teacher had so much faith in his students, and that made me take the countless opportunities when I was involved in the FFA and see my full potential. Now, as I stand in those shoes, I watch my students grow every day as they learn new things and take some of those opportunities as well. The blue jacket experience is a generation legacy that inspires so many, and I am happy to be one of those stories.

Q: What is your favorite FFA memory?

A: I really enjoy State Fair! As a member, I competed in Forestry Field Day! I still remember all of the practices and hard work that led to the excitement when my team finished fourth at the state contest! Now, I see my students share in the same excitement as they see their own efforts pay off.



Trust Your Equipment:
FFA Prepares You to Lead, Learn, and Serve



Brigadier General Tammy Smith joked that she chose a career that allowed her to wear official dress every day, as she met Virginia FFA members during the 89th State Convention in Blacksburg, VA this past June. As she reflected on her FFA experience and career in the U.S. Army Reserve, she shared lessons learned and encouraged members to embrace the skills and leadership experiences that FFA cultivates.

Brig. Gen. Smith was a member of FFA at Oakland High School in Oakland, Oregon, where she participated in both prepared and extemporaneous public speaking competitions and various livestock projects. Smith delayed college for one year after graduating high school to serve as the State Reporter for the Oregon FFA Association. In this role she traveled the state as an FFA representative, conducting leadership camps and speaking

Trust Your Equipment (Con't)

at FFA chapters about leadership and goal setting. She credits FFA with catalyzing her interest in the study and practice of leadership, and has used the skills she gained as a member of FFA to advance her career in service to the U.S. Army Reserve.

Providing the keynote address during the Virginia FFA Foundation's Annual Banquet, Brig. Gen. Smith shared a story highlighting a training exercise that required a quick, skilled response. Parachuting from thousands of feet above ground, she encountered several unique circumstances, but remained calm and remembered the instructions she received before her jump: trust your equipment. Because she was able to remain calm under pressure and adjust to the changing circumstances, all the while trusting her equipment, she completed the jump safely.

She challenged members to trust their equipment — the skills, experiences, values, and beliefs that are foundational to their FFA experience — as they face new opportunities and challenges in life. She referenced learning humility as she competed in contests at the local, regional, and state levels in Oregon. Brig. Gen. Smith mentioned the integrity she embraced as a state officer representing and serving the Oregon Association. She reflected on the values and beliefs of FFA, and their role in guiding and shaping her character as she pursued a career of public service. Her professional achievements are outstanding, as is her continued support of FFA members.

Today, FFA continues to equip members to lead, learn, and serve as they pursue goals and dreams that require a strong foundation of diverse skills and experiences. Brig. Gen. Smith inspired FFA members to reach their full potential, to trust their equipment, and make a positive difference in their schools and communities, and make their mark!







About Brigadier General Tammy Smith, Deputy Chief of Staff, Army Reserve



Brigadier General Tammy Smith is the Deputy Chief of Staff, Army Reserve. Brig. Gen. Smith was a 4-year Reserve Officer Training Corps scholarship recipient and graduated from the University of Oregon in 1986. She was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Quartermaster Corps. During her 26 year military career she has served in a variety of logistics, operations, training and personnel assignments, including duty in the Republic of Panama, Costa Rica, and Afghanistan.

Brig. Gen. Smith holds a Doctor of Management degree in Organizational Leadership from the University of Phoenix and is a member of the Delta Mu Delta International Business Honor Society. Her research focus was executive leadership and senior leader transitions into new organizations. Her interest in the study and practice of leadership was inspired by her participation in FFA in Oregon, where she participated in prepared and extemporaneous speaking contests as well as maintaining various livestock projects. Brig. Gen. Smith served as State Reporter for the Oregon FFA Association and values the experiences and opportunities FFA provided.

Brig. Gen. Smith's awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit Medal, the Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medals (two oak leaf clusters), Army Commendation Medals (four oak leaf clusters), the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Combat Action Badge, Senior Parachutist Badge, Parachute Rigger Badge, and the Army Staff Badge. She and her spouse Tracey Hepner are active in volunteer military family support events in the Washington, DC and Northern Virginia area.

Brigadier General Smith and her staff were hosted by the Virginia FFA Foundation.

VIRGINIA FFA FOUNDATION