NEW HORIZONS

Winter 2018

FFA.ORG



A FUTURE IN Forestry

FROM FFA TO PROMISING CAREER PATH

WISCONSIN COMMUNITY GOES ALL IN FOR AG ED

The Rise of Robots

MAKE YOUR MARK



What difference would it make if you really committed to supporting the National FFA Organization or your local FFA chapter? I'm talking about a bold commitment to agricultural education that might even take you out of your comfort zone. Could the time, talent and treasure of just one person really make an impact and ignite support from others in the community? The answer is yes.

"High school students have so much good to offer the world, and all it takes is someone willing to facilitate those projects," says Rachel Sauvola, the agricultural education teacher and FFA advisor at New Richmond High School in New Richmond, Wis.

Sauvola lives by that belief. She has been awarded tens of thousands of dollars in grants for her program, has had 20 acres of land donated to create the New Richmond SOAR (Student Opportunities with Agricultural Resources) Educational Center, has had a new Dodge truck donated to the program, and has taken her winning World Dairy Expo dairy judging team on a two-week, all-expenses-paid trip to Europe to judge cattle – all because she asked for community support.

Read more about her devotion to her chapter in "All in for Ag Ed," page 20.

Maybe you're not quite ready to take your community by storm. I understand that. In "How to Support Your Advisor," page 5, we share some simple, but effective, ways for students, alumni and supporters, and community members to pitch in.

Enjoy and have a wonderful winter!

Justin Davey

Justin Davey
Editor, *FFA New Horizons*
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SHARE YOUR STORIES!
Our cover story about Hendrix Paterson ("The Future of Forestry," page 16) was inspired by a submission from Windermere FFA advisor Amy Paterson. We're thrilled when it works out to feature your story ideas here in *FFA New Horizons,* and I encourage you to send them our way. Just visit FFA.org/submit-your-story.

CONTENTS

FEATURES

10 OUT-OF-THE-BOX AGRICULTURE
Students at Bryan High School in Omaha, Neb., study plant science in an AgroBox, a converted shipping container that cleverly houses high-tech lab instruments.

16 THE FUTURE OF FORESTRY
Hendrix Paterson, a sophomore member at Windermere FFA in Windermere, Fla., nurtures a love of forestry and helps his community in the process.

20 ALL IN FOR AG ED
When it comes to providing opportunities for her students, there's nothing Rachel Sauvola won't do – including convincing community members to join in.

DEPARTMENTS

3 THE FEED
Quick reads about scholarships, supporting your advisor, opioids and more.

7 NATIONAL FFA OFFICER Q&A
The 2017-18 officers share their hopes for the future of the organization.

8 AG 101
The robots are coming! Here's a timeline of robotic advances in agriculture.

14 PREMIER LEADERSHIP
Kate Indreland of Big Timber, Mont., pursues a passion for regenerative agriculture.

15 CAREER SUCCESS
This FFA alumna realized her career goals while reading *FFA New Horizons*.

24 FFA IN THE USA
Updates from chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

26 ON THE RECORD
University of Illinois Chancellor Robert Jones gives advice to today's FFA members.

27 AG ANGLE
FFA advisor Emily Cooper shares an unseasonaly snowy photo from Louisianna.

Winter 2018
Volume 67, Number 2

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THE FFA VISION
Students whose lives are impacted by FFA and agricultural education will achieve academic and personal growth, strengthen American agriculture and provide leadership to build healthy local communities, a strong nation and a sustainable world.

THE FFA MISSION
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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The National FFA Organization affirms its belief in the value of all human beings and seeks diversity in its membership, leadership and staff as an equal opportunity employer.

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Cover photography: Jeff Noble

Photography: David Ekstrom

APPLY Yourself

FFA SCHOLARSHIPS ARE DESIGNED TO FIT EVERY MEMBER'S INTEREST. GIVE THEM A TRY!

Did you know the National FFA Organization awarded $2.5 million in scholarships in 2018, consisting of aid to 1,842 members from 44 states? That's a lot of cash for college! Since FFA members come from a wide variety of backgrounds, the FFA scholarship program exists to help students achieve success in a large number of fields in agriculture. The top five areas awarded are agribusiness systems; animal systems; power, structural and technical systems; plant systems; and biotechnology systems.

Ready to get started? Now's the time. The 2019 scholarship application opened on Nov. 15, and the deadline to apply is Feb. 6, 2019.

The 2019 FFA scholarship application is on a new platform that will provide a more robust experience for applicants. You'll be able to log into your password-secure account from any device with an internet connection, check the status of your application in progress, save your progress and return to complete your application, and upload required materials directly to your application. Submit just one application, and you'll be considered for all scholarships whose criteria you meet.

Visit **FFA.org/Scholarships** for more information and to apply. If you have questions, email **Scholarships@FFA.org.**

– By Jodi Helmer

Talking Points: THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

DID YOU KNOW THAT LIVING IN A RURAL AREA INCREASES YOUR RISK FOR OPIOID ABUSE AND OVERDOSE? THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC IS CONSIDERED A NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY AND KILLS AN AVERAGE OF 115 AMERICANS EVERY DAY.

AS AN FFA MEMBER, YOU CAN HELP SPREAD THE WORD AND BREAK DOWN THE STIGMA OF OPIOID ABUSE. THERE'S A NEW PROGRAM CALLED #FARMTOWNSTRONG DESIGNED TO HELP YOU AND OTHER LEADERS WAGE THE ATTACK. HERE'S WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW.

Q: WHAT IS OPIOID ADDICTION?

A: Opioids include prescription pain relievers such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, morphine, and many others, plus heroin and synthetic drugs, such as the highly lethal fentanyl. Addiction often begins when a prescription painkiller is used longer or differently than it was prescribed.

Q: WHY DO FARMERS AND RANCHERS NEED TO BE CONCERNED?

A: The rate of drug overdose deaths in rural areas has surpassed rates in urban areas, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Last year, the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) and National Farmers Union (NFU) conducted a survey of 2,100 rural adults, including farmers and farmworkers. They found that opioid abuse has directly impacted nearly half of all rural adults and three quarters of all farmers and farmworkers.

Q: HOW CAN #FARMTOWNSTRONG HELP?

A: At the start of 2018, AFBF and NFU joined forces to start #FarmTownStrong. They enlisted FFA to help build awareness and encourage discussion. The campaign's website, **FarmTownStrong.org**, offers resources for opioid abuse prevention, treatment, hotlines, drug disposal tips and ways to encourage communication to help solve the problem. Check it out for ideas on activating the #FarmTownStrong movement in your community.

– By Karen Bernick

CALENDAR

Nov. 25:
REGION II (B) REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE REGISTRATION CLOSES
Be sure to register for this RDC, which will be held in College Station, Texas, Dec. 7-8. Visit **FFA.org/GoToRDC.**

Dec. 17:
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE REGISTRATION OPENS
Claim your spot at this Alumni and Supporters RDC, which will be held Feb. 8-9 in Kansas. Visit **FFA.org/GoToRDC.**

Jan. 1:
SPRING SEMESTER LIVING TO SERVE GRANT APPLICATION OPENS
Looking for $1,200 to implement a semester-long service-learning project in your community? Visit **FFA.org/LivingToServe/Grants** to apply.

Feb. 6:
NATIONAL FFA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE
Scholarships are sponsored by businesses and individuals and are given for a wide variety of experiences, career goals and higher-education plans. To apply, visit **FFA.org/Scholarships.**

Feb. 16-23:
NATIONAL FFA WEEK
Show your FFA pride along with members from across the country. Get ideas for your party plans and more at **FFA.org/FFAWeek.**

Feb. 19:
GIVE FFA DAY
Your gift at **donate.FFA.org** will help prepare and inspire FFA members to become active leaders in agriculture.

GRANTS FOR GROWING

DOES YOUR CHAPTER NEED FUNDS TO DEVELOP OR IMPROVE AN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION PROJECT? YOU'RE IN LUCK.

Tractor Supply Co. launched a campaign called Grants for Growing in 2016 to help local FFA chapters complete projects that will boost agricultural education in their communities. The projects are meant to last longer than just one year; the intent is for them to live on to benefit future FFA members.

Chapters can apply for the grants through a competitive process, and awards start at $500. Recipients are selected based on several factors, but at the center of it all is agricultural education and experiential learning opportunities.

The campaign has funded some impressive projects.

In 2017, Bloom-Carroll FFA in Ohio used Grants for Growing funds to develop an AGVenture summer day camp for first- through fifth-grade students in the school district. The five-day camp featured daily agricultural themes with educational stations that participants moved through in small groups. The grant provided the chapter an opportunity to improve the agricultural literacy of youth and inspire them to become FFA members in the future.

In West Virginia, Ripley FFA used a grant to equip its Simulated Workplace with a modern zero-turn mower for classroom instruction and education. The mower is used in a small engine maintenance course that teaches students about maintenance and safety operations that they, in turn, share with the community.

Alcovy FFA in Georgia used a grant to create a school-based floral shop, where students create flower arrangements and wreaths, and gain experience in customer service through marketing and selling their creations.

Does your chapter have a great idea for a Grants for Growing project? Learn more and apply at **FFA.org/grantsforgrowing**.

– By Jessica Mozo





Quiz: MEET OUR MEMBERS

How much do you know about our FFA membership? Pick the right answers in this multiple-choice quiz.

1. How many FFA members are there nationwide?
A. 544,602
B. 669,989
C. 826,560

2. About 53 percent of FFA members are male. How many female members does FFA have?
A. 148,062
B. 299,086
C. 398,076

3. Tenth-graders represent the second-largest group of FFA members by grade. What grade has the largest number of FFA members, with a total of 156,602 members?
A. 12th
B. 11th
C. 9th

4. How many FFA chapters are there nationwide?
A. 5,560
B. 8,630
C. 10,042

5. FFA advisors are male and female, ranging from age 19 to 70! What age category does the largest number of advisors fit into?
A. 20-29
B. 30-39
C. 50-59

Answers: 1: A; 2: B; 3: C; 4: A; 5: A

How to Support YOUR ADVISOR

FFA ADVISORS HAVE A LOT ON THEIR PLATES, BUT THEY DON'T HAVE TO DO IT ALL ALONE. FFA ADVISORS AND SUPPORTERS SHARE SOME SIMPLE WAYS YOU CAN HELP.

"I let successful CDE students train new teams. You can have multiple practices happening at the same time and float between them."
– Chaney Mosley, former FFA advisor and current Middle Tennessee State University agricultural education professor

"I've served on the chapter advisory board and do chapter officer interviews. It's only a few hours of my entire year, but it's extremely rewarding."
– Penny Kreul, Republic FFA Chapter parent, Missouri

"If a parent is already attending an event, advisors can always use more chaperones."
– Kate Willoughby, Mount Juliet FFA Chapter alumni and supporter, Tennessee

"I have had some great parents help me with my own children. They would babysit while I had FFA events. We basically trade kids!"
– Lindy Holt, Savannah FFA Chapter advisor, Missouri

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Julie Woodard, National FFA Organization

Illustration: syntika, iStockphoto.com



Photography: Copyright © FFA

HOME OF THE FFA JACKET

AN OHIO TOWN IS RECOGNIZED FOR ITS LANDMARK CONTRIBUTION TO FFA HISTORY.

A small Ohio village has a big claim to fame: Fredericktown is the birthplace of the FFA jacket.

Agriculture educator J.H. (Gus) Lintner commissioned a jacket for members of the local FFA chapter to wear to the 1933 National FFA Convention in Kansas City, Mo., as part of their FFA band uniform. The iconic blue and gold design was so popular that it was adopted as the Official Dress of FFA members.

In honor of its role in FFA history, Fredericktown was selected by the Ohio Historical Society to receive an Ohio Historical Marker for being home of the FFA jacket. The plaque was unveiled at Fredericktown High School in September. Neil Overly and Linden Scheff, both members of the FFA band who wore the jacket at the 1933 national convention, were in attendance.

"Our town is very proud of the heritage of the FFA jacket," says Debra Burden, an agriculture educator in Fredericktown. "The historical marker is a respectable way to honor our role in FFA history."

– By Jodi Helmer

FFA jackets are built and personalized in Van Wert, Ohio. See how at FFA.org/FFAJacket.

$500,000

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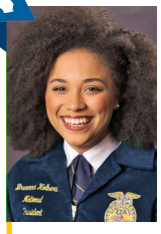
NATIONAL FFA OFFICER Q&A

Q: YOUR TIME AS A NATIONAL FFA OFFICER CAME TO AN END AT THE 2018 NATIONAL FFA CONVENTION & EXPO. WHAT IS YOUR HOPE FOR THE FUTURE OF THE ORGANIZATION?

Breanna Holbert



NATIONAL FFA PRESIDENT

Ashley Foster from South Dakota FFA makes it her daily mission to be herself and do what she loves. She's tenacious. This year, I've come to admire the tenacity and ambition of every FFA member. My hope is that we all use Ashley's same ambition to be unique and outspoken, to question ourselves and to accomplish everything we set out to do. We are greater than our circumstances because we were made for a time such as this.

Erica Baier



NATIONAL FFA SECRETARY

My biggest hope is that all those involved with FFA learn to own their stories. While it's not something tangible, I want all participants to know how important and valid their own journeys into the agriculture industry really are! Whether they have an agricultural background or not, or whether they come from a five-teacher agricultural program or a one-teacher program, we need all members and the unique perspectives they bring.

Ian Bennett



SOUTHERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT

I'm excited about the new technology and ideas that are coming to FFA. Blue Room and Blue 365 kicked off this year and will bring innovative technology, science, research and entrepreneurship to classrooms nationwide. Some members experienced the interactive Blue Room at national convention, which centered on the challenges facing our communities. I can't wait to see what the future holds.

Gracie Furnish



EASTERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT

My hope is that members will continue to understand their full potential, the influence they can have in empowering others and the power they have to create change in our world. Our organization will grow and thrive if we continue with open perspectives, innovative mind-sets and the excitement to reach outside our comfort zones.

Piper Merritt



CENTRAL REGION VICE PRESIDENT

Our organization has remained strong, resilient and relevant for nearly 100 years because of our dedication to leadership in agriculture. My hope for the future is that we unite in sharing the mission that everyone is a part of the agricultural community, whether we live in an apartment or on 500 acres. Time and time again, our members rise to the vision of growing themselves as leaders, and I am eager to see how our future develops because of that.

Bryce Cluff



WESTERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT

My hope for the future of our organization is that we continue to embrace FFA members for who they are. This year has shown me the amazing diversity we have within FFA, and nothing would make me happier than to see an organization that continues to represent that. Every voice is needed to continue telling our story and the story of American agriculture.

Photography: Copyright © FFA

AG 101

THE RISE OF ROBOTS IN AG

The robots are coming! They arrived in agriculture several years ago, in fact. While they're still in their infancy in some areas, their prevalence in other areas continues to grow. Here's how robots are – and will be – used in agriculture.

– Compiled by Jessie Scott and Tharran Gaines
Infographic by BlindSalida

2018

Field-based HIGH-THROUGHPUT PHENOTYPING is available and may become more prevalent if it proves to be economically viable.

2020

Market adoption of ROBOTIC STRAWBERRY HARVESTING will start with robotic apple harvesters following in 2022.

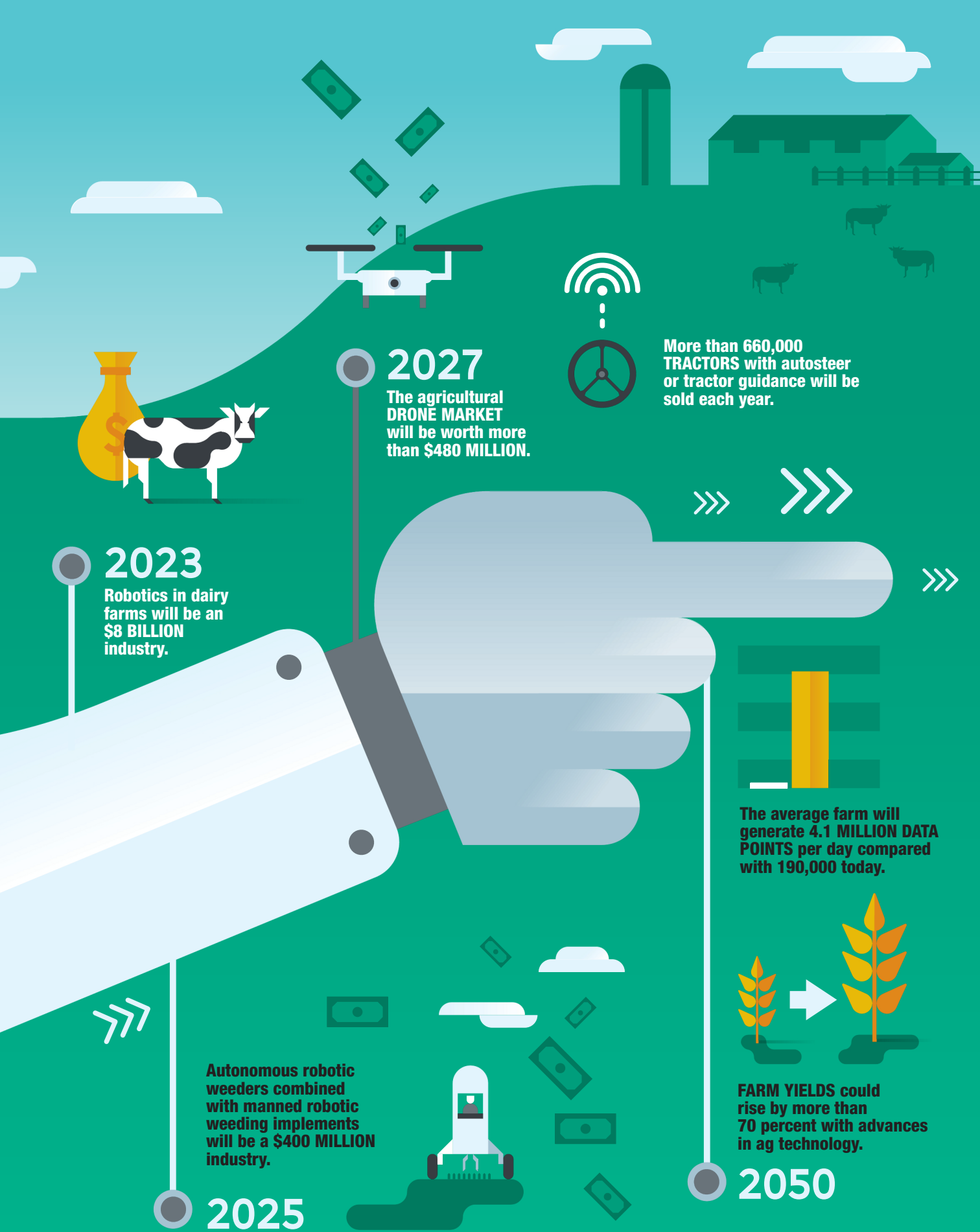
2020: The market will take off for AUTONOMOUS ROBOTIC WEEDERS.

2020: FOOD-SORTING MACHINES will be able to detect quality issues that lie below the surface, such as sugar levels or oil content.

2022

Sales of AUTONOMOUS TRACTORS (in particular, follow-me tractors that trail a tractor with an operator) will start to rise.

Illustration: John Coulter



Sources: Agricultural Robots and Drones 2017-2027: Technologies, Markets, Players; OnFarm; Goldman Sachs; Translating High-Throughput Phenotyping into Genetic Gain; Food Sorting Technology 2020: An In-Depth Look Into an Evolving Industry



The mural on the Bryan High School agrobox, pictured here, was painted by former student Hugo Zamorano.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX

IN ORDER TO FEED A HUNGRY PLANET, FUTURE AGRICULTURISTS HAVE TO THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX. FOR SOME STUDENTS, THIS MEANS WORKING INSIDE THE AGROBOX.

STORY BY BEV FLATT
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CORY HALL



Samantha Hernandez inspects lettuce grown in the nutrient film technique (NFT) hydroponic system.

When you walk into a classroom at Bryan High School's Urban Agriculture Academy, you see a typical teacher's room. A bulletin board holds announcements and school notices. Bookcases are scattered around the room with resources and references for research papers. The loud sounds of lockers opening and closing fill the hallways between classes. It isn't until you walk behind the school, in the middle of Omaha, Neb., that you see what turns a great agricultural education program into an innovative high school experience.

Turning the corner around the back of the building, you are greeted by an imposing 40-foot-long shipping container with murals painted on the sides. Once you pull open the doors of the container, you find it's been completely refurbished to contain state-of-the-art equipment for growing lettuce, tomatoes and various herbs using hydroponics. This facility is known as the AgroBox, and it can produce up to 1 acre of fruits and vegetables



AGRICULTURE

in the space of six standard parking spaces.

"A few years ago, our school was looking to expand the agricultural program and career academies," says Tyler Schindler, Bryan High School FFA advisor and agricultural education teacher. "We initially wanted to build a greenhouse, but we didn't have the money or space needed for that type of project. Given those obstacles, the AgroBox became the perfect solution."

The AgroBox won favor over a greenhouse, as it is a nonpermanent, modular structure. The building can be loaded up and moved to a different location if needed. Once the idea for the agricultural education shipping container was formed, the school contacted Rubicon Agriculture, a manufacturing company based in Indiana, to make a game plan for creating the facility. Chris Moorman, an owner of Rubicon Agriculture, was a former FFA member and saw incredible potential in the project. After building plans were in place, the school secured funding from the Omaha School Foundation, its Perkins budget (which provides funding for career and technical education), Farm Credit Services, and the Buffett Foundation to make this dream come alive.

"WE INITIALLY WANTED TO BUILD A GREENHOUSE, BUT WE DIDN'T HAVE THE MONEY OR SPACE NEEDED FOR THAT TYPE OF PROJECT. GIVEN THOSE OBSTACLES, THE AGROBOX BECAME THE PERFECT SOLUTION." – TYLER SCHINDLER

"Our focus has been to give students the experience of working in a greenhouse setting and also to learn what urban agriculture is all about," Schindler says. "There aren't many opportunities to work in the greenhouse industry in the middle of Omaha, but there is a growing demand for urban agriculture, community gardens, and locally grown food. There has been a lot of focus



The vertical-grow hydroponic system is one of three systems utilized in the Bryan High School AgroBox.



Joslyn Wildrick inspects herbs that were planted in the ebb and flow hydroponic system.



Kevin Salazar refills a nutrient tank, which can be programmed to dispense nutrient solutions in selectd quantities.

on how to grow your own food in your house or in your yard. This is what we focused on rather than bedding plants and flowers. What we try to do in the AgroBox is really about the research experience and the different things that impact growing."

THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE FOOD

When working in the hydroponics facility, students control the lighting, temperature, humidity and more. Making small changes allows the students to measure the impact that each of the variables has on the growth rates of plants. The school is set up in the career academy model, so students can then take this data into their science and math classes to measure and plot the data to make informed, science-based decisions for their projects.

"The success of the AgroBox is a collaborative group effort rather than the work of one single teacher or one single person," Schindler says. "I work with a history teacher, a science teacher, a math teacher, an English teacher, and a special education teacher every week to talk about our students and the work that is coming up. We also work with a curriculum director and a counselor to make sure all of our students' needs are met. Our principal is also a big driver of getting kids real-world experiences. I rarely have a student ask me, 'When am I ever going to use this?' They can immediately see how it connects to their future."

"THE SUCCESS OF THE AGROBOX IS A COLLABORATIVE GROUP EFFORT RATHER THAN THE WORK OF ONE SINGLE TEACHER OR ONE SINGLE PERSON," SCHINDLER SAYS.

The program has become increasingly popular. In the first year, 90 students were able to work in the AgroBox. Today, the Urban Agriculture and Natural Resources Career Academy enrolls 170 students. The program is highly selective and has to turn away nearly 40 percent of students who apply to be in the academy.



Above: Schindler shows Kevin Salazar how to use a donated growing chamber in order to start plugs and plants for the hydroponic systems.



Below: Kassie Ronnei and Joslyn Wildrick check on their cuttings. The students use the wall aeroponics system to clone and root plants.

CURRICULUM ACROSS CLASSROOMS

When an agricultural education program is structured in the career academy model, students learn how foundational courses, such as algebra, biology and English, are used in the agriculture industry. From calculating feed ratios for cattle to developing agritourism business plans, all careers in agriculture require proficiency in reading, writing and arithmetic. At Bryan High School, freshman students make a career academy choice and take classes such as agricultural biology, agricultural economics, agricultural English, food science, agribusiness and agricultural American government during their sophomore, junior and senior years.

This allows students and FFA members to see the connection between classes in a field they are interested in. Students working on a prepared public speaking leadership development event can receive support from their English teachers. Students studying for the farm business management contest can immediately use the skills learned in agricultural economics and American government when preparing for exams. In algebra classes, they can calculate parts-per-million formulas for various concentration and dilution ratios of plant products. Students who are putting together an agriscience fair presentation can gather feedback and advice from science teachers. Career academy models have shown an increase in student engagement, graduation rates and attendance across the country, according to the National Career Academy Coalition.

Learn more about how Bryan High School uses the career academy model in our video at FFA.org/AgroBox.

Even still, Bryan High School supports one of the largest FFA chapters in the state of Nebraska with more than 100 active members.

As agricultural education programs continue to expand and thrive in urban areas, it is becoming increasingly important for students to understand where their food comes from and how the entire food chain works. For many students in the Omaha school district, basic literacy on what food is and how it is grown may not always be available.

"We have a lot of food-processing companies in and around Omaha," Schindler says. "These companies make and produce a huge amount of the food in our grocery stores, but our students didn't even know that. Now, every incoming student in our academy takes part in a rural immersion field trip."

As a part of this field trip, each student is required to select a favorite food and trace its path from the farm to the dinner table. For example, if a student chooses to study popcorn, he or she may visit a popcorn grower to see the crop in the field and learn how popcorn is harvested, processed, transported, and eventually how it ends up as a bag of kernels that can be cooked in the microwave.

THE FUTURE OF FOOD PRODUCTION

The AgroBox is just one example of innovative food-production facilities that can be used in urban communities to save resources and space and to provide locally grown produce.

"It is amazing how this one shipping container has had such an immense impact on our students, our school and the communities in which we work," Schindler says. "This is my third year as a teacher at Bryan High School, and I know it will only continue to grow. This year, we have a chapter officer team that is going full force. Our teachers are focused on providing even more programming to keep the students engaged. We have a state officer from our chapter this year, which has had a huge impact on our chapter, school and city. And this year, we have added a second agricultural education teacher to the program to keep up with the demand. We have truly transformed the lives of our students."

To learn more about Bryan High School, the Urban Agriculture and Natural Resources Career Academy and the AgroBox, visit **bryan.ops.org.** •



From the GROUND UP

Kate Indreland sees soil health as the path to a better world.

Who can imagine an exciting career based on the ground beneath your feet? For Kate Indreland, that's the case. The life of the soil on which all life depends is a passion she's taking forward in her own life.

Her exploration of regenerative agriculture recently won her a $10,000 prize as a finalist in the General Mills Feeding Better Futures Scholars Program.

Her interest in regenerative ag has taken her to farms and ranches in New Zealand and Western Australia. But her schooling began right at home on her parents' purebred Angus ranch near Big Timber, Mont. What she's discovered is that farmers and ranchers the world over are dealing with the same issue: how to improve soil health.

Practitioners of regenerative ag seek to address that challenge by incorporating more natural processes into food production while improving profitability for farmers and ranchers.

It's a noble goal, but how glamorous is a career rooted in the soil?

"Come on! Being 4 feet deep in a soil pit doesn't sound glamorous?" Indreland asks with a smile. "It is! To me, a lifestyle where I'm making a difference in people's lives that will benefit them and their operations is, in a sense, as glamorous as it gets."

EVERYTHING IS SOIL

Indreland's experiences have led her to a firm belief that she's on the right track with a commitment to regenerative ag.

"There was a day when I realized that everything is soil," she says. "Want to feed the world? Soil. Want to have a farm or ranch for our kids to come back to? Soil. Want to have clean air and water? Soil. But if we keep treating soil like dirt, we will not be fulfilling these things."

In her young life, Indreland has already seen success in regenerative ag practices. "I am seeing immensely improved soil, plant and animal health on our ranch and on other operations that are using these practices," she says. "On our ranch, we have seen protein and crucial nutrients increase in the plant by 30 percent!"

Her next step is enrollment at the University of Montana to study ecology and business.

At first glance, Indreland's career path may seem to be an idealistic one, but her hard work to date provides another impression to those who know her.

"I'd call her a realist," says Nicole Masters, a soils expert who has mentored Indreland in her study of regenerative ag. "Kate's seen operations around North America, Australia and New Zealand that are profitably improving their soil and water. I'm excited about the young people like Kate who are interested in regenerative ag."

– By John Walter

Check out Indreland's General Mills Feeding Better Futures Scholars Program highlight video at FFA.org/KateIndreland.

Photography: General Mills

A CALL TO Communicate

This FFA alumna credits the organization – and this magazine – with helping her uncover her path to professional success.



It was an *FFA New Horizons* article, much like the one you're reading now, that helped Julie Groce determine she wanted to pursue a career in agricultural communications.

Groce, a second-generation FFA member and former member and past president of the Hillsdale FFA in Jeromesville, Ohio, was interested in agricultural broadcasting and competed at the state level in Creed speaking and prepared public speaking leadership development events. She didn't realize her passions and talents could easily be transformed into a rewarding career. She remembers flipping through *FFA New Horizons* and landing on an article that outlined the career possibilities in agricultural communications, and that was when she knew it was the path for her.

"I was so excited to discover that people in ag communications often wrote about agriculture or worked on the broadcasting side, because both of those sounded perfect for me," Groce says. "After reading that article, a light bulb went off for me, and I got even more involved in FFA. I became my chapter's first female president and served in that role during my junior and senior years. During both of those years, I was also selected to participate in the National FFA Band."

Groce went on to major in agricultural communications at Ohio State University. As she was earning her degree, she landed an internship as a farm broadcaster with the National FFA Organization at the 1987 National FFA Convention.

"As an intern, I interviewed some really interesting people, including celebrities and National FFA Officer candidates, and it really solidified my interest in ag communications," Groce says.

After graduating with her bachelor's degree in 1989, Groce moved to North Carolina and began her first job as a client services manager at a public relations and marketing agency. Since then, her career has evolved as she's taken on roles at Syngenta, Novartis Animal Health U.S., Elanco and the North Carolina Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Groce now serves as the manager of communications and content marketing for the U.S. pork and poultry division of Zoetis.

Although it's her hard work that's gotten her where she is today, Groce credits FFA with helping her find success. She continues to give back to the organization as a mentor and has served on the North Carolina FFA Foundation Board of Directors. She's even passed her love for FFA down to her daughter, a third-generation member who is also pursuing a career in agriculture.

"It's important for me to remain involved with FFA because the organization has given me so much," Groce says. "The leadership and communication skills I learned have benefited me throughout my career; the lessons I learned in FFA have never left me."

To learn more about careers in agricultural communications, visit **AgExplorer.com**.

– By Jessica Walker Boehm



Windermere FFA member Hendrix Paterson nurtures a passion for forestry, an industry he plans to work in after college.

THE FUTURE OF FORESTRY

THIS MEMBER GROWS A SUCCESSFUL SAE TO SERVE HIS CHAPTER, SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY.

STORY BY JESSICA WALKER BOEHM

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF NOBLE

It was in his middle school FFA program that Hendrix Paterson first knew he wanted to pursue a career in forestry.

"I remember participating in a forestry competition when I was in the SunRidge Middle School FFA in Winter Garden, Fla.," says Paterson, now a sophomore at Windermere High School in Windermere, just outside of Orlando. "I fell in love with every part of it."

Today, the 15-year-old is using his experiences to nurture the interest that has taken root within him and to prepare for a career as a forest ranger.

Paterson's interest in forestry led him to Forestry Training Camp as both an eighth- and ninth-grader (in 2017 and 2018, respectively) where he learned about soil, tree diseases and disorders, wildfire protection, job opportunities in the forestry field and more.

Sponsored by the Florida Forest Service and open to FFA members across the state, each weeklong camp is held at O'Leno State Park in northern Florida and ends with a competition in which campers are tested on what they've learned. During both years of attendance, Paterson scored well enough to be named among the top 10 of about 65 campers.

"We're tested on things like map interpretation, timber estimation, tree identification, tool identification and general forestry knowledge," Paterson says. "I've been excited for my hard work to pay off, and it's been an honor to be a top camper for two consecutive years.

"It was at a forestry camp where I realized I wanted to be a forest ranger one day, and I know FFA is going to help me get there," he adds.

Paterson has been a longtime FFA member, first joining the organization in 2013 as a sixth-grader. He competed in several career development events (CDEs) in areas such as forestry, land judging and livestock evaluation at the state level. During his eighth-grade year, he served as the chapter's president.

Today, Paterson is an active member and leader in the Windermere FFA, a new chapter that began at Windermere High School in 2017 and has grown to nearly 50 members.

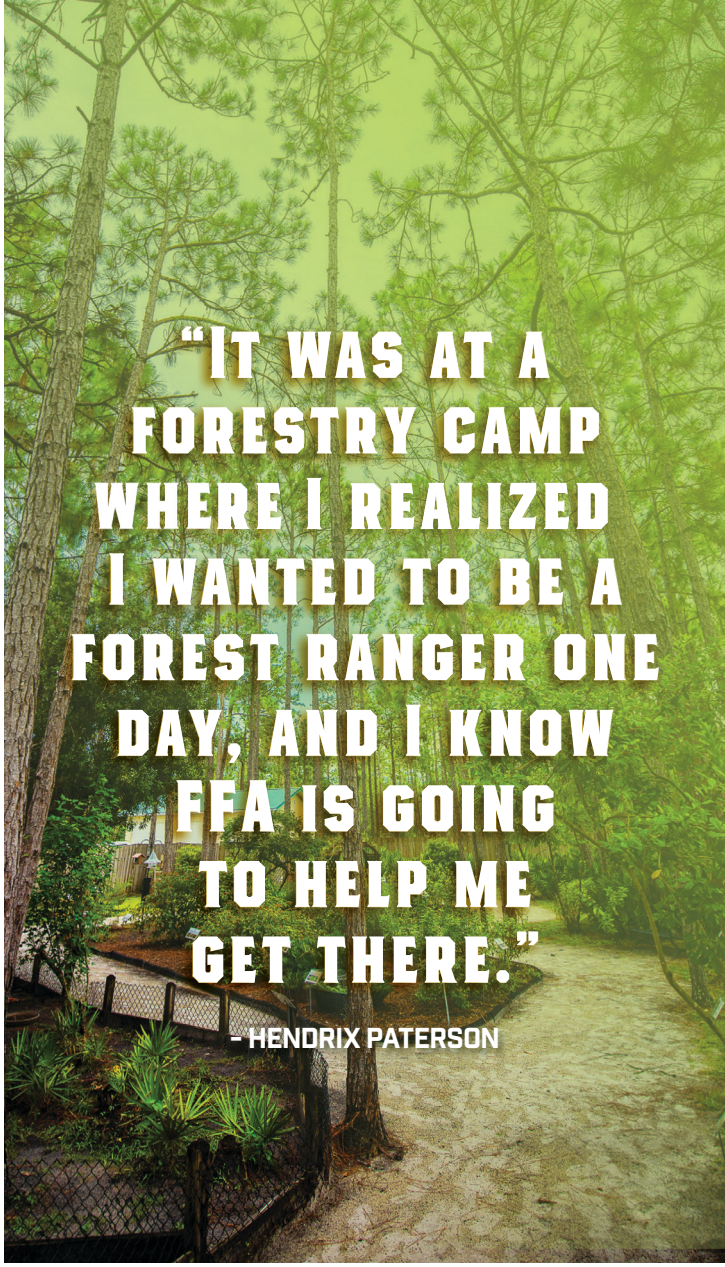
"Our chapter is filled with amazing people who have a lot to offer, and we're doing great things to help our community," Paterson says. "Through our hard work, I think we've shown that Windermere FFA is something special to be part of. We're one big family, and there's a place for everyone; I think that draws people in. We now have 400 agriscience students in our school — chances are, many of them will join FFA, too."

As a freshman, Paterson served as the student advisor for Windermere FFA, and he's currently the treasurer. He has continued his participation in CDEs, most recently competing in land judging, meat evaluation and agricultural sales at the state level, and he mentors the SunRidge Middle School FFA forestry CDE team. However, his biggest contribution to date is the supervised agricultural experience (SAE) project he broke ground on in 2018.

A NEW SPECIES OF SAE

Paterson channeled his passion for forestry into an SAE with the assistance of Dana Sussmann, a senior forester with the Florida Forest Service. Sussmann helped Paterson secure a $400 grant to purchase trees for his project — creating a native tree forest on the Windermere High School campus.

"I wouldn't have been able to do this without Dana, and I can't thank her enough," Paterson says. "She took a big interest in my SAE and helped me make my dream a reality."







Paterson's trees include a wide range of native species such as American elm, red cedar, magnolia, bald cypress, pine and oak. His high school campus is now home to approximately 40 trees, and he plans to plant at least 60 more during the 2018-19 school year.

"Hendrix's SAE is a perfect fit for him because he truly loves forestry, but it's also important because there really weren't many trees on the Windermere High School campus," says Amy Paterson, Windermere FFA advisor and Paterson's mother. "There certainly wasn't the variety of different species that students needed to see. He has made it possible for other students interested in forestry to easily access timber directly outside their classrooms. They no longer have to travel to other places to find native trees. Hendrix essentially helped create a forestry land lab on our campus."

That quick timber access has proven useful since Paterson and his fellow Windermere FFA forestry CDE team members often head outside to examine and study the trees as they prepare for competitions.

"I've been able to take my team right outside and teach them different ways to identify trees and diseases. We can look at how soil type and ground slope affect tree growth," Paterson says. "My SAE project has helped me become more of a leader in my chapter because it's opened up new opportunities, and spending so much time with the trees has only increased my knowledge base."

In addition, Paterson says he's proud to have created something that future forestry teams and agriscience students will also be able to use, leaving a legacy that will serve others for many years to come.

"In FFA, it's not just about you as an individual member," Paterson says. "It's about your chapter and the members who will come after you. I'll always feel honored that I was able to contribute to my chapter and school in this way."

A GROWING FUTURE

During his sophomore year at Windermere High School, Paterson aims to become a district or federation officer for the Florida FFA Association. He also hopes to see his CDE teams prosper and earn top spots at the Florida FFA State Convention & Expo.

While he adds trees to his on-campus forest, Paterson plans to create a sitting area where his classmates and others in the community can relax and enjoy his handiwork.

After graduating from high school, Paterson plans to attend the University of Florida and earn a bachelor's degree in forestry management. He'd like to put his knowledge and passion to work as a forest ranger for the Florida Forest Service, which manages more than 1 million acres of public forestland and protects 26 million acres of homes, businesses, private lands and natural resources from wildfires.

"FFA has helped me discover so many things, and I can't imagine my life without it," he says. "There's a competitive atmosphere that propels me forward, and it's helped me find what I want to pursue in college and beyond. Plus, FFA has given me opportunities to serve my community, which is a big part of the organization; we live to serve. There's no doubt that I owe a lot of my success and personal growth to FFA, and I wouldn't be here with my amazing advisors: Mrs. Katrina Alford, the SunRidge Middle School FFA advisor, and my mother." •





Far left: Paterson with his FFA advisor and mother, Amy. Middle: Paterson with fellow Windermere FFA members. Left: Senior forester Dana Sussman helped Paterson secure a grant.

DISCOVER YOUR PERFECT SAE

With so many supervised agricultural experience (SAE) project opportunities available in areas like entrepreneurship, service-learning, research and more, it can feel challenging and overwhelming to pick the one that's right for you. If you're not sure where to start, don't worry. Your perfect SAE may be right in front of you.

For example, look around your school and community and see what's missing. Can you fill a need that's not being met, like Hendrix Paterson did with his on-campus forest? In other words, consider how you can use your SAE to make an impact that will benefit others, and don't be afraid to think outside the box.

In addition, Windermere FFA advisor Amy Paterson recommends finding a way to incorporate your unique passions and interests into your SAE. That way, she says, you can ensure you're excited about your project and you're truly invested in it. After all, you're going to devote a lot of time to it. Why not love what you're doing?

"It's important to have a personal connection to your SAE," she says. "Choose something that you believe in and you're passionate about. Your SAE can also be related to what you're planning to pursue as a career. Your options are practically limitless, so make the most of the opportunity."

For more FFA SAE information and inspiration, visit **FFA.org/SAE**. Also check out the SAE idea cards and SAE videos on **FFA.org**. Need a way to fund your SAE? Don't forget to look into an SAE grant on **FFA.org**.


FFA
MICHAEL

ALL IN FOR AG ED

This community steps up in big ways to support its FFA chapter, thanks to the tireless efforts of the agricultural education instructor. You, too, might be surprised by the support you receive – if you just ask.

Story by Jodi Helmer

Photography by Bob Stefko

From left to right: Grace Johnson, FFA advisor Rachel Sauvola, Andrew Cole and Rachel Skinner with three animals from the school's 20-acre farm.

When it comes to providing opportunities for her students, there is nothing Rachel Sauvola won't do.

The agricultural education teacher and FFA advisor at New Richmond High School in New Richmond, Wis., helped a student facilitate a project to hatch shark eggs in the aquaculture lab, for example. She also asked local farmers to donate bull calves for the animal science program, and she even received a brand-new farm truck from a local Dodge dealership where the minimal lease is paid for by donations into the Ag Education Fund through the New Richmond Area Community Foundation.

"High school students have so much good to offer the world, and all it takes is someone willing to facilitate those projects," Sauvola says.

Although Sauvola knew she wanted to be an agriculture educator after attending her first FFA meetings in seventh grade, she had no idea that the role would involve writing grants or overseeing donations to support student projects or negotiating deals to secure the infrastructure to grow the program. Sauvola considers the extra tasks small sacrifices to see her students succeed.

"I get to witness all of the leadership skills that my students acquire pay off," she says.

The effort Sauvola has put into developing the agricultural education program and FFA chapter at New Richmond High School is paying off, too. And the community has joined the cause.

CULTIVATING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Thanks to a partnership with the city of New Richmond, the New Richmond airport and the school district of New Richmond, the school secured 20 acres of land and intends to build a series of state-of-the-art agriculture buildings, including a new beef barn, on the site. The New Richmond SOAR (Student Opportunities with Agricultural Resources) Educational Center, coupled with the facilities at the high school, offers hands-on learning opportunities in all aspects of farming – from greenhouse production to aquaculture. The SOAR facilities include a barn where students raise bull calves, and Sauvola hopes to add swine, sheep, goats and additional poultry in the future.

In 2016, students began raising four donated bull calves that produced almost 1,500 pounds of beef that were served in the school lunch program this spring. Students also raise chickens, ducks and tilapia and grow fresh produce. All have been sold into the school lunch program. Westfields Hospital and Hudson Hospital also purchase tilapia from the program.

Sauvola notes that demand for the farm-to-table fare, which she markets as "made with student love," exceeds what the program is producing. She hopes to expand production to more than 2,000 pounds of beef and enough excess eggs and produce to set up a student-run booth at the local farmers market. Attracting enough students to meet the demand isn't a problem.

When the new school opened in 2008, 20 students were interested in large animal science classes. Now, 90 students are enrolled in that course, and, during the last school year, Sauvola had 436 course requests for the 16 different agricultural education classes she teaches (in a high school with 940 students). An additional part-time agriculture educator joined the program last year to keep up with the demand.

A COMMUNITY PROGRAM

The educational offerings are certainly part of the high school, but Sauvola considers it a community agricultural program. In the 19 years Sauvola has worked for the school, she has partnered with countless organizations to get students involved in community projects, including tree-planting events and a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service project to restore native prairielands.

"This program works because we have a tremendous number of volunteers, and we want to do our part to give back to the community that does so much for us," Sauvola says.

Only a small percentage of the support the chapter receives comes from FFA alumni. In fact, Sauvola avoids the word "alumni" when recruiting volunteers, preferring to call them FFA friends, families and supporters. She uses a volunteer inventory created by the National Organization to recruit new volunteers and signed up 52 new supporters in 48 hours.

"We don't want people to think what we're doing isn't open to them because they've never been part of FFA," she explains. "I add all of our volunteers to the alumni roster to keep them up to date on what FFA is doing and to increase their level of knowledge and involvement."

Sauvola has learned that the community is always willing to step up when its FFA members are in need. The SOAR Educational Center is "donation central" where feed, animals and pallets are dropped off on a regular basis. Local farmers have even donated ducklings and a 650-pound heifer.

In 2017, when the New Richmond FFA dairy cattle judging team won first place at the World Dairy Expo and received an invitation to travel to Europe to take part in the International Dairy Judging Tour, supporters went above and beyond to make sure the students could participate in the once-in-a-lifetime experience. The team raised $30,000 through individual, business and organizational contributions. One event – a farm-to-table dinner featuring locally grown foods – raised $6,000.

"The community is so excited about the things we're working on and sees the value in the program," she says. "It's incredible who will step up to help when you ask."

A self-described mover and shaker, Sauvola believes it's important for students to see her advocating for the program. "It's good for them to see an adult set goals and work hard to achieve them," she adds.

Sauvola is adamant that advocacy includes spreading the word about the agricultural education program and FFA chapter far and wide. In addition to being active in the community, she often speaks to the media and generates buzz by talking about the program to anyone who will listen.

"There isn't a district newsletter that goes out without FFA news, a SOAR update and an agriscience update," she says. "If you don't tell your story, no one will know what you're doing. If I can be the vehicle to tell our story, the world will be a better place."

A SELF-DESCRIBED MOVER AND SHAKER, SAUVOLA BELIEVES IT'S IMPORTANT FOR STUDENTS TO SEE HER ADVOCATING FOR THE PROGRAM. "IT'S GOOD FOR THEM TO SEE AN ADULT SET GOALS AND WORK HARD TO ACHIEVE THEM," SHE ADDS.

SOAR and the agricultural program at New Richmond High School have developed an excellent reputation for top-notch education. Visitors from seven states have visited New Richmond to tour the facilities and the SOAR Educational Center, and several students have transferred to the high school from neighboring towns because of the program.

"What we do is so important for career connections and helping set students up for success. Parents and students recognize the opportunities," Sauvola says. "When you're passionate about something and have good help, there isn't anything you can't do." •

THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

WHEN FFA MEMBERS, ALUMNI AND SUPPORTERS COME TOGETHER, GOOD THINGS HAPPEN. HERE ARE TWO MORE PROJECTS THAT PROVE HOW LOCAL CHAPTERS AND COMMUNITIES BENEFIT FROM YOUR TIME, TALENT AND TREASURE.

KICKING OFF KANSAS FFA CHAPTERS

Despite being the second-most populous county in Kansas, Sedgwick County did not have a single FFA chapter. Alumnus John Niemann wanted to change that. In 2013, the president of protein ingredients for Cargill helped launch an FFA chapter at Maize High School in Wichita. Thanks to FFA alumni and supporters, Sedgwick County is now home to five FFA chapters. "I wouldn't be where I am today without the experiences I had in FFA," Niemann says. "I wanted to help provide those same experiences to other students."

PITCHING IN TO GIVE BACK

As part of Give FFA Day in 2018, DeWitt Central FFA members in DeWitt, Iowa, coordinated a meal packaging event at Central DeWitt High School. Members of the North Scott FFA and Easton Valley FFA also joined, along with alumni and supporters, to package 51,000 meals for food-insecure families.

"THIS PROGRAM WORKS BECAUSE WE HAVE A TREMENDOUS NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS, AND WE WANT TO DO OUR PART TO GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY THAT DOES SO MUCH FOR US," SAUVOLA SAYS.

Top: Rachel Skinner and Nick Cheslock hold plants that community members care for over the summer. Middle: Brooke Frazier visits the school's Animal Learning Center. Bottom: Morgan Ayotte, Rachel Sauvola and Andrew Cole work in the aquaculture lab.







GIVE TO FFA

The National FFA Foundation depends on the generosity of its supporters to fund opportunities for agriculture students and teachers nationwide. Here are a few ways you can give.

- **INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS:** You can make a one-time gift or set up an automatic recurring donation. Contributions in any amount are welcome and appreciated.

- **SPONSORSHIPS:** Businesses and corporations can sponsor FFA to invest in the next generation of agriculture leaders. Sponsors reach nearly 670,000 FFA members and more than 13,000 agriculture teachers nationwide.

- **MEMORIALS AND TRIBUTES:** The National FFA Foundation welcomes gifts made in honor of or in tribute to someone special.

- **ENDOWMENTS:** Establish an endowment with a minimum gift of $25,000. Endowment funds provide both immediate and long-term benefits for FFA.

- **PLANNED GIVING:** Consider including the National FFA Foundation in your estate planning. The organization offers several options for planned giving, including securities, real estate and bequests.

To learn more, visit **FFA.org/Foundation**.

FFA *in the USA*

THE NATIONAL FFA ORGANIZATION HAS STATE ASSOCIATIONS AND LOCAL CHAPTERS IN ALL 50 STATES, PUERTO RICO AND THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS. HERE ARE SOME OF THE IMPORTANT AND EXCITING THINGS HAPPENING IN THEIR COMMUNITIES. — Compiled by Julie Woodard

ALABAMA

The Enterprise FFA Chapter's horticulture classes recently created flower baskets that lined the streets of their downtown area.

ALASKA

Chapters are encouraged to focus part of their community service efforts on suicide prevention. The state has one of the highest rates of suicide in the nation.

ARIZONA

Red Mountain FFA hosted a country kickback dance to bring Arizona FFA members together for an evening of entertainment.

ARKANSAS

This winter, state officers will welcome first-year members to Camp Couchdale, where they host three Greenhand conferences.

CALIFORNIA

State officers invited six chapters to take over the @CaliforniaFFA social media accounts this summer. For a week, chapters shared news, happenings and more about their communities.



COLORADO

Limon FFA hosted a "Speaking as Easy as Pie" event on Nov. 7 where members practiced their speeches. The community attended and learned about agriculture while enjoying homemade pie.

CONNECTICUT

Housatonic FFA is gearing up for its annual Holiday Production Marketing Unit. The chapter typically raises over $70,000 in three weeks by selling holiday plants and decorations.

DELAWARE

Caesar Rodney FFA has partnered with the Delaware Department of Agriculture on an ag in the classroom trailer that will be used to teach kindergarten students about food and fiber.

FLORIDA

Deane Bozeman FFA has joined the University of Florida, U.S. Fish and Wildlife and others to restore the bays surrounding Panama City, Fla.

GEORGIA

Gov. Nathan Deal attended the Georgia FFA Convention to sign Senate Bill 330 into law, which brings the three-component model of agricultural education and agricultural education programs into elementary schools.

HAWAII

Keaau FFA members volunteer year-round at local nonprofit agencies in exchange for on-site career shadowing and mentoring.

IDAHO

State officers have challenged members to a "penny challenge." Members will collect pennies to donate to a charity in Idaho, an idea that came from a past issue of *FFA New Horizons!*

ILLINOIS

Goreville FFA created "Screen Free for a Better Me," challenging students to spend an hour a day away from devices and participating in activities that build cognitive skills.

INDIANA

Shenandoah FFA will invite members of the community with developmental disabilities to a Legacy Christmas Party. Community members will receive presents from Santa provided by FFA members.

IOWA

Audubon FFA will travel to Haiti to build Sukup Safe T homes out of small grain bins. The homes fit up to 12 people and are hurricane-resistant. Keep an eye out for more coverage of the chapter's trip in 2019.

KANSAS

Districts across the state will hold leadership schools, where chapters compete in parliamentary procedure, opening ceremonies and a general FFA knowledge test.

KENTUCKY

Each January, state officers go on a statewide industry tour to learn how agriculture plays a vital role in Kentucky's economy.

LOUISIANA

From the heart of the Honey Island Swamp, Pearl River FFA has developed a unique Cajun barbecue seasoning that sells in local stores and across the nation. *Ça c'est bon!*

MAINE

In January, state officers will participate in Maine's Agricultural Trades Show, an annual networking and educational event for agriculture and natural resources representatives and the public.

MARYLAND

State officers partner with the University of Maryland Extension and 4-H youth to host the U-Learn Farm at the Maryland State Fair. The farm features hands-on agricultural and educational exhibits.

MASSACHUSETTS

This fall, state officers facilitated a series of leadership workshops across the state that taught chapter officers how to become better leaders in their communities.

MICHIGAN

During their Project Rural Education Day, members work with their local Farm Bureau to learn how to communicate the importance of agriculture to consumers.

MINNESOTA

At the Ag Policy Experience in March, members who are interested in politics can draft mock policy, learn more about ag issues and host a legislative reception.

MISSISSIPPI

Clarkdale FFA is leading a statewide movement to build beds for families in need. Several chapters have given foster children free beds and mattresses.

MISSOURI

Members have partnered with several agricultural entities to raise over $145,000 to donate to food banks across the state.



THANK YOU, STATE OFFICERS, FOR PROVIDING NEWS AND EVENTS FOR YOUR STATES.

Photography and Illustrations: nickylarson974, Ljupco, SlothAstronaut, Alexander Mikhailov, iStockphoto.com

MONTANA

Electric City FFA members participated in an "Infarmation" project, posting signs that identify crops along highways throughout central Montana to promote ag literacy.

NEBRASKA

Nebraska FFA is looking forward to kicking off its Chapter Visit Program this spring. State officers will meet with members across the state.

NEVADA

At Sierra Nevada FFA, first-year students and their families visited the school's urban farm for the Freshman Meet & Greet. Members learned about the program and participated in leadership activities with chapter officers.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

This summer, Coe Brown Much-To-Do FFA and Dover FFA ran an educational children's barn at the Deerfield Fair, the largest and oldest fair in the state.

NEW JERSEY

This winter, Northern Burlington FFA will visit local Christmas tree farms to gather greens, make wreaths and grave blankets, and sell them to the school and community as a fundraiser.

NEW MEXICO

Every year, New Mexico FFA chapters roast and sell their world-famous green chiles as a major fundraiser.

NEW YORK

In December, Albion FFA members will assist local farmers in distributing and donating over 35,000 pounds of fresh foods to different food pantries in their area.

NORTH CAROLINA

Each September, the North Carolina FFA Center hosts wildlife camp, giving members a close look at the state's wildlife, conservation resources and careers in the field.



NORTH DAKOTA

Oakes-Sargent Central FFA is living to serve by planting 170 fruit trees and shrubs. The produce will be donated to a regional food bank.

OHIO

As part of its Ag Career Day, Harrison Central FFA joined forces with the local Farm Bureau to connect students with industry leaders and speakers.

OKLAHOMA

Members of Wellston FFA have been so inspired by former member Ryan Danker, who teaches agriculture in Uganda, that they are raising money and collecting supplies to send to Uganda.

OREGON

Everyone loves food and competition, right? The Southern Oregon District combines both through a Dutch oven dessert cook-off at its leadership camp.

PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania FFA will host a Mid-Winter Convention in January. Nearly 400 members will receive their state degrees, and first-year members will receive an official jacket, thanks to the generosity of the state's FFA alumni and supporters.

PUERTO RICO

FFA and 4-H members will soon participate in an initiative called "Creciendo Sembrando" ("Growing Sowing"), where middle and high school students will offer planting workshops to elementary school students year-round.

RHODE ISLAND

Members will embrace the holiday spirit by participating in a holiday design contest where they submit arrangements, wreaths, artwork and more.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Every year during FFA Week, members gather at the state capitol for Legislative Day. They raise awareness for agricultural education and expose members to the inner workings of state government.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Milbank FFA is working with its city council to turn a vacant land plot into a community dog park, complete with agility courses designed by the chapter.

TENNESSEE

During the Tennessee 212°/360° conferences in November, participants and state officers packed about 10,000 meals for local communities.

TEXAS

Each year, from February to August, Yantis FFA cultivates nearly 500 button bushes that are planted in the local lake in late August to reduce erosion and feed and shelter aquatic life.

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Ivanna Eudora Keen FFA remodeled the backyard of an elderly couple living on the island of St. Thomas. The chapter planted new plants and created a walkway and sitting area for the couple.

UTAH

Members are rallying to get an FFA license plate in their state. Their foundation has offered $1,000 to the chapter that gets the most license plate applications.

VERMONT

Missisquoi Valley FFA sells gift baskets filled with student-made maple candy, crème, lollipops and more during the holiday season.

VIRGINIA

Culpeper Schools put on an Ag Expo this fall. Members gave tours of livestock exhibits, showed off their welding skills, and gave engine and small animal care demonstrations.

WEST VIRGINIA

Tyler FFA will collaborate with 11 chapters to host a Christmas dinner food drive. Chapters will deliver food baskets to local families in need.

WISCONSIN

In February, DeForest FFA will deliver donuts and milk to farms and businesses across the school district to thank them for their support.

WYOMING

Each August, fairgoers join the state officers for the FFA Duck Race to benefit the officers' travel fund.



WASHINGTON

The Washington FFA Foundation swung into action at its first golf tournament fundraiser to support more student opportunities.



On the RECORD

Robert JONES

The chancellor of the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana started on a sharecrop farm in the segregated South of the 1950s. An FFA background launched his incredible journey.

Q: WHAT STARTED THIS LONG JOURNEY FOR YOU?

A: Neither of my parents finished high school, but they were determined that my brother, my sister and I would.

When I started at George Washington Carver High School in Dawson, Ga., I was required to take vocational agriculture classes. Walter Stallworth was the teacher. From a young age, I had a natural curiosity about plants. Mr. Stallworth took to calling me "Professor." He gave me no option: I would go to college at either Tuskegee in Alabama or Fort Valley State in Georgia, which is where I went.

Q: WHEN DID YOU GET ACTIVE IN FFA?

A: Our school was segregated. We didn't have FFA; we had NFA (New Farmers of America), which was for African-American students. Mr. Stallworth made sure I got involved, and I eventually became chapter president. I was at the meeting in the 1960s when the merger took place between NFA and FFA.

It was my first real connection with people of diverse backgrounds. That leadership training has been important to me at every step of my career since then.

Q: HOW DID YOU GET INTO COLLEGE ADMINISTRATION?

A: To my own surprise, as my career progressed, I found that I get great satisfaction from improving the experiences of other people, such as students and faculty. Sometimes, you have to focus on one thing, and that's what I've done.

Q: WHAT IS YOUR JOB AS CHANCELLOR?

A: Essentially, I'm the chief executive officer of the Champaign-Urbana campus, the largest in the University of Illinois system. We have a student population of about 46,000 and an academic and support staff of about 17,000 people. It's like running a city.

Q: WHAT'S YOUR ADVICE TO STUDENTS IN FFA TODAY?

A: Stay in school! Get a good, solid foundation in all the basics of agriculture, food science and STEM. With a broad background, you can go in any career direction you choose.

The exciting thing today is that we have so many multidisciplinary fields. For example, we have a degree program combining computers and crops. We have programs in nutrition, health, economics, communications or almost any other field that can be pursued under the general umbrella of agriculture.

– By Gene Johnston

> "STAY IN SCHOOL! GET A GOOD, SOLID FOUNDATION IN ALL THE BASICS OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD SCIENCE AND STEM."
>
> – ROBERT JONES

Photography: L. Brian Stauffer



Ag Angle

EMILY COOPER

LOCATION: Thomas, La.
FFA CHAPTER: Varnado Jr. High FFA Chapter Advisor
INSTAGRAM: @countrymilefaith
FACEBOOK: Country Mile Faith

Louisiana doesn't typically receive snow like other states in the winter, but there are rare occurrences when it does. This photo captures snow in my area from last winter and features my cat, Sassy. She was not happy about the snow at all and made sure to communicate that to me. Fortunately, she did a wonderful job posing in the Louisiana snow!

SHARE YOUR AG ANGLE WITH US! It's as simple as completing the submission form at **FFA.org/submit-your-story**. The editors will review all entries and publish one in each issue of *FFA New Horizons*. All material submitted becomes the property of the National FFA Organization. If your idea is used, you give FFA the right to use it in any manner.

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