NEW HORIZONS

Fall 2020

FFANEWHORIZONS.ORG



Special shopFFA LOOK BOOK Inside

Des Moines FFA Buzzes With Life

Urban Ag

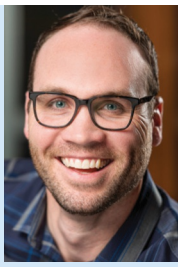
Inclusion, Diversity & Equity

Members Share Their Stories

PLUS:

8 Ways You Can Be Inclusive

A FUTURE For All



"The summer of 2020 will be tied forever to both the COVID-19 pandemic and the worldwide marches and protests for social justice. The demonstrations raised our awareness of the importance of diversity, inclusion and equity — and all the places they're lacking."

I found myself nodding in agreement as I read these words from writer Jami Stall in "A Future for All," a collection of stories from FFA members willing to share their experiences to help promote understanding and awareness as it relates to inclusion, diversity and equity, on page 24.

For years, FFA has sought to grow more in these areas. Nearly a century after its formation, steps toward broader accessibility and inclusion have been taken. But it is clear that FFA must continue to progress.

As a tangible next step, the National FFA Organization and the National Association of Agricultural Educators have developed an initiative called Agricultural Education for All, which will provide diversity training to students, teachers and advisors alike. (Learn more at **FFA.org/diversity-and-inclusion**.)

As this initiative rolls out, *FFA New Horizons* will be here to give a voice to those issues and perspectives.

Perspectives like that of Sean Neal, who has used a wheelchair since age 6 due to a neuromuscular disease. As a teen, joining FFA afforded Neal the chance to experience being a teammate and the thrill of competing (and winning) among peers. "Without the opportunity to play sports, I didn't have an outlet where I could express my fierce competitive nature, but FFA provided me that opportunity," he says in "A Future for All." "Being able to compete on an equal playing field was something I really appreciated, and my advisor was always supportive. Never hesitating, he was always like, 'We'll figure out how to do it.'"

I love that.

So here's my challenge to you (and to myself) in this season of life: Let's commit ourselves to learning from someone who is different from us. Listen. Find common ground. Be a bridge builder. Grow.

Let's get to work, friends!

Have a fantastic fall.

Justin Davey

Justin Davey
Editor, *FFA New Horizons*
ffanewhorizons@meredith.com

P.S. I want to remind you that the 93rd National FFA Convention & Expo will be a virtual experience on multiple outlets the week of October 28. Take a look at Convention.FFA.org for more information.

Photography: David Ekstrom
Cover Photography: Dan Videtich

Fall 2020
Volume 69, Number 1
FFA COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER Julie Woodard
EDITOR Justin Davey
CREATIVE DIRECTOR Matt Strelecki
COPY EDITORS Nancy Dietz, Paula Barbour
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT Diana Weesner
EXECUTIVE ACCOUNT DIRECTOR Doug Stark

2019-20 National FFA Officers
PRESIDENT Kolesen McCoy, OH
SECRETARY Kourtney Lehman, OR
EASTERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT Tess Seibel, VA
CENTRAL REGION VICE PRESIDENT Mamie Hertel, MT
SOUTHERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT Yomar Roman, PR

National FFA Staff
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER Mark Poeschl
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER David Schapker
PRESIDENT, NATIONAL FFA FOUNDATION AND CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER Molly Ball
CHIEF PROGRAM OFFICER Christine White

National FFA Board of Directors
CHAIR, NATIONAL ADVISOR James Woodard
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE SECRETARY Cheryl Zimmerman
NATIONAL TREASURER William (Buddy) Deimler, UT
STATE SUPERVISOR Chris Bacchus, AR
STATE SUPERVISOR Dennis Wallace, WA
STATE SUPERVISOR Matt Winkle, OH
STATE SUPERVISOR/NASAE Leon Busdieker, MO
TEACHER EDUCATOR/AAAE Eric Rubenstein, GA
TEACHER EDUCATOR/AAAE Jessica M. Blythe, WV
AFNR TEACHER/NAAE David Gossman, CA
REPRESENTATIVE/USDE Travis Bradshaw, OK
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION Scott Stump, Washington, D.C.
BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY Susanne Wasson, IN

Subscription Information
FFA New Horizons (ISSN 1069-806X) is published biannually by the National FFA Organization, 6060 FFA Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46268-0960. Publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts, art or any other unsolicited materials. For subscription information email FFA New Horizons Subscription Services at **newhorizons@FFA.org**. Periodical postage rate is paid at Indianapolis, Ind., and additional mail offices.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to FFA New Horizons, P.O. Box 68960, Indianapolis, IN 46268-0960.

Copyright ©2020 by the National FFA Organization.

THE FFA VISION
FFA is growing the next generation of leaders who will change the 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.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT
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.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION STATEMENT
The National FFA Organization is a resource and support organization that does not select, control or supervise state association, local chapter or individual member activities. Educational materials are developed by FFA in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education as a service to state and local agricultural education agencies.

CONTENTS

4 5 Things from FFA.org

11 National FFA Officer Q&A

12 Ag 101: The Buzz About Honeybees

Cover Story

16 Urban Ag Oasis

24 A Future for All

30 The Corn Maze Craze

38 On the Record

40 FFA in the USA

42 Media Center

43 FFA Moment

DEPARTMENTS

4 The Feed

14 Premier Leadership

22 Personal Growth

36 Career Success

P. 30: A petting zoo, corn maze and more draw visitors to McCall's Pumpkin Patch in New Mexico.

THE FEED

Scan these codes with your phone camera to learn more.

5 Things FROM FFA.ORG

Check out these key resources to help you make the most of your FFA experience this season.

Virtual National FFA Convention & Expo

The National FFA Organization will host the 93rd National FFA Convention & Expo as a virtual experience on multiple outlets the week of Oct. 28. Keep an eye out for details regarding the schedule, registration, special guests and other pieces that deliver high value and impact for FFA members. ***Convention.FFA.org***

Official FFA Manual en Español

Learn everything you need to know about FFA — its history, bylaws, constitution and more — with the Official FFA Manual, translated in Spanish and, as always, available for download online for free. ***FFA.org/official-manual***

SAE Video Library

Kick-start your supervised agricultural experience (SAE) with ideas, inspiration and real-life success stories from members. Videos cover dozens of SAE topics — including composting, drones, agritourism and more — aimed to educate, inform and shine a light on the everyday work of FFA members. ***FFA.org/ffa-video-center/sae-video-library***

Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Value Chain

As in any industry, consumers and technology drive what and how things are produced. Right now, personal health, sustainability and nutrition are significant drivers affecting agriculture, food and natural resources (AFNR). Learn more about the AFNR value chain – from research and development through consumer consumption — with deep dives into each step along the way. ***FFA.org/value-chain***

AgExplorer

The agriculture industry can open up a world of career possibilities, and the demand for professionals in every agricultural area is high. Use this joint service from the National FFA Organization and Discovery Education to learn more about which career may be right for you by watching the videos, exploring the career pages and completing the Career Finder interactive.

AgExplorer.FFA.org

ALUMNI AND SUPPORTERS FFA

Join the Forever Blue Network

Be part of the latest effort to strengthen the FFA community. – By Jessica Walker Boehm

Looking for an easy way to stay connected to the global FFA community? You're in luck. The Forever Blue Network, which debuted in May, gives FFA members, alumni and supporters the opportunity to come together no matter where they are. All that's required is your phone or a computer and internet access.

"The Forever Blue Network is a personal and professional development social network that's completely devoted to FFA," says Joshua Rusk, executive director of National FFA Alumni and Supporters. "You can share memories, reconnect with friends you met through FFA, look for job or internship opportunities, and get plugged in to what's going on in FFA right now."

To ensure the Forever Blue Network stays safe and secure, all applications are screened before they're approved. Those with FFA IDs — unique identification numbers assigned to individual profiles in the National FFA database — are more quickly accepted into the network. Others may require a more in-depth review and wait as many as three business days to receive access.

Currently, only the FFA members in the class of 2021 and older are approved to join, which Rusk says is due to the broad age range of members, alumni and supporters.

"Extensive security measures are in place to safeguard the Forever Blue Network because safety is our top priority," Rusk says. "If someone is not an FFA member or alumni and wants to join, we ask for additional information before approving their application.

"Think of the Forever Blue Network as your one-stop-shop for all things FFA," Rusk says. "It's a unique way of leveraging the network of FFA members and alumni around the globe to benefit both job seekers and employers while also enhancing the work being done at the local level. It creates a safe space to rekindle or develop personal connections as well as gain new ideas."

Join Today

Create an account one of two ways:

1. Visit ForeverBlueNetwork.org on your computer or mobile device.
2. Download the Forever Blue Network app. Android users can directly download the app, but iOS users must first download the Graduway Community app. After entering your affiliation with the National FFA Organization, it displays the Forever Blue Network.

Start Connecting

Once you're in, access these fun features:

- Post in and peruse the feed.
- Interact with fellow users' posts.
- Search for alumni mentors.
- Scroll through the job board.
- Join and connect with groups.

Members Rally to Rescue Cattle

High school ag enthusiasts band together to save cattle and equipment from burning barn.

– By Jessica Walker Boehm

On the evening of Dec. 11, 2019, three young men in Barren County, Ky., saw a barn ablaze and immediately took action.

The trio comprised Jaxen Arms, Mason Pennington and Jonathan London, all of whom attend Barren County High School in Glasgow. Together, they rescued approximately 80 head of cattle and salvaged a significant amount of equipment, saving the owner an estimated $300,000.

"My father is good friends with the man who owns the barn, Mr. Gary Scott, and I knew he would do the same thing for us if the situation were reversed," says Arms, who is a member of the Barren County FFA along with Pennington. "We didn't hesitate — we just acted. We knew what we had to do, and we'll do it again if we're ever in the same situation."

Arms, Pennington and London were recognized for their heroic efforts at a Barren County Board of Education meeting in January 2020, with Barren County High School Principal Amy Irwin praising them for their selflessness, bravery and willingness to serve a neighbor despite such dangerous circumstances.

Although the young men say they don't deserve accolades for their actions, it's safe to say the community won't soon forget their courageous response in the name of helping one of their own.

"As an ag teacher and FFA advisor, I'm always glad to hear of my students doing positive things in the community," says Dr. Andy Joe Moore, who serves as the advisor of the Barren County FFA with Doug Berry and A.J. Mitchell. "In this situation, these students demonstrated courage and leadership, loyalty to their neighbors and community, and their undeniable love for livestock. While we're proud to claim them as our FFA members, their actions are a testament to the young men their families have raised them to be."

A Rich Future of Women in FFA

Women have made their mark on the history and the future of the National FFA Organization.

– By Bev Flatt

"Through this door pass many friends of the FFA. It is my duty to see that the door is open to our friends at all times and that they are welcome." Most FFA members recognize this phrase as a part of the official FFA opening ceremonies. While the sentinel is the only person who makes this statement, it is a declaration that FFA members across the country and generations have embodied.

With nearly 100 years of FFA history, there is a milestone anniversary to celebrate nearly every year. For the past two years, the celebration of female membership in FFA has shown their remarkable tenacity and integrity for more than 50 years.



"The anniversary of female membership has brought some really wonderful stories to light," says Molly Ball, president and chief marketing officer of the National FFA Foundation. "While women haven't always worn the blue jacket, they have been a part of shaping our organization since the very beginning. Women are doing amazing things in science, in corporate agriculture and on their farms. These past few years have brought a level of openness and conversation that we haven't had until recently."

Despite the incredible progress made the past 50 years, Ball hopes to still see women break the remaining glass ceilings, including a female becoming a national FFA advisor. To help all members, advisors, alumni and supporters be a part of the future of a welcoming and enriching program, the National FFA Organization is working to provide resources to ensure that agricultural education is for everyone.

"No matter where you come from, what gender you identify with, what race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic background, or agriculture background you have, there is a place for you in FFA."

- Molly Ball

"No matter where you come from, what gender you identify with, what race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic background, or agriculture background you have, there is a place for you in FFA," Ball says. "We look at these areas not only from an airplane view of the organization but in every way: from the grassroots level, helping train teachers and students to focus on inclusion, diversity and equity, to the space station level where we are helping to break down entry barriers into production agriculture."

Visit **FFA.org/50YearsOfWomenInFFA** to read more about the incredible history of women in FFA.

A special thanks to Carhartt, Cargill, Ram and CHS, which sponsored our 50 Years of Women in FFA project.

Photography: Brian Smale, Getty Images, sbayram, Copyright © FFA

REPROGRAMMING THE AMERICAN DREAM

Kevin Scott, the chief technology officer for computer tech giant and FFA Gold sponsor Microsoft, grew up in tiny Gladys, Va. He recently wrote a book, *Reprogramming the American Dream*, that details his early life, the revolution that is unfolding in artificial intelligence and how agriculture could be one of the biggest beneficiaries. - By Gene Johnston



NH: **How did you go from a small town to a top executive position at Microsoft?**

KS: In retrospect, it does seem a little unlikely. But one of the pieces of good luck I had was being born in 1972. When I was 11 or 12 years old, the personal computing revolution was happening, and my parents and I were able to save up enough to buy me a computer. Fairly early on, I taught myself how to program, figuring things out on my own. I followed that through my education and into my career, now at Microsoft.

NH: **Did you take agriculture classes in school?**

KS: Yes, in middle school. I remember it as a ton of fun. It wasn't a farm that I grew up on, but we had a very big garden from which we harvested and preserved food for the whole year.

NH: **In your book, you talk about artificial intelligence (AI) as the next big thing in technology. What exactly is it?**

KS: AI is not just one thing. It's a set of technology tools that you can use to automate tasks that otherwise might have been performed by people. In some cases, it might be tasks that people can't do at all.

NH: **How will it work in agriculture?**

KS: There are many ways. Already, there's this notion of precision agriculture, where relatively sophisticated and big farming operations have access to very powerful tools to tell when and where to do things. What I like is that AI is increasingly putting these technologies, and even more powerful ones, into the hands of smaller farming operations, even in the developing world. At Microsoft, we have this entire research endeavor called FarmBeats, built on the premise that we can use AI to help farmers increase yields and reduce environmental impacts.

NH: **What advice do you have for tech-savvy agriculture students?**

KS: Fully explore your imagination and make a difference in the world. I know from personal experience that when you put your mind to accomplishing something and you feel confident in using the tools available, you can do amazing things. You have a more powerful set of tools than you've ever had before.

Protecting Pollinators

FFA sponsors are part of a national collaborative to restore monarch populations.

Monarch butterflies have experienced significant declines over the last 20 years. A group of scientists, conservationists, corporate leaders and farmers is working to increase their populations. The group, known as the Monarch Collaborative, and organized by the Keystone Policy Center, includes FFA sponsors Bayer Crop Science, BASF, Corteva Agriscience and Syngenta.

"We know that agriculture is well-equipped to provide habitat for the monarch, so we identified an opportunity to reach out to farmers and provide resources and information to support their efforts," explains Chip Shilling, manager of sustainability and issues management at BASF.

Collaborative members introduced efforts to support monarch butterfly populations in agricultural landscapes, according to Aimee Hood, head of regulatory and scientific engagement for Bayer.

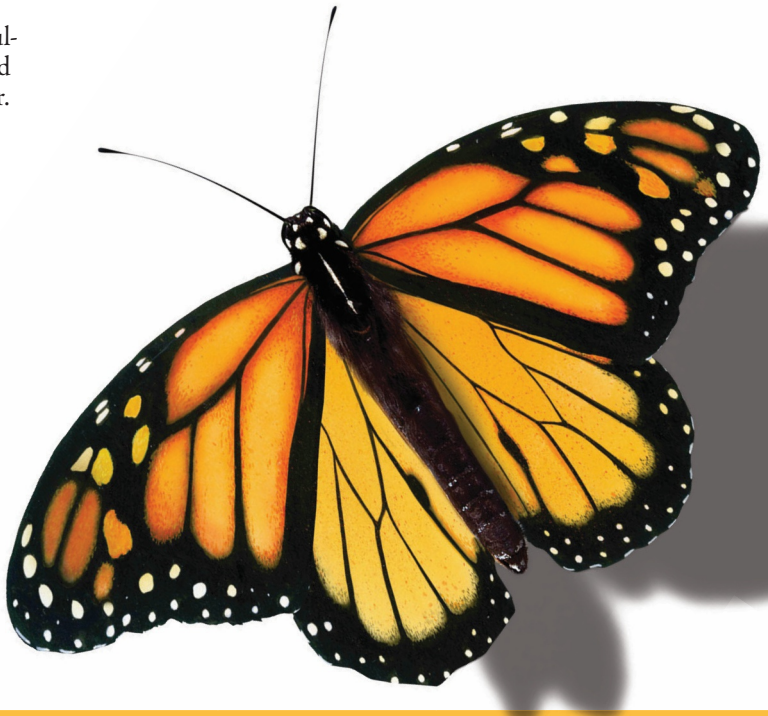
"[The collaborative] was a convener of many of the key players in the agricultural sector that wanted to make a positive impact in this space," Hood adds.

BASF, Bayer, Corteva and Syngenta have all launched their own pollinator initiatives. BASF established The Living Acres #MonarchChallenge and has provided 60,000 milkweed stems. Corteva planted pollinator habitat at many of its U.S. locations as part of its program, Corteva Grows Pollinator Habitat. Syngenta created Operation Pollinator, a global initiative that provides wildflower seed mixtures for pollinators, and Bayer established monarch habitat at 70 of its research and manufacturing sites.

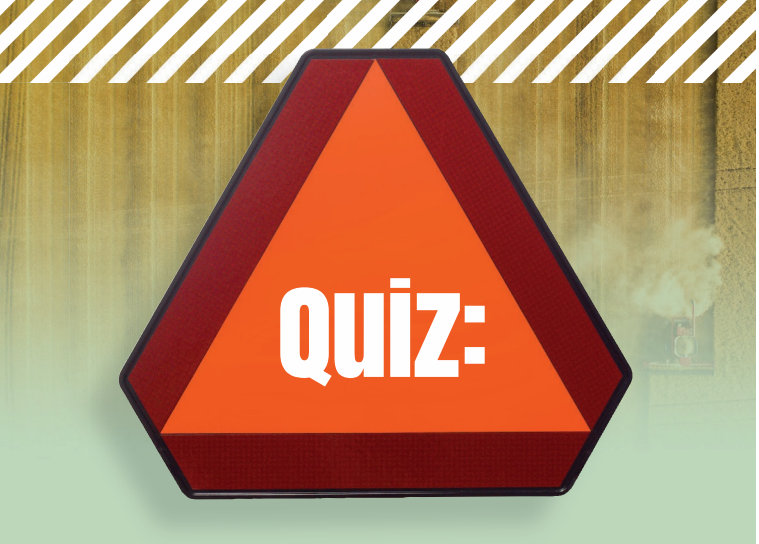
In addition to their individual efforts, the organizations recognized the potential to join together for an even bigger impact. "We need to have all hands on deck," says Corteva research scientist Chad Boeckman.

Caydee Savinelli, stewardship team and pollinator lead for Syngenta, hopes that spreading messages about the essential role pollinators play in the ecosystem, including agriculture, will encourage farmers to preserve and plant habitat for monarch butterflies.

"Farmers are good stewards of the land," Savinelli says. "It's about how we can work together to expand our reach by working with many stakeholders and getting more seeds in the ground, and that starts with learning to appreciate the work that pollinators do."



Photography: Getty Images, Chris Clor



Farm Safety Facts

How much do you know about farm safety? Take our quiz to learn more. Then visit CultivateSafety.org/work to find helpful guidelines for youth who work in agriculture.

1. The top three causes of fatalities among children on farms are machinery, motor vehicles and drowning.
   - ☐ True
   - ☐ False
2. Tractors cause only 10 percent of accidental farm deaths of children under 15.
   - ☐ True
   - ☐ False
3. The top three causes of injuries among children on farms are falls, animals and machinery/vehicles.
   - ☐ True
   - ☐ False
4. Statistics show that every day, 15 children are injured in an agriculture-related incident.
   - ☐ True
   - ☐ False
5. The number of ag-related youth worker fatalities is higher than all other industries combined.
   - ☐ True
   - ☐ False
6. About 60% of child ag-related injuries happen to children who are working on the farm.
   - ☐ True
   - ☐ False

Answers:

1. True

2. False. Tractors actually cause more than 40% of accidental farm deaths of children. It's best to keep kids away from tractors.

3. True

4. False. About 33 children are injured in an agriculture-related incident every day.

5. True

6. False. Actually, 60% of child ag-related injuries happen to children who are not working. It's important to keep young children out of the work site.

Photography: Getty Images, Robert Lowdon, g king

Advisor Advice

Regardless of what your school year will look like in the COVID-19 era, these five FFA advisors and National Teacher Ambassadors for FFA share tips for starting on the right foot.

– By Bev Flatt

"First things first: Enjoy the last bit of summer so you are relaxed and ready for the challenge of a new year. On the first day of school, wear an outfit that you feel confident in, and start the first day with an organized backpack and planner."

– Lily West, Texas FFA Association

"My best advice is to sign up or volunteer for as many things as possible – even if you're not sure what it will entail. This way, you will gain new experiences and you might even find something you really enjoy!"

– Hannah Everetts, Ohio FFA Association

"Take some time at the beginning of the year to develop an FFA bucket list, and then tell your advisors what your interests are. They can plug you into something that you will excel at. And, of course, do an FFA Official Dress check early!"

– Paryce Black, Virginia FFA Association

"If you are an upperclassman, make sure that you go out of your way to invite new members and students to functions. Attend chapter meetings. Volunteer during community service events. Take part in raising funds. Overall, be sure to stay involved."

– Brittany Davis, Tennessee FFA Association

"Give your teachers and classmates some grace as we transition to the new normal. We are all working together to figure out what will work the best. Events and activities may look different now, so here is your chance to start new traditions and make a positive impact on your chapter through new and innovative ideas."

– Jason Ferreira, California FFA Association

Scan this code and watch our video for even more advisor advice.

Thank You, Ag Teachers!
Also, hats off to all the agriculture teachers as they head back to school! Share your support on social media with the #TeachAg hashtag.



"My associate degree will be 100 percent paid for, thanks to my FFA scholarship and membership in my college's honors program," Medina says.

Earning to Learn

More than 600 different scholarships are available for FFA members. Could one make the difference in your education?

As part of its commitment to develop career success through agricultural education, the National FFA Foundation – with financial support from businesses and individuals –awards more than $2 million in postsecondary scholarships each year, including for trade schools and two-year programs. Applications for the 2021-22 National FFA Scholarship Program will open in November and close in January. Any FFA member currently enrolled as a senior in high school or as a freshman, sophomore or junior in college can apply. One single application enters you for multiple scholarship opportunities.

"Make applying for scholarships your most important thing," says Sarahi Medina, a 2020-21 recipient of a $2,000 John Deere scholarship. "Even if you think your chances are slim, you may actually get it, and it's a big help."

Medina, who served as reporter for the Buckeye FFA Chapter at Buckeye Union High School in Buckeye, Ariz., is entering her sophomore year at Estrella Mountain Community College in Avondale, Ariz., where she is majoring in animal science. She plans to transfer to the University of Arizona and pursue a career in food production.

"My associate degree will be 100 percent paid for, thanks to my FFA scholarship and membership in my college's honors program," Medina says. "It's been super helpful."

Learn more about FFA scholarships and apply at **FFA.org/scholarships.**

How to #SpeakAg With Consumers

In an era when consumers want to know where their food comes from and how it was grown or raised, we asked three #SpeakAg Ambassadors how to effectively communicate with consumers.

Q: Where do consumers get most of their information about agriculture?

A: In my experience, consumers get most of their information about agriculture from two main sources: personal experiences and the media. Personal experiences are very compelling and common in places like Iowa and other rural communities steeped in agricultural tradition. Even those of us who don't live on farms, myself included, most likely know someone who is directly connected to agriculture, or we see production agriculture in our everyday lives. However, roughly 80 percent of Americans live in urban areas, according to the last census, so many people aren't able to have these direct experiences because of where they live.

– **Grace Long, Iowa**

Q: What are some effective methods for communicating with consumers about food production and food safety?

A: Some examples are short, informative video clips that can be shared on social media platforms, shorter articles or fact posts about these topics, as well as in-person conversations with others. The way that you communicate with consumers varies depending on their agriculture background, age and other variables. You just have to assess your target audience and create an action plan for how you can best reach them!

– **Hope Showalter, Virginia**

Q: How do you prepare to share agriculture's story with consumers?

A: The best stories are the ones that you connect with. If you can find a way to tell agriculture's story in a way that has directly impacted you, it helps your audience develop a personal connection with agriculture. One of the best ways to achieve that is to look at it from their point of view. Once you understand why they feel the way they feel, you'll be able to bridge the gap between their beliefs and yours.

– **Devin Rossa, Arizona**

Do You #SpeakAg?
To learn more about agricultural literacy and advocacy, visit FFA.org/ag-literacy-and-advocacy.

Thank you to our Agricultural Literacy and Advocacy sponsors, Dominos, Merck, Bayer, Growth Energy, Smithfield and Valent.

Photography: Celeste Carbajal Photography

NATIONAL FFA OFFICER

Question & Answer

The National FFA organization is always evolving to best serve its members. What excites you about the future of FFA?



Kolesen McCoy

NATIONAL FFA PRESIDENT

I envision all students enrolled in agricultural education with both the invitation and ability to experience a journey in our organization they can call their own. I envision an organization dedicated to serving all individuals and bridging relationships to their communities. This is the FFA of the 21st century. This is the organization of tomorrow, and I am humbled to witness it today.



Kourtney Lehman

NATIONAL FFA SECRETARY

There is a list of items that excite me about the future of FFA, but the top of the list will always be the array of backgrounds and experiences brought to this organization by its diverse membership. Having members from rural and urban communities allows us to unite the various spectrums of agriculture, as well as learn from the stories and talents of individuals nationwide.



Yomar Romann

SOUTHERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT

The thing that excites me most about the future of FFA is how our organization is always adapting and changing for good so we can meet the needs of our members and the people around them. As our name suggests, we work in the present for the future.



Tess Seibel

EASTERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT

One thing that really excites me is how our organization continues to ask questions about how we can stay relevant today while remembering the roots that we were founded on. In a fast-changing world, the values and mission of our organization remain steadfast, while we challenge ourselves to adapt to the current needs of our membership and stakeholders.



Mamie Hertel

CENTRAL REGION VICE PRESIDENT

When we zip up the blue jacket, we feel a sense of belonging. Each year, new people get to experience that feeling and become part of a community that encourages personal growth. In the future, I'm looking forward to seeing members carry on the rich traditions we've developed as an organization and create their own traditions. I'm excited to see how members live out their passions and purposes in their own unique ways.

LEARNING TO DO,

DOING TO LEARN,

EARNING TO LIVE,

LIVING TO SERVE.

– FFA Motto

Photography: Copyright © FFA

AG 101

The Buzz About Honeybees

By John Walter

Honeybees have a huge job in U.S. agriculture. Their pollination of more than 100 crops is critical on farms from coast to coast, and it is worth more than $15 billion in added value, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In recent years, beekeepers have faced tough, new challenges in keeping their hives healthy and working. Check out these facts about bees, hives and how you can get involved.

Stable Numbers

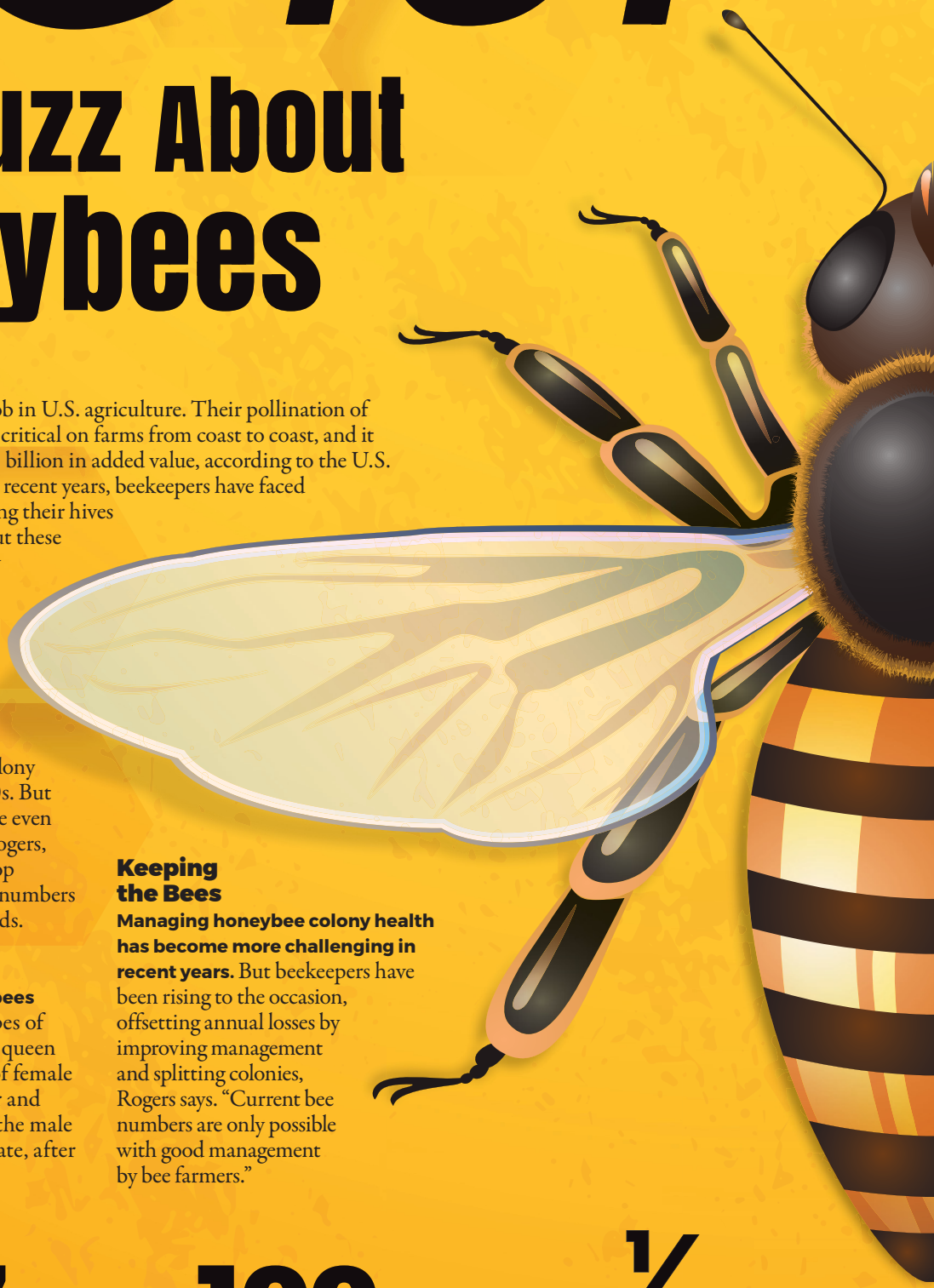
Beginning in the mid-1980s, honeybee colonies began a worrisome decline due to various pest and management challenges. Winter colony losses doubled in the mid-2000s. But numbers have stabilized and are even increasing slightly, says Dick Rogers, bee care manager for Bayer Crop Science. In some states, colony numbers have grown dramatically, he adds.

Inside the Hive

An average of 50,000 honeybees live in a single hive. Three types of honeybees exist there: the one queen who lays eggs, the thousands of female worker bees who gather nectar and pollen and tend the hive, and the male drones who do nothing but mate, after which, they die.

Keeping the Bees

Managing honeybee colony health has become more challenging in recent years. But beekeepers have been rising to the occasion, offsetting annual losses by improving management and splitting colonies, Rogers says. "Current bee numbers are only possible with good management by bee farmers."



2.67
million
Number of honeybee colonies in the U.S. last year

100
pounds
How much honey a colony can produce in a year

1/12
teaspoon
Amount of honey produced by a foraging honeybee in her lifetime

Illustrations: background, filo. Honeybee, vericika. Getty Images

Print a Poster:
Scan this code with your phone's camera to download this art as a print-ready poster.



Learn About Beekeeping

Beekeeping can be a fun, exciting hobby or a supervised agricultural experience (SAE), and it's a great way to learn more about nature and agriculture. Most of the 125,000 beekeepers in the U.S. are hobbyists with fewer than 25 hives.

Related career paths can be found at **AgExplorer.FFA.org.**

Teachers: Visit **FFA.org** to download an SAE beekeeping lesson plan.

On the Road

Many colonies of honeybees are trucked around the country to pollinate crops. The work begins in February, when colonies arrive in California. Next, they travel to Florida, then through the Southeast, wrapping up in the Northeast U.S. in late June and early July.

Dancing in the Dark

After successfully foraging for nectar and pollen, a honeybee does a waggle dance to show other bees the location of food it has found. In the dance, done in a dark hive, a bee maps the direction of food relative to its angle to the sun and distance to the hive.

Wild Bees Work, Too

While the European honeybee is the main managed pollinator, native bees play a big role in U.S. food crops. There are some 4,000 species of bees native to the U.S. They are superior at pollinating native plants, such as blueberries, cherries and pumpkins. Wild bees can be encouraged by planting a diversity of native plants to provide pollen and nectar sources.

What Farmers Can Do

Farmers can play a big role in helping keep honeybee hives healthy. Good practices include communicating with beekeepers, managing land for biodiversity and sustainability, following pesticide labels and avoiding treatment of bee-attracting plants when bees are foraging.

2
million
Number of flowers foragers need to harvest to make 1 pound of honey

6
miles
How far a honeybee can travel in a trip

15
mph
Estimated flight speed of a honeybee

ADVOCATING *for* AG EDUCATION

This Wyoming education official uses her platform to support FFA and agricultural education.

– By Jessica Walker Boehm



Wyoming superintendent of public instruction Jillian Balow is committed to promoting ag education.

Serving as the Wyoming superintendent of public instruction since 2015, Jillian Balow plays an important role in the state's public education system, and she's doing her part to ensure agricultural education is at the forefront.

Balow, a fifth-generation Wyomingite, did not grow up on a farm, but her father did. He instilled in her a deep appreciation for agriculture, and she was active in 4-H as a young girl. Balow has helped pass that appreciation on to her children, Paiton and Jack, and she says watching them thrive in FFA has reinforced her commitment to promoting ag education.

Jack, who will enter ninth grade this fall, has already been involved with FFA in middle school, and he plans to continue his involvement in high school. Paiton, now 20 years old and a member of the U.S. Army, was in the Frontier FFA in Cheyenne during her entire high school career — a transformative experience from start to finish, according to Balow.

"Paiton had an incredible passion for FFA, and it was a huge part of her life as well as our family's life," Balow says. "She raised pigs and cattle, served as her chapter's reporter, and earned her State FFA Degree. Along with meeting new friends and mentors, she developed skills and learned lessons that will serve her throughout her life. FFA changed her entire trajectory, and her father and I couldn't be more thankful."

Although both of her children have enjoyed raising livestock and taking part in the traditional FFA activities, Balow says she sees great value in all aspects of the organization. She points to the unique ways in which FFA can help young people grow their confidence and develop leadership skills, and as a result, she is using her platform in another role. As national president of the Council of Chief State School Officers, Balow can advocate for FFA and ag education on a much larger scale.

Balow says she hopes she can inspire other education leaders to develop or enhance FFA programs in their respective communities and spread the message that FFA is for every young person, regardless of their proximity to a farm.

"Part of my mission is to make sure all students know that no matter where they live — whether in a city or a more rural area — they can be in FFA and reap all the benefits," Balow says. "There are so many opportunities in FFA, from ag business and communications to animal science and horticulture, and I want to dispel the myth that FFA is only about farming. It's about leadership, relationships, being active in your community and giving back, and being part of something bigger than yourself."

"There are so many opportunities in FFA, from ag business and communications to animal science and horticulture, and I want to dispel the myth that FFA is only about farming. It's about leadership, relationships, being active in your community and giving back, and being part of something bigger than yourself."

– Jillian Balow

Photography: Courtesy Wyoming Department of Education

BULRUSH IN THE BAYOU

THE SPRINGFIELD FFA CHAPTER IS HELPING TO RESTORE LOUISIANA WETLANDS.

– By Jodi Helmer

Every June, a group of Springfield High School students pulls on rubber boots and steps into the swamps near Springfield, La., with burlap bags filled with California bulrush reeds. Their goal: Plant thousands of native grasses to restore habitat, combat erosion and protect coastal communities from the effects of wind and water.

"The marshes play a big role in our communities," says Springfield High School senior and FFA member Micaela Bono.

> "It was a great opportunity for us to start from an idea and develop it into a program," Dylan Fontenot says.

The Springfield FFA Chapter received a $1,200 grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service to start the project in 2016. Students established California bulrush, a native perennial that thrives in wetland marshes, in their school greenhouse and planted the mature grasses in local wetlands.

The program started as a partnership with Louisiana State University and has since morphed into a standalone program that focuses on wetland restoration projects in Springfield and surrounding communities. Students learn about coastal wetlands and their role in the ecosystem in a hands-on way.

"It was a great opportunity for us to start from an idea and develop it into a program," says Springfield FFA member Dylan Fontenot. "It's important that students get some knowledge about wetlands to truly understand why we're doing this."

The Springfield FFA Chapter partners with local community groups to coordinate annual restoration projects. Conservationists choose the sites and monitor plant growth over time, and the fire department transports students into the swamps on boats and oversees water safety.

Bono admits that it's a little stressful knowing that snakes and alligators could be lurking beneath the waters in the bayou, but focusing on the task — driving the point of a short, sharp shovel into the ground and planting California bulrush reeds in each hole — is a good distraction. During the 2019 field day, the Springfield chapter planted 10,000 California bulrush weeds.

"It's not the easiest task, but it's so worth it to know that we're making a difference in our community," she says.

Wetlands restoration projects have become popular with Louisiana FFA chapters, according to Kendra Keen, agriscience teacher and Springfield FFA advisor. She estimates six chapters have started similar programs in the last five years.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the chapter to cancel its 2020 restoration project. However, members plan to be back in the swamps next summer to establish more native grasses and restore wetland habitats.

"If you're an FFA chapter in the bayou, it's expected — just like FFA chapters in Texas are expected to show cattle," Keen says. "We have to be out there because the community needs us."



The Springfield FFA Chapter partners with local community groups to coordinate annual restoration projects.



Springfield High School students step into Louisiana swamps to plant native grasses and restore habitat, combat erosion and protect coastal communities.



During the 2019 field day, the Springfield FFA Chapter planted 10,000 California bulrush weeds. It's not the easiest task, members say, but it's worth it.

Photography: Courtesy Kendra Keen



Urban Ag Oasis

A hands-on approach to learning gives city students from **Des Moines, Iowa,** career insights, employable skills and leadership opportunities through FFA.

By Beth Eslinger

Photography by
Dan Videtich



Des Moines
FFA member
Paige Baney



A leader in grain production and home to innovators such as John Deere, Corteva Agriscience, Kemin Industries, the World Food Prize, FarmHer and more, Iowa is deep-seated in agriculture and rural experiences. While FFA in Iowa has commonly focused on rural communities, the trend today is urban. With new chapters in some of the state's largest cities and a significant growth in the Des Moines FFA (within the state's largest population center at 645,000), the FFA tenets of leadership and career development are resonating with urban youth.

Within the past year and into the coming year, seven chapters have started or will start in some of the largest schools in the state, including Sioux City and Ames. "Ag education interest in Iowa in our population centers is encouraging," says Iowa FFA Association Executive Director Scott Johnson. In the past decade, FFA membership has grown 30 percent in the state, says Johnson, with current participation at 16,000.

What draws urban students to take agriculture classes and become FFA members? The reasons are as varied as the students, but, in most cases, the opportunity to learn about land and livestock inside the city limits is too interesting and accessible to pass up.

Diverse Ag Experiences

In the Des Moines FFA Chapter (a female-majority group that is one-third ethnic minorities), the focus is preparing the next generation of geneticists, veterinarians, scientists and more through hands-on learning. The chapter, which began in 1975, has seen consistent growth over the past four years. "Because our members don't come from farm backgrounds," says FFA advisor and animal science teacher Kevin Anderson, "we're not heavy into traditional production agriculture." Those lessons are taught, though.

Ag education students come from seven area high schools to study current issues in the state and beyond. "We participate very much in nontraditional events," says Anderson, who is an FFA alumnus from central Iowa. Recent science fair projects at the city and state levels had members researching cognitive abilities in bonobos (the renowned Ape Cognition and Conservation Initiative is located nearby and studies bonobos), tracking consumer greenhouse trends, making a wind turbine to check energy output and analyzing egg nutritional values. A winter 2020 competition had members exploring the complexities of the cattle industry through role-playing as a grower, environmentalist, fast-food franchise owner and low-income mother. Meetups with state legislators and Iowa's governor, Kim Reynolds, provide opportunities for chapter members to discuss current issues and develop communication skills. Horse-judging competitions offer additional growth opportunities.

During their monthly meetings, FFA members talk about activities, competitions, legislative symposiums, swine and egg judging and more. "We come together to grow relationships; we all have to be informed," says chapter reporter Emma Ashton. Passionate about photography, Ashton is currently working on a visual look book for her chapter to inspire city youth about agriculture. She's also researching the ways fire affects the safety of animals at zoos and conservation centers through a World Food Prize junior competition.

Members looking for traditional farming experiences can find those through the program too. In 2020, 45% of FFA members here raised animals, including sheep, goats, chickens and rabbits. "We do from birth to finish," Anderson says. "Kids get to see every step of the animal." Last year, member and current high school senior James Hughes won the Grand Champion Laying Bird, a barred rock breed. This year, Ashton raised a



Top: Emma Ashton and Jocelynn Holman work at the school's 11-acre ag facility. Bottom: Natalie Royce and Silvia Poore water plants in the school's greenhouse. Opposite: Lauren Chayet pauses with poultry.



In 2020,

45%

of FFA members here raised animals, including sheep, goats, chickens and rabbits.



Above: Bailey Smith feeds the goats at the ag facility. Opposite: The school's greenhouse brims with plants and pops of color.

meat goat kid for the fair. It was her second year showing animals.

Members also have an opportunity for community outreach with their animals and through volunteerism through the Des Moines FFA Chapter.

At a local grocery store last fall, several FFA members promoted pork grown by area youth by handing out samples, cookbooks and meat thermometers from the Iowa Pork Producers. The students who raised the pigs donated one to a local food bank; the remaining 11 pigs were sold at a local grocery.

Members have also packaged dry food for Meals from the Heartland, which serves lower-income residents throughout the nation and across the globe, and they have made fleece blankets for the city's Ronald McDonald House.

"Through the FFA program, students saw what they liked and were able to create more experiences for themselves," says senior and first-year member Eva Button.

Buzzing With Life

The Des Moines FFA Chapter is available through the Des Moines Public Schools' Environmental & Agricultural Sciences Academy. Students from five Des Moines schools and two suburban schools bus each day to an 11-acre farm on the city's south side to attend horticulture and animal science classes.

The ag facility buzzes with life. Free-range chickens greet visitors with their inquisitive looks; ewes poke heads through the fence while lambs trail behind; bees hover among fruit trees as they pollinate; and greenhouses brim with tomato and pepper seedlings and annuals blooming in the hottest colors. A new animal science building houses aquaculture tanks for raising tilapia. A greenhouse gives students experiences with hydroponics and allows them to harvest greens and cucumbers for salad days prepared during class. Students spend time handling animals (including mucking out stalls), transplanting seedlings in the greenhouse, testing soil samples and identifying trees in the nearby woods.

Internships with local businesses, such as turf management at a golf course adjacent to the ag facility, give students additional hands-on opportunities. Additionally, students working and volunteering in ag- and food-related jobs, such as grocery stores and the zoo, can gain college credit for their efforts. Many Des Moines FFA members pursue agricultural jobs due to their experience.

"I've always had a passion for horses. I wanted to be an equine vet," says Ashton, noting it's difficult to find large-animal specialists in the city. "I decided to broaden the spectrum," she adds, to work with more than horses. "The classes helped me solidify that I want to go into the ag career path."

For Button, it was her passion for plants that piqued her interest in the academy and FFA. Based on her work potting poinsettias, cloning plants, making cuttings and maintaining the hydroponic system, she is planning a career in plant genetics and attending Iowa State University in the fall. •

AG IN ACTION

Both the horticulture and animal science departments through the Des Moines Public Schools' Environmental & Agricultural Sciences Academy give students real-life opportunities to run businesses.

Each spring, the FFA plant sale raises about $75,000. All the proceeds stay in the ag education department and provide student enrichment. In 2019, second-year students were awarded a free trip to Thailand.

As part of their curriculum, students learn the science behind the plants they grow and identification basics. Most years, they work the sales floor, helping customers with their selections. This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, horticulture and environmental science teacher Craig Nelson worked with adult volunteers on a drive-up and virtual sale.

Later in the year, a small on-site, student-run grocery store will sell pork, lamb, chickens, honey and more produced at the urban farm. The students are responsible for setting up the store, including hours, pricing and staffing. The store will also feature goods made by students of other Des Moines Public Schools career-training programs, including T-shirts created by graphic design students and signs fabricated by the welding class. A local business, Fareway Meat & Grocery, contributed $30,000 for the store and is serving as a model for the store setup.


Pericallis

HOW TO BECOME THE GOLD STANDARD

These five tips can help you earn the coveted American FFA Degree.

– By Jessica Walker Boehm

Earning the American FFA Degree, the highest degree achievable in the National FFA Organization, is no easy feat. Members must participate in FFA at the local and state levels, obtain the State FFA Degree, complete at least 50 hours of community service, maintain good grades — and that's just a sampling of what's required.

That may sound overwhelming, but it doesn't have to be. Read on for five tips for becoming the gold standard in FFA from William Gaspard, a former member of the Louisiana School for the Agricultural Sciences FFA who will receive his American FFA Degree this year.



"It's much easier to stay motivated and keep pushing forward when you're excited about what you're doing."

1. PURSUE YOUR PASSION.

Gaspard, who is currently working toward a degree in agricultural leadership, development and communications at Louisiana State University (LSU), encourages FFA members to funnel their passions into their supervised agricultural experiences (SAE) and community service endeavors.

> **"It's much easier to stay motivated and keep pushing forward when you're excited about what you're doing," Gaspard says.**

2. DARE TO BE DIFFERENT.

If a typical SAE doesn't interest you, Gaspard says to think outside the box and get creative.

> **"I've written articles and press releases, produced social media content, edited websites and created a blog focused on agricultural advocacy. Essentially, I have used my voice and skills to connect consumers with the ag industry," says Gaspard, who completed SAEs in agricultural communications, served as a public relations intern for the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation, and is now an Extension and communications intern for the LSU College of Agriculture.**

3. STAY ORGANIZED.

As you complete projects on your journey to earn the American FFA Degree, keep your records updated and in easy reach.

> **"When you're applying for the American FFA Degree, you want to make sure you can show how you've grown and what you have achieved over the years," Gaspard says. "You may forget some of what you've done, so it's helpful to go to one spot and review your accomplishments."**

4. PRIORITIZE WHAT'S IMPORTANT.

Gaspard suggests maximizing your time by eliminating unnecessary activities and keeping your goals at the forefront of your mind.

> **"I had to make sacrifices to earn the American FFA Degree," Gaspard says. "I made the time to pursue it because I knew it would help me become a better person and get me closer to my long-term goals."**

5. PRESENT YOURSELF IN A POSITIVE LIGHT.

Be aware of your public persona, Gaspard says, and stay conscious of what you're representing when posting on social media and spending time in your community.

> **"Have a clear understanding of your personal brand, and remember that your actions will determine how you are perceived," Gaspard says.**

Learn more about the American FFA Degree, including eligibility requirements and application information, at **FFA.org/participate/awards/american-ffa-degree**.

A special thanks to our American FFA Degree sponsors, CASE IH, Elanco and Syngenta.

Photography: Courtesy William Gaspard

WHERE BRIGHT MINDS

meet big ideas.

2020–2021 FFA LOOK BOOK



SHOP FFA



COZY IN CARHARTT®

Create connections that build community.

Browse this and more at ShopFFA.org.

FFA members know: The friends and mentors you find in this organization will shape your perspective, your future and your life forever. We're proud to represent FFA in the actions we take and in the clothes we wear, because being in FFA means being part of something bigger than yourself. And that's something worth sharing.

20% OFF
THE FFA CARHARTT® JACKET
Now through Oct. 15, 2020
Visit ShopFFA.org for details

2019–2020 NATIONAL FFA OFFICERS

Kolesen McCoy
President. Ohio.

Kourtney Lehman
Secretary. Oregon.

Tess Seibel
Eastern Region Vice President. Virginia.

Yomar Roman
Southern Region Vice President. Puerto Rico.

Mamie Hertel
Central Region Vice President. Montana.

Respecting our earth. Respecting each other.

While our members share a set of core values and a commitment to our mission, we also honor each student as an individual. Tess Seibel, 2019-2020 National FFA Eastern Region Vice President, reflects on how this perspective has shaped her mindset and pushed her to grow as a person.



MV Sport® For the Future For All Blanket
$39.50 | 03008
personalization available



For the Future For All Hoodie
$29.50 | HOOD20 | S–5X



For the Future For All Tee
$24.50 | 02970 | S–2X



2020-2021 Annual Tee
$12.50 | TEE20 | S–5X

MINDSET MATTERS

"Every member who is in FFA is unique. We have all had different experiences, challenges and moments in our lives that shape us into who we are. To make the unique impact that we're meant to, though, we have to embrace every piece of ourselves and our stories, and know that everything that we've been through has given us a unique story that needs to be shared."

Becoming What the World Needs Next

20% off logo gear now through Oct. 15, 2020. | Visit ShopFFA.org for additional color options.



FFA Split Logo Gear Tee
$12.50 | 02585-03 | S–2X



Lettermark Logo Gear Tee
$12.50 | 02953-50 | S–2X



FFA Stripe Logo Gear Tee
$12.50 | 02951-40 | S–5X



FFA Split Logo Gear Hoodie
$29.50 | 02586-32 | S–2X



Lettermark Logo Gear Hoodie
$34.50 | 02954-40 | S–2X



FFA Stripe Logo Gear Hoodie
$29.50 | 02952-71 | S–2X



Blue 84 FFA Icons Tee
$19.50 | 02992 | S–2X

Image One® Filled Letters Tee
$29.50 | 02996 | S–2X

Overreacting Beakers Tee
$17.50 | 02961 | S–2X

Herd That Tee
$15.50 | 02590 | S–2X

Goat to Be Kidding Me Tee
$17.50 | 02957 | S–2X

The FFA way.

Learning from the land gives us a close-up of nature: how it works, what we can learn from it and how we can sustain it for centuries to come.





Image One® FFA Stripe Circle Tee
$19.50 | 02955 | S–2X

Blue 84 Ombré Fields Tee
$19.50 | 02965 | S–2X

Image One® Script Forever Blue Tee
$19.50 | 02988 | S–2X

MV Sport® FFA Tie-Dye Tee
$17.50 | 02966 | S–2X

THIS LAND TEACHES US THINGS WE COULD NEVER LEARN IN A CLASSROOM. FROM THE FIELDS TO THE WATERS AND EVERYWHERE IN BETWEEN, NATURE ALWAYS LEADS THE WAY.

Image One® Students of the Land Tee
$29.50 | 02968 | S–2X

Blue 84 Distressed Diamond Tee
$29.50 | 02975 | S–2X

Blue 84 Rolling Fields Tee
$34.50 | 02973 | S–2X

What it means to wear FFA.

Long days. Late nights. Years of dedication. By wearing these three letters, you're representing the work you've put in to become the person you are today. So go ahead, wear FFA.



Image One® We Are FFA Tee
$29.50 | 02969 | S–3X



Vice President Tee
$15.50 | 02568-06 | S–2X



Camp David® Lettermark Tie-Dye Hoodie
$44.50 | 03003 | S–2X



MV Sport® FFA Emblem Crew
$34.50 | 02981 | S–2X



FFA Senior Tee
$15.50 | 02212 | S–3X



Blue 84 Pattern Circle Tee
$34.50 | 02998 | S–2X



Camp David® Lettermark Tek Quarter Zip
$44.50 | 02979 | S–2X



Image One® FFA Mom Tee
$19.50 | 02989 | S–2X



FFA Tie-Dye Tee
$29.50 | 02997 | S–2X



Flipped Text Box Tee
$17.50 | 02958 | S–2X

FROM THE COVER

Back cover
MV Sport® FFA Sarge Hoodie
$39.50 | 02983 | S–2X

Camp David® Forever Blue Varsity Hoodie
$44.50 | 03002 | S–2X

Camp David® Distressed FFA Tee
$24.50 | 02987 | S–2X

Front Cover
FFA Flag Tee
$24.50 | 02971 | S–2X

For the Future For All Hoodie
$29.50 | HOOD20 | S–5X



TIPS TO ESTABLISH YOUR SAE

Universal tips from FFA members to help you succeed in a supervised agricultural experience — no matter the topic.

This past year, YouTube was listed as the second-most popular search engine on the internet. As video content becomes more compelling, finding resources and inspiration for your supervised agricultural experience (SAE) is as simple as watching some of the nearly 100 FFA video resources on SAEforAll.org. Check out how other FFA members are living this circle of the agricultural education model.

When you fall off the horse, get back on again.

"Keep trying. It's going to be hard to start out. Make sure you have the support behind you who help pick you up when you're feeling down and help you succeed in your SAE project."

— **Abbey Rinker, Strasburg FFA Chapter, Va., Horse Showing SAE**

Think beyond your years in FFA.

"Fly fishing to me is something I'll be doing my entire life … I think that is important — to find a project that can be something we can do our whole lives."

— **Dylan Gonzales, Los Lunas FFA Chapter, N.M., Fly Tying SAE**

Pay your project forward.

"Make sure it is something you love doing and is something you would want to share and help others spark their interests, get them started on their SAEs, or to teach them about your interests."

— **Keegan Humm, Breckenridge FFA Chapter, Mich., Implement Dealership SAE**

Don't let any resources go to "waste."

"I didn't know what to do with the chicken manure from my project. I looked up videos on what to do with it. I made a compost pile and, later, I planted tomatoes."

— **Ja'Kolbie Jones, Clarke Central FFA Chapter, Ga., Backyard Chickens SAE**

Time is of the essence.

"This SAE affects my future because I plan to pursue a career working in marine life, specifically salt water. So being able to have the experience working with a saltwater animal now in high school is really going to benefit me in the future."

—**Hannah Colonese, Sound School – New Haven FFA Chapter, Conn., Ctenophore SAE**

Think beyond the barn.

"If you are living in the city, know that an SAE doesn't have to be limited to working on a farm. I worked with my own animals before I began working at a pet shop."

— **Denisha Washington, Seneca FFA Chapter, Ky., Pet Store SAE**

Climb to new heights.

"Find something that is super extraordinary. Stick with it and don't give up. This is my chance or opportunity to help people."

— **Jacob Reed, Durant FFA Chapter, Fla., Drones in Agriculture SAE**

Make hay while the sun shines.

"Do your own thing and forge your own path. Do what makes you happy and what will put you a step ahead in the world and start your future."

— **Rebeka Newburn, Bullard FFA Chapter, Texas, Forage Production SAE**



a future for all

Let's grow more leaders by embracing our differences.

By Jami Stall • Illustrations by Lauren Crow

The summer of 2020 will be tied forever to both the COVID-19 pandemic and the worldwide marches and protests for social justice. The demonstrations raised our awareness of the importance of diversity, inclusion and equity — and all the places they're lacking.

For years, FFA has sought to grow more in these areas. The organization took root in 1928 as a place that provided a sense of belonging for youth in farming. Nearly a century later, steps toward broader accessibility and inclusion have been taken. But it is fundamentally clear that FFA must continue the progress and take greater steps to remain relevant to students today.

Since 2018, an initiative underway by the National FFA Organization and the National Association of Agricultural Educators has sought to celebrate the diversity of students and educators in agricultural education. The initiative, called Agricultural Education for All, will provide results-orientated training to students, teachers and advisors alike.

As this initiative rolls out, *FFA New Horizons* will play a significant role. To kick things off, we're highlighting three FFA members willing to share some of their experiences to promote understanding and awareness.

Sean Neal: On Being Treated Like Everyone Else

Former chapter officer, state officer, national officer candidate and president of his FFA alumni chapter, Sean Neal, a graduate of Washington State University, currently works in finance at an ag retailer in Washington. He's also an author and motivational speaker. Neal points to far more blessings than burdens in his life's experiences, including those in FFA.

As a child, Neal endured multiple surgeries and tremendous physical and emotional pain due to a neuromuscular disease; **he's used a wheelchair since he was 6**. Yet, as a teen, joining FFA afforded Neal the chance to experience being a teammate and the thrill of competing (and winning) among peers.

"Without the opportunity to play sports, I didn't have an outlet where I could express my fierce competitive nature, but FFA provided me that opportunity," Neal says. "Being able to compete on an equal playing field was something I really appreciated, and my advisor was always supportive. Never hesitating, he was always like, 'We'll figure out how to do it.'

"Since a very young age, I've just wanted to be treated like everyone else and not have people see me as a person in a wheelchair, but rather see me as a fellow classmate and a fellow member of the team."

As for his advice to others in FFA, Neal says empathy and understanding go a long way in creating an inclusive environment.

"People didn't maybe realize just what it took for me to show up at school every day with my clothes on straight or that I was in my wheelchair correctly," he says. "Most students just get up, take a shower, eat breakfast, put on their clothes and get going. But when you're in a wheelchair, all that, in and of itself, can be a feat. You have to rely on a lot of other people for help."

Not all struggles are visible, Neal reminds.

"We all have disabilities in one form or another. Some of us are just a lot better at hiding them," he explains. "I happen to be just the opposite. Everybody can see my wheelchair. Not everyone can see someone's depression or anxiety or brokenness at home or whatever it may be. I think we should try to understand and recognize that things go on outside of school. You just don't know what baggage someone's carrying."

He says having empathy is part of being a good leader, and that FFA members should look out for others within their chapter, think of ways to connect with them and draw them into the group. "We all have different gifts or callings that we're good at," Neal says. "Treat the people with disabilities or differences just like you would anybody else and get to know who they are."

HG Mann: On Role Models and Realities

Former chapter and state officer at Salem County Career and Technical High School FFA in New Jersey and past state alumni president, HG Mann now runs the state officer selection process for New Jersey's state convention as its State Alumni Leadership chair.

"During the summer of 2019, I facilitated the Washington Leadership Conference, which was a super-rad experience," Mann says, recalling reservations leading up to it. "Living in close proximity for an entire summer with 12 other people I didn't know very well was concerning. Having experienced the FFA world in the past and knowing the proclivities and inclinations of a lot of the other people, I'm thinking **I was fairly justified in being nervous going into those scenarios as a non-binary transgender person.**

"But the staff I worked with was absolutely incredible. It wasn't just because they had to; they did it because they genuinely saw me for who I identify as. I didn't think I would ever get to experience this in an FFA environment. It also served to create a supportive and inclusive environment for our students over the summer."

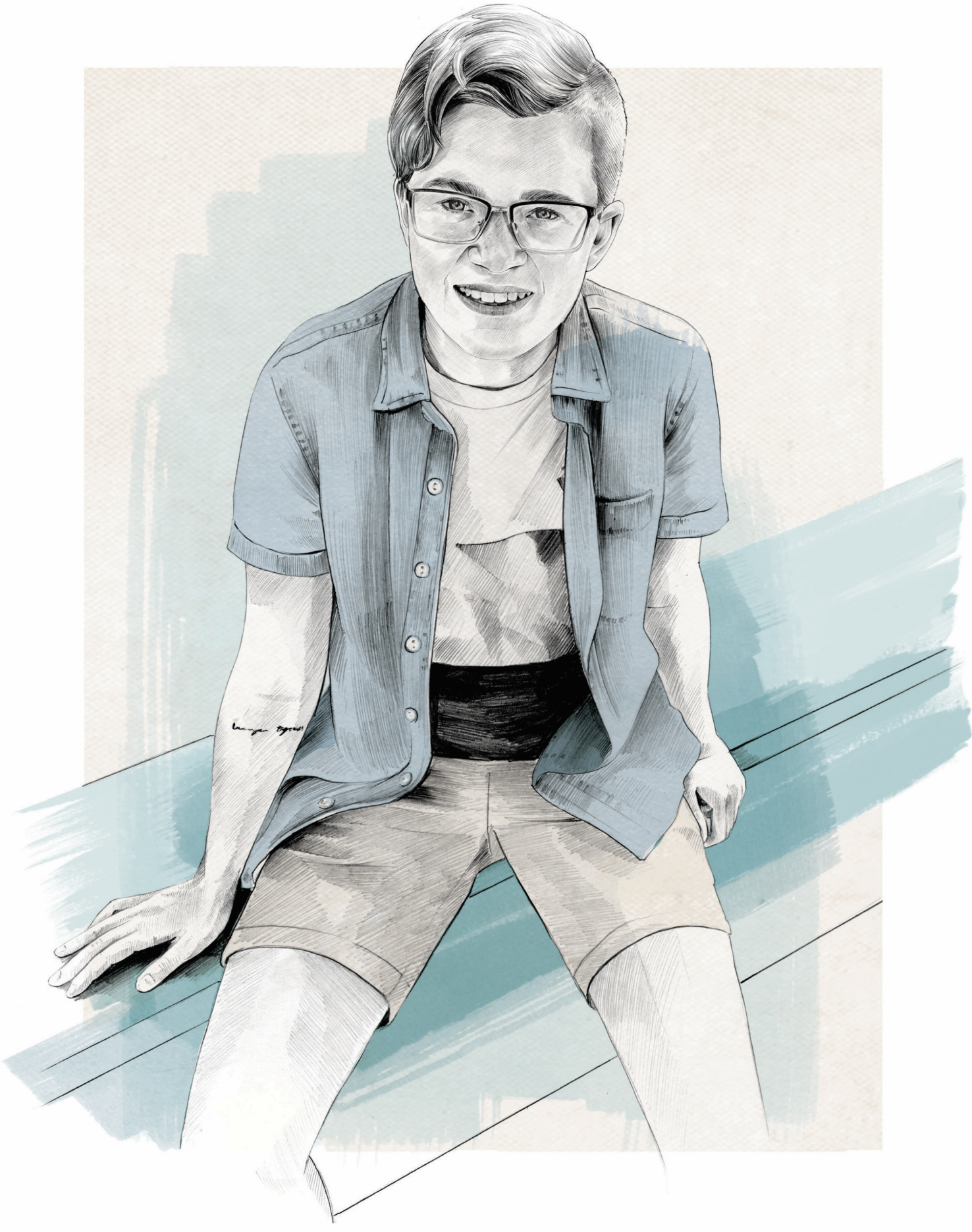
Mann believes it's important for youth to have allies and role models who understand them. "I know some people talk about how they have an experience where they see someone, whether it's in FFA or in another part of life, and they think 'that person is like me, so I can do this.' But there were never any state officers, national officers, national facilitators or anyone like that who looked, acted or felt anything like me."

The students are out there; teachers need the training to teach them, says Mann. "I've seen the kids that this affects. I've met the closeted queer kids who can't come out in their communities. I've met kids getting bullied by other kids at conferences for the way they look or dress and their orientation. I've met the kids searching for people who look like them. Those kids are out there, and they want to be in FFA," Mann says. "The focus needs to be creating environments where those students can thrive, because they want to be there, and they're hungry for the resources and the opportunities of FFA — we just need to highlight them."

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION FOR ALL

Agricultural Education for All is a joint partnership of the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) and the National FFA Organization, with the goal of ensuring that all in agricultural education feel welcome, safe and celebrated as their authentic selves.

The Agricultural Education for All platform, which has been three years in the making, seeks to build an atmosphere of empathy, self-awareness and respect through educator and student training; research and data collection; assessment of organizational policies, program and practices; implementation of policy, program and practice improvements; development of timely and appropriate resources and tools; and ongoing collaboration with inclusion, diversity and equity experts. To learn more, visit **FFA.org/diversity-and-inclusion/** and **NAAE.org/agriculturaleducationforall/index.cfm.**



Jasmine Coates: On Fitting In and Finding One's Self

Former chapter secretary and treasurer at North Harford High School FFA, FFA state secretary and FFA collegiate member of Delaware Valley University, Jasmine Coates confidently shared with an auditorium full of FFA members how she finally quit trying to live up to society's expectations for her. During her retiring address at the Delaware state FFA convention, Coates spoke of being one's authentic self, because she found her voice and herself through FFA.

"I used to be terrified of public speaking, and I was originally really shy and quiet. Going into high school was really a weird time for me," Coates says. "But once I got into FFA, it seemed like I fit in more, and the more I started competing in speaking competitions and trying to push myself, the more comfortable I felt in who I was as a person. FFA definitely helped me figure out more about myself."

Coates says being biracial and a minority in a white community, and going to schools with very little racial diversity, exposed her to occasional racial comments or jokes. Often, she would laugh along or otherwise deflect them. Even last year in college, friends jokingly called her "gray, the color that comes from mixing black and white," she recalls.

"I realized that even though my friends weren't trying to be mean to me, what they were saying was wrong. I said, 'I know you didn't mean anything by it, but do you mind not calling me that? I don't like how it makes me feel,'" Coates says. Enlightened and apologetic, they obliged, which she finds promising.

"I think making sure the new generation is educated on how to properly address race and gender will help, and hopefully, the younger people can continue to influence older generations that may have been brought up differently," she says.

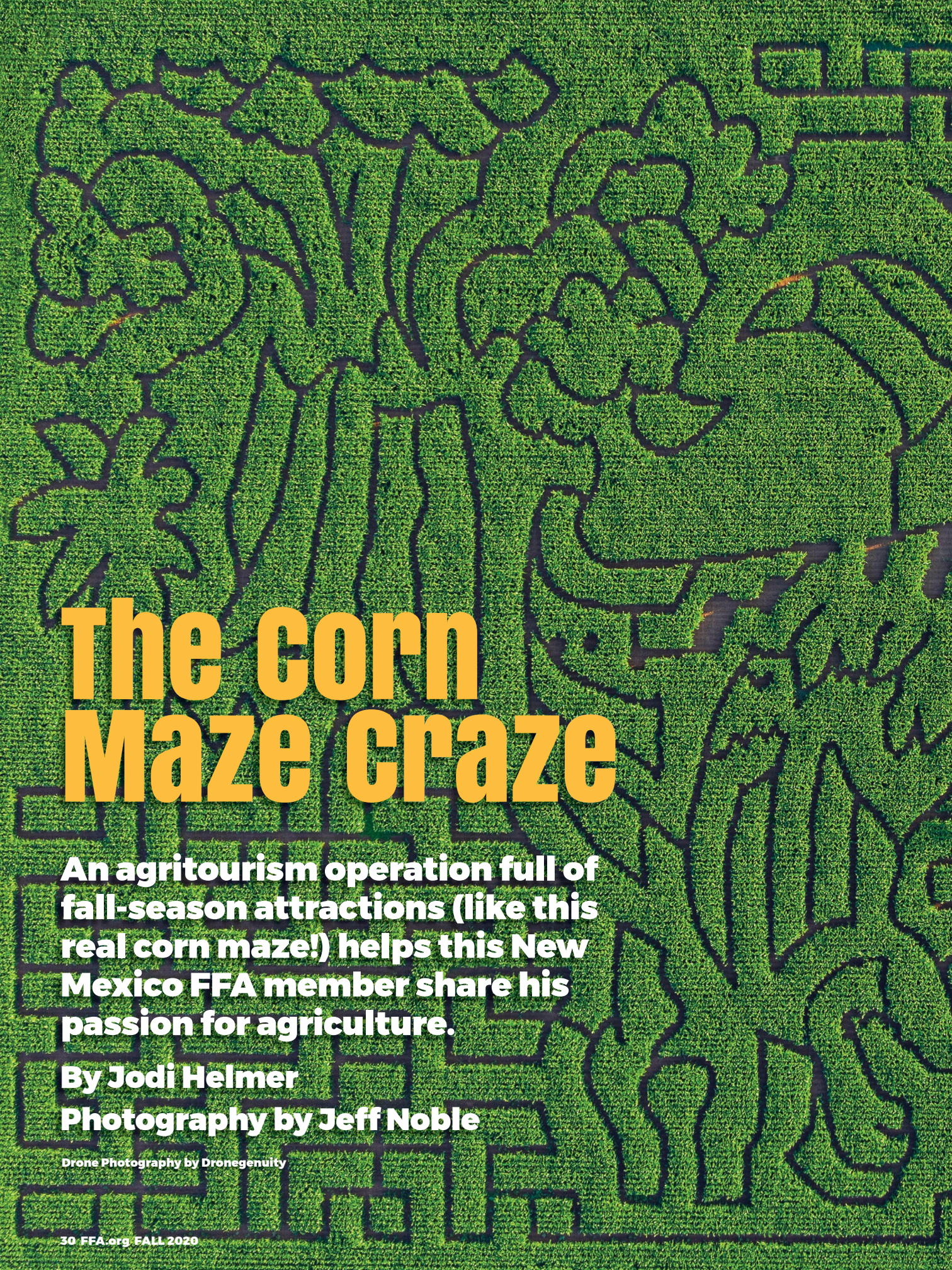
In the meantime, Coates also encourages others maneuvering through their teens to continue trying new activities within their chapter. "FFA is so large and so inclusive with like, a million opportunities. No matter what, you always have a place in FFA. You might not have found it yet, but just keep trying."

8 WAYS YOU CAN BE INCLUSIVE

As different as we are, we all desire the same thing: a sense of belonging. As FFA members, you can easily make others feel welcome in our organization by taking the following steps outlined by the University of California, San Francisco, Office of Diversity and Outreach.

- **Include as many people as possible in discussions.**
- Be open to many viewpoints.
- **Consider the feelings of many people.**
- Be open to people who are different from you.
- **Create an attitude of cooperation and teamwork.**
- Highlight things others have in common.
- **Relate to each other.**
- Take advantage of others' talents, abilities and perspectives to make us stronger.





The Corn Maze craze

An agritourism operation full of fall-season attractions (like this real corn maze!) helps this New Mexico FFA member share his passion for agriculture.

By Jodi Helmer

Photography by Jeff Noble

Drone Photography by Dronegenuity


ENTER THE
LAND OF THE
LOST







The McCall family had been growing pumpkins on their Moriarty, N.M., farm for several years when they decided to invite the local kindergarten class to visit their pumpkin patch.

"The school groups came to the farm on a school bus, went out into the field and picked pumpkins for $4 each," says FFA member and farmer Caleb McCall. "My dad had an aha moment that this could work for the farm."

After those first school visits in 1998, trips to McCall's Pumpkin Patch became an annual tradition. The farm transitioned from selling truckloads of pumpkins wholesale to welcoming school groups and opening the farm gates to the public. On those first fall weekends, the farm welcomed an average of 2,000 visitors, and some families drove from as far away as Albuquerque and Santa Fe to experience life on the farm.

"It just grew from there," McCall says. "We started out with one class of kindergartners in 1998, and last season, we had over 100,000 people."

Sharing the Story of Agriculture

The pumpkin patch was only the beginning.

The McCall family began adding new attractions each season and developed an agritourism business — farms that contain a recreational or educational enterprise component, such as tours of a working farm and pick-your-own fruits, as described by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Agritourism isn't a new trend, but it's one that continues to grow. "Farm agritourism revenue more than tripled between 2002 and 2017, according to data from the Census of Agriculture," the USDA reports. "Adjusted for inflation, agritourism revenue grew from $704 million in 2012 to almost $950 million in 2017."

The McCall operation started with a pumpkin patch and petting zoo. It now offers more than 50 attractions, including hayrides, pumpkin cannons, a produce stand, a low ropes course, a cow-theme train ride, pig races and multiple food outlets.

One of the newest attractions is a 3,000-square-foot castle complete with princess makeovers, tea parties and costumed princesses reading stories. McCall calls the castle his favorite attraction on the farm. "It's the epicenter of our Main Street," he says.

In addition to looking to world-class attractions such as Walt Disney World and Dollywood for inspiration, the family has connected with agritourism operators across the country to help generate ideas and trade tips for running a successful pumpkin

Top left: A 3,000-square-foot castle is complete with princess makeovers, tea parties and costumed princesses. Top right: Morgan, Caleb, Kevin and Kirsten McCall (left to right). Above: A 32-foot-tall milk can — the second tallest in the world — that operates as a soft-serve ice cream stand is one of the standout attractions.



It started with a pumpkin patch and petting zoo, and it has grown to include **more than 50 attractions.**


"We want to take people away from the city, away from technology,
away from the stress."
- Caleb McCall



Above: McCall's Pumpkin Patch started with one class of kindergartners in 1998 and had over 100,000 visitors last season.

patch and corn maze. Creating an entertaining environment is just part of their mission.

"We're a miniature-scale amusement park with an agriculture focus," McCall says. "I've been very active about advocating for agriculture. I love teaching people about where their food comes from because with that knowledge and their support for agriculture, the industry thrives."

The FFA Connection

McCall is always learning.

As a member (and past president) of Moriarty FFA, he learned a lot about farming in agriscience classes and activities, such as the agronomy career development event (CDE). The farm is also the basis for his current supervised agricultural experience (SAE) in diversified agriculture. He hopes it will help him earn his American Degree in 2020. McCall also credits FFA leadership skills that have been essential on the farm.

Attending the New Century Farmer conference in 2019 allowed him to connect with other young producers to share knowledge, ideas and challenges that will propel their future success. He calls it a highlight of his FFA career, and he believes that staying in contact with attendees and sharing experiences will influence his path in agriculture.

"If I didn't do FFA, I don't think I'd be able to talk about the farm as fluently," he says.

McCall is currently a freshman studying plant, soil and environmental science at West Texas A&M University, and he's developing even more of a foundation for a career in agriculture.

"My dad was taught by his grandpa how to farm, and a lot of the practices we used are passed down. No one on the farm has ever had the understanding of how it all works," he explains. "My plan is to get that understanding and come back and be able to fix a lot of those practices and bring more of an educational process to the farm."

Lost in the Possibilities

The 14-acre corn maze is one of the highlights of McCall's Pumpkin Patch. It takes months to pick a theme and settle on a design. Past themes have included a tribute to New Mexico, Pac-Man, *Looney Tunes*, and a castle and dragon. The 2020 maze features dinosaurs as a nod to the *Land of the Lost* TV series. The farm has also worked with sponsors, including McDonald's and the University of New Mexico, to use the corn maze as a canvas for logos and branded messages.

In 2013, after the now-iconic Super Bowl commercial, the McCall family chose "God Made a Farmer" as its corn maze theme. The maze design featured a tractor and an American flag. McCall says it was one of his favorites. Once the design is complete, McCall flies a drone over the corn maze and snaps photos so visitors can see how it looks from above.

The family works with The MAiZE Inc., the world's largest cornfield maze design company, to design and cut all of its corn mazes. The McCalls also travel to destinations such as Arizona, Hawaii, Florida and California to attend annual conferences to stay up-to-date on trends.

The maze is not the only thing that changes every year. The McCall family is constantly adding new attractions to its agrtourism operation. A 32-foot-tall milk can — the second tallest in the world — that operates as a soft-serve ice cream stand is one of the standout attractions. Major improvements to the haunted attractions are under construction and scheduled to make their debut this fall.

Although McCall's Pumpkin Patch already has a strong educational focus, McCall hopes to expand on that element of the operation by adding an educational barn that highlights different areas of agriculture, such as dairy, poultry and crop production to further educate visitors about where their food comes from.

"We want to take people away from the city, away from technology, away from the stress," he says. "We want them to have fun and experience what life is like on the farm." •

THE MAKING OF A MAZE

Creating a corn maze is a big undertaking. Some farmers take a DIY approach, sketching out designs on graph paper and using GPS-enabled tractors to carve paths, while others hire companies to turn their ideas into maze designs. In both cases, the process is similar. Corn is planted in a grid. When it grows knee-high, flags are set out to mark the outline. The design is spray-painted and then cut to create the paths.

In 2013, FFA sponsor Culver's started the Thank You Farmers project to support agricultural education programs. The restaurant group has partnered with farmers to create agricultural-themed mazes for the past five seasons, and the designs have ranged from a honeybee and hive to a horse pulling a plow. To date, Culver's has grown 38 Thank You Farmers project corn mazes in 19 states. In 2018, a farm in Olivet, Mich., designed a corn maze with the FFA logo.

How to Find

YOUR CAREER IN AGRICULTURE

READ ON FOR EASY STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO FIND YOUR PLACE – AND THE PATH TO GET THERE – NO MATTER YOUR AREA OF INTEREST. – By Jessica Walker Boehm

With one in three people working in agriculture worldwide, it's safe to say careers in ag are plentiful. Wondering what ag career might be a good fit for you?

Get started by visiting AgExplorer.com, a joint career resource offered by the National FFA Organization and Discovery Education, and clicking on "Career Finder." There you will be prompted to answer a series of questions related to education, interests, skills and career aspirations. Based on your responses, you'll receive a selection of ag careers that may be of interest, as well as information about each one, such as the education and training required, typical employers and average annual full-time salary.

While you're on AgExplorer.**FFA.org,** you can also take virtual field trips to various agricultural business-es, and get a behind-the-scenes look at how they operate and the tasks their employees tackle. AgExplorer.**FFA.org** outlines nine career focus areas within the ag industry, along with supervised agricultural experience (SAE) ideas that correspond to each one, plus career profiles that give job seekers a deeper glimpse into what a particular career typically entails.

"AgExplorer.**FFA.org** currently features about 250 different career profiles that highlight the wide variety of job opportunities in the agriculture indus-try," says Erika Osmundson, director of marketing communications for AgCareers.com, which connects job seekers with careers in ag and partners on aspects of AgExplorer.**FFA.org**. "Most people know about careers in production ag, but not everyone realizes how fast the ag tech sector is growing. Ag companies are increasingly looking to hire people well versed in areas like communications, marketing and social media too."

> "AgCareers.com offers a true picture of the jobs available at the moment, and that can help guide students as they prepare for what's next."
> – Erika Osmundson

Once you have an idea of the career you might like to pursue, head to AgCareers.com and use the job search tool to look for opportunities using keywords, job titles, company names, locations and other inputs.

"Young people want to know that if they go to school and work hard for a degree, there are going to be viable careers ready for them when they graduate," Osmundson says. "AgCareers.com offers a true picture of the jobs available at the moment, and that can help guide students as they prepare for what's next. For example, they may not need a four-year degree for the career they want, and that's valuable information when it comes time to make postsecondary education plans."

5 steps to Discover Your Future in Ag:

1. **Visit AgExplorer.FFA.org and click on "Career Finder."**
2. **Answer the questions and submit your responses to receive career recommendations.**
3. **Read through your results and determine if any of the careers interest you.**
4. **Review career profiles related to the profession that most appeals to you.**
5. **Go to AgCareers.com to search for opportunities.**

MORE AG JOBS

In addition to giving FFA members, alumni and supporters the opportunity to come together no matter where they are, the Forever Blue Network, which debuted in May, also features job openings in agriculture. Check it out at **ForeverBlueNetwork.org**.



Photography: Getty Images, elenabs, EyeEm

AN AG EXTENSION FOR EVERYTHING

"Agriculture" covers many different fields. As a community educator, this FFA alum has a hand in them all. - By Lauren Denton

Growing up in an Ohio grain farming family seven generations deep, Brooke Beam knew she wanted a career in agriculture. But what specifically? That was less clear cut.

When she started at Ohio State University's college of food, agriculture and environmental sciences, she thought she might want to be a vet. But after being "exposed to a lot of other things," she says, she pursued both a bachelor of science and master of science in agricultural communication and earned a doctorate in agricultural and Extension education in 2017. Now, she works as the agriculture and natural resources/community development educator for OSU Extension in Highland County, Ohio.

"Every day is different," Beam says. "It really depends on who walks through the door."

Some days she works with clientele on horticulture questions. Other days, it's a group of farmers attending Beam's courses on fertilizer and pesticide compliance or beef quality assurance. Beam also leads a nine-month program called Leadership Highland, through which community members, selected through application, visit and learn about different industries around the county.

One of her favorite projects has been the Germinate International Film Fest – an idea born out of her passion for video production and her research specialization in the public perception of the agriculture industry in entertainment. The inaugural event in 2019 drew more than 70 entries from around the globe and explored agriculture, natural resources and rural communities. Entries ranged from a fifth-grader showcasing how he raised his steer for the fair to a 90-minute documentary on pollinators. (The 2020 festival was canceled because of COVID-19.)

"Showing off the ag industry in so many different ways benefits everyone," says Beam, who was first drawn to film to help depict agriculture more accurately. She also "helps people see farming in a new way" through The Southern Ohio Farm Show, a web video series she produces with her coworkers.

Beam was named a 2020 AgGrad 30 Under 30 for "the extra effort to move this industry forward," according to AgGrad.com. "It can be hard for young people to get started in ag, so it's nice to have that support," she says.

> "FFA gave me a lot of opportunities to explore different aspects. Try something new, a part of ag you're not familiar with. Being well versed in a lot of topics is a great asset to have," Beam says.

Her time in FFA has also supported her career. "FFA gave me a lot of opportunities to explore different aspects," she says, adding that she'd encourage current students to "try something new, a part of ag you're not familiar with. Being well versed in a lot of topics is a great asset to have."

The American FFA Degree holder and former East Clinton FFA vice president uses the skills she learned not only in her job but also on the farm she purchased in 2011, where she grows corn and soybeans, and produces maple syrup. (Maple syrup production earned her a finalist position for a National FFA Agricultural Proficiency Award in 2008.)

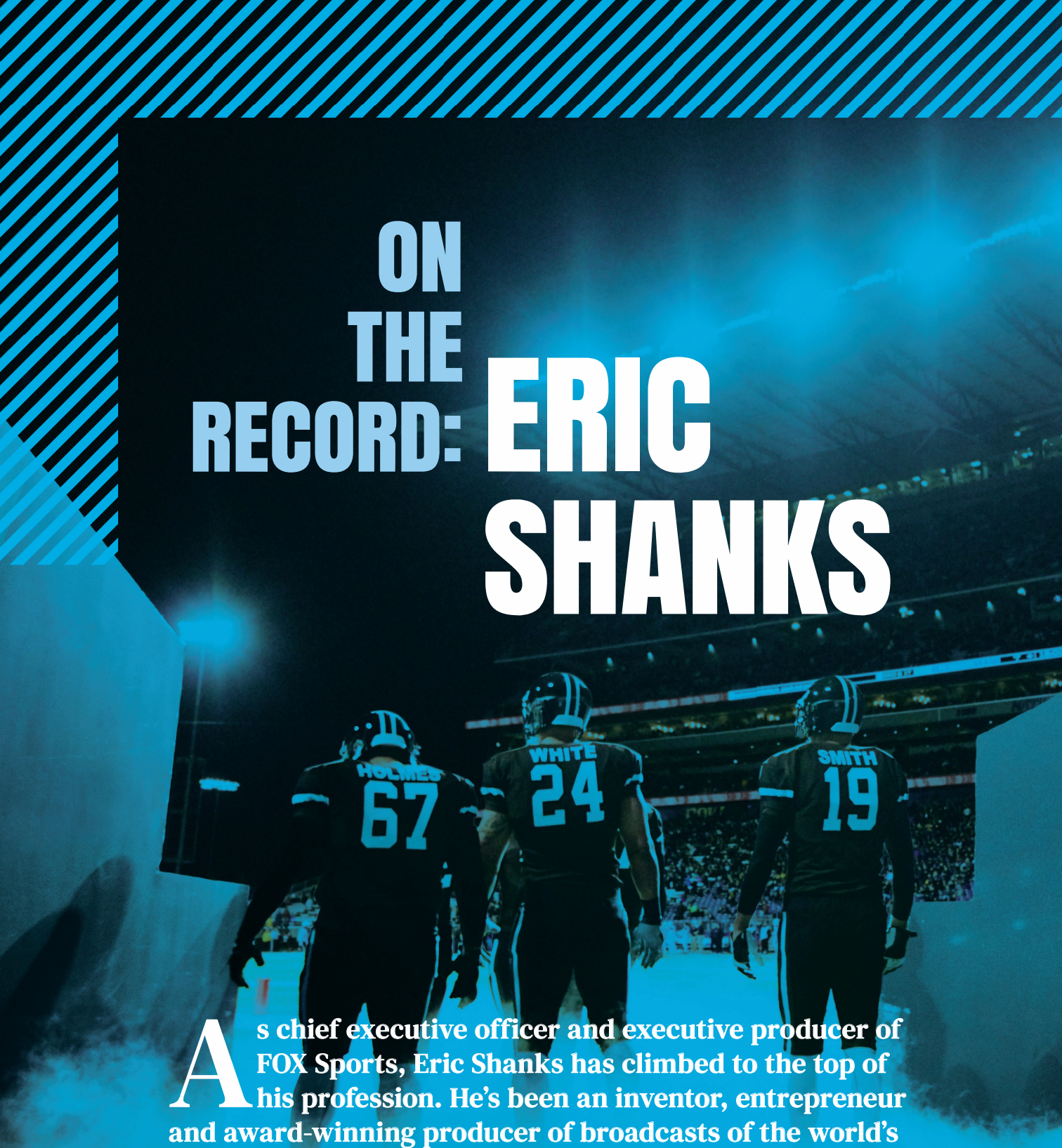
"Record keeping, welding, carpentry — these are all things I can use on the farm," Beam says. "There is so much you can learn in FFA even if you just use it for trivia down the road."



Dr. Brooke Beam works as the agriculture and natural resources/community development educator for the Ohio State University Extension.

Photography: Courtesy Brooke Beam

ON THE RECORD: ERIC SHANKS



As chief executive officer and executive producer of FOX Sports, Eric Shanks has climbed to the top of his profession. He's been an inventor, entrepreneur and award-winning producer of broadcasts of the world's greatest sporting events, including the Super Bowl, World Series, the World Cup and NASCAR. Shanks took time at his avocado farm in Southern California to talk about his career and memories of FFA. - By John Walter

"I learned that you don't know what you can do until you try to do it. I always took the first opportunity, made the most of it and tried to overachieve." - ERIC SHANKS


Eric Shanks

NH: What were some highlights of your FFA experience?

ES: For me, everything starts with the people. The people who were in our class in the little town of Brazil, Ind., and the FFA chapter there were what made the experience great. Also, we had an amazing ag teacher and leader of our FFA chapter, Steve Stoelting. It was his passion for everything from entomology to soil judging to basketball that made all of us in FFA have such a great time.

NH: What's the most memorable sporting event you've overseen at FOX Sports?

ES: A lot of what we do is plan, so we will plan for a Super Bowl for an entire year — the pregame show, how many cameras we're going to have, how we're going to cover the game and so on. But you can't plan for the game itself. We had the privilege of covering the greatest comeback in Super Bowl history, which was Tom Brady's 28-3 comeback. That was probably one of the best games FOX Sports ever produced, because late in the game, we never let the viewer think the game was out of hand.

NH: Which athlete have you been most excited to meet or watch?

ES: The people in the FOX Sports family I get to work with every day are amazing people, whether it's Terry Bradshaw, Michael Strahan, Alex Rodriguez, Urban Meyer or others. They just happen to be Hall of Fame athletes. Whether it's Bradshaw or Alex, they're leaders here, just like they were on the field. It's great to be able to learn from them.

NH: How did FFA help you with your career path?

ES: Again, I think it goes back to the people and learning to have respect for others. In my line of work, I meet so many different people, and if you don't start out with that perspective of respecting one another, I just don't think you're going to be as successful. Just growing up in ag, I always say that what we do in live television is a lot like farming. Every day you wake up and you don't know what the day's going to bring. We'd all be better off if everyone had the skills and mind-set of a farmer.

NH: What advice would you give FFA members?

ES: I've always given the advice to bite off more than you can chew. When I was out of school and moved to the big city or took different jobs at different places, I learned that you don't know what you can do until you try to do it. I always took the first opportunity, made the most of it and tried to overachieve.

Photography: Fox Sports, Getty Images, Thomas Barwick

FFA *in the* USA

The COVID-19 pandemic may have stunned the world, but it didn't stop FFA members from serving in their communities. From virtual workshops to drive-through food giveaways, FFA members lived to help others — even at a distance. Use these examples to inspire your next chapter events and activities. – Compiled by Julie Woodard

Alabama

Members participated in a virtual workshop with Kansas and Montana FFA members to craft their own "why" statements (why they do what they do) to help them become more effective leaders.

Alaska

Using Zoom to bridge the more than 2,800-mile distance, Alaska FFA members showed off their supervised agricultural experiences (SAEs) during the virtual "Pontiac, Illinois FFA Elementary Agriculture Comes to Town" event. Two members discussed raising yaks on the Kenai Peninsula, and trapping and selling furs in Tok.

Arizona

Antelope FFA in Welton ran a drive-in banquet that not only showed off the achievements of its members but also inspired the community.

Arkansas

Bentonville West FFA received a grant to continue shop class from home, including building birdhouses.



California

San Luis Obispo FFA hosted a dairy drive and collected 56 dairy products for families in need. More drives are planned in the future.

Colorado

Alamosa FFA member Emily Wilson partnered with her local National Honor Society chapter to host a hygiene drive for families in her community.

Connecticut

Killingly FFA educated the public about agriculture through its social media pages in the form of Trivia Tuesdays and various other Instagram challenges.

Delaware

Caesar Rodney FFA organized a social media platform to recognize and advertise local produce stands and direct farm sales.

Florida

Branford FFA encouraged members to put their agriculture skills into action at home. Seed packets were available for pickup at school or by bus route to ensure all students had access to vegetable, herb and flower seeds for their home gardens.

Georgia

Rather than sell the vegetable plants and bedding flowers from its greenhouse, Lanier County FFA donated these plants to the local food bank in their community. Members served nearly 300 families in a day. More flowers from the greenhouse were given to the local hospital to thank local health care workers.

Hawaii

State officers hosted a virtual workshop for FFA members about traditional Hawaiian agriculture, including how *Mahina* (the moon) affects practices.

Idaho

For Meal-to-Go night, Filer FFA served meals to community members in their cars, all while also supporting local businesses.

Illinois

Chapters advocated for community members to participate in the 2020 Census and in return, received $125 credits toward FFA event registrations. This movement allowed chapters to save money and get involved with their communities.

Indiana

Rossville FFA started a program called FLAG (Front Line Appreciation Group) that buys meals from local businesses and gives them to frontline workers.

Iowa

Belmond-Klemme FFA arranged garden starter kits for students to grow crops while they're at home. The harvest was shared with those in need in the community.

Kansas

Blue Valley FFA created "We Believe Gardens" and handed out fresh produce to households in its school district.

Kentucky

Royal Spring Middle School FFA hosted a virtual 5K to encourage community members to stay active despite the pandemic. Funds from registration fees were donated to Feeding Kentucky to help those struggling with food insecurity.



Louisiana

To help flatten the COVID-19 curve in Louisiana, FFA members at Vinton High School worked with community volunteers to sew and deliver more than 150 cloth face masks.

Maine

State officers took to Instagram to not only send encouraging messages to their members and advisors but also offer a daily trivia challenge for the week. Each winner took home an Amazon gift card.

Maryland

When its annual plant sale was put on hold indefinitely, Gwynn Park FFA partnered with several organizations to hand out the vegetables, herbs and houseplants – along with gardening and nutrition resources – to food distribution sites in the community.

Massachusetts

The Bristol and South Shore FFA chapters used 3-D printers to make face shields and donated them to frontline workers.

Michigan

Ithaca FFA participated in a statewide competition called Tons of Tabs, where members collected bottle tabs for the Ronald McDonald House. The competition ended in early September, and the winner received a prize.

Minnesota

To keep members engaged and connected while also having a friendly competition, Grand Rapids FFA hosted a virtual Kahoot game and gave away prizes.

Thank you, state officers, for providing news and events for your states.

Photography and Illustrations: Getty Images, ZargonDesign, fermate, bsd555, FoxysGraphic



Mississippi

The state hosted a virtual FFA Creed contest where members sent in video recordings showing off their Creed speaking skills. The winner received a $25 gift card to Shop FFA.

Missouri

The Greene County FFA Chapter donated hanging baskets of flowers that couldn't be sold due to the COVID-19 pandemic to the local nursing homes to brighten the outdoor areas for residents.

Montana



Missoula FFA purchased and processed hogs at the Missoula County Public Schools Meat Lab to provide the community with meat during the quarantine. Buying the hogs from South Dakota, the chapter turned a product that would be wasted into meat that went into the local food system.

Nebraska

To inspire its members, Nebraska grooved to a virtual talent revue. In a 13-minute video, FFA members rocked their talents, such as piano playing and singing.

Nevada

Silver Sage FFA initiated a community service project for chapter members to write thank-you letters to those making a difference in the community during the pandemic.

New Hampshire

Sugar River Valley FFA created 200 Sunshine Victory Garden kits containing seeds and soil. The kits were distributed free to community members at a local farm stand.

New Jersey

Students at the Delsea Regional FFA Chapter continue to grow produce through their school greenhouse. Utilizing safe social distancing methods, students harvest their crops and donate the items to community members in need.

New Mexico

The state hosted a chapter scrapbook competition featuring chapter highlights of the 2019-20 school year.

New York

FFA members served as dairy fairies, providing dairy products, food and hope to many people in need.

North Carolina

West Rowan FFA served its community through its #PlantHopeInitiative. Members distributed garden packs grown in their school greenhouses to empower community members to start gardens at home.

North Dakota

Members of Max FFA supported their community by helping keep the Our Savior Lord's Food Pantry up and running during this time of need.

Ohio

Plymouth FFA made a COVID-19 Kindness Calendar. This 30-day challenge featured daily activities for members to show their appreciation for essential workers.

Oklahoma

Burns Flat-Dill City FFA reopened its chapter meat sales program to provide quality pork products to the local community to combat the nationwide meat shortage.

Oregon

Burns FFA Alumni and parents planned a drive-by to celebrate a newly elected state officer, honking and showing their support all down the caravan.

Pennsylvania

As an online community service event, members have collectively donated more than 2.7 million grains of rice since April by answering trivia questions on the digital game Freerice.

Rhode Island

Chapters across the state have hosted their respected plant sale fundraisers and have safely visited their schools to make sure their plants and animals are healthy during this time.

South Carolina

Nation Ford FFA partnered with Anne Springs Close Greenway, a local nature preserve, to create a virtual series on agricultural issues and topics that taught its community at home.

South Dakota

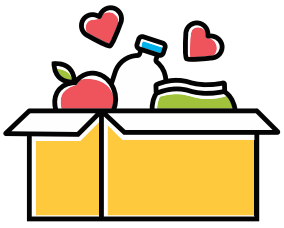
Deubrook FFA hosted a ditch cleanup contest. Community members posted pictures of their filled trash bags with #DeubrookDitchQuarantineCleanup to be entered into a drawing.

Tennessee

Bradley FFA members took on a project straight from history books: Victory gardens. Similar to home gardens grown during World War II, students grew their food with the virtual help of their advisors.

Texas

Krum FFA member Caitlyn Muckensturm installed four micro food pantries – called Project



H.O.P.E (Helping Other People Eat) boxes – around her community to help those who are food insecure, have lost their jobs or been diagnosed with COVID-19.

Utah

Uintah FFA wrote thank-you cards and made masks for health care workers and other community members striving to make a difference.

Virginia

FFA members were treated to a virtual tour of Gore's Meats to learn about meat production after the cancellation of school field trips.

Washington

To celebrate the association's 90th anniversary, the state produced a virtual Hall of Chapters that showcased the activities and achievements of numerous chapters.

West Virginia

Members designed a bingo game to learn about FFA members. The boards could be shared with a hashtag on Facebook.

Wisconsin

Spencer FFA delivered more than 100 Easter baskets when the annual egg hunt was canceled due to COVID-19. The baskets included toys and games the kids could enjoy while staying at home.

Wyoming

The state hosted an online leadership camp in June that featured, among other activities, a flag ceremony video contest where members showcased what patriotism meant to each chapter.

Members, submit your chapter updates at FFA.org/Submit-Your-Story.

MEDIA CENTER

ARTS & CULTURE IN AGRICULTURE

– By Jessica Wesson

BLOGS

Female Farmers

Check out these five blogs written by incredible women with ties to the land.

Prairie Californian

Jenny Dewey Rohrich is a native Californian turned North Dakotan. As the wife of a crop farmer, she writes about life on the farm, but she also covers food, beauty and style. ***prairiecalifornian.com***

Pioneer Woman

Ree Drummond lives in Oklahoma on a working cattle ranch, where she has become famous for her blog as a ranch wife and mother. She has also gained notoriety for her cooking show and television appearances. ***thepioneerwoman.com***

Dairy Carrie

Carrie Mess writes about her experience in southern Wisconsin as a dairy farmer, which she never planned on becoming. She records her experiences with hopes of educating the public about the dairy industry. ***dairycarrie.com***

Buzzard's Beat

Brandi Buzzard Frobose, a Kansas cowgirl, brings sass to her blog about life on the ranch. She chronicles her experiences in the rodeo arena, in the kitchen and as a mom. ***buzzardsbeat.com***

FarmHer

Iowa-based Marji Guyler-Alaniz uses her blog to recognize and inspire a wide range of women in agriculture. Livestock, fish, flowers and more, the things these farmers raise and grow show just how active women are in ag. ***farmher.com/blogs/farm-hers-ranchhers***

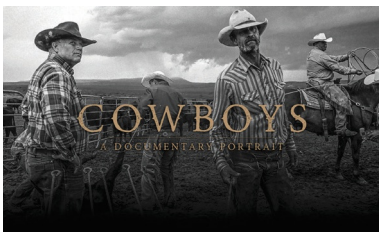


DOCUMENTARY

COWBOYS: A Documentary Portrait

Ride alongside modern-day cowboys for a look inside this 200-year-old lifestyle.

While many say the cowboy breed is dying, this film suggests otherwise. Released in November 2019, this documentary is a fresh outlook on the modern cowboy lifestyle. The film documents eight of the world's largest cattle operations across 10 U.S. states. Some span more than 1 million acres, and most still employ teams of horseback ranch hands that maintain large herds of cattle. Cowboys face some of the same struggles today that they did over 200 years ago, such as drought, disease and isolation, but they persevere despite these daunting challenges. Take a journey with these men and women as they narrate their own Wild West stories. ***thecowboymovie.com***



PODCAST

Future of Agriculture

You're the future of agriculture, but what does your future in agriculture actually look like?

In this series, podcaster Tim Hammerich aims to connect agricultural employers with job seekers and offer young applicants tips they need for success. Hammerich previously founded AgGrad, an online platform for agricultural companies and organizations to post job openings, which has grown into a valuable resource for high school and college students interested in agricultural careers. Podcast episodes include interviews with employees of ag companies and shed light on what their daily work consists of and how their work impacts the future of agriculture. Segments also offer tips about career skills and professionalism. ***aggrad.com***

Photography: Courtesy Cowboys: A Documentary Portrait, Getty Images, Janie Airey



FFA Moment

1973

In 1965, the civil rights movement and local and state desegregation began to crumble the hold that years of racial segregation had on America. With that contagious spirit came the inspiration to combine the New Farmers of America — the vocational agriculture organization for African American students — and FFA. Eight years later, in 1973, Frederick McClure from Texas became the organization's first African American national officer. As national secretary, McClure and his five fellow national officers traveled the country promoting agriculture and FFA, a journey that eventually led to Washington, D.C., and the office of Vice President Gerald R. Ford. A friend to FFA, Ford believed vocational education played a vital role in preparing youth for leadership and career opportunities that would one day transform the nation's agricultural landscape. Today, more than 700,000 members strong and fortified by the foundation of agricultural education, FFA continues to cultivate the future of agriculture for not only our nation but also the world.

[SHOP FFA

FREE PERSONALIZATION ON POLOS AND WOVENS

Free right chest personalization on select polos and woven shirts now through Oct. 15, 2020.

Visit **ShopFFA.org** or call **888-332-2668** to get yours today.



ECO-TEK EMBLEM POLO
$29.50 | 01712 | XS-3X