Spring/Summer 2022

NEW HORIZONS

FFA.ORG



Make Memories At FFA Camps

a summertime staple

Social Media Dos and Don'ts

New Farmers Of America Recapturing a Lost Culture

RELEARNING HISTORY FOR A BETTER FUTURE



Our understanding of history depends on the point of view from which the story is told. Sometimes, new perspectives can challenge what we know.

In 1965, the New Farmers of America (NFA) and the Future Farmers of America (now the National FFA Organization) became one organization.

While labeled a merger, NFA was basically absorbed by FFA. At the time, both organizations were independently successful in honing leadership skills and providing professional development opportunities for young men in agriculture. Since combining, however, the number of African Americans who benefit from activities in FFA and agricultural education has decreased drastically. Many of the traditions, and much of the history and culture of Black agricultural education has been erased or forgotten.

"There was a feeling that this merger was inevitable and not such a bad idea, but there was an expectation that Black students would be provided equal opportunities in all positions and activities," says Dexter Wakefield, Ph.D., professor and associate dean of academic programs at Alcorn State University. "It did not happen."

This is a tough — but important — realization. Recent research by Wakefield and Antoine Alston, Ph.D., professor and associate dean at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, captures the experiences of former NFA members and advisors to help the FFA community better understand the past and build a more positive identity for the future.

The time is now for us to better understand the history of an organization that shaped the blue and gold as we know it and ensure the rich culture and tradition of NFA lives on. Read more about the research and history of NFA in "Recapturing a Lost Culture" on page 24. I am ready — and honored — to join you on the journey of relearning to make change.

In this issue, you'll also find articles about National FFA Week, tips for fundraising, social media dos and don'ts, the tradition of FFA camps and more.

Here's to a successful spring.

Kasey Riebel

Kasey Riebel
Editor, *FFA New Horizons*
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IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK!

FFA taught me that my story is important — now it's my turn to share yours. I'm honored every day to have rejoined FFA, this time as editor of *FFA New Horizons,* a magazine I used to read (and reread) cover to cover as an FFA member in Nebraska. As a proud FFA alumna, I look forward to sharing the inspiring and powerful stories of FFA members, alumni and supporters within these pages, and in magazine issues to come.

Photography: David Ekstrom
Cover Photography: Tyler Smith

Spring/Summer 2022
Volume 70, Number 2
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Subscription Information
FFA New Horizons is published biannually by the National FFA Organization, 6060 FFA Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46278-1370. 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.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to FFA New Horizons, 6060 FFA Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46278-1370.

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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.

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

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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.

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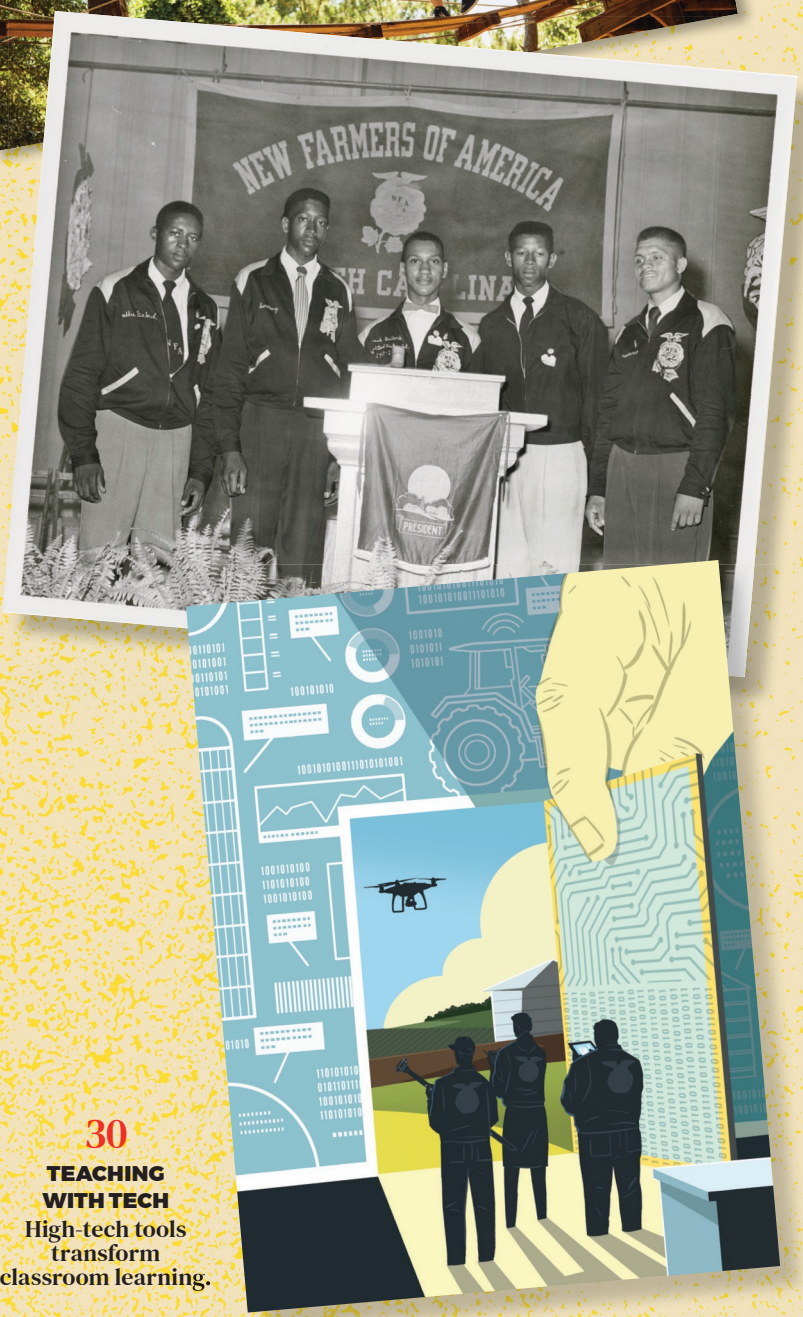

5 Things FROM FFA.ORG

FFA.org has a lot to offer for those involved in FFA and those curious about FFA happenings. Check out these resources on the website to set yourself up for a successful semester.

Scan with your phone

AgExplorer

This comprehensive resource allows you to explore agricultural careers based on your interests. Select a focus area, gather related SAE ideas and learn more about recommended coursework to be successful, as well as specific responsibilities expected for each career. There's something for everyone. You might discover your passion. ***AgExplorer.FFA.org***

CDE/LDE Finals Hall

Get a jump start on the competition by watching and learning from finalists at the 94th National FFA Convention & Expo. If you're wondering what it takes to be a national finalist in Creed Speaking or what winning elements the judges are looking for in a marketing plan, watch fellow members compete on the national stage and take notes to guide your practices. ***FFA.org/FFA-Video-Center/CDE-LDE-Finals-Hall***

Student Dashboard

Manage your FFA experience in one place with the student dashboard. Browse the Quick Access section to update your FFA profile, search for scholarship and grant opportunities, and discover new ways to get involved in FFA. ***FFA.org/My-Toolbox/Student***

Living to Serve Grants

If you have a community service project in mind but lack the funds or resources to support it, apply for a Living to Serve Grant. Identify a need in your community among the focus areas (community safety, hunger, health and nutrition, environmental responsibility or community engagement), and determine the duration of your project — yearlong, semester-long or one-time service event. ***FFA.org/LivingToServe/Grants***

SAE Video Library

Looking for inspiration for your supervised agricultural experience (SAE)? Browse the SAE Video Library for ideas from current and former members. Whether pet grooming, composting or zookeeping, there's no shortage of variety — and creativity. ***FFA.org/FFA-Video-Center/SAE-Video-Library***



National FFA Week Calendar Of Events

Celebrate the 75th anniversary of National FFA Week Feb. 19-26 with these ideas.

Sponsored by: TSC TRACTOR SUPPLY Co.

SUNDAY: SAE Sunday

Looking for inspiration for your supervised agricultural experience (SAE)? Check out the FFA Blue Room this week for a presentation from a leading ag tech organization. Watch the Tedx-style presentation to learn about new innovations in agriculture — it just might spark an idea for your SAE.

MONDAY: Service and Advocacy Day

FFA members across the country are building and maintaining little free pantries in their communities. You can do the same! Follow the virtual National Days of Service supplemental project guide for a successful little free pantry project.

TUESDAY: Alumni Day

There are nearly 680,000 FFA alumni in 2,600 chapters across the country, each presenting an opportunity to grow your network and share how grateful you are for the support. Plan an alumni networking event or host an alumni dinner to offer your thanks.

WEDNESDAY: Ag Teacher Appreciation Day

Share how an ag teacher or advisor has impacted your life by gathering photos from past and present members to create a photo book of memories. Present it to your ag teacher on Wednesday of FFA Week. Post their reaction on social media using #FFAWeek.

THURSDAY: Give FFA Day

The National FFA Officer Team will be sharing ideas, messages and more for each day of FFA Week. Tune in on Thursday to hear what Give FFA Day means to them.

FRIDAY: Wear Blue Day

Visit **Shop.FFA.org** early so you can don your FFA colors with pride. No matter if you are bundled up in a hoodie or sporting a light T-shirt, Friday of FFA Week is the day to sport your FFA swag.

– By Bev Flatt

To learn more about how to tailor each day to fit your chapter's individual needs, check out the implementation guide at **FFA.org/National-FFA-Week** and share what you're up to using #FFAWeek.

Photography: Tyler Smith

STANDOUT ALUMNI AND SUPPORTERS

Check out these five successful programs from one of the best alumni and supporters' chapters in the country.

– By Lauren Denton

At the 94th National FFA Convention & Expo, West Rowan FFA Alumni and Supporters of Mount Ulla, N.C., won National Outstanding FFA Alumni and Supporters Chapter for a year of original programming and exceptional results. Here are some highlights:

Alumni Council Leadership Training

At the annual August meeting, FFA advisors and past alumni and supporter presidents led nine members through a unifying four-hour training, which covered chapter history, goal setting, volunteer agreements and committee appointments.

Capital Campaign for Multipurpose Memorial Trailer

The chapter raised $15,000 for an 18-foot trailer to be used for concessions and mobile classrooms. Each $1,000 donation memorialized or honored an integral member of the local ag community, with their names showcased on the back door.

Plant Hope

When COVID-19 struck, alumni and students distributed "starter gardens" to 80 families concerned with food security. The kits included 10 types of vegetable plants from the school's greenhouse, care instructions, recipes and information about FFA.

Oyster Roast and Silent Auction

The annual signature event raises money for students to attend national convention. Raising $23,000, the alumni and supporters also funded a college scholarship, supported a teacher's land lab project, sponsored one state leadership conference and gained two life alumni members.

Growing Falcon Leaders

This virtual leadership program for student officers includes a two-day training, monthly events, a book study and tickets for all to attend the state leadership conference. The goal: Equip officers with the tools to inspire and grow their chapter.

Learn more about alumni and supporters at ***FFA.org/Alumni.***

The Art of GIVING BACK

This member donates a portion of her business profits to FFA.

– By Lauren Denton

When Maddie Grace Roe launched her graphic design business in January 2021, she was simply tinkering with her dad's hand-me-down equipment. "It was just me in my bedroom making things for my friends," says Roe, a Clear Lake FFA senior from Texas.

Now with the help of her dad, Allen, a former graphic design business owner himself, and a public Facebook page, Maddie Grace Designs serves five to 15 clients each week, creating farm logos, vinyl decals for livestock trailers, show banners and more. "I can design anything you can imagine," says Roe, who has carved a rare niche in the agriculture space.

One of her favorite offerings, though, is that 3% of the cost of each order gets donated to the National FFA Foundation. Roe began giving in April 2021, with a goal of donating $750 for the year. "I wanted to give back to the program that really started my career," says Roe, who plans to attend college in the fall with the hope of becoming a large-animal vet.



"FFA means the most to me," she adds. "I love all the friends I've made and how much of a family we are." - Maddie Grace Roe

"FFA means the most to me," she adds. "I love all the friends I've made and how much of a family we are. I love showing hogs and the competition aspect. It has really grown me as a person, and it's going to be my forever home."

That impact has also worn off on her dad, who sponsors FFA students who want to show livestock. "I have never seen a bigger smile on the children [who] are part of FFA, and that swells my heart," he says.

Has FFA had an impact on you? Discover ways to give

Photography: Getty Images, vladimir_karpenyuk; Courtesy of Madison Grace Roe

Strength *in* Diversity

In recognition of Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month in May, the 2021-22 California FFA president reflects on the ways our differences make us stronger.

– By Jodi Helmer

As a child in the Philippines capital of Manila, Marc Cabeliza often visited his grandparents' farm. He knew they grew wheat and rice, but he didn't realize how much work went into operating a farm.

Cabeliza moved to Santa Maria, Calif., in 2011, and later he joined the Pioneer Valley FFA Chapter as a freshman. The experience provided an unexpected connection to his grandparents and his Asian heritage.

"FFA helped me connect to my background," says Cabeliza. "It's interesting to talk to my grandparents now because I have a more broadened perspective on agriculture."

Cabeliza graduated from Pioneer Valley High School in 2021. He was accepted to California Polytechnic State University to study mechanical engineering but decided to take a gap year to serve as California FFA president — the first Asian American to hold this office. His goal: Create an environment where everyone feels like they belong.

"A lot of students don't want to pursue involvement in FFA because they don't see people who look like them [in the chapter]," he says. "As a state officer, I want to show these students that the color of your skin or your background doesn't matter — you can do this as well."

Cabeliza has expanded the perspective of what it means to be in FFA, according to Pioneer Valley FFA advisor and agricultural education teacher Gabriel Ponce.

"He's very diverse in his experience and connects to a lot of students, and that makes people look up to him," he says.

Being part of a strong, diverse community that shares an appreciation for agriculture made joining FFA valuable for Cabeliza.

"One of the coolest things is how agriculture is for everybody," he says. "Our differences are what make this organization the best in the world."



"One of the coolest things is how agriculture is for everybody. Our differences are what make this organization the best in the world."

– Marc Cabeliza

Photography: Courtesy of Marc Cabeliza

SOCIAL MEDIA DOS AND DON'TS

Is your social media presence helping or hurting your future career?

– By Jessica Mozo

Social media can be a useful tool to connect with friends and family, but it also plays a role in professional settings. What you post online can help or hurt your reputation — and your future career opportunities.

Jen Hartmann, director of strategic public relations and enterprise social media for John Deere, shares why it's important to think twice about what you post on social media. "In my role with John Deere, I've been the hiring manager for both entry-level and leadership positions," she says. "I've made it standard practice to scan social media pages of anyone we're considering for an interview, and I've seen it all."

Hartmann offers this social media advice for any young person starting a career.

– DO –

Establish a professional presence on LinkedIn. Yes, LinkedIn. "While it's probably the last social platform you're considering, it's a huge plus for job seekers to have an updated, professional profile complete with work history, a recent bio, profile picture and relevant cover image," Hartmann says.

Remember that everything can live forever on the internet. "Screenshots of 'disappearing' social media content such as snaps, stories, DMs and TikToks can and do exist," Hartmann says. "Be mindful of what future employers may see, and take caution in sharing content, even privately, that you wouldn't want to see published publicly."

Be kind. Social media is designed to foster community and connect us with friends, family and people who share our interests. "Bullying, harassment, hateful or derogatory comments and outbursts aren't going to win you points with potential employers," Hartmann says. "In fact, bad behavior online will likely exclude you from opportunities you might have otherwise had based on experience alone."

– DON'T –

Don't engage with cyberbullies and individuals seeking to spread misinformation. "Replying to harassing or disturbing messages is not likely to end well and is likely to upset you," Hartmann says. "Instead of responding, talk to an adult you trust about the situation."

Don't post inappropriate photos. Think about the implications of posting certain photos. "Before you post photos, ask yourself if it's something you would want a teacher or potential employer to see," Hartmann says. "If it gives you pause, don't post it. You don't want an inappropriate post to be the reason for getting in trouble or losing out on an incredible opportunity."



Jennifer Hartmann

JOHN DEERE

Don't post without thinking of potential consequences. A first reaction to a situation can be more emotional than factual or reasonable. "When you feel passionate about posting something or have the urge to respond to a controversial post, implement the five-minute rule," Hartmann says. "Write your post out but wait five minutes before you hit 'send.' After five minutes, decide whether you still feel it's a good idea to post it."

GET SOCIAL WITH THE FFA COMMUNITY

Junior and senior FFA members along with alumni and supporters can use The Forever Blue Network to connect with the FFA community worldwide. Visit ForeverBlueNetwork.org to set up your profile today.

Photography: Getty Images, Dimitri Otis; Courtesy of Jennifer Hartmann

Quiz:

Plant Match

Put your plant identification knowledge to the test with this quick quiz. – By Jessica Walker Boehm

Your goal is to correctly match each plant name with its picture. We've included photos of plants in different growing stages. Good luck!

1. **Sorghum**
2. **Cauliflower**
3. **Cantaloupe**
4. **Sweet Corn**
5. **Sugar Beet**











Try This CDE!

Continue to test your plant identification skills by competing in an agronomy career development event (CDE), sponsored by Bayer and Nutrien Ag Solutions. Perhaps you'd rather try your hand at floriculture or forestry? Whatever you're interested in, find the perfect CDE for you at FFA.org/Participate/CDE-LDE.

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

Photography: Getty Images, Creativ Studio Heinemann, bugto, toeytoey2530, Marccophoto, Westend6, Sukhachev



Take Your Fundraising to the Next Level

Many people and organizations in agriculture are ready and willing to offer financial support to local causes. Learn how to sharpen your fundraising skills for your local FFA chapter. – By Bev Flatt

With a long list of acronyms already in place, members should know one more set of letters about the National FFA Organization: NPO — it stands for nonprofit organization. As a 501(c)(3), the National FFA Organization relies on donated funds to operate. Fundraising is one piece of that puzzle. However, it can often be intimidating. Fortunately, there is a simple process to get started.

Ask for Support. The first step in fundraising is simply to ask for donations. Begin by asking those closest to you, such as former members, FFA families or even a local FFA alumni and supporters' chapter. They can always say no. But remember, 100% of the people who aren't informed about your cause won't donate.

Say Thanks. After every fundraising effort, remember to show your gratitude. Writing a quick thank-you note is the perfect way to show your appreciation for the time and money donated to your chapter. In addition to sharing your thanks, let your donors know how the money is being used so they can feel further connected to your work.

Seek More Opportunities. Learn more about national fundraising opportunities through **FFA.org/Financial-Assistance.** Many companies establish programs that offer funding opportunities to local chapters and members. If you are just beginning to explore fundraising opportunities, this is a great place to start.

SWAPPING Surprises



Chapters from across the country exchanged goodie boxes filled with snacks and surprises.

A fun project that connected chapters across the country had an even bigger impact than anyone could have predicted. – By Jessica Walker Boehm

To celebrate National FFA Week in 2021, Paris FFA Advisor Josh Bondy of Missouri got creative — and to call it successful would be a massive understatement.

Bondy, a Teacher Ambassador for National FFA, organized a goody box exchange with his fellow teacher ambassadors and their chapters. A total of 20 chapters across the country participated, and each was assigned another chapter to exchange with after completing an intake form.

"I matched chapters based on their preferences — whether they wanted to exchange boxes with a similar chapter or one that was totally different, for example — and I provided a list of things for them to include, like a favorite local snack, chapter T-shirts, and letters written to and from chapter officers," says Bondy, an agriculture instructor at Paris R-II High School in Paris, Mo.

Learn more about the National Teacher Ambassadors for FFA program.

Upon receiving their boxes, FFA members were instructed to open only one piece of the box per day throughout National FFA Week, giving them something to look forward to.

That was certainly the case for Millie Chism's students, who received a box from Bondy's chapter. Chism, a Pine Grove FFA advisor from Pine Grove School in Ripley, Miss., says anticipation was high during the week as her members were excited to see what awaited them in their box.

"This exchange gave us a great opportunity to connect with another chapter, and it made National FFA Week even more special for us," Chism says. "Many of my students made social media connections with [Paris FFA members], so the connection definitely didn't stop after the week was over. That's really cool to see."

The Pine Grove FFA and Paris FFA connection doesn't end there. Chism's students added crayons to the box they sent, along with a letter explaining their significance and what to do with them — a seemingly small gesture that had a big impact.

"Crayons weren't on the list of things to include, but I'm so glad they did," Bondy says. "The letter explained that the students were supposed to break the crayons in half and put one piece in their FFA jacket pocket and give the other piece to another member to serve as a reminder that even if they're broken, they're still useful."

A couple of months later, that broken crayon came in handy for one of Bondy's members, Chris Ebbesmeyer, who was interviewing for a position as a Missouri FFA officer. During his interview, he pulled out the broken crayon and shared its meaning. Today, he is the vice president of the Missouri FFA.

"This is a perfect example of the power in building bonds with other FFA chapters and members, and it was the cherry on top of an awesome experience," Bondy says.

Ready to plan your own National FFA Week celebration? Visit **FFA.org/National-FFA-Week** for resources.

Thank you, Tractor Supply Company, for sponsoring National FFA Week!



Paris FFA members in Missouri show off apparel from Pine Grove FFA in Mississippi.

Photography: Courtesy of Joshua Bondy

NATIONAL FFA OFFICER

Question & Answer

National FFA Week is a great opportunity for members to give back to their communities. What advice would you give to chapters about how to select meaningful service projects for FFA Week?



'22 WA

Cole Baerlocher
NATIONAL FFA PRESIDENT

Get involved in your community to see what the need is right now. One of the biggest challenges our country is facing is nutritional insecurity, so maybe you help support local initiatives that cover those types of issues. Every community is different, and that's why our country is so unique and incredible. Get into your community, take a needs assessment and determine how you can best support those around you through an act of selflessness and service.



'22 DE

Jackson Sylvester
NATIONAL FFA SECRETARY

Take a moment to dive in and understand your individual community's needs and focus your efforts on that. If you see that something your community faces is food insecurity, then serve at the local food bank. If you feel agriculture is something you struggle with promoting, then host industry tours. Ultimately, spend time reflecting on what exactly your community needs and work to serve those needs.



'22 WI

Cortney Zimmerman
CENTRAL REGION VICE PRESIDENT

It's so easy to assume needs are being met within your local town, so you'll have to find that need. This may include organizing a food drive to restock your local food pantry or making blankets for the local elderly home. Once you've identified the need, develop a plan to accomplish your chapter's goal — and work hard to achieve it. All will benefit, including your community, your chapter and you as an individual.



'22 GA

Erik Robinson Jr.
SOUTHERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT

I think chapters should start by remembering the impact people have had on their lives. Whether it's something little like showing someone an act of kindness or simply giving someone food, these small acts make a big difference. Remember the things that you needed when you were down and when you were at a time in life when you needed help. Start there, and know that whatever you decide to do matters.



'22 OR

Josiah Cruikshank
WESTERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT

Selecting any meaningful project begins with an honest needs assessment. This ultimately looks different for each of us. In my home chapter, Bend FFA, we started by considering what our community needs the most. We'd then determine how we could effectively move the chapter in a way that's reasonable for our members, but also meaningful to our community and fulfill the designated need.



'22 KY

Mallory White
EASTERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT

Addressing the need in your local community starts by taking the time to ask community members what they think the community needs. FFA members have the opportunity to fill that gap and be leaders in their communities. Even if it takes a little while to prepare the work, it's still important to understand what it is their community truly needs and address the core of any issues present in their community.

Photography: Copyright © FFA

AG 101

From Farm to Table:

The Growth of Direct-to-Consumer Selling

By Lauren Manning • Photo Illustration by William Duke

Thanks to a variety of factors — social media, consumers' curiosity about where their food comes from and supply chain challenges — farmers have increasingly opted to sell their products direct to consumers. Farmers markets, community supported agriculture (CSA) offerings, online sales and more provide the connection and local convenience consumers and farmers are looking for. Read on to learn more about the growth of direct-to-consumer (D2C) markets and what it means for farmers and consumers.

The Rise of D2C Selling

The 2017 Census of Agriculture reveals that farmers sold more than $3 billion of edible food commodities directly to consumers in 2015. On-farm stores and farmers markets are the most popular D2C outlets for farmers. In 2015, these channels captured $2 billion in sales and accounted for 67% of farmers' total D2C sales. About half of the farms offering D2C sales are in metropolitan counties, while more than 80% of the farms made all their sales within a 100-mile radius of the farm.

Making Sense of a New Market

Although D2C markets have become popular with many farmers and consumers, they aren't for everyone. Here are a few challenges and opportunities farmers and consumers should consider.

Farmers

Challenges

• **Marketing** – Farming is already a full-time job. Entering a D2C market means you also may have to engage in marketing, branding and salesmanship. Many farmers selling D2C create and manage websites, social media accounts and more to maintain professionalism and attract customers. Managing the sales and marketing aspect of a D2C channel may be more work off the farm than some farmers can handle.

• **Preparation** – Getting ready for the Saturday morning farmers market can take a lot of time – sometimes an entire day's work. Packaging and shipping products also takes time to ensure that products arrive safely and maintain quality.

Opportunities

• **Connection** – One of the things farmers love most about selling D2C is the ability to get to know the people who eat the food they grow.

• **Education** – Farmers who sell D2C can educate consumers about food production.

If you are eager to represent agriculture and help your community learn more about how food is produced, D2C markets may be perfect for you.

Consumers

Challenges

• **Convenience** – D2C channels don't always offer the same convenience as popping by the grocery store on the way home from work. They may have limited hours, operate seasonally or deliver to selected areas at specific times.

• **Variety** –Although many farmers offer a variety of produce, meat, dairy and more, variety is limited compared with traditional channels. Also, certain items might not be available year-round because of the seasonality of products.

Opportunities

• **Exploration** – A by-product of D2C markets' limited variety and seasonality is taking the opportunity to explore new recipes, try new foods and branch out of your comfort zone. Farmers markets can offer fun and educational experiences for children interested in food and farming.

• **Community** – You may come to the farmers market for the in-season peaches, but you may leave with new friends. Farmers markets have become more than just places to pick up local produce; they create spaces for people to connect who may have never met otherwise.

The Future Of D2C Markets

D2C channels like farmers markets, CSAs and online sales have grown in popularity over the years and will likely continue to grow. For both farmers and consumers, exploring D2C markets doesn't have to be an all-or-nothing proposition. Farmers can explore the possibilities by signing up for their local farmers market or contacting local restaurants to gauge their interest in buying from a local farmer. Consumers can explore local farmers markets, food hubs and restaurants that specialize in local cuisine, or commit to making one meal a month exclusively from D2C purchased foods. •

BREAKING THE MOLD



FFA ALUMNA DORIS MOLD PURSUED HER PASSION FOR AGRICULTURE AGAINST ALL ODDS.

– By Jodi Helmer

Doris Mold spent her childhood tagging along doing farm chores, helping her dad feed calves and milk cows on the family dairy farm. Mold loved working on the farm and hoped to operate her own farm one day, but when she told her extended family she wanted to be a farmer, they quickly interjected.

"They said, 'You mean you want to *marry* a farmer,'" she recalls. I said, 'No, I want to *be* a farmer.'"

Mold was undeterred.

When she joined North Branch FFA in 1976, she was the only female member of the North Branch, Minn., chapter and, despite a lack of encouragement from her FFA advisor, she became chapter president, then district president and ran for state office twice. She lost both times, but her passion for agriculture and leadership never wavered.

"It hurt at the time," she admits. "You figure out other ways to serve and make a difference."

Since then, Mold has found countless ways to make a mark in agriculture. She is the president of Sunrise Agricultural Associates, a consulting firm focused on strategic and business planning and marketing for agricultural companies, including farms. She also serves as co-CEO of Annie's Project, a nonprofit organization that empowers women in agriculture by providing educational programming and networks, particularly for women farmers and ranchers.

She balances both roles while teaching farm and agribusiness management courses for the MAST International program at the University of Minnesota, operating a dairy farm and volunteering for numerous efforts in the ag community, including farm stress programming, agricultural advocacy efforts, and FFA and 4-H programs.

Growing up with few female role models in agriculture helped Mold understand the importance of paving the way for other women in the field. In fact, she served on the expert panel that advised the U.S. Department of Agriculture on changes to the way it collected data on the gender of farm operators in the Census of Agriculture to ensure that women were being counted.

"We saw a 27% increase in the number of women farmers. It wasn't because we suddenly had all of these additional women farmers. It was because we finally started asking the right questions," Mold says. "It felt really good to know that I had a hand in making sure that women were counted."

In honor of Women's History Month observed in March, Mold hopes the next generation of women in agriculture continue to pursue their passions and commit to supporting those coming up behind them.

"Seek out mentors; ask for help. Be a catalyst," she says. "If you see a need, don't be afraid of starting something new."



"Seek out mentors; ask for help. Be a catalyst. If you see a need, don't be afraid of starting something new." – Doris Mold

Photography: Getty Images, kgfoto, Toxitz; Courtesy of Doris Mold



Leading Like Washington

While National FFA Week is meant for celebration, it also offers many ways to grow as leaders. This year, hone your leadership skills and put them into action throughout National FFA Week by finding inspiration from President George Washington. There is a lot we can learn from his examples of leadership and put into practice this National FFA Week.

– By Bev Flatt

Find Opportunities To Practice

Washington was known for his incredible military leadership, but did you know he learned all his military training on the job? Rather than learning from books on military strategy, Washington volunteered for active service at age 21, thus beginning a career that changed the world.

Volunteering for chapter activities can help you demonstrate your leadership abilities and develop those skills in a welcoming environment. Sign up to lead your FFA Day of Service or develop a competition for Give FFA Day. While it may be challenging, you'll learn how to manage people who may have conflicting opinions and learn how to create collaboration.

Learn To Follow

Washington received a formal education and showed an aptitude for mathematics. This led him to a surveying career where he completed more than 200 survey assignments across 60,000 acres by following the maps and guidance of other individuals. By following their instructions with precision, Washington established a lucrative career that would span decades.

If you often find yourself in the driver's seat, now is the time to view leadership from a different perspective. Think about what you would want a follower to be doing, and then do it. This approach enables you to think about leadership from a different perspective and how to encourage this kind of behavior in the future.

Engage Those Around You

At Valley Forge in the winter of 1777-78, nearly 2,000 of Washington's soldiers died due to brutal conditions at the Pennsylvania encampment. While many suffered because of their desire for a free country, historian David McCullough states many soldiers would go anywhere and do anything because of their love for General Washington.

Although some people are born with the ability to use charm and charisma to their advantage, it is something that can be learned. Listening attentively, taking an interest in people and giving them a voice can be key motivators for success. While your chapter spends this week sharing positive stories and messages about agriculture, look for ways to practice engaging those around you.

Photography: Getty Images, mikroman6



a summe

This photo: Annabella Leach, a member of Wagener-Salley FFA in Wagener, S.C., balances fun with team building on the high ropes course at the South Carolina FFA Camp.
Opposite: Fresh off the water, Jazen Furgison, South Carolina FFA Camp counselor, heads to the next activity.



rtime staple

Generations of FFA members have marked their calendars for summer camp. Consider doing the same.

By Jessica Walker Boehm
Photography by Tyler Smith

Synonymous with fun in the sun, relaxation and vacations, summer is a highly anticipated time of year for many people, but it's especially exciting for FFA members.

Throughout the summer, FFA camps are in full swing in many states, giving members the opportunities to make new friends, engage in team-building activities and hone their leadership skills — not to mention create memories likely to last a lifetime.

"FFA camps are steeped in tradition," says Frank Saldaña, South Carolina region III and IV agricultural education coordinator. Saldaña is instrumental in organizing the annual summer camp sessions at the South Carolina FFA Center. "Many campers come with advisors who also came to camp when they were FFA members, or their parents came and now it's their turn. It's almost considered a rite of passage, and it's definitely very special."

A Rich History

Camp Clements, the camp that sparked this summertime tradition, was established in the late 1920s, and it's still going strong.

Located in the foothills of the Cumberland Mountains on the Caney Fork River in Van Buren County, Tenn., the camp was named for its creator, Dudley M. Clements, who first imagined the original FFA camp when he was a young agriculture teacher in 1911.

Eventually serving as the first state supervisor of agricultural education in Tennessee, Clements saw his dream come to life in 1927. Aside from a three-year closure from 1958 to 1961, Camp Clements has remained operational since its inception, making it the nation's oldest FFA camp.

The second oldest FFA camp is the North Carolina FFA Center at White Lake, which has been in operation since 1928 and has hosted upward of 150,000 members to date.

Many other states followed suit in the 1930s, with FFA camps popping up across the nation, including Arkansas, Wyoming, North Dakota, New Hampshire and New Jersey. In 1941, the National FFA Camp opened in Washington, D.C.

The National FFA Camp location at the nation's capital was chosen intentionally, offering FFA members an opportunity to sightsee and explore, and it was immediately popular. During the summer of 1941, 483 boys from 49 chapters in 17 states visited the camp.

However, the excitement was short-lived as the United States entered World War II later that year, and the camp closed until 1946. After briefly reopening, the National FFA Camp closed permanently in the 1950s. It was transformed into the National FFA Center from 1958 to 1997.

While the National FFA Camp is a thing of the past, state FFA camps continue drawing FFA members each summer, many of whom return year after year.

A Lasting Impression

Although it's not one of the state's original FFA camps, the South Carolina FFA Camp has drawn thousands of young people since 1956.

Operated by the South Carolina FFA Board of Directors, four camp sessions are held during June and July at the 36-acre South Carolina FFA Center



Below, left: Noah Key and Xzavier Cobb from Carvers Bay FFA in Hemingway, S.C., relax during free time. Below: Lily Campbell and Audrey Cutlip from WTC Kershaw County FFA in Camden S.C., enjoy team-building activities. Opposite: South Carolina FFA Camp attendees take to the water on House Creek. Opposite, inset: Abigail Lucas from Swansea FFA in Swansea, S.C., showcases her catch of the day.



FFA camps continue drawing FFA members each summer, many of whom return year after year.



in the marsh of North Myrtle Beach. Each session lasts five days.

South Carolina FFA Camp attendees can expect to spend time outdoors, taking their turn on the high and low ropes courses, completing an obstacle course, and playing miniature golf and volleyball, as well as enjoying water activities such as swimming and kayaking.

"Our camp is full of energy and excitement," Saldaña says. "By participating in the many activities and events we offer and forming teams with their peers, campers grow and enhance their leadership skills. They're learning more about themselves, forming friendships and creating stronger bonds within their chapters, all while having fun. It's a unique experience that's hard to re-create — unless they come back to camp, of course."

Grant Hall is a perfect example of a camper who couldn't get enough, first attending the South Carolina FFA Camp when he was 7 years old with his father, who served as the Marlboro County FFA advisor. Hall continued attending camp with his father until he could go as a camper with his own chapter, Cheraw FFA. After high school graduation, he went back to camp as a counselor, a decision he says changed his life in more ways than one.



"I would not be an ag teacher today if not for the South Carolina FFA Camp, and I probably wouldn't have met my wife had we both not attended camp as counselors," Hall says. "To say it's a special place to me is a huge understatement."

After spending three years as a counselor, Hall went on to become an FFA advisor for Carvers Bay FFA in Hemingway, S.C., and now he brings his members to the South Carolina FFA Camp.

One of those members is Spencer Watts, the vice president of Carvers Bay FFA, who attended camp for the first time in 2021.

"I'd heard so many good things about FFA camp, and everyone was right: It was amazing," Watts says. "I got to meet chapters from across the state while also growing closer to my chapter members. We did lots of team-building activities, so everyone had a chance to get involved and share their ideas, and we all worked together throughout the week during different competitions and events."

Watts enjoyed South Carolina FFA Camp so much he plans to follow in his advisor's footsteps and become a counselor next year, helping to ensure that the magic of camp stays alive for the next generation.

"Anyone and everyone who can attend FFA camp should go," Watts says. "There's nothing quite like it, and I already can't wait to go back." •

FFA Camps Across the Country

Looking for an FFA camp in your region? We've compiled a list, but this is only a sampling. There are more great ones across the United States. Check with your advisor or browse your state association website to find any in your area!

1. Arizona FFA Leadership Camp at Camp Shadow Pines in Heber, Ariz.
At this five-day camp, FFA members from across Arizona form teams to compete in relay races and tackle an obstacle course while also enjoying hiking, fishing, boating and swimming. AZFFA.org/FFA-Camp

2. Oswegatchie FFA Camp in Croghan, N.Y.
Offering several weeklong sessions each summer, the Oswegatchie FFA Camp offers team-building activities on its high and low ropes courses, plus horseback riding, archery, kayaking, zip-lining, mountain biking and much more — all in the Adirondack Park. Oswegatchie.org

3. Ohio FFA Camp Muskingum in Carrollton, Ohio
Ohio FFA Camp Muskingum hosts six sessions throughout the summer that include leadership workshops, swimming, canoeing, scavenger hunts and more. The camp also offers special sessions like Camp Canopy, a camp focused on forestry and wildlife identification and education organized by the Ohio Forestry Association. OhioFFA.org/Camp

4. Wyoming FFA Leadership Camp near Lander, Wyo.
With two summer sessions, the Wyoming FFA Leadership Camp offers a balanced mix of work and play with workshops in public speaking and interviewing, as well as outdoor adventures, team competitions and a camp-wide dance. FFACamp.org

5. Camp John Hope in Fort Valley, Ga.
Central Georgia's Camp John Hope has been a mainstay in youth recreation and education for over 80 years. In that time, its campground has been enjoyed by various organizations, including New Farmers of America (NFA) and Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA). Activities include canoeing and kayaking, crafting, swimming, archery and rock wall climbing. Don't be afraid to get dirty — the muddy obstacle course is a hit! CampJohnHope.com



Opposite: (from left to right) Danaysia Roberts, Phoenix Sandifer and Jaylen Chisolm from Bamberg-Ehrhardt FFA in Bamberg, S.C., show off their team-building winnings. This photo: Lauren Knight, from Swansea FFA in Swansea, S.C., flashes a smile after kayaking.

Learning to Lead

Joining FFA helped Bennett Perez go from shy to self-assured and gave her the confidence to chase her dreams.

– By Jessica Walker Boehm

Bennett Perez found her footing in agricultural education in an unexpected way.

Perez, a John Bowne FFA alumna from John Bowne High School in Flushing, N.Y., felt drawn to FFA because of her love of plants and animals, but her focus changed when she was recruited to join her chapter's agriculture sales team as a freshman.

"One of my advisors said he saw something in me, and even though I was terrified, I trusted him," Perez says. "The team captain and my advisor helped me practice and prepare, and I ended up placing eighth as an individual in the New York FFA Agriculture Sales Career Development Event (CDE) that year, while also helping my chapter place first as a team. I couldn't believe it. It was the biggest confidence boost of my life."

Months later, Perez and her teammates headed to the National FFA Convention & Expo, where she finished sixth as an individual in the agricultural sales CDE and solidified her spot as her chapter's sales team captain.

Perez also launched her chapter's marketing plan team, and she continued competing in CDEs until she graduated in 2014. In that time, Perez gained skills in active listening to build rapport, and she learned to match product features and benefits to a customer's needs and wants — skills that are important in any career.

"Competing in sales and marketing events taught me leadership skills and gave me so many opportunities to get out of my comfort zone and talk to new people," she says. "I also learned a lot about myself; it turns out I'm not as shy as I thought I was, and I enjoy being a leader and working with others to achieve a goal."



After high school, Bennett attended the State University of New York (SUNY) at New Paltz and earned a bachelor of arts degree in sociology with a concentration in human services and a minor in Asian studies.

Her next step would have sounded shocking to a younger version of Perez, but thanks to the confidence she built in FFA, she was ready to chase her dream of living in Japan. She entered the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program as an assistant language teacher in 2018 and worked alongside Japanese English teachers in rural Japan.

Now back in the United States, Perez plans to explore career opportunities in a variety of areas and find the perfect fit; after all, she now knows the sky is the limit.

"I would not be who I am today without the experiences and adventures I had in FFA," Perez says. "Although the heart of FFA is agriculture, it's about so much more than that. When you join, you become part of a family that helps you grow and become your best self. I'm so lucky to have been part of such an incredible organization."

To connect with inspiring alumni like Perez and fellow members and FFA supporters, check out the FFA Forever Blue Network at ***ForeverBlueNetwork.org.***

Interested in learning more about the agricultural sales and marketing plan CDEs? Hover your smartphone's camera over the code.

Photography: Courtesy of Bennett Perez

WELL-POLISHED MACHINE



Dawson Boys

THIS FFA MEMBER BUILT A HIGH-DEMAND CAR-DETAILING BUSINESS.

– By Lauren Denton

The COVID-19 pandemic taught the world the art of the pivot. For Dawson Boys, the forced change of plans made him a successful entrepreneur. When his fast-food job took a pause, the then 18-year-old junior at Stewardson-Strasburg High School in Stewardson, Ill., used his newfound free time to monetize a passion project — working on cars.

"I was born and raised in a shop," says Boys. In addition to building his own race truck and restoring cars with his dad, "I always had an immaculate car," he adds. "I thought, 'People would pay money for that.'"

He tested that theory by starting a car-detailing business while also mowing lawns. In just a few months, he'd built a solid customer base and transitioned entirely to his one-person operation. "I just started grinding it out," he says. "I worked a lot of long days." It paid off: In the first year, DB's Auto Detailing raked in upward of $15,000.

"It was really just a side hustle that I never expected to blow up," says Boys, who logged the business as a supervised agricultural experience (SAE) during his senior year. The key? "If you make a dozen people happy, you'll make 100 people happy. They won't stop talking about the work you do."

Boys' business is a case study in word-of-mouth marketing. His first customers were people he raced with, which included a local farmer who also wanted his tractor and tillage tools cleaned. That farmer's friends then called Boys to polish their trucks, and friends of those friends wanted pristine vehicles, too. "I eventually had to turn people away," he says.

"Networking was so important to help kick off my business," he adds. "You have to have people who believe in you, and that's powerful to sell them on ideas." That principle also bolstered his FFA experience. "I'm a big people person. The people I've met through FFA have helped my business tremendously."

Now a freshman at Southern Illinois University, more than two hours from home, Boys has paused his business, except for during breaks from school. As a business finance major considering business law, he'll likely stay close to entrepreneurship for the long haul.

"I just love being able to look at something I built, and that money in my bank account is because of me, coming to me for what I did," he says. "A hamburger can be made the same way by anyone, but a personal service is just you — and that's really special to me."

For ideas and inspiration for starting your own SAE, visit **SAEForAll.org**.

> "I'M A BIG PEOPLE PERSON. THE PEOPLE I'VE MET THROUGH FFA HAVE HELPED MY BUSINESS TREMENDOUSLY." – Dawson Boys

Photography: Courtesy of Dawson Boys; Getty Images, EyeEm

Officer Tees



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1. ADVISOR ICON TEE (S-2X)	03056-03	$19.50	**5.** SECRETARY ICON TEE (S-2X)	03056-70	$19.50
2. REPORTER ICON TEE (S-2X)	03056-40	$19.50	**6.** TREASURER ICON TEE (S-2X)	03056-30	$19.50
3. PRESIDENT ICON TEE (S-2X)	03056-60	$19.50	**7.** SENTINEL ICON TEE (S-2X)	03056-42	$19.50
4. VICE PRESIDENT ICON TEE (S-2X)	03056-06	$19.50			

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(Pictured: @anthony_andres_, @itsmaddie.e, @jacobaharper, @torin_lynn)



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Annual FFA TEE COLLECTION



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BACK

8.	**2021-2022 ANNUAL TEE** (S-5X)	TEE21 $15.50	**12.**	**WE ARE FFA ICONS BAG**	03052 $5.00
9.	**WE ARE FFA SLIDE CAP**	03113 $17.50	**13.**	**WE ARE FFA TEE** (S-2X)	03084 $17.50
10.	**WE ARE FFA ICONS TEE** (S-2X)	03103 $30.00	**14.**	**WE ARE FFA ICONS MUG** (11oz.)	03050 $4.00
11.	**MV SPORT® WE ARE FFA ICONS BLANKET**	03058 $44.00	**15.**	**WE ARE FFA ICONS HOODIE** (S-5X)	HOOD21 $38.00

Logo Gear



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1.	BOLD LOGO GEAR TEE (S-3X)	03186-06	$15.50	6.	BOLD LOGO GEAR TEE (S-2X)	03186-80	$15.50
2.	BOLD LOGO GEAR TEE (S-2X)	03186-40	$15.50	7.	BOLD LOGO GEAR HOODIE (S-3X)	03187-06	$35.00
3.	BOLD LOGO GEAR TEE (S-2X)	03186-42	$15.50	8.	BOLD LOGO GEAR HOODIE (S-2X)	03187-40	$35.00
4.	BOLD LOGO GEAR TEE (S-2X)	03186-47	$15.50	9.	BOLD LOGO GEAR HOODIE (S-2X)	03187-47	$35.00
5.	BOLD LOGO GEAR TEE (S-3X)	03186-64	$15.50	10.	BOLD LOGO GEAR HOODIE (S-3X)	03187-64	$35.00



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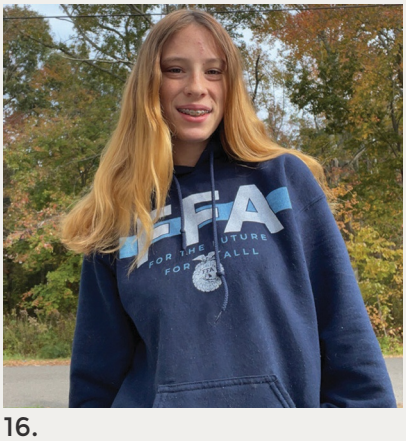

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FFA STRIPE LOGO GEAR

11.	**FFA STRIPE LOGO GEAR TEE** (S-2X)	02951-32	$15.50
12.	**FFA STRIPE LOGO GEAR TEE** (S-2X)	02951-36	$15.50
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14.	**FFA STRIPE LOGO GEAR TEE** (S-2X)	02951-71	$15.50
15.	**FFA STRIPE LOGO GEAR HOODIE** (S-2X)	02952-32	$35.00
16.	**FFA STRIPE LOGO GEAR HOODIE** (S-5X)	02952-40	$35.00
17.	**FFA STRIPE LOGO GEAR HOODIE** (S-2X)	02952-36	$35.00
18.	**FFA STRIPE LOGO GEAR HOODIE** (S-2X)	02952-71	$35.00

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(Pictured: @vanessaanaya, @rose_weidemann5, @lizzie_hunterr)





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(Pictured: @benjamin_williams04, @laken_lindsay)

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5. COMFORT COLORS® GROWING THE FUTURE TEE (S-2X) 03096 $38.00
6. IMAGE ONE® COUNTRY ROADS BADGE TEE (S-2X) 03065 $22.00



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7. COMFORT COLORS® FILLED LETTERS TEE (S-2X) 03196 $35.00
8. IMAGE ONE® FLORAL FOREVER BLUE TEE (S-2X) 03144 $30.00
9. IMAGE ONE® NEON CIRCLE TEE (S-2X) 03197 $35.00
10. IMAGE ONE® FILLED LETTERS HOODIE (S-2X) 03146 $45.00
11. MV SPORT® WE ARE FFA HOODIE (S-2X) 03117 $40.00
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Recapturing a Lost Culture

Decades after the merger between New Farmers of America (NFA) and FFA, recognition is long overdue for an organization that shaped the blue and gold as we know it.

– By Bev Flatt



Photography: Courtesy of F.D. Bluford Library



Four members of the North Carolina Association of New Farmers of America (NFA) attend state convention (c. 1950).

"I keep records of receipts and disbursements just as Washington kept his accounts — carefully and accurately. I encourage thrift among the members and strive to build up our financial standings through savings and investments. Booker T. Washington was better able to serve his countrymen and posterity, because he was financially independent."

While the majority of FFA members can recite the first two sentences of this quote from memory, the third is less familiar. These words have not been spoken in an official agricultural education meeting since the New Farmers of America (NFA) and the Future Farmers of America (now National FFA Organization) became one organization more than 50 years ago.

While labeled a merger in 1965, the NFA was basically absorbed by FFA. At the time, both organizations were independently successful in honing leadership skills and providing professional development opportunities for young men in agriculture. Since combining, however, the number of Black Americans who benefit from activities in FFA and agricultural education has decreased drastically. Many of the traditions, history and culture of Black agricultural education have been erased or forgotten.

With recent research by Antoine Alston, Ph.D., professor and associate dean at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, and Dexter Wakefield, Ph.D., professor



Cattle judging was an important event through which NFA members learned new skills.

Browse the following resources to learn more about the experiences and memories of NFA members and advisors.

NFA Records 1929-1965

NFA Impact on Members

NFA Merger With FFA

Historical Narrative

Voices of Teachers

and associate dean of academic programs at Alcorn State University, more is known about the experiences of former NFA members.

"If you think about the age of a former NFA member or even NFA teachers today, they would be more than 75 to 80 years old," says Alston. "Our time to learn from these early, Black agricultural leaders is running out. If we don't capture their experiences and their memories now, it may soon be lost to history."

Understand the History

The roots of NFA can be traced back more than 140 years to Booker T. Washington, an influential educator, author and civil rights leader.

In 1880, Washington, the son of former slaves and an advocate for black progress through education and entrepreneurship, established an agricultural class for Black boys in his one-room school in Tuskegee, Ala. Beginning in 1896, the segregation of races in educational establishments was instituted under the "separate but equal" doctrine created by Plessy v. Ferguson, a U.S. Supreme Court case in which the Court decided that racial segregation laws were constitutional as long as the facilities for each race were equal in quality. It would remain in practice by the United States for the next 70 years, and ultimately led to the creation of similar but separate organizations like NFA and FFA.

Later, passage of the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 — barely 50 years removed from the end of slavery — provided funding to states for vocational and agricultural education. Dr. H.O. Sargent was soon appointed as the first federal agent of vocational agricultural education for special groups,



NFA National Board of Trustees in 1956



The 1952-53 National NFA Officer Team

which included Black, Hispanic and Native American citizens. He was widely accepted by Black agricultural educators, and under his leadership, Black agricultural education expanded and many Black teacher-trainers were awarded fellowships for graduate studies.

Understand the Journey

In 1927, Sargent teamed up with G.W. Owens, a teacher-trainer at Virginia State College, to draft the first constitution and bylaws for New Farmers of Virginia, an organization for Black agriculture students. That same year, 400 New Farmers of Virginia members from 18 chapters held a state rally to create more interest in the vocation of farming, encourage cooperative effort among agricultural students and develop rural leadership.

From 1927 to 1935, plans for the national NFA organization took shape and it was officially formed Aug. 4, 1935, at Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Ala. From then on, an emblem comprising a plow, owl, rising sun, open boll of cotton, American eagle and the words "NFA" and "Vocational Agriculture" graced the black-and-gold jackets of NFA members across the country. Active members earned degrees as the Farm Hand, Improved Farmer, Modern Farmer and Superior Farmer, and they would compete in events such as dairy farming, farm electrification and public speaking. A quartet contest was held to develop a greater appreciation for music, including traditional Black spirituals.

NFA operated autonomously from its inception in 1935 until 1941. During this time, NFA grew to consist of 1,004 chapters in 12 states and more than 50,000 members. In 1941,

While desegregation was a milestone, the way in which it was carried out ended up hurting the Black community.



Entertainment was provided during most chapter, state and national NFA meetings.



NFA members show beef cattle at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (c. 1950).



An NFA member gathers eggs as part of his poultry supervised farming practice.

the U.S. Department of Education — which didn't employ a single Black person to represent NFA — brought NFA under its own authority, removing authority from the NFA leaders of that time. NFA leaders recognized the need to secure leadership positions in education departments to support their interests at the local, state and national levels. Over the next two decades, NFA leaders made repeated attempts to gain representation.

Meanwhile, momentum for "separate but equal" legislation began to slow. In addition to other court cases, in 1954, the Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education struck down the doctrine of "separate but equal" and ordered an end to school segregation. Individual states enacted desegregation legislation and, as a result, five of the 17 state NFA associations in existence at the time merged with their state FFA associations.

Understand the Losses

While desegregation was a milestone, the way in which it was carried out ended up hurting the Black community. As schools began to merge, the resulting agriculture programs couldn't support two agriculture teachers; more often than not, Black teachers lost their jobs to white teachers. In other cases, Black teachers were demoted from being a vocational agriculture teacher to a lower category, leading to smaller salaries and reduced opportunities. Leadership positions were largely given to white individuals, leaving Black students and teachers unrepresented.

In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law. While the implications of this act would desegregate all schools and school-based

These long-lasting impacts are still felt today. In 1965, more than 52,000 young men were members of the NFA. Today, just 36,000 FFA members identify as Black, which accounts for only 5% of membership.

activities, it also led, through a merger with FFA, to the end of NFA and the culture built around it. The merger was ultimately one-sided, as NFA gave up its name, charter, constitution, bylaws, awards, emblem, jacket, Creed, flag, banner, colors, financial assets and adult leadership. Meanwhile, FFA gave up nothing — not even a single seat on its board of directors.

"The events around the NFA/FFA merger were a federal mandate from the U.S. government," says Wakefield. "There was a feeling that this merger was inevitable and not such a bad idea, but there was an expectation that Black students would be provided equal opportunities in all positions and activities. It did not happen."

These long-lasting impacts are still felt today. In 1965, more than 52,000 young men were members of NFA. Today, just 36,000 FFA members identify as Black, which accounts for only 5% of membership.

But Alston says not all of NFA disappeared.

"While there was significant loss, there are a lot of NFA activities that still exist as a part of FFA today," says Alston. "The challenge has been around access. It's all about resources when it comes to being an effective organization. Decades ago, resources were a barrier when agricultural education membership [costs] went from 5¢ in the NFA to 50¢ in FFA. Back then, it was typically not feasible for students who did not have financial resources to receive an award in the FFA."

In his research, Alston heard from one NFA advisor who said, "We lost a lot; lost some great opportunities. [We] should have kept the vision of NFA, and we would be better off. We lost our camp; lost employment. We lost so much, [which] still impacts [us] today."

The Black community began experiencing a decline in representation in agriculture, as some Black teachers and leaders were pushed from their positions. Black students, in turn, lacked role models in the field; those students who wanted to pursue agricultural careers were encouraged to choose other pathways.

"Today, even students who have [financial] resources [to pursue careers in agriculture] are being told to choose another career pathway," says Alston.

Wakefield adds, "Underrepresented students are traditionally unaware of the potential of success in the agriculture field of study" because they're encouraged to pursue other careers, instead.

Understand What Is Possible

"We must address the tough topics of our past to help our organization create an accessible and inclusive future," says James Woodard, National FFA Advisor and chair of the National FFA Board of Directors. "FFA is made up of more than 700,000 members, each with their own unique history, heritage, interests and vision for the future. We honor and respect the differences among us that make us stronger."

Learning what happened in 1965 may inspire members to take action and ensure the NFA culture is not lost. What could this look like? Movements start at the grassroots level with members and chapters. Perhaps members can initiate a scavenger hunt through the NFA archives. Or chapters can invite community members who were students during segregation to share their experiences or become an honorary chapter member. Maybe members will find inspiration in the former NFA talent programs and host a quartet competition. Chapters may look to supplement copies of the Official FFA Manual with additional historical material on NFA to ensure the past is not forgotten. Start small now, then think bigger.

Regardless of the actions members are inspired to take or the emotions processed, recognition of the NFA perspective is a step to reevaluate a decades-old absorption and turn it into a true merger — making FFA an organization for all. •

PRESERVING THE PAST

The National FFA Organization is helping to fund the NFA Archives project in 2022 to ensure these important perspectives are not lost.

Antoine Alston, Ph.D, and Dexter Wakefield, Ph.D, are also creating an NFA pictorial to document the history of NFA through photos.

Understand Our Potential

For one FFA member in Tennessee, a gap in a history lesson led to a drastic shift in the way NFA history is taught at his school.

During a class lesson, Malachi Johnson raised his hand to challenge his class on why there wasn't more information regarding the history of the New Farmers of America (NFA). The question went unanswered, and members of the Scotts Hill FFA Chapter have made it their mission to research NFA and build a more robust history lesson. Throughout the process of finding the hidden history of this organization, the chapter made a rare discovery — the jacket of a former NFA member, which now hangs proudly in their classroom.

Today, Scotts Hill FFA has a Human Resources Committee; members of the committee are conducting interviews with original members of NFA chapters. These interviews will be compiled into a documentary, allowing the voice of former NFA members to be heard by all. Follow along with these FFA members as they journey through NFA history on their chapter Facebook page.

Keep up with the Scotts Hill FFA Chapter's NFA history journey.

NFA members gained a wide variety of skills, including woodworking, through the organization's programming.





Texas NFA members attend the 23rd National NFA Convention in 1957 in Atlanta, Ga.



An NFA member and member of the Logan Boar Association from Concord, N.C., shows his boar as a part of his swine project in 1941.


Teaching With
TECH

High-tech tools transform classroom learning.

By Jodi Helmer

Illustrations by Matt Wood

Jaidyn Seelye had never eaten bok choy or red lettuce until she started growing both as part of a classroom project at Southeast Region Career and Technology Center in Wahpeton, N.D.

Cultivating the vegetables under different conditions was part of the Growing Beyond Earth Challenge, a NASA-led science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education program that invites students to grow vegetables in a self-contained growing unit called a MARSfarm. The data collected in the classroom was sent to NASA to help the space agency determine which foods to grow at the International Space Station.

Once the veggies were slathered with a little ranch dressing, Seelye, 15, and her fellow Wahpeton FFA members liked the taste.

Participating in the Growing Beyond Earth Challenge was about more than experimenting with new foods. Seelye believes it was also a good way to see how technology could be used in the classroom.

"Hands-on learning is really beneficial because it gives you different ways to learn," she says. "We got to be really creative with the lighting and controls and then watch the plants grow over the week, which was really cool."

Experiences like Seelye's are not unusual, as teachers trade whiteboards and notebooks for high-tech tools that transform their classrooms into advanced centers for learning and exploration.

Incorporating technology into the curriculum is more common than ever and offers big benefits.

The latest data from Common Sense Media shows that 73% of teachers rated digital creation tools as effective for engaging students in learning and 63% said the same of digital games.

Consider these five examples and benefits of technology in the classroom.

1. Build Career Skills

In 2021, Kasey Naylor used funds from the Grants for Growing program, sponsored by Tractor Supply Company, to purchase an ultrasound machine for students enrolled in agriculture classes at Sam Rayburn High School in Ivanhoe, Texas.

> **"Minecraft allows for purposeful play, social interaction and collaboration, and it also builds soft skills."**
>
> **— Laylah Bulman**
>
> Microsoft

An Out-Of-This-World Education

Scan this code with your smartphone's camera to watch our video about the Wahpeton FFA project with NASA.

The technology will allow students to perform ultrasounds on the cattle living on the 90-acre school farm and determine their reproductive status. Students can also study the ultrasound images to learn about fetal development.

"Students want a visual," explains Naylor, agriculture teacher and Sam Rayburn FFA advisor. "They are so used to looking at TikTok and YouTube and learn better when they can access images."

Naylor also hopes the students can use the ultrasound machine during off-site visits to determine whether the pigs, sheep and goats their classmates are raising for FFA projects are pregnant.

"There are a lot of kids taking animal science classes who want to be vets," she adds. "This technology will show them some of the other career possibilities, like becoming an ultrasound technician or exploring careers in animal reproduction."

Another tool being used in the classroom is the video game Minecraft, through which players use blocks to create their own three-dimensional worlds. The platform allows players to design their terrain, extract raw materials, build structures, plant crops and make tools, and the education edition of the game incorporates features built for learning environments, including classes for STEM, language arts, coding and history.

These tools do more than just build technology skills. Minecraft allows for purposeful play, social interaction and collaboration, and it also builds soft skills, according to Laylah Bulman, senior business program manager for Minecraft: Education Edition at Microsoft.

"The skills that you learn in Minecraft: Education Edition are transferrable to other areas of life," she says. "It has such a meaningful impact on students."

2. Spark Creativity

When students at the Southeast Region Career and Technology Center, including Seelye, heard they would be growing vegetables as part of a science experiment for NASA, their excitement was contagious.

"It really drew them in," recalls agriculture teacher and FFA advisor Breanna Pastir.

Pastir signed up to participate in the Growing Beyond Earth Challenge hoping that the hands-on project would help her students see the real-world application of their classroom instruction, and it worked. In fact, once the initial trial was complete, members of the Wahpeton FFA Chapter were eager to see how other factors like the light spectrum, water levels and fertilizer application affected plant growth. Pastir encouraged them to continue experimenting and recording their results.

"A lot of times we do things in the classroom and our students can't see the application," she recalls. "For them to see that the research they're doing is useful — that's my favorite part about the project and the reason we continue to do it."

3. Promote Personalized Learning

During a trip to Indiana for the National FFA Convention, a Sam Rayburn FFA member was introduced to an app that makes it possible for beekeepers to check the health of their hives from their smartphones. This was a lightbulb moment for the student


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> "They can see how what they are learning in other classes, like science classes, **applies to agriculture.**"
>
> **— Breanna Pastir**
> Wahpeton FFA advisor

beekeeper, Naylor says.

"It really opened his eyes to all of the ways we can use technology," she says. "The more kids see opportunities to use technology in new ways, the more engaged they are in learning."

Pastir encourages students to use the MARSfarm as inspiration for their agriscience fair projects. It allows them to come up with their own experiments and, she adds, "They can see how what they are learning in other classes, like science classes, applies to agriculture."

4. Create Connections

Technology has been especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Bulman. She points to game-based learning tools like Minecraft: Education Edition as one of the many high-tech tools that have allowed students to remain connected outside the classroom.

"We're able to connect kids virtually in this world when they couldn't get together in real life," she says. "There is this amazing value to giving kids a tool that makes them want to keep learning."

In the process of building virtual worlds and creating characters, students learn to work together, set goals, solve problems and develop communication skills.

Bulman believes that the gaming aspect draws in students who might be otherwise uninterested in lessons about math, history, computer science and environmental studies.

Minecraft: Education Edition also allows teachers to create non-player characters to provide instruction, insert web links, communicate via chat and build an interactive experience that connects, educates and inspires students.

"You can leverage the technology to transform learning," Bulman says. "The power of technology is that it allows students to find their passions."

5. Inspire an Interest In Agriculture

The Sam Rayburn FFA Chapter also used grant funds to purchase a drone.

The remote-controlled device provides an aerial view of farm fields, allowing agriculture students to understand how soil fertilizer and other inputs affect crop health and yield. Students can also navigate the drone over the pastures to check cows. Naylor hopes that seeing the drone flying over campus and hearing students talk in the halls about what they get to do in agriculture classes will have another benefit: encourage more students to enroll in agriculture classes.

"It's something different to bring to the classroom," she says. "I hope it'll get kids all across campus thinking, 'I should've taken an ag class.'"•

Real-World Technologies In Classrooms

The National FFA Organization and Microsoft created the FarmBeats for Students program, giving students access to the modern tools growers are using on farms. The program combines a hardware kit — which includes an array of sensors and high-tech tools — with curriculum and activities designed to give students a hands-on experience in applying precision agriculture techniques to food production. Learn more at FFA.org/FarmBeats-For-Students.

Looking for more ways to bring innovations in agriculture to the classroom? The Virtual FFA Blue Room will host speakers from leading ag tech organizations throughout the year — not just during national convention — to share insights and info through short presentations. Tune in at Convention.FFA.org/The-Blue-Room to learn the latest from technology leaders.





Above: Junior and senior FFA members can connect with alumni and supporters online through the Forever Blue Network.
Left: Alumni members support local chapters through gifts of time, talent and resources.

CULTIVATING CONNECTIVITY

The Forever Blue Network brings the FFA community together in one place — online.

– By Lauren Denton

Imagine a social platform with the community of Facebook, the networking of LinkedIn, and every interaction about agriculture and FFA: That's the Forever Blue Network, which launched in May 2020. "Our main goal is to broaden the FFA family," says Joshua Rusk, executive director of alumni and supporters at the National FFA Organization. "Now members can utilize experiences all over the world for personal and professional success."

Casting the Vision

The niche network grew out of a pilot mentoring program that Rusk and his team managed manually with a spreadsheet. In an effort to expand and automate, they discovered the potential for a website that could not only coordinate mentorships, but also reignite a lost FFA connection, spot subject matter experts, list agriculture jobs, find volunteers and judges, and provide chapter ideas all in one browser tab.

"A lot of [Forever Blue Network's] success has been because people didn't know where to find that information," Rusk notes. "Now we have a central housing unit."

Maximizing the Experience

Membership is open to all alumni and student members, starting with juniors in high school. Supporters may also join after specifying why they'd like access, such as an employer seeking a qualified FFA candidate. The responses are highly vetted to ensure the network remains aligned with its original vision: to connect the FFA and ag communities and meet shared needs.

Once approved, a detailed profile is the ticket to a personalized experience. Simply complete the registration questions, which include items like what state you're from; which FFA leadership programs you attended; and whether you're willing to be a speaker, judge or mentor. You can specify limits too: How many times do you want to be contacted? How many mentees are you willing to take? "This system allows individuals to determine how involved they want to be," says Rusk.

Your responses may automatically plug you into specific groups like Washington Leadership Conference or Past State FFA Officer. These "mini Forever Blue Networks," as Rusk calls them, are one of the platform's key features, and you can browse and join any that fit your interests.

There are additional features not to miss.

- The feed is a consolidated current-conversations reel from your network. Rusk encourages taking a few minutes each visit to scroll: "Get ideas for new activities, post your questions so others can respond and browse existing questions to see if you can give feedback."

- The job and internship board hosts postings from AgCareers.com, as well as posts from employers and fellow alum who specifically want to find FFA talent.

- The directory, or rather its search function, is the signature piece of the Forever Blue Network. Use the filter to find exactly what you're looking for: Search by location to find a local resource, or by industry to find a person in a specific career. "One of the very first people to reach out was looking for an internship in marine biology, and they were able to filter to find someone in that field," Rusk notes.

Profiles with a red flag signify people who specified they're "willing to help," and you can email, set up a meeting and call all within the secure system of the network.

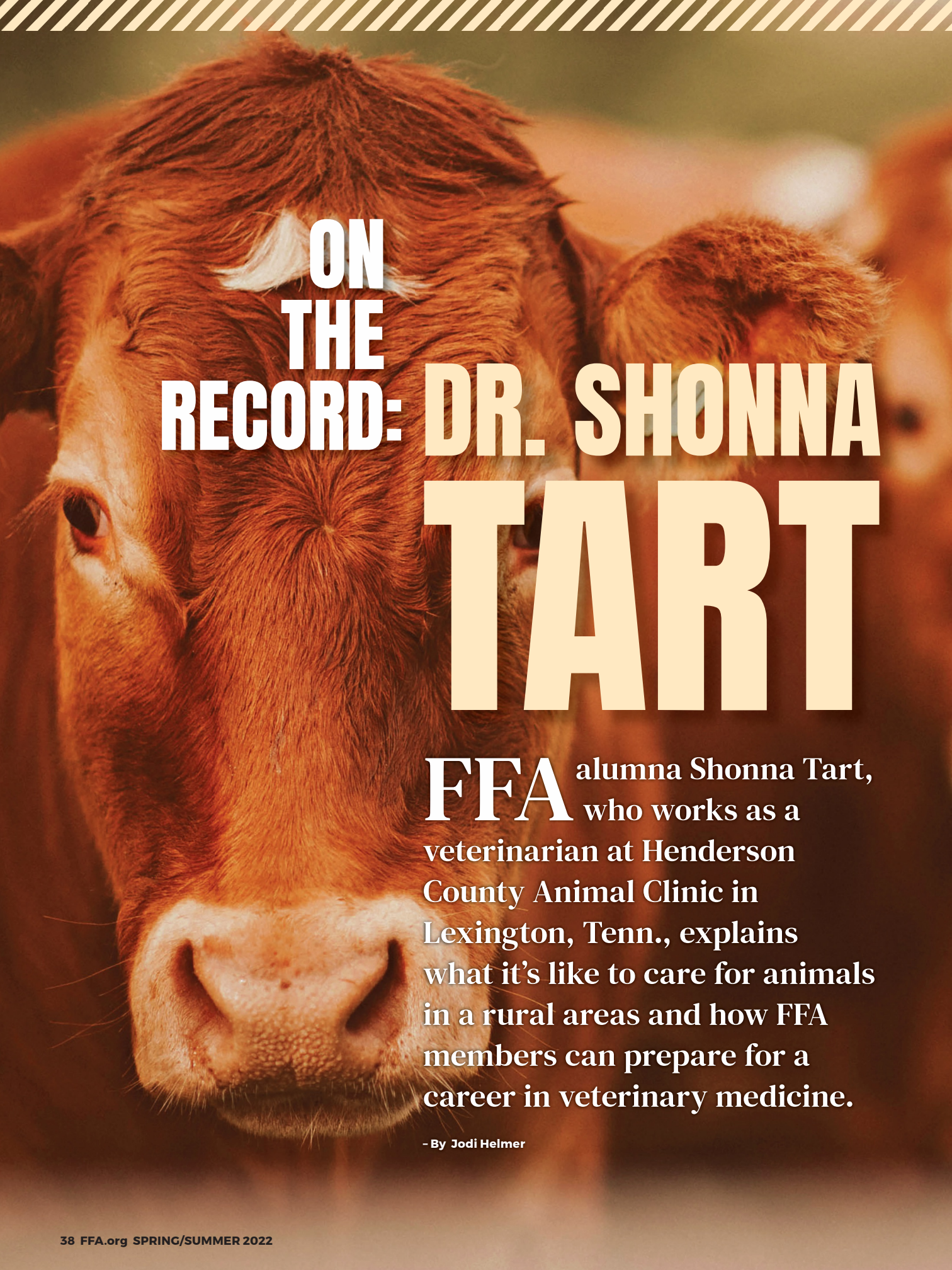
Measuring Success

Still relatively new, Forever Blue Network's long-term impact remains to be seen. But the day-to-day wins are clearly visible in the increasing number of site visitors who sign up each day and through "seeing people use it for exactly what it's meant for," says Rusk. "It's success just to hear, 'I never would have found them without the network.'"

The ultimate measure, perhaps, is the strengthening of the FFA community overall, the "core idea" from the beginning. In the first year, "more than 70% of users raised their hands to help," Rusk notes — and that's precisely the FFA way.

Register for the FFA Forever Blue Network at **ForeverBlueNetwork.org**.

Photography: Copyright © FFA



ON THE RECORD: DR. SHONNA TART

FFA alumna Shonna Tart, who works as a veterinarian at Henderson County Animal Clinic in Lexington, Tenn., explains what it's like to care for animals in a rural areas and how FFA members can prepare for a career in veterinary medicine.

– By Jodi Helmer

Shonna Tart's love for animals led her to a career in veterinary medicine. She works for a veterinary clinic in rural Tennessee.



"Focus on education because it is very competitive to get into vet school. You have to put in the work."

– SHONNA TART

Q: When you applied to vet school at University of Tennessee, Knoxville, was your plan to work with large animals?

A: I went to vet school because of an interest in public health and food animal safety. All through vet school, my plan was to be a food animal veterinarian with a focus on pigs, but it's really hard to get a job strictly as a large-animal vet.

Q: What makes it hard to get a job strictly as a large-animal vet?

A: It depends on location and how much producers depend on their veterinarian. In Illinois, I worked with a lot of cattle, helping producers pull calves and going on herd visits to vaccinate or castrate cattle. [In rural Tennessee], most producers do that work themselves. If you want to work solely with large animals, you have to find an area where the vets are actually actively involved in the routine maintenance of the animals. There just aren't many who do that type of work.

Q: What are some of the challenges of working as a veterinarian in a rural area?

A: Being in a rural area, we face a lot of income challenges. Producers don't always use vets for preventive factors. We get called in for emergencies and, by that point, there is often very little we can do and the things we can do are going to cost more than the animal is worth. Instead of paying for the animal's care, producers decide to sell it.

Q: What's the best part of working in a mixed animal practice in a rural area?

A: Sometimes it's nice just to get out of the clinic. It gives you a little bit of variety and breaks up the monotony, broadening your horizons. You get to know your clients in a small town. It's more of a close-knit community than you find in a city with thousands and thousands of people.

Q: What advice do you have for FFA members interested in pursuing careers in veterinary medicine?

A: Focus on education because it is very competitive to get into vet school. You have to put in the work. Volunteer at a vet clinic or get a summer job as a kennel assistant and participate in FFA events like livestock judging and animal science classes. Those are good opportunities through which you'll learn about animals and how to read and handle an animal. Those experiences will come in handy down the road.

There's a CDE for That

Prepare your skills for a career in veterinary medicine with the veterinary science CDE. Visit **FFA.org/Participate/CDEs/Veterinary-Science** to learn more.

Photography: Courtesy of Shonna Tart; Getty Images, Catherine Falls Commercial

FFA in the USA

National FFA has state associations in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Read on for the exciting things local chapters are doing in communities across the country.

— Compiled by Julie Woodard

Alabama

To promote unity and patriotism, Southern Choctaw FFA installed flagpoles at the baseball, softball and football fields; hung flags in each classroom at Southern Choctaw High School; and placed flags on all the graves of marked veterans at its local cemetery.

Alaska

The Alaska State Fair partnered with Alaska FFA to restore the historic Rebarchek Farm, an original colony farm. Once complete, the farm will provide Alaska FFA members with greenhouse space and land to grow crops and raise livestock.

Arizona

Trivium FFA showed off its baking and grilling skills with a hearty homecoming barbecue and sweet dessert auction. Over 350 people attended, and the chapter raised $8,000 for members to attend national convention.



Colorado

The Colorado FFA Foundation hosts an Ag Hall of Fame banquet each February to honor agriculturalists across the state and recognize their contributions to the industry.

Delaware

After the Delaware 4-H & FFA Spring Dairy Expo was canceled, the Milford FFA and Appoquinimink FFA partnered to create the Battle for the Bell Dairy Show open to all Delaware FFA members.

Florida

Ferguson FFA in Miami partnered with Zoo Miami to host a virtual meeting for veterinary students last March. Attendees tuned in for an educational, behind-the-scenes look at exotic animals.



Hawaii

Lahainaluna FFA participated in an agricultural box exchange with Penn Yan FFA in Penn Yan, N.Y., to teach students the value of agriculture and FFA. The chapter's box included Hawaiian specialties such as lilikoi (passion fruit) and pineapple, soil samples, pictures and member-written letters.

Idaho

Rigby FFA hosted an event called 3rd Grade Ag Day through which members taught youth about the role agriculture plays in their everyday lives. Students learned about a wide range of agriculture subjects, including fish and wildlife, veterinary medicine, dairy, equipment, grain and, of course, potatoes.

Illinois

Last summer, Illinois FFA hosted a traveling state convention in three locations. Each location allowed members to celebrate accomplishments at outdoor venues.

Indiana

Members of Delphi FFA showcased their technical skills by refurbishing tractors. So far, the chapter has restored nearly 50 antique tractors and plans to work on more.

Iowa

State officer Trenton Eilander arranged a team bonding experience for his fellow district officers that featured a tour of the Iowa Interstate Railroad. The tour covered the state's railroad history and showcased one of the few places that still runs old steam locomotives.

Kansas

Ark City FFA conducted a community-wide emblem hunt during National FFA Week to spread awareness of the benefits of FFA and agriculture.

Kentucky

Carter G. Woodson FFA in Lexington produced lettuce and other vegetables in a hydroponic container farm in cooperation with AppHarvest, an ag tech company that develops large-scale, high-tech greenhouses.

Maine

State officers, along with state officers from the five other New England states, are planning an in-person Checkpoint #1 training event in June. Attendees will hone skills in running successful workshops, engaging in public speaking and managing team dynamics.

Maryland

Chapter officers from Oakland and North Garrett FFA partnered with a local cut-flower producer to gather flowers, make arrangements and give them to the residents of two local senior care facilities.

Massachusetts

Despite restrictions, Massachusetts FFA was able to hold many career and leadership development events. Now, after two years of virtual conventions, the state is planning an in-person state convention.



Michigan

Ravenna FFA was chosen for a U.S. Department of Education project through which members will learn about beekeeping, technology and business management.

Minnesota

Braham FFA participates in the national SAE Supermileage competition each year. Members design, weld and wire single-person vehicles to maximize fuel efficiency.

Mississippi

In the summer, Mississippi FFA organizes its Summer Leadership Camp. Members grow as leaders by attending workshops facilitated by the state officers and developing their chapters' Program of Activities.

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

Photography and Illustrations: Getty Images, Big Ryan, CSA Images, Don Mason, massidamas

Missouri

Members jump-start their FFA experience and learn more about FFA opportunities at Greenhand Motivational conferences, which are conducted in 16 locations throughout the state.

Montana

Each July, members of Park FFA organize a children's rodeo at the Park County Fair.

Nebraska

Seward FFA hosts a pet parade each Fourth of July. Members enter their pets to be judged in several categories.

Nevada

West Tech FFA in Las Vegas celebrates Earth Day via social media by encouraging members to go green and reduce their carbon footprint.

New Hampshire

In March, FFA members will participate in Spring Interscholastics and compete in forage, horticulture and dairy judging career development events (CDEs) at the University of New Hampshire-Durham campus.

New Jersey

Last summer, members of Cape May FFA banded osprey and recorded data for a wildlife conservation project.

North Carolina

Last July at the State Leadership Conference, state officers featured the North Carolina School for the Deaf and its FFA chapter during the closing session by showcasing a video of the school's agriculture activities.

Ohio

Every spring, FFA chapters in Preble County hold an annual basketball tournament called Ag-Ball series. Chapters form teams to compete during February and March.

Oklahoma

Starting in 2022, State Star winners will be granted Carl C. Anderson Innovator Awards, which will provide these future innovators with scholarship money or operating capital grants.

Oregon

Tillamook FFA is planning a veterans dinner to honor local veterans in its community. The dinner will be free for those who have served the country.

Pennsylvania

At the Mid-Winter Convention during the Pennsylvania Farm Show, nearly 400 first-year members received their FFA jackets in front of more than 5,000 guests.

Puerto Rico

The state officers, along with other FFA members, met with community members and other organizations to reforest beaches after Hurricane Maria.

South Carolina

State officers implemented a new community outreach program called the Chapter Spotlight Lottery. Each week, a chapter is chosen at random to showcase its accomplishments and activities on the state association's social media.

South Dakota

Last year, Gregory County FFA members drove tractors and other farm and ranch equipment to school to promote National Farm Safety and Health Week. FFA members then invited elementary students to explore the equipment and demonstrated safe practices.



North Dakota

In the past 13 years, the Richland 44 FFA Chapter has built over 250 checkerboards to donate to Sanford Children's Hospital.

Tennessee

Cumberland County FFA recently held a Freshman Fun Night recruitment event. Current members led leadership games for 85 potential members and showcased opportunities in FFA.

Texas

Wildorado Cattle Co. is an enterprise led entirely by members of Wildorado FFA. Running the business gives members hands-on experience in careers including agricultural production, communications and financing.

Utah

Wasatch FFA members can apply for jobs working on their school farm, which includes a native plant nursery, a pheasant program and more. Members earn wages by selling the goods they produce.

Virginia

At the state fair, more than 1,000 FFA members — nearly 10% of the state's FFA membership — participated and competed in CDEs such as junior dairymen's, hippology and forestry field day.

Washington

Each January, Washington FFA members visit the capitol building in Olympia and mingle with state senators and members of the House of Representatives to experience the role government plays in agriculture.

Wisconsin

Pulaski FFA developed a new 3.25-acre community garden and began growing wildflowers, fruit trees and several hundred strawberry plants.

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

MEDIA CENTER

ARTS & CULTURE IN AGRICULTURE – By Jessica Wesson

DOCUMENTARIES

Diversify Your Ag Knowledge With These Four Documentaries

"The Pollinators" (2020)
This documentary focuses on the life of migratory beekeepers in the United States who tote truckloads of bees across the country. It examines the importance of honeybees to the environment, their role in pollination and the production of numerous foods and threats to their survival.

"Before the Plate" (2020)
John Horne, a popular Canadian chef, investigates the ingredients used in his restaurant and where they came from. He exposes some of the major issues farmers face to produce the food he uses in his kitchen and shares what it takes to produce the food he serves daily.

"The Need to Grow" (2019)
As the amount of available farmable land decreases, the fight to create more methods for sustainable farming increases. This film follows three individuals driving change in the agriculture industry: an 8-year-old girl, an urban farmer and an inventor. They all face unique challenges as they seek solutions.

"The Biggest Little Farm" (2019)
John and Molly Chester decided to buy 200 acres of farmland and start a new lifestyle without any prior experience in farming. The couple moved from bustling Los Angeles in search of a quieter setting to become more in tune with nature. Through determination and hard work, they create a successful and biodiverse farming operation.

TIKTOK

@FORESTRYPROF

THIS TIKTOK INFLUENCER TEACHES FORESTRY TO THE MASSES

Neil Thompson, a forestry professor at the University of Maine, uses his popularity on the TikTok social media platform to educate the public about forestry and the timber industry, while showcasing unique aspects of the industry. His large fan base of 113,900 loves following along in his adventures.

Thompson is the academic advisor for all first-year forestry students at his university. He received a bachelor's degree in forestry from the University of Maine in 2013 and a doctorate in natural resources and environmental studies from the University of Northern British Columbia in 2017.

BOOK

Rancher, Farmer, Fisherman: Conservation Heroes Of the American Heartland

Join the journey of five individuals as they work to conserve their environments and produce food for others.

This book follows a Montana rancher, a Kansas farmer, a Mississippi riverman, a Louisiana shrimper and a Gulf fisherman as they engage in their everyday work of producing food. All connected by the Mississippi River, these environmentalists have deep passions and love for the land and water they utilize to make a living. Readers will experience each individual's family history, the work that goes into raising food and the landscapes these heroes protect.



Photography: Getty Images, Willard



FFA Moment

1952

For the past 70 years, FFA has shared the stories of members, alumni and supporters through the organization's official magazine. Originally called *National Future Farmer* magazine, which debuted in 1952, the publication's name changed to *FFA New Horizons* in 1989. As FFA has evolved and changed over the years, *FFA New Horizons* has documented the accounts first-hand, keeping a record for members past and present to learn from. Woven within the first issue of *National Future Farmer* magazine and every issue of *FFA New Horizons* since are stories of agriculture education in action — impressive, inspiring, everyday people who are Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live and Living to Serve.

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