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Summer 2016

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California FFA member builds million-dollar company with help from "Shark Tank," then buys her dream ranch

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FFA member Andrea Cao and her mom purchased a horse ranch in Alascadero, Calif., with the profits they made in their acupressure business.

PHOTO BY JAY WINTER

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

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

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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FFA NEWS FROM ACROSS THE U.S.

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

AMANDA CLEARCREEK FFA, OH

Recruiting Mom to "Join" FFA

As a high school freshman, Josie Montoney came home from school and announced she was joining FFA. Her mother Cindy was surprised, since they didn't have a connection to agriculture.

But only four years later, Josie has served as chapter FFA president and won seven state and one national title through FFA. And her mom is now the ag teacher and FFA advisor in her chapter!

Cindy had a degree in natural resources, so when a teaching position opened at the school, the agriculture department asked her to apply. She got her teaching licensure, and today, Cindy says that being an ag teacher gives her "such joy and pride."

LIVIN' THE DREAM

MCCOOL JUNCTION FFA, NE

FFA member Clay Real had big dreams for his chapter. He wanted to build an animal lab so people could learn about where their food comes from and how to care for animals.

After Clay died unexpectedly in 2014, his community decided to make his dream a reality. The Real family donated $15,000 in memorial funds to the FFA program, the local farmers cooperative donated an old filling station, and locals worked together to build "The Clay Real Livin' the Dream Animal Learning Barn."

The barn had its grand opening in February, and five piglets were born there the same month. A calf, rabbits and a hedgehog also soon arrived!

COLBERT COUNTY FFA, AL

Traveling Fresh

Colbert County FFA members combined math, carpentry, electrical and engineering skills in their recent project to convert regular box trailers into refrigerated transportation units. The project, funded through an NRCS Resource Conservation and Development grant, was intended to provide local farmers with refrigerated ways to transport their goods from field to market. It's the first project of its type in Alabama and a great success!

– Submitted by FFA member Abbie Green

MACKAY FFA, ID

Buying Livestock, Receiving Life Skills

This school's unique breeding livestock project helps FFA members purchase show animals. Students are chosen through an interview process, then select a bred animal. Over the next two years, they show the animal and offspring, and use their proceeds to pay back a portion of the loan. FFA members learn responsibility, animal care and money management.

GREENWICH FFA, OH

FFA Camp Creates Career Change

Since seventh grade, Amber Clingan was determined to pursue a law degree, but attending FFA camp opened her mind to a career as an agriculture teacher. She loves the hands-on aspects of ag education and helping other people. Read her essay at **FFAnewhorizons.org**.

GODLEY FFA, TX

Puppy Patients

Agriculture students at Godley High School had an extra special hands-on class project recently, when they got to practice their veterinary skills on puppies.

The students learned how to give vaccinations, and the event helped raise awareness of ag education in the community. The class has done other animal science demonstrations, including animal handling and reproduction.

FFA NEW HORIZONS

MORE ONLINE

Interested in a veterinary science career? Go to FFAnewhorizons.org for more information.

YOUR TURN

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

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

Or, mail to:
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MEET SIX FFA SHINING STARS

ShopFFA.org, the sponsor of FFA Faces, will award a gift card to featured members

Zuri Richmond
SALEM CO. VO. TECH FFA, NJ

Zuri has been an FFA member for three years. She has served as chapter reporter, secretary, public relations committee chair, and is on the citizenship committee. She received her state FFA degree in May 2016.

Renee Sherman
UPPER SANDUSKY FFA, OH

Renee has served as president of her FFA chapter for the past three years. She was the 2015-16 Wyandot County Fair Queen and has participated in public speaking and parliamentary procedure.

Destiny Peed
SMOKEY VALLEY FFA, NV

This senior has served as president of her chapter for two years. She competes in poultry, floriculture and horse evaluation. She plans to attend Feather River College and study environmental sciences.

Robert Stossel
BARTOW SENIOR FFA, FL

Robert has been an FFA member for the past two years. He has exhibited horticulture projects, and he also helped his chapter clean up an abandoned cemetery where many war veterans are buried.

Andres Flores
VARDAMAN FFA, MS

Andres has been involved with FFA for two years, competing in the Envirothon contest, tractor operation and maintenance, and land judging. He was also a member of the third-ranked agronomy team in the state.

Tyler Pointer
IOLA FFA, TX

During his senior year, Tyler served as chapter president and district vice president. He has competed in Texas FFA Leadership Development Events and served on the state's first-ever state officer nominating committee.

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

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

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

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

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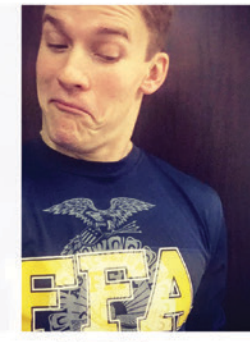


ALL MEMBER ACCESS ONLINE AT ShopFFA.org

Andrea Cao from San Luis Obispo, Calif., invented an acupressure device called the Q-Flex.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAY WINTER

AS SEEN ON TV

California FFA member builds million-dollar company with help from "Shark Tank"

Andrea Cao of the San Luis Obispo FFA chapter in California was only 13 when she had a business idea that landed her on ABC's popular reality show "Shark Tank."

"My mom is a nurse and worked long 12-hour shifts, so she would get sore and always asked me to massage her back," says Andrea, a rising sophomore at San Luis Obispo High School. "I thought there must be a better way to help her, but I didn't find anything that worked, and I didn't have much money. So I decided to make something. It started as kind of a joke, but I drew some plans for a prototype and realized it was actually a pretty good idea."

Q-FLEX IS BORN

With her mom Hong Cao's help, Andrea created a self-acupressure tool called Q-Flex. It's a purple, hand-held device shaped like a question mark that allows users to apply acupressure to parts of the body that are difficult to reach. It is designed to relieve muscle tension, pain and stress, and can be used on the back, shoulders, neck, hips, legs and even feet. It flexes to deliver the right amount of pressure.

"Andrea came up with the concept, and I helped her with the design and financially," Hong says. "We worked on it together."

The mother-and-daughter team started with $20,000 and began manufacturing Q-Flexes in batches of 20. Andrea sold them door-to-door and in local massage stores. They had sold about 800 devices before Andrea decided to pitch her idea to "Shark Tank."

"I love watching that show, but I didn't think I was old enough to be one of the entrepreneurs pitching to the sharks," Andrea says. "When I looked into it, I found there was no age requirement. I sent them an audition video explaining my product, but heard nothing back."

Andrea didn't give up. She saw an ad for an open audition in San Diego, about seven hours from her home, and begged her mom to take her.

"We went and camped out in line the night before. There were about 500 people auditioning," she says. "When I was done, I felt like I blew it. I was not impressed with myself at all. But two weeks later, I got a call that we were moving to the next round."

APPEARING ON "SHARK TANK"

Andrea became one of 100 inventors who got to pitch their idea to the sharks on Season 6 out of 100,000 people who auditioned. They traveled to Los Angeles for the filming.

"When I found out we made it, I screamed," Andrea says. "I couldn't believe it was real life."

Two "sharks" – Barbara Corcoran and Mark Cuban – invested in the Q-Flex with a combined $25,000 in exchange for 12.5 percent of the business apiece. The Caos own the other 75 percent of the company.

"In the tank, I expected them to chew me up," Andrea admits. "But they were super nice and even complimented me, saying they couldn't believe I was only 13. Even the 'mean' shark, Mr. Wonderful, was nice."

The episode featuring Q-Flex aired in December 2014, and orders began pouring in. The company has now reached more than $1.3 million in sales.

"'Shark Tank' helped take us from a door-to-door business to an actual company with more than $1 million in sales," Andrea says.

A LOVE FOR HORSES

Andrea and Hong used some of their profits to purchase a horse ranch in Atascadero in May 2015. Andrea has always dreamed of becoming a horse trainer.

"Andrea's passion has been horses since she was 1 year old," Hong says. "She loved 'My Little Pony,' and she would draw pictures of horses."

Andrea and her mother Hong Cao (pictured top right) invented a special acupressure device, which helped fund their dream of owning a horse ranch.

Andrea's love for animals and horses is one reason she joined FFA in 2015. She is on her chapter's veterinary science team and participates in novice parliamentary procedure and FFA Creed speaking. She's also on the welding team and enjoys building agricultural mechanics projects.

"Andrea is very mature and has a strong work ethic. She has a lot of ideas for the future combining her Q-Flex invention and possible uses for the animal industry," says Anna Bates, FFA advisor at San Luis Obispo High School. "I think participating in marketing plan or ag sales could be FFA contests up her alley. I have enjoyed seeing her develop her technical knowledge in vet science and seeing the diversity of her hands-on skill set in many career technical education areas."

In the future, Andrea's dream is to attend Stanford University to get a marketing degree and further her education at the Clinton Anderson Clinician Academy, where she hopes to become a certified professional clinician and pursue her passion for training horses.

"I'm glad I joined FFA, because it has helped me a lot with public speaking skills. I'm becoming more comfortable in front of a large audience," Andrea says. "FFA is also growing my passion for agriculture."

Find out more about Q-Flex at **www.getqflex.com**.

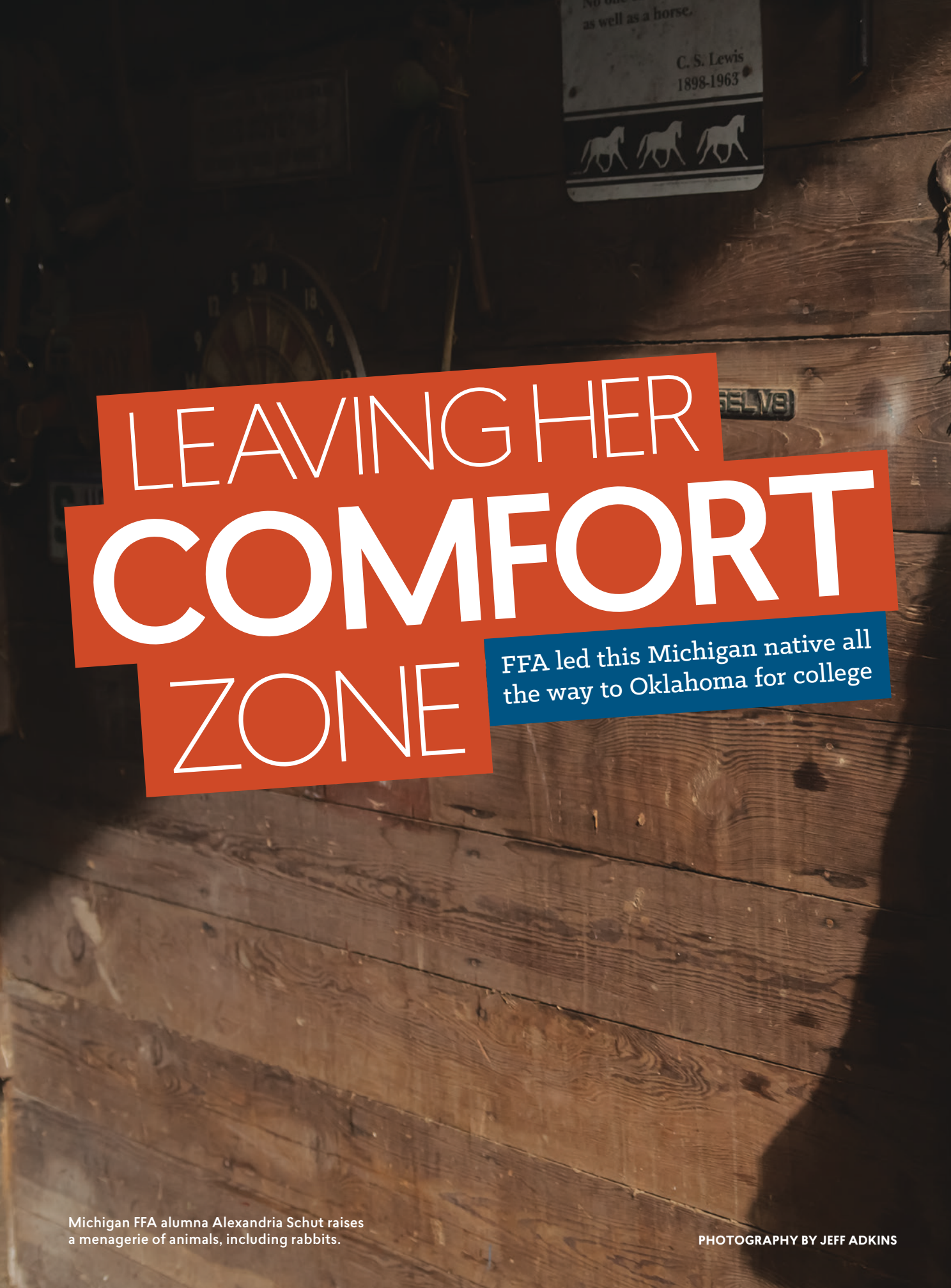
– Jessica Mozo

MORE ONLINE

Watch the video clip of Andrea appearing on "Shark Tank" at FFAnewhorizons.org.

LEAVING HER COMFORT ZONE

FFA led this Michigan native all the way to Oklahoma for college



Michigan FFA alumna Alexandria Schut raises a menagerie of animals, including rabbits.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF ADKINS

PREMIER EXHIBITOR

Alexandria Schut's impressive drive, deep passion for agriculture and leadership skills started early. Originally from Belding, Mich., the Oklahoma State University student grew up in the equine industry, watching her grandpa and uncle build hitch wagons, and showing horses across the state. She traveled with her dad to shear sheep, and got her very own set of sheep when she was just 5 years old, prompting her to begin showing them as well as rabbits.

"It really took off from there," Alexandria says. "I showed horses pretty heavily until I was 10 and then got pretty serious into sheep, showing them nationally. I also picked up pigs and goats."

Alexandria's dad is an agriculture educator, so the progression came naturally. It was only a matter of time before FFA became one of Alexandria's interests, too.

"Agriculture is what I wanted to do and I'm super passionate about it," she says. "I grew up going to state and national FFA conventions."

She adds that though she was also involved in other things, FFA is where she found people who were always willing and helpful, yet also aspired to be different.

Throughout her time in FFA, Alexandria has become an extremely well-rounded and driven member. She served as Michigan state FFA president, won several awards including state runner-up in junior high public speaking, state winner in FFA Creed speaking, and a finalist in job interview and prepared public speaking. She also won a silver award in the national risk management essay contest, had a diversified livestock

Alexandria practices walking one of her show wethers on the family's farm in Belding, Mich.

Alexandria's family raises Haflinger horses, a breed known for being relatively small and extremely hardy. They are commonly used for harness work.

and equine SAE in Michigan, and served on a national top-16 marketing team.

However, Alexandria says even with all her accomplishments, FFA really broadened her horizons in terms of what she values in life.

"One of the biggest lessons I learned from FFA is to value family and friends. Going to a lot of stock shows, I get to spend that time with my family and some of my best friends, who I know will be there for me even when we don't live close to each other," she says.

FFA helped her with the almost 14-hour move from Belding to Stillwater for college as well.

"I don't think I would have ever looked at venturing out of Michigan for college if not for FFA," Alexandria says. "As a state officer, I got to hear about different schools, and my leadership skills opened up so many opportunities as I was preparing for college."

Now, she's studying animal science and ag business, with an ultimate goal to attend law school. Staying true to herself, she's still very involved in the horse industry, showing at home and in national shows. She volunteers for a charity group on campus, making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to sell and give proceeds to Kenya, as well as serving as an officer in Collegiate FFA, Equine Club, and Block and Bridle.

"I think my time spent in FFA really gave me the leadership to pursue more leadership positions in college," Alexandria says.

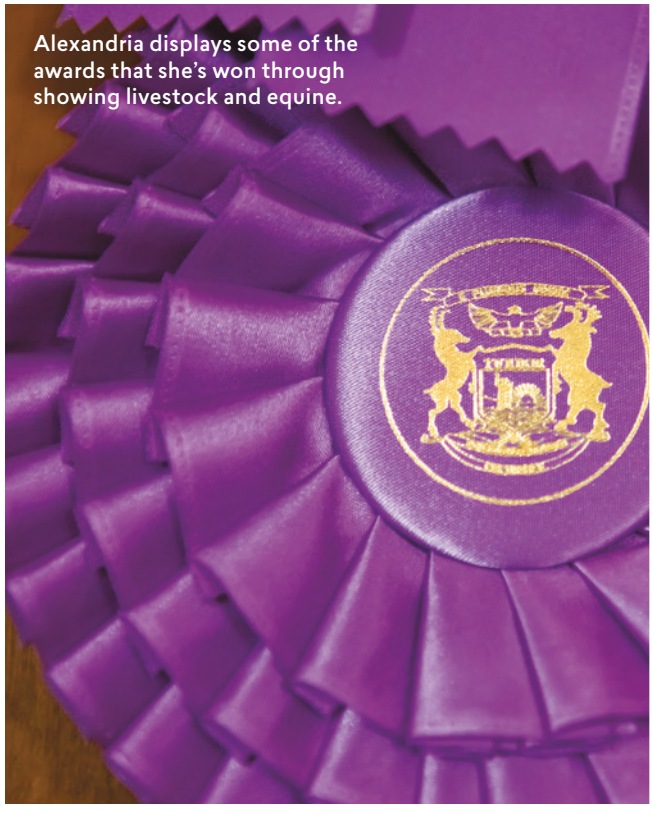
STILLWATER, OK

Alexandria Schut moved 14 hours away from Michigan to attend college at Oklahoma State University.

As for current FFA members, Alexandria says to make sure you're open to all the different pathways that are open to you.

"I was pretty set on what I wanted to do and didn't always push myself to explore other opportunities," Alexandria says. "I got to see some really cool things in my travels as an officer, and it's important to recognize the SAEs and other activities your peers are doing."

– Rachel Bertone



Alexandria displays some of the awards that she's won through showing livestock and equine.

The Basics of Beans

Explore the dry edible (or field) bean industry, an important part of U.S. agriculture

This summer, when enjoying some baked beans at a backyard barbecue, give some thought to how those beans were grown, harvested, processed and prepared for your meal.

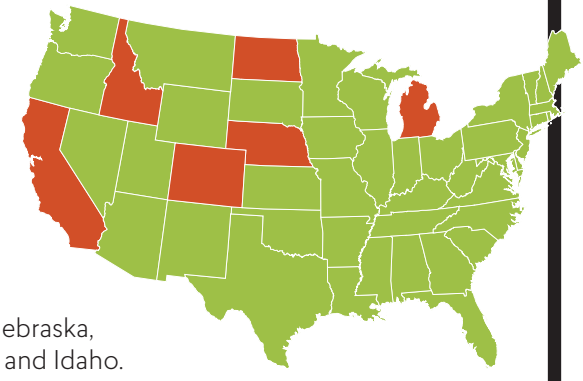
Dry edible beans, also known as field beans, are grown to their mature stage, then dried and harvested for the seed within their pods. Although not as widely cultivated as soybeans or other crops, dry edible beans are an important food crop in the United States, the sixth-leading producer in the world.

They come in a variety of shapes, sizes and textures. Some of the most prevalent varieties are the pinto, black, Great Northern, garbanzo and navy – the ones most likely used in your baked beans. Other varieties include light red kidney, dark red kidney, large lima, baby lima, pink, small red, cranberry, blackeye (cowpeas), small chickpeas and small white.

Top Dry Edible Bean States

Dry beans come in vining or bush-type varieties. They grow best in well-drained soils and aren't typically planted in the same field for consecutive years.

Top states are North Dakota, Michigan, Nebraska, Colorado, California and Idaho.



1.7 million acres

In 2015, U.S. farmers planted 1.7 million acres of dry beans.

Benefits of Beans

BEANS ARE AN INEXPENSIVE AND VERY NUTRITIOUS FOOD.

1. **PROTEIN:** On average, one serving of dry edible beans provides 20 percent of your daily recommended intake.
2. **FIBER:** A highly satisfying food, dry edible beans contain approximately eight times the fiber of an apple.
3. **IRON:** One serving of cooked dry edible beans contains 38 percent of your daily iron requirement.
4. **LOW FAT:** Almost fat-free, dry edible beans only contain 1.1 grams of fat per serving.
5. **VITAMIN C:** With 6.6 grams per serving, dry edible beans are a surprising source of vitamin C.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANTONY BOSHIER

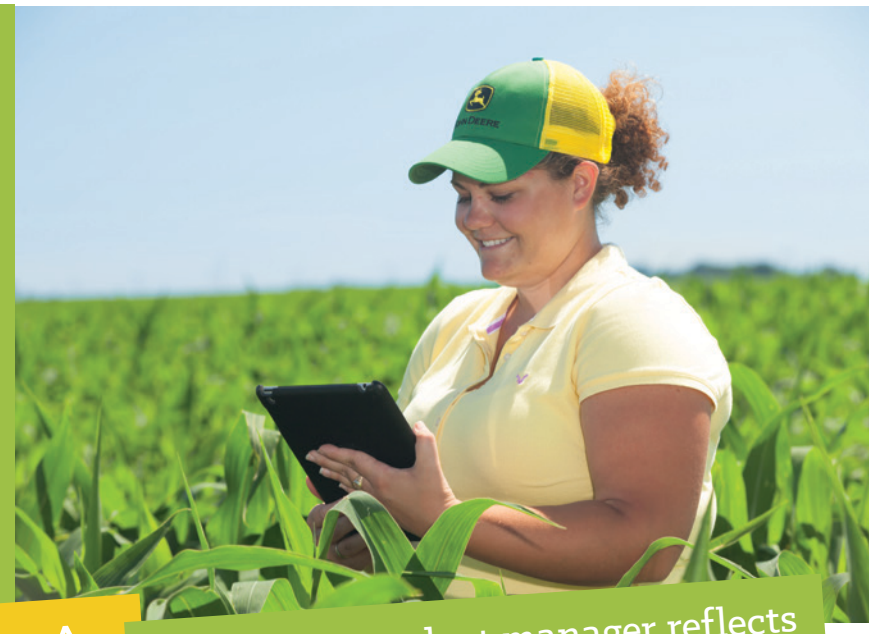
NAME: Laura Donaldson

OCCUPATION: Product Manager for John Deere

FFA CHAPTER: South Newton FFA in Indiana

SUPERVISED AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCE: Growing soybeans within the fiber and oil crop production area

EDUCATION: Bachelor of Science in agribusiness management from Purdue University



LAURA DONALDSON

John Deere product manager reflects on FFA, agricultural upbringing

Q HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH FFA?

A I joined FFA in the sixth grade, and I was hooked. I was active in so many different career development events, from FFA Creed to job interview to livestock judging and horse judging. Not all of those ended up being my passion, but they did help me figure out what was. I had always been most interested in row-crop production, and I learned that even more so through FFA judging experiences.

Q WAS YOUR FFA SUPERVISED AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCE (SAE) PROGRAM CONNECTED TO YOUR FAMILY'S FARM?

A Yes, it was! I grew up on a row crop operation in northwest Indiana, where my dad grows corn and soybeans. I started renting 11 acres of my own to grow soybeans for my SAE. I picked up three more acres along the way. Ten years later, I'm still farming that same 14 acres. I use my vacation days from John Deere to go back to farm my ground, and my dad still helps me out a lot when I can't be there. I think continuing to farm a little helps keep me grounded and involved in production agriculture, while being able to pursue my career at Deere.

Q DID YOU DEVELOP AN APPRECIATION FOR THE JOHN DEERE BRAND WHEN GROWING UP ON YOUR FAMILY'S FARM?

A Oh definitely. The first tractor I learned to drive was a John Deere 4020. When my family moved from the main farm to a new house down the road, I was pretty upset about it. I think I was in 8th grade. I told my mom I wasn't moving unless she painted my walls John Deere green and yellow. She did it! And she put John Deere signs and other decorations in my room. I guess you could say this career was predestined. At the time, though, I just wanted to farm. I wasn't even thinking about working for a big company, so it's interesting how that ended up.

Q WHEN DID YOU KNOW THAT WORKING IN AGRIBUSINESS WAS YOUR CAREER GOAL?

A While I was a state FFA officer, we did business and industry visits. And during those visits, I became really interested in agribusiness and the industry side of things. I liked getting to know our FFA

sponsors and having conversations with them about careers in agribusiness. That's what helped me decide to major in agribusiness management while at Purdue. I always had a passion for equipment on the farm, so that drove me to talk to the John Deere representative at the Purdue career fair.

Q DID YOU HAVE A COLLEGE INTERNSHIP?

A I interned with John Deere twice, actually. For my first internship, I traveled to 24 states and visited 40 dealerships to talk about some changes in the sales process. That travel and the ability to use my presentation skills really developed my passion for the company and its people. I was sold. I wasn't sure I'd ever find another company that would match my passion for equipment, agriculture and people in the same way that John Deere did, with also giving me the opportunity for global experiences.

Q WHEN YOU ACCEPTED YOUR FULL-TIME JOB WITH DEERE, WHAT TYPE OF TRAINING DID YOU RECEIVE?

A Deere offers a great two-year training program, which gives you time to learn about different areas of the business and get more familiar with the company. I spent six months in Olathe, Kan., working on the small ag tactical marketing team. Then I went to Orlando, Fla., for four months. There, at our training site, I instructed classes for John Deere dealers and sales professionals. Next was another six-month experience in Des Moines, Iowa, with the precision ag group. Now I'm moving to Moline, Ill., to work as a product manager for air seeders, planters and box drills.

Q WHAT EXCITES YOU ABOUT YOUR NEW JOB?

A My motivation for moving to this new job within Deere is the opportunity to understand new crop sectors. I've been really unfamiliar with canola and other small grains production. But now, working with air seeders, I'm going to have to better understand that side of the business and those cropping systems. That's exciting for me!

Q WHAT MAKES JOHN DEERE SUCH A GREAT PLACE TO WORK?

A The people, number one. We hire world-class people to work at Deere who genuinely care about feeding the world. Deere is committed to those linked to the land, and that's really true about all of our employees as well.

Another big part of what I like is that there are so many different opportunities. You could work in marketing, fulfilling orders, promoting products. You could manage a group of people in a factory setting who are putting the machine together. Or you could work in HR and recruit new staff. Regardless of the job you have, it's one company and one culture. That also makes me think of our values, which are another great strength of the company. Our four values are integrity, quality, commitment and innovation. I see those in our products but also in the people I work with.

Q HOW DO YOU STAY INVOLVED WITH FFA?

A I give back monetarily, and I try to donate my time when I can.

What's really neat is that Deere & Company management realized that there are a lot of former FFA members as employees. Many of us don't live close to our home chapters, but still wanted to be involved with the National FFA Alumni Association.

Two years ago, I helped charter the John Deere alumni affiliate chapter. We have a lot of former members within our affiliate chapter but also people who weren't FFA members themselves. I really like that about Deere – its commitment to FFA and helping us remain connected.

JOHN DEERE AND FFA

Founded in 1837 by John Deere, a blacksmith and inventor, platinum FFA sponsor Deere & Company has grown into one of the world's most admired businesses. Through its numerous products and services, John Deere is dedicated to those who are linked to the land – farmers and ranchers, landowners, builders.

For more than 72 years, John Deere has worked with FFA to provide FFA members the opportunity to grow into leaders, build their communities and strengthen agriculture.

Deere's support through the years has allowed FFA to deliver its mission to millions of members. Their gifts have supported the National FFA Organization's career development events, proficiency awards, National Chapter Awards, Agriscience Fair and leadership conferences for state officers. Deere is also a key supporter of the FFA scholarship program, in conjunction with John Deere dealers.

In 2015, John Deere pledged to donate $1 million dollars annually over the next five years to help FFA continue its strides in creating future leaders.

Thank you, John Deere!

NAME: Matthew McLaughlin

OCCUPATION: Manager of Service Start-Up and Integration for CSX Transportation

YEARS OF FFA MEMBERSHIP: 1998-2007

CHAPTER: Citrus FFA in Florida

SUPERVISED AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCE: landscape management and beef production

HIGHEST FFA DEGREE ACHIEVED: Proud to say that I received my American FFA Degree in 2007

EDUCATION: Bachelor of Science in food and resource economics, University of Florida; M.B.A., St. Leo University

CSX employee credits FFA for his leadership skills

MATTHEW MCLAUGHLIN

Q CAN YOU SHARE A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR COMPANY?

A CSX Transportation provides rail, intermodal, and rail-to-truck transload services and solutions to customers across a broad array of markets, including energy, industrial, construction, agricultural and consumer products. We are made up of 21,000 miles of track in 23 different states, the District of Columbia, and the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

CSX moves a broad portfolio of products across the country in a way that minimizes the effect on the environment, takes traffic off an already congested highway system, and minimizes fuel consumption and transportation costs.

Q WHAT ROLE DOES CSX PLAY IN AGRICULTURE?

A At CSX we play many different roles in agriculture. We move plastic pellets, which are used to make PVC pipe from which water feeds the plants. We move chemicals that are used as inputs into fertilizer creation, which helps aid in plant growth and prevent susceptibility to diseases and pests. Raw commodities are transported to elevators via rail. Finished products are transported via intermodal containers across the country or for export. In fact, CSX transports more than 25 million tons of grain each year! Since 2003, CSX has also been moving corn to ethanol plants and ethanol out via rail to facilities where it is used as a fuel additive. There are many, many roles in which CSX and freight rail is involved.

Q TELL US ABOUT YOUR OWN CAREER JOURNEY.

A In eight years I have held five different positions and experienced an immense amount of knowledge. I began working with CSX promptly after graduating college as a management trainee in operations. This was a 10-month role in which I learned how to be a professional railroader, with an extreme focus on safety. Upon completion of the program I was placed in Cumberland, Maryland, and worked as a trainmaster at a classification yard. These yards work similar to an airport hub in that cars come from one origin and split at the hub to different trains going to different destinations. As a trainmaster you are responsible for overseeing yard operations – beginning with safety and ending with timely train departures.

After a year and a half I traveled to Chicago to work as a trainmaster in a different setting and gain a broader spectrum of rail knowledge. In this role I worked predominantly at a large flat yard, in which I was responsible for roughly 100 contract employees and oversaw the operations at the yard and 40 miles of mainline. This location included numerous interchanges with other railroads and a much larger customer base.

In late 2012 I was approached for a position in Jacksonville, Fla. This role was centered on improving the customer experience and improving internal processes. Within the past year I have transitioned into a role in which I am directly involved with on-boarding new customers and ensuring their transition to rail is smooth. Through this job I am able to combine my background as a trainmaster with my drive for ensuring a customer experience second to none.

Q A TRAINMASTER – WHAT AN INTERESTING TITLE! WHAT DOES THAT JOB ENTAIL?

A A trainmaster is in charge of overseeing yard operations at a railyard or over a given section of railroad. This person accounts for safety of employees, ensures that trains are built properly and on-time and that resources are lined up for work, and coordinates work across many different departments and railroads. A trainmaster is in constant contact with yardmasters, train dispatchers and train crews to facilitate an efficient operation.

Q IN YOUR CURRENT POSITION, WHAT DOES AN AVERAGE DAY LOOK LIKE?

A An average day in my current role begins with a lot of coordination and a can-do attitude. My role is to facilitate new customers shipping by rail. In doing that, we work with sales, marketing, transportation and engineering to ensure timelines and expectations are set up front and achieved in the long-run. With new customers it is important to break down railroad jargon and educate on how the railroad fundamentally works. This requires lots of communication throughout the on-boarding process and being available when things go awry.

Another facet of our work includes the facilitation of high-value shipments, e.g. power transformers. These are exciting because the customer is looking for a location to load/unload and we help expedite the move from start to finish. This is fun for me in that it involves facets of my trainmaster job with the sales-type role that I am currently involved in. We also assist customers with challenging scenarios, be it a temporary need for storage or working through an uptick in business.

Q WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR PROUDEST FFA EXPERIENCES?

A The Florida FFA Convention my sophomore year of high school really opened my eyes to FFA. I served as chapter sentinel my junior year and vice president my senior year. I participated in virtually every CDE that we had available – land judging, forestry, extemporaneous public speaking, tractor driving, parliamentary procedure, livestock judging and horse judging.

Q LOOKING BACK, WHAT ARE THE WAYS YOU BELIEVE FFA PREPARED YOU FOR YOUR CAREER?

A FFA helped prepare me for my career by helping me to step out of my boundaries. Beginning with my first state convention I could not get enough of it. I honed in on my networking skills and got to experience a variety of different career development events and supervised agricultural experiences. I also believe these experiences helped to make me more well-rounded. There were also numerous leadership positions that I held through FFA, which have set the stage for future roles in college and now in work. All of the team events helped me to understand the different dynamics of different people and sharing a common goal. These skills all transfer over to the workplace and in all aspects of life.

CSX BELIEVES IN FFA

CSX, based in Jacksonville, Fla., is a premier transportation company providing rail, intermodal, and rail-to-truck transload services and solutions to customers.

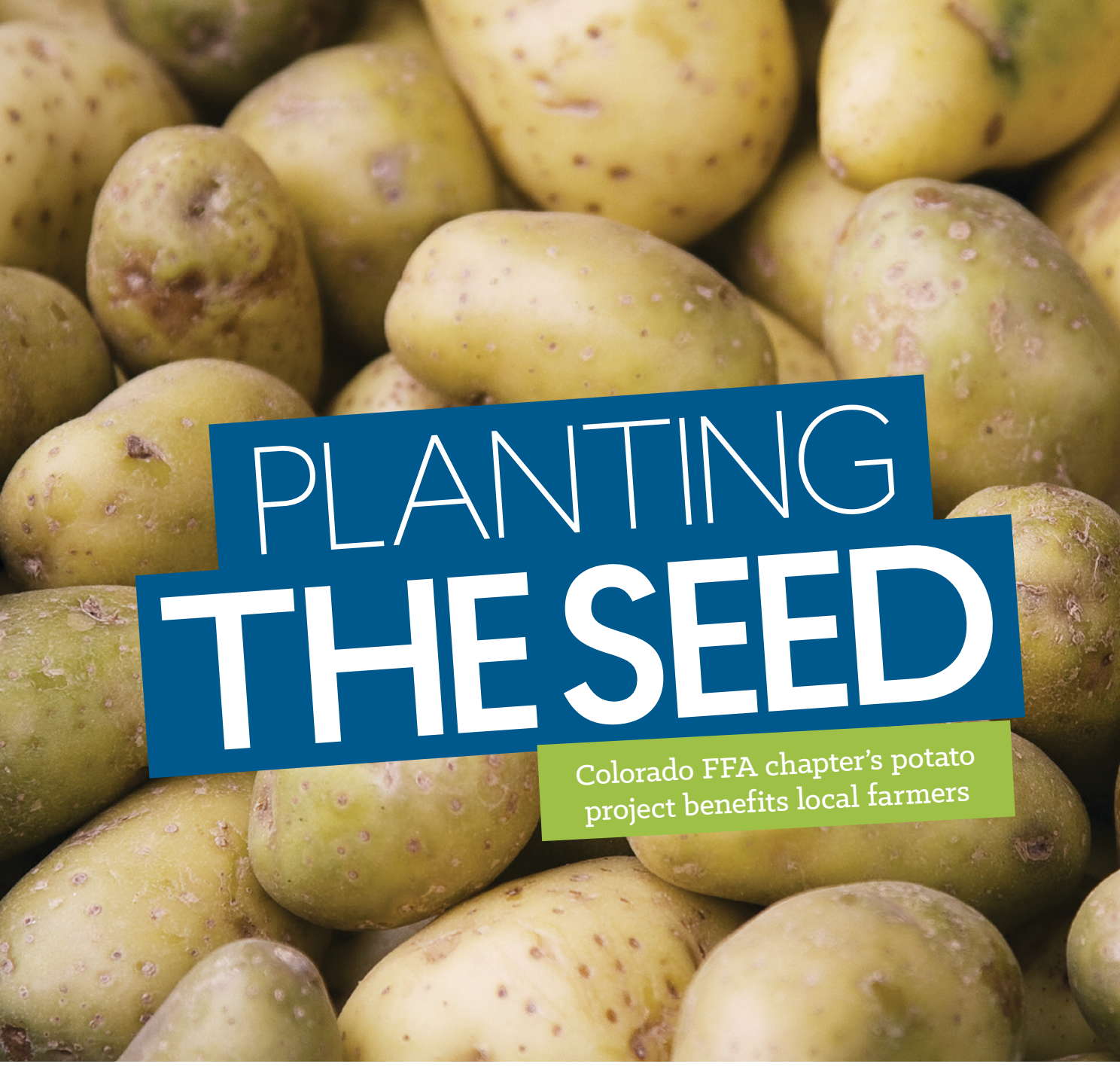
For nearly 190 years, CSX has played a critical role in the nation's economic expansion and industrial development. Its network connects every major metropolitan area in the eastern United States, where nearly two-thirds of the nation's population resides.

It also links more than 240 short-line railroads and more than 70 ocean, river and lake ports with major population centers and farming towns alike.

CSX is also a platinum sponsor for the National FFA Organization. CSX provides funds for leadership development conferences, environmental grants, scholarships, service learning activities and other programs that impact FFA at the local, state and national levels.

CSX employees invest hundreds of hours in community service, leadership/career training and job interview preparation to FFA and its members.

Thank you, CSX!



PLANTING THE SEED

Colorado FFA chapter's potato project benefits local farmers

Frigid temperatures didn't stop Alamosa FFA Chapter members from harvesting their potato mini-tuber crop on a snowy Tuesday morning in February.

The 14 students kept warm while working in their greenhouse at Alamosa High School, preparing the mini-tubers they planted in early November for a special destination – to go to local farms, where they would then be planted as seed potatoes in fields to grow an even bigger crop. The result: nearly 60 pounds of potatoes, including 37 pounds of Mesa russet potatoes, just over 6 pounds of the Sangre variety and 16 pounds of Desiree potatoes.

Instructor Kevin Rice, who heads the greenhouse management class, says the project's purpose is to give the young members not only a chance to learn about agriculture but also to give back to their local farming community.

He oversees the program with the help of two Colorado farmers, Brendon Rockey of Center and Matt Seger, who farms west of Sargent. The men say this is the only FFA chapter and class in the nation where members learn about agriculture by actively providing to farmers.

The project started two growing seasons ago after a former Valley Courier reporter, Lauren Krizansky, recognized the potential of using the greenhouse for a greenhouse management class.

With the project, students were able to learn how to

FFA PHOTOS COURTESY OF STAN MOYER

Members of the Alamosa FFA Chapter in Colorado grew 60 pounds of certified seed potatoes, which were then planted by area farmers to grow large fields of potatoes for market.

ensure a healthy potato crop. Kent Sather of the Colorado State University Extension Service and manager of the Potato Certification Service inspected the growing crop, finding the potatoes virus-free. A federal inspection is required during the 100-day upbringing period to designate a crop as certified seed potatoes.

Also, entering the greenhouse required everyone to step in disinfectant to eliminate the chance of transferring germs to the crop as it grew.

Alamosa FFA students were able to delve into what it means to be part of an agricultural community. Destiny Comstock, high school senior and greenhouse manager, used the project for her supervised agricultural experience, which is needed for FFA membership. She says the knowledge and experience gained by working on the project contributed to her goal of becoming a biologist.

The 90-minute mini-tuber harvest on that frigid February morning was just the cap to the hard work and learning of the Alamosa FFA Chapter and class. After planting the mini-tubers and growing crops of their own, farmers will sell both the larger and final potato crops, as well as the seeds developed at the beginning of the greenhouse efforts.

Rockey says the effort of the Alamosa FFA members will eventually "contribute to hundreds, even thousands, of acres."

– Story submitted by Stan Moyer

GET TO KNOW YOUR NATIONAL FFA OFFICERS

HOW WILL YOU BE SPENDING YOUR SUMMER?

TAYLOR: This summer will be filled with state conventions in Indiana, Arkansas and Colorado. I'll be traveling to South Dakota for FFA camp, and I can't wait to hang out with newly elected state FFA officers at two National Leadership Conferences for State Officers (NLCSO) in Georgia and West Virginia! Oh and who can forget tiempo con amigos en Puerto Rico y las Islas Vírgenes!

NICK: I'm pumped to try out the different foods around all the state conventions I'll go to! I've heard a lot about an In-N-Out Burger "Animal Style," Coffee Syrup and Liver Mush – it's going to be weird, and it's going to be delicious!

ABBEY: Beginning in May, I'll go to Nebraska for Chapter Officer Leadership Training, then to New Jersey, Kentucky, Wisconsin and Texas for their state FFA conventions. Also I will be traveling to Wyoming for FFA camp and helping facilitate NLCSO conferences in Mississippi and Alaska. At the end of the summer the whole team will reunite and host State Presidents' Conference in Washington, D.C.

ABRAH: I begin the summer months in Kansas, South Carolina, Mississippi and Florida for their state conventions. I'm excited to sneak home and be a bridesmaid for my best friend's wedding before heading out to Wyoming for NLCSO. I'll also be exploring Kentucky, North Carolina and Washington, D.C.

SYDNEY: I'll be traveling to Arizona, Louisiana, Pennsylvania and Maryland for their state FFA conventions throughout the month of June. I also get to hang out with state officers during NLCSO in Nebraska and South Carolina, and then travel to State Presidents' Conference in July!

SARAH: I am stoked to attend the Connecticut, Alabama and Virginia state conventions. Then I'm off to NLCSOs, Oklahoma Alumni Leadership Camp, Alumni Development Conference, State Presidents' Conference and also hopefully a little sunshine.

DESCRIBE THE AG INDUSTRY IN YOUR STATE.

TAYLOR: North and western Arkansas are home to poultry and cattle, there are vineyards in the Ozark Mountains region, and in south Arkansas, it's pine trees and timber. Eastern Arkansas is home to the top rice-producing area in the U.S., plus baitfish and catfish farms.

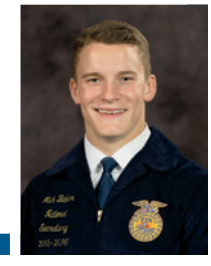
NICK: West Tennessee is primarily corn and soybeans. In Middle Tennessee, there's more of a beef and horticulture concentration, and East Tennessee FFA members are known for their SAEs in ag research. Corn won't grow at all in East Tennessee (aka Rocky Top), dirt's too rocky by far.

Taylor McNeel
NATIONAL FFA PRESIDENT

Taylor grew up on a farm in Vilonia, Ark., where she raised and showed goats. She has a strong passion for agricultural policy and is studying agricultural business and Spanish.

Nick Baker
NATIONAL FFA SECRETARY

This Tennessee native had a lawn care business as his supervised agricultural experience (SAE). Nick's goal is to serve in the U.S. military and focus on food security and hunger issues.



Abbey Gretsch
SOUTHERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT

Abbey is proud of her strong agricultural roots, as her father is a farmer in Lexington, Ga., and she had her own beef herd. She hopes to become an ag educator.

ABBEY: The 5 P's – Peaches, Poultry, Pecans, Pulpwood and Peanuts. A lot of Georgia revolves around these forms of agriculture, but we also are extremely diversified.

ABRAH: Everywhere I travel, almost everyone says, "Oh, you have a lot of corn there," in response to being from Iowa. The agriculture industry is a dynamic part of Iowa's economy; we are the No. 1 producing state for corn, hogs and eggs.

SYDNEY: Some of Ohio's top ag products are soybeans, corn, eggs and dairy products! Just like any state, the agriculture industry back home is a tight-knit family that supports one another endlessly.

SARAH: Utah has beautiful red rocks and towering mountains, so our agriculture is based on what can be grown or raised around those. Livestock and dairy represent more than 75 percent of Utah's agricultural income. We also grow crops of alfalfa hay, corn, onions, and potatoes with orchards here and there.

WHAT'S BEEN A FAVORITE MOMENT THIS YEAR?

TAYLOR: I am the second national FFA president from Arkansas. The first was Mr. John Haid, who served in 1956-57. It was an honor to meet him after I was elected.

NICK: Dancing with the Academy for Science and Agriculture Chapter up in Minnesota after a chapter visit was pretty wild! Those members know how to get down!

ABBEY: Playing cornhole during FFA Week with some Rhode Island FFA members. I knew they thought I was going to be terrible, but anyone can ask Narragansett FFA that I totally brought the heat and won the tournament for the team.

ABRAH: I loved experiencing my first state FFA convention in Oregon. I had many memorable moments there, but one of my favorites was swing dancing with my new friend David from the Henley FFA Chapter!

SYDNEY: Kicking off my convention travels in Delaware with some of the most enthusiastic FFA members I've ever met! State convention is like a big family reunion in Delaware – everyone loves and supports one another. It was an awesome experience!

SARAH: I was welcomed by the sweetest family in Maine and I learned how to tap Maple trees to get syrup!

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE APPS FOR TRAVELING?

TAYLOR: Most essential app while traveling – The Weather Channel. Most surprising app I depend on – Starbucks.

NICK: First app in the morning is Instagram. App I depend on most is definitely Easily Find My Phone.

ABBEY: Most essential app while traveling – Spotify. Last app checked before bedtime is The Bible.

ABRAH: Most used app is Instagram. Most surprising app I depend on is ESPN – I need my sports updates!

SYDNEY: First app checked in the morning – text messages then Instagram. Most essential app while traveling – GateGuru. It helps you find places to eat in any airport.

SARAH: Last app checked before bedtime – Clock App to set my alarm. Most essential app while traveling is Waze, a navigational app.

MORE ONLINE

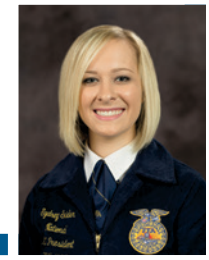
Visit FFAnewhorizons.org for more about the officers' phone habits.

Abrah Meyer
CENTRAL REGION
VICE PRESIDENT

Hailing from Iowa, Abrah grew up playing the piano and four sports – volleyball, basketball, softball and track. Her goal is to work in ag education overseas.

Sydney Snider
EASTERN REGION
VICE PRESIDENT

Sydney grew up on a small farm in rural Ohio, raising beef cattle, swine and goats. Her career plan is to work in public relations for an ag company.



Sarah Draper
WESTERN REGION
VICE PRESIDENT

This Utah native found FFA SAE placements at local dairy and veterinarian's offices, and today, she is studying agricultural education for a career as an ag teacher.

VOLLEYBALL: DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB/SERGEY NOVIKOV

You've Got Skills!

6 ways to grow your leadership abilities before school starts back

Summer is a perfect time to work on your leadership skills. Without the distractions of schoolwork, FFA chapter meetings and CDEs, sports events, etc., you can focus on some personal reflection and development. And if you're an FFA chapter officer or a leader within your school, building strong leadership skills now will make you even more prepared for your role next school year. We asked the 2015-16 National FFA Officers to identify some ways you can grow this summer. Read on for their ideas!

1. WATCH MOTIVATIONAL VIDEOS.

"Kid President, Andy Paul's Retiring Address and Rita Pierson's Ted Talk 'Every Kid Needs a Champion,' are just a few of my favorite video finds. What better way to get plugged in than to listen/watch something that's fun, interesting and inspirational? Everything from speaking skills to qualities of integrity and influence can be applied through the many different forms of video media. Also, videos are THE best and easiest way to stay relevant!" *– Abbey Gretsch*

2. READ ABOUT LEADERSHIP.

"Reading has always been a struggle for me, anyone agree? I realized I like reading things that are practical to life. Leadership books and blogs are my go-to's. These books have many leadership and life lessons with some good stories. These are ways to get quick, relevant and up-to-date information." *– Taylor McNeel*

3. SPEND TIME WITH A MENTOR.

"I always like to go spend an afternoon over coffee with my mentor. I always have a lot of questions to run by him. Sometimes I'm asking for advice, sometimes I'm just curious about his perspective. I always walk away feeling as if I've got a better grasp on whatever it is I've got going on." *– Nick Baker*

NATIONAL OFFICER COURTESY OF NATIONAL FFA

To grow your leadership this summer, you could (from left) join a new team, plan out your school year, read a new book or watch inspirational videos online like retiring addresses of past national FFA officers.

4. JOIN A NEW TEAM.

"Summer is the best time to try something new! I love being a part of summer league softball, playing sand volleyball with other people and doing a bible study with some girls at my church. Join a new team this summer, and it will turn those boring days at home into fun, action-filled ones with new and old friends!" *– Abrah Meyer*

5. ASSESS YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLES.

"We've all taken them, the random quizzes that pop up in our Twitter or Facebook feed to see what character of Star Wars we most identify with. Next time you're cooling down after some time in the sun and scrolling through social media, try some leadership assessments. These can help identify strengths and weaknesses, or even personality traits, and can guide you in growing as an effective leader. These assessments were my favorite part of summer officer retreats because my team and I had a great time comparing our results, understanding each other better, and how to work more harmoniously as a team." *– Sarah Draper*

6. PLAN AHEAD FOR THE YEAR.

"If you're green, you're growing. Just like many vegetables, fruits and plants, when you are green, you are growing. In order to stay fresh, and green, in your personal growth, you can develop a plan of goals you hope to accomplish. The first step is to identify at least three core areas you want to improve in your life. This could be centered on mental, physical, spiritual, relational or professional growth – or maybe something entirely different. Once those areas are determined, be specific with what you hope to accomplish, how you will do so, and what your ideal outcome would look like. This creates a growth plan to guide you toward continually improvement!" *– Sydney Snider*

Caught Up & Called Out: Where Are You Going to Go?

Editor's note: FFA alumnus Brandon Baumgarten has quite an impressive résumé – past FFA state president, Oklahoma State University student, and now, professional leadership speaker and book author. We asked Brandon to share his thoughts about leadership with us – and the meaning behind his book title, Caught Up & Called Out.

While walking into the freshman agricultural education class at Oilton High School in Oklahoma, many thoughts raced through my head. "What will this class be like? How will I fit into it? What if I don't know anything about agriculture?"

However, as I stepped into class and listened to the agriculture teacher tell us about this organization called FFA, I couldn't help but be intrigued. He mentioned just a few of the opportunities that it offered – from public speaking, livestock judging and even the chance to sing in the state chorus.

Oklahoma FFA alumnus Brandon Baumgarten recently published his first leadership book.

After explaining briefly, he left the class with this thought-provoking question, "This organization can take you anywhere you want to go, the question is, 'Where are you going to go?' "

Immediately, my preconceived concerns were no longer lingering inside my head. Instead, my mind was caught up with the idea of getting involved in FFA. You could say that my first day of ag class shaped a huge portion of my life as I'm sure it does for many others.

As I learned more about FFA, I began to take a special interest in writing and delivering speeches in the prepared and extemporaneous public speaking CDEs.

This routine of preparing speeches would eventually lead to a personal growth of communication and writing skills. Not only was I learning how to speak in front of people, but also learning how to connect with others and how to clearly communicate through my writing. Many times in high school and college, it's easy to ask the question, "When am I ever going to use this in life?" For me, I found that these skills I learned through FFA would be utilized very quickly.

In 2013, I was representing Oklahoma FFA as a national officer candidate at the National FFA Convention & Expo. Although my name was never called out to serve on the national officer team, I realized that my life was still being called out to serve just in a different way.

Your life is too! From there, it was on my heart to put a book project together to go along with my professional speaking career, that would highlight the biggest leadership lessons I had learn from my FFA experience.

Two years later, after lots of writing, I was finally able to publish my leadership book, *Caught Up & Called Out*. It was written in hope that high school and college students would discover the leader that's waiting inside them and realize you don't have to have a title to make a difference. All you need is a heart of service, a mindset of action, and an answer to my ag teacher's question, "Where are you going to go?"

– Brandon Baumgarten

MORE ONLINE
Visit FFAnewhorizons.org for more information on Brandon's book.

Brandon (seated, in center) served as a state officer, an experience he says shaped his views on leadership and teamwork.

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Summertime Success

School's out, so it's the perfect time to prepare for the college road ahead

For most students, summer break conjures daydreams of poolside lounging, beach vacations, long, lazy days, and – most exciting – kicking the textbooks to the curb. Before you stow your backpack for good, consider this: while it is important to take a break during the summer, it's also an opportune time to get a head start on preparing for college.

"It's very important for students to take some sort of break in the summer, but that time can also be used for academics, extracurriculars and testing, which are three things colleges look at," says Jay Bacrania, CEO of Signet Education. Signet is a college prep company based in NYC and Boston that has been helping students reach their full potential by making learning enjoyable.

ACADEMICS

In terms of academics, if you didn't quite make the grade you were hoping for in a particular subject during the school year, the summer is the perfect time to fill that hole, whether it be enrolling in a class or hiring a tutor. It's also good if you want to pursue an academic interest that wasn't available to you.

Bacrania says there are lots of academic summer camps that offer options for both of these avenues.

TESTING

Testing is another challenge that can be tackled during the summer. If you just completed your sophomore year, it's time to start prepping for SAT and ACT tests. Motivation may be a bit harder to come by in the summer, but if you stick to it, the rewards can be substantial with test scores. Ideally, you should take one test or the other the summer after your junior year.

EXTRACURRICULARS

As for extracurriculars, Bacrania says summer is a "phenomenal time to pursue interests outside the classroom."

"Colleges emphasize the 'whole student,'" Bacrania says. "Structured programs like dance or music camps are great, but a lot of students don't realize they can also make their own opportunities as long as they know generally what they want to accomplish."

STAY TRUE TO YOU

Being well rounded definitely helps you stand out in a sea of college applications, but Bacrania cautions to make sure you're staying true to yourself.

"If you don't like math, don't sign up for a math camp," he says. "Don't do something just for a college application. There's a chance you may not get in and then you wasted a summer. Do something you really love and it will create a compelling narrative to you."

Bacrania adds that you don't have to sign up for a prepackaged program at a local college. Trying something like a structured nature activity is great as well. If this is your senior summer before college, be sure to take some time to reflect.

"That summer is a pause in your life, and it's good to stand back and say, 'How far have I come? Where am I going? What am I excited about?' All of these prompt reflection, which helps set you on the right path for starting college," he says. "Oftentimes, students go straight into college and see 'I'm free' for the first six months. It's kind of a mess because they don't know what they want to do or study. Think through what your plan is during the summer. It's a great time to travel too, and broaden your horizons."

– Rachel Bertone

MORE ONLINE

Test your knowledge about college with our online quiz at FFAnewhorizons.org.

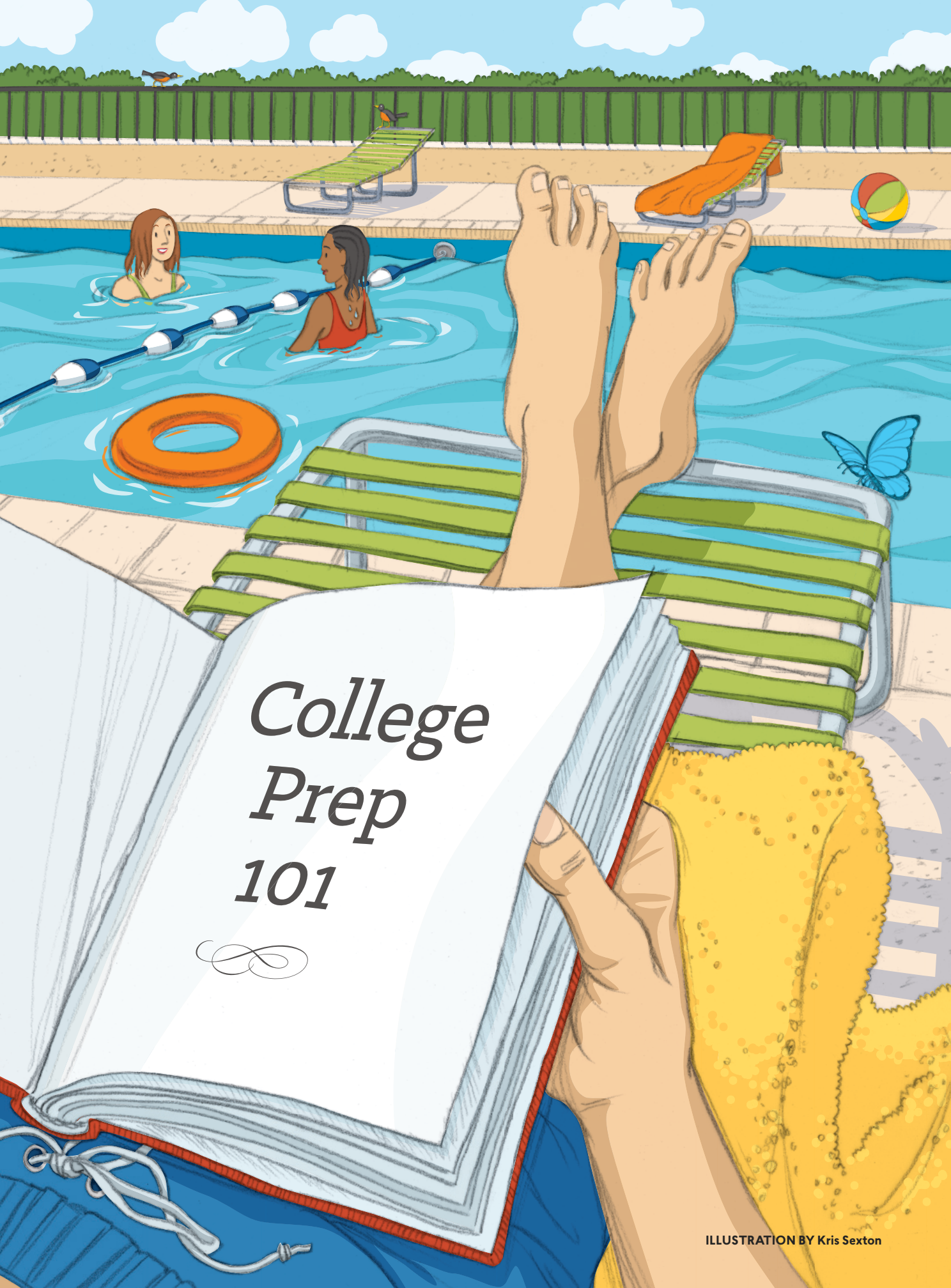

ILLUSTRATION BY Kris Sexton

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STORIES BY STATE

WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

Read more stories about FFA members and chapters from your state. Every *FFA New Horizons* story is posted online at FFAnewhorizons.org, plus more that won't fit in our print magazine. Go visit your state's page now, then sign up to receive email notifications when new stories are posted.

Want us to post your story? Email your FFA stories to newhorizons@ffa.org for a chance to be in the magazine or on the *FFA New Horizons* website.

FFANEWHORIZONS.ORG

Raking in the Good Karma

Hiland FFA members help clean up their Ohio community

Free time between classes, sports and extracurricular activities is a precious commodity. Hiland FFA chapter members in Berlin, Ohio, gave up two of their afternoons to rake leaves for members of their community as part of their Acts of Kindness project.

The goal was to make an impact on their community while also getting to know their neighbors.

The first day proved to be quite a challenge. The chapter spent the entire afternoon conquering a single yard that was completely covered with fall foliage.

"There was hardly any green grass in sight due to the blanket of golden leaves in the backyard," says chapter reporter Nikyta Engstrom.

Undeterred, members set to work with their respective tools. Some with rakes, some with leaf blowers, some with garbage bags. Leaves flew left and right as the members waded through the piles.

On the second day, the chapter set their sights on cleaning up the yards of seven houses in the community.

The chapter had impeccable timing, showing up just in time to assist one homeowner who was attempting to rake their lawn in spite of health issues. The chapter swooped in to assist, much to the joy of the homeowner.

"By participating in this project, it shows the community that teenagers can be mature and step up to help people in need," says FFA member Sheila Troyer.

The members relished the opportunity to make connections with their neighbors and allow them to experience firsthand the first line of the legendary FFA motto, "Living to Serve."

"It was a great way to get to know the people living in our community and spread the name of the Hiland FFA," member Hunter Mast says.

But this community service project was not all hard work and heroism. The chapter took time to enjoy their work, leaping in the gigantic piles of leaves having fun.

A few days and 11 exhausted FFA members later, the community's yards looked spick and span. Members learned a valuable lesson about hard work, community and the satisfaction of helping someone without being asked.

"Through this experience, the community has learned that Hiland FFA will reach out to them in whatever way, to help them when they are in need," says chapter member Hayleigh Schuefler. "It was a great opportunity to be able to step out and beyond with serving my community."

– Hannah Patterson

OTHER COMMUNITY SERVICE IDEAS

Food Drive – Whether you're collecting cans or filling backpacks with lunches, food drives are a great way to fight hunger in your community.

Race for a Cause – Walk it, run it or hula hoop it! Participating in a race raises money for research and awareness for important causes.

Community Cleanup – The earth can't clean itself up so someone's got to do it. Start a recycling project, clean up a wildlife habitat or make a rain barrel to conserve water.

Bust Bullying – Take a stand against bullying by hosting activities and speakers about the impact of bullying. You can help end the cycle.

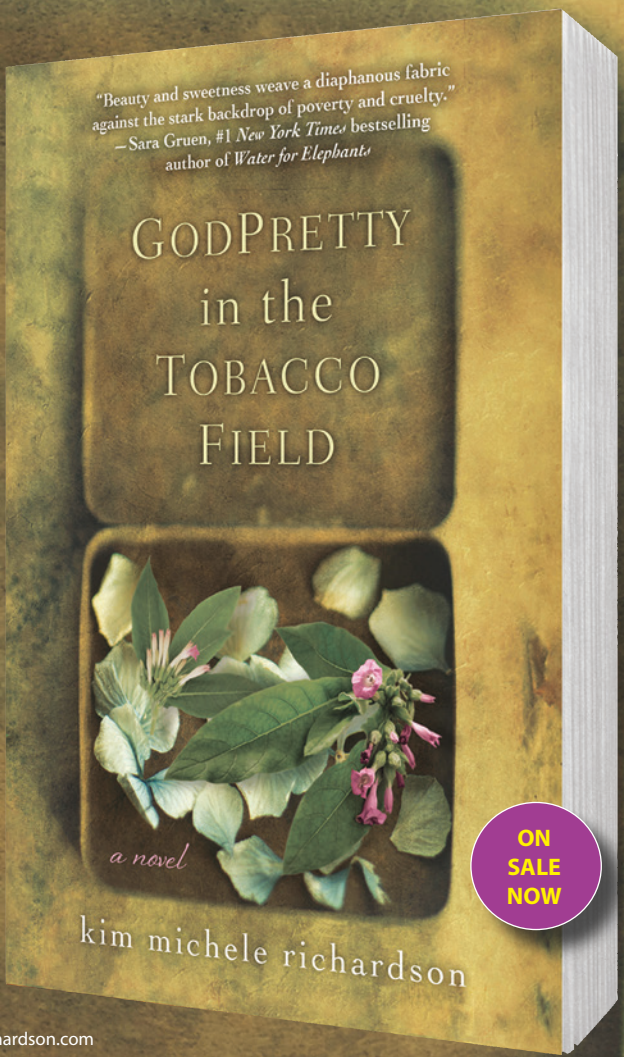
For more information on these ideas, visit FFAnewhorizons.org/community-service.

A ray of hope…

© Andrew Eccles

In **Kim Michele Richardson's** new novel, follow RubyLyn beyond the tobacco fields of her poor Appalachian town over the course of 1969's blazing Kentucky summer.

"Beauty and sweetness weave a diaphanous fabric against the stark backdrop of poverty and cruelty."
—SARA GRUEN,
***New York Times* bestselling author of Water for Elephants**



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The Michigan FFA Creed

Summer 2016

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Members share their thoughts on the role of technology in agriculture.

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Discover a unique career that combines communication and agriculture!

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Find out the steps necessary to become engaged in our political system.

K Destination D.C.
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Hear about a member who aims to serve through his passion for agriculture.

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

Aim to be BRIGHT.

"You're not productive." "You're not smart enough to learn anything." "You have failed 1,000 times at this task." Thomas Edison was told time and time again that he was not good enough. When a reporter asked him how it felt to fail at creating the light bulb 1,000 times, Thomas Edison stated, "I have not failed 1,000 times. I simply found 1,000 ways in which it did not work." Thomas Edison was bright.

Often times, referring to someone as "bright" is describing his or her intelligence, but to us the term bright describes the optimis – someone who seeks the light in every situation. At the 88th Michigan FFA State Convention, we witnessed the accomplishments of FFA members from across our state as they competed in leadership contests, received awards, and performed on the Wharton Center stage. Their tenacity in not giving up on their goals is what makes them bright.

If we are a part of a sports team and often sit on the bench, instead of saying "I haven't played," say "I haven't played yet." Instead of saying, "I'm a failure," say, "I haven't succeeded yet." Instead of saying, "I lost," say "I haven't won yet." The 'yet' is the light we strive to look for.

Seek the light in everything that you do. Michigan FFA, aim to be bright!

-2015-2016 Michigan FFA State Officer Team

DID YOU KNOW

Michigan produced 134 million pounds of tart cherries in 2015

Agriculture contributes $101.2 billion annually to Michigan's economy.

The Michigan FFA Association had 8 regions until 1995.

The Michigan FFA will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, age, gender, marital status, weight, sexual orientation or disability. Any student requiring an accommodation as a result of a disability should contact the chapter advisor to arrange such accommodation.

Check This Out!

A Week to Remember:
Highlights of the 2016 Michigan FFA State Convention

Introducing the 2016-2017 Michigan FFA State Officer Team!

State President
Loren King - Branch Area Career Center
State Vice President
John Williams - Olivet
State Secretary
Austin Haywood - Hastings
State Treasurer
Jose Cervantes - Ithaca
State Reporter
Lauren Heberling - Sanilac
State Sentinel
Jenna Kingsley - Webberville

Region I State Vice President
Josephine Forbush - Byron
Region II State Vice President
Aimee Crist - Waldron
Region III State Vice President
Claire Laurenz - Breckenridge
Region IV State Vice President
Hailey Andres - New Lothrop
Region V State Vice President
Madeline Meyer - Ionia
Region VI State Vice President
Courtney Wangler - Ogemaw Heights

Convention Moments

Delegates enjoyed breakfast at the delegate session Thursday morning .

Delegates and the state officers visited the Capital.

The State Chorus and State Band entertained us all week with their musical talents.

Let's meet the 2016 State Stars

Star Farmer
Austin Haywood
Hastings FFA

Austin's SAE primarily revolves around the dairy industry. He has developed a 40 head herd of cattle that rank in the top in the nation. On top of raising cattle, Austin is also a part owner in Haywood Family Cheese where he produces approximately 900 pounds of cheese annually. Austin has also been very involved in 4-H raising and showing beef steers, dairy feeder steers, and dairy cattle at the county fair. After graduation Austin plans to attend Michigan State University to study animal science.

Star in Placement
Madeline Meyer
Ionia FFA

Growing up on a family dairy farm, Madeline created her SAE in dairy placement. Her main responsibility on the farm is feeding and caring for all of the calves. She also helps with milking her family's Holsteins making for some early mornings and late nights. Another job around the farm is covering silage piles with tires to help protect the feed from the weather. Madeline also has been involved in exhibiting her animals at the county fair.

Star in Agribusiness
Ashley Hemminger
Jonesville FFA

Equine is a major part of Ashley's SAE as she is a Certified Equine Sports Massage Therapist and horse trainer. Ashley also helps out with her family crop farm. As part of her business, she takes clients from all over lower Michigan and operates her family farm doing farm hand duties and working on bookkeeping. Ashley is looking forward to continuing her education in college after graduation.

Star in Agriscience
Loren King
Branch Area Career Center FFA

Agricultural advancement is very important to Loren. His first research was dedicated to studying the effects of cold snaps on early planted corn seeds. Since then he has continued his research by building a working drone that expands the possibilities of soil test data. After graduation Loren plans to attend Michigan State University and study both Agribusiness and Agricultural Engineering.

Many members received awards over the three days.

Chapter members and their advisors spent quality time together.

Members had the chance to meet people from all across the state.

Say What?

By:
Tyra Jonas
State Reporter

Mason Harbaugh
Region I
Branch Area Career Center

"Technology should be used to increase efficiency in crop production. Another role that technology should play in sustainable agriculture is to help producers meet future demand and increase productivity. While technological advances alone may not solve the world food crisis, it will certainly be a great tool to use."

"Technology is and will continue to be a big part of agriculture. It will be a large component of increased food production. For instance, drones and computer systems can help monitor crops, letting you know if and how your crops need to be treated. Technology will also help save money and improve time management with the help of new inventions."

Kilie Sheffer
Region II
Waldron

Kaddi Gewirtz
Region IV
Perry

"Technology has a major role in the future of agriculture: from farmers flying drones over a field to check fertilizer levels or connecting the agriculturalists of the world. Soon all tractors will be up to date with the technology, so each farmer can plant their fields more efficiently! Thus, planting fields to their full potential and allowing us to feed the world."

The question: What role does technology play in the future of agriculture?

"I believe that technology plays a huge role in agriculture. Without new technologies or farming systems and equipment, as well as research techniques, agriculture today would face big obstacles. Technology plays an outstanding role in our industry and as it continues to improve, our ag industry will too."

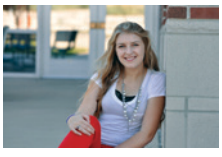
Alyssa Roby
Region IV
Dansville

Chad Timmer
Region V
Careerline Tech Center

"Technology is a big part of agriculture now, and will continue to improve. It will help increase speed and efficiency in food production. This could be from GE food, better machinery, new technology, etc. A solution is needed to solve the problem of how to feed the ever growing population, and I think technology will be greatly involved in the solution."

"With the rising population and limited space we can use technology to feed the world. Methods such as hydroponics and soil testing allow us to produce more with the same resources. New equipment has made farming much more effective and efficient. I have no doubt that with technology we will be have the ability to feed the world."

Jocelyn Kempf
Region V
Fremont



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

Jason Jackson
Centreville FFA

"Technology in agriculture will continue to help young farmers become successful in farming large quantities of land. The technology in agriculture and the rising population will always make agriculture a successful industry in America."

John DelMotte
Dundee FFA

"Technology greatly affects agriculture because it allows growers to produce goods more efficiently and cost effectively. Technology, such as Global Positioning Systems (GPS), helps growers to be efficient in their work. By using GPS, America will continue to be a leader in agriculture."

Mandy Block
Beal City FFA

"Technology will have a great impact in American agriculture because it will allow us to do more in a shorter amount of time. For example, the simple task of milking a cow has become much easier with efficient and effective equipment."

Chris Pelton
Wexford-Missaukee FFA

"Technology will impact American agriculture extensively in the next ten years. It will greatly affect the American farmer by increasing production and allowing crops to be planted and harvested more efficiently."

#Teacher Tuesday

By:
Tyra Jonas
State Reporter

This former Spartan truly believes in the future of agriculture and the FFA. In fact, Mr. Torey Birchmeier, agricultural teacher at Durand High School, was an FFA member himself. Some of his greatest accomplishments within the FFA were receiving his American FFA Degree, placing first on a crops team while placing as the second high individual and placing at State for land conservation. A few other accomplishments outside of the FFA Mr. Birchmeier earned were receiving numerous champion livestock awards, top showmanship honors, and overall showmanship sweepstakes winner at county and state fairs. After high school, he went on to Michigan State University to receive his Bachelor's and Master's Degree.

Since starting a career as an agricultural educator and FFA advisor, Mr. Birchmeier developed a love and passion for the job. His reasoning for this is he gets to work with and connect with students every single day. He says, "I often hear students say, 'You are (or your class is) the only reason I came to school today,' which makes me realize how important I am to students and the impact I make." When first starting the job a great friend of his told him, "Kids do not care what you know, until they know you care." This quote stuck with him and he remembers this quote when teaching. He believes in every single student and tries to connect with each of them.

As a teacher, he encourages students to go into the agricultural field, but realizes that not every student will. He tells the students that no matter what they end up doing in life, they need to make sure it is something they enjoy. However, Mr. Birchemier believes students should consider an agricultural career because the possibilities are endless. He says, "The world population is continuing to grow at an alarming rate. We need people to be able to continue to improve agricultural practices to feed the growing population. The United States is the leader in agricultural production. We need all aspects of agriculture including research, education, technology, sales, communication, food science, and so much more. Students are able to choose their destiny." Activities the Durand FFA chapter participates in include their annual homecoming hog roast before the football game, adopting six families in their community each holiday season by providing gifts and full meals for the families, and allowing students to raise chapter animals and show them at the Shiawassee County Fair each summer. Through events such as these, his students are able to gain real life experiences. He believes the FFA has a wide variety of opportunities for students that can stick with them for a lifetime. ‡

Living to Serve

By:
Maria Blough
Region V State VP

One of our goals as a state officer team this year was to highlight that almost any career ties back to agriculture. I discovered how my own dream career of becoming a journalist relates to agriculture. In December I was fortunate to job shadow Nicole Heslip, the Michigan Anchor/ Reporter for Brownfield Ag News, as she covered the Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable and Farm Market Expo.

Through involvement in the FFA, Nicole found her passion for agricultural communications. She graduated from Michigan State University where she majored in Agriculture and Natural Resources Communications and specialized in Agri-Business Management and Public Relations though MSU no longer offers this major. Students interested in careers in communications could work for an agricultural company, association, news outlet, or advertising firm crafting communications, public relations materials, news, and more.

There are even more job opportunities for those who are willing to travel outside the state of Michigan.

As a journalist, Nicole is always meeting new people and learning how agriculture continues to change. She reports on state and national agricultural news through multiple mediums like print, social media, and radio. Farmers are of the utmost importance; her job is to interact with farmers and tell their stories. When covering a story she focuses on what farmers care about and what is impacting the industry. Nicole works from home, but travels throughout the state and to national events on a regular basis.

On my job shadow with Nicole I learned about the Farmer Veteran Coalition which is an agriculture organization geared towards helping veterans become farmers. Nicole interviewed Adam Ingrao, an army veteran who is pursuing a PhD in entomology at Michigan State University. Walking through the booths after the interview, Nicole often stopped and talked to other vendors she had met in her years of being a journalist.

It's never too early for FFA members to make steps toward future careers. Nicole recommends students interested in agricultural communications pay attention in English and design classes. She says what she learned during creative writing, yearbook, and layout and design classes have paid off later in her career. It's also important to seize any opportunity that relates to future career goals including attending workshops or connecting with current professionals with jobs that interest you. Teachers are great resources to help discover these types of opportunities. Nicole served as chapter and regional reporter in FFA and started a newsletter for her student council called "Hopkins Happenings." Social media provides endless opportunities to share agricultural stories through blogs, videos, and other digital accounts.

If working with people and telling agriculture's story is something you are passionate about, consider living to serve as an agriculture reporter. With less than 2 percent of Americans involved in agriculture, we will always need reporters like Nicole Heslip to be the voice of the agricultural industry. ǂ

We the People

By: Dustin Petty
Past State Officer

The United States has been, and will continue to be, a work in progress. It says so right in our Constitution's Preamble:

We, the People, in order to form a **more perfect union**...

We're not perfect, yet. But every few years, we have the opportunity to push our country in a direction that we believe is best.

Do you know the ins and outs of voting?

When can I register to vote?
In Michigan, you must be 18 to register to vote. The deadline to vote in the Aug. 2 State Primary is July 5. To vote in the November General Election (and help elect our next president), you must be registered by Oct. 11.

Where can I register to vote?
You can register to vote at your local Secretary of State office, your local county, city, or township clerk's office, and military recruitment centers.

How do I vote?
In Michigan, you need to visit your local polling place. You can find your polling place at vote.michigan.gov. You'll also find information on how to obtain an absentee ballot, allowing your local clerk to send you a paper ballot if you're unable to make it to your polling place on Election Day.

What should I bring with me to my polling place?
In Michigan, you need a photo ID if it's your fist time voting. Accepted forms of ID are a driver's license, a Michigan-issued ID card, a U.S. passport, or student ID card from your high school or accredited college.

Why should I vote?
Men and women fought and died in Concord and Normandy, Gettysburg and Okinawa to give us a country where we would have the right to vote. Men and women protested in Selma and Boston, gathered in Seneca Falls, and marched on Washington, fighting for the right to vote.

There's nothing more American than exercising your right to vote.

Now you know more about the logistics of voting. But before that, it's important to become an informed citizen. In 2016, the United States will elect a new president. Each district will also elect a representative to the U.S. House of Representatives. Here are some helpful online tools for finding unbiased information on candidates and issues:

- Congress.gov – find out your representatives' voting records and see what current legislation is being considered
- iCitizen – an app you can download to connect with elected officials
- Vote-USA.org – compare candidates side-by-side on the issues

In the end, decisions are made by those who show up.

Show up and vote. ‡

THE WASHINGTON LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

New People, New Places, New Perspectives

By Channon Turrell, Lapeer County FFA Chapter, 2015 WLC Attendee

Like a typical FFA member, I was talked into going to the Washington Leadership Conference by my advisor and a group of seniors who had went before. They all told me, "It will change your life! It's the best conference ever! I wish I could go back!" But I figured there's no way **THIS** conference could be **THAT** different than other FFA events and conferences.

Boy, was I wrong!

From the start, I boarded a bus filled with people I have never met to travel 13 hours to Washington, D.C. I was roomed with complete strangers and assigned to a group with, you guessed it, more strangers. Yet, by the end of the five-day conference, those strangers became some of my most trusted friends.

We came from all different states and so many different backgrounds. Together, we started thinking about our purpose in life – not what job we wanted to have or what college we wanted to go to. We looked at the needs our neighbors, friends and classmates face on a day-to-day basis and created plans to help fill those needs. We realized that we all have the responsibility to do what we can, with what we have, wherever we are.

True, we walked a lot, slept a little and stretched our comfort zone. But we also toured our national monuments, gave back through a service project and learned what it means to be a servant leader. It was by far the best FFA conference I've ever been to and has had a HUGE impact on my life.

WLC AT A GLANCE

IN 2015, WLC STUDENTS PACKED

410,000 *meals*

FOR LOCAL FOOD BANKS &

96%

LEFT WITH A PLAN TO GIVE BACK TO THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

IN THE PAST 25 YEARS, MICHIGAN HAS SENT NEARLY

2,000 *students*

ON 47 BUSES OVER

30,000 *miles*

TO ATTEND WLC.

Last year

2,162 *students*

BECAME EFFECTIVE LEADERS AT WLC BY LEARNING:

- THEIR PURPOSE
- HOW TO VALUE PEOPLE
- HOW TO TAKE ACTION
- & HOW TO SERVE OTHERS.

THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS PAST & PRESENT WLC SPONSORS!

MICHIGAN FARM BUREAU

MICHIGAN FOUNDATION FOR AGRICULTURE

MMPA MICHIGAN MILK PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

Michigan FFA Foundation

DUPONT PIONEER

JOIN MICHIGAN FFA ALUMNI

IN COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE STATE, **FFA ALUMNI** MEMBERS ARE COACHING, MENTORING, FUNDRAISING & PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS.

JOIN THEM. NO JACKET REQUIRED.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT **MICHIGANFFA.COM/ALUMNI**

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EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

Student Spotlight

By: Tyra Jonas
State Reporter

Joe Adams

Olivet FFA

Meet Joe Adams! He is a sophomore at Harper Creek High School! However, he is an active member of the Olivet FFA chapter. After graduating from high school he plans to attend Michigan State University studying civil or agricultural engineering. Completing a degree in one of these fields is just one of the many goals this future Spartan has. Joe also plans to join the Army Corps of Engineers for four years! Aside from his FFA life, he participates in numerous activities including 4-H, DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America), lacrosse, and wrestling. He truly lives out the last line of our motto by serving in as many ways as he can. For example, he serves his church by shoveling snow and by ushering, he volunteers at the local fire department, and he helps his FFA chapter as often as he can.

Joe has been able to strengthen his Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) throughout his time in the FFA. Today his SAE is comprised of three different segments. He raises and sells meat chickens, raises and sells laying hens, and sells eggs. He began his SAE by raising chickens for six years, but three years ago discovered his passion for the business side of the industry. When raising meat chickens, Joe purchases 40 to 60 Cornish crosses three times a year and sells these meat chickens to a group of established customers. When raising laying hens, he purchases Isa Browns. According to Joe, he "buy[s] them as chicks and keep[s] them for about four months and then sell[s] them to people who want younger laying hens but don't want to go through the hassle of raising chicks." By promoting this new part of his business mainly through word of mouth, Joe has been able to make it very profitable. However, the most profitable part of his SAE has consistently been selling eggs. Joe has approximately 75 laying hens and sells the eggs to a group of customers on a weekly basis. He says, "I have found over time that selling subscriptions to regular customers (4 weeks at a time) has helped me manage my inventory and keep my customers loyal. I am looking to expand the egg part of my business in the years to come because it is the most profitable."

Throughout Joe's FFA career, he has participated in numerous events including Greenhand Conduct of Meetings, Soil Judging, Poultry Contest, FFA Quiz Bowl, and the Crops competition. He attends chapter meetings and as many of the other chapter events as possible despite the distance he has to travel from his home in Harper Creek to Olivet. Joe says the reason he stays involved in FFA is "because of the great memories made with the other members and because of the valuable life lessons." Joe reflects on his experiences by saying, "When you are on a FFA contest team, it is a lot like sports. Everyone has a role to play. I've had some successes and failures which is like life. I've met people that will be lifelong friends, and I am certain there will be quite a few of them at Michigan State with me." ‡

State Officer Stats

Samantha Ludlam
State Vice President

Chapter: Hopkins

College: Michigan State University

SAE: Sheep Production

Theme Song: “American Girl”

Favorites

Sport: Cross Country

Movie: *Almost Famous*

Hobby: Showing livestock

Candy: Junior Mints

Daniel Flynn
State Treasurer

Chapter: Branch Area Career Center

SAE: Swine Production

Hobby: Weight Lifting

Theme Song: “Imagine”

Favorites

Sport: Football

T.V. Show: *Psych*

Musician: Eric Church

Book: Unbroken

Kyle Forbush
Region IV State Vice President

Chapter: Corunna

College: Michigan State University

SAE: Diversified Livestock

Theme Song: “My Last Name”

Favorites

Sport: Football

Candy: Butterfingers

Food: Mom’s Mac ‘n Cheese

Musician: Dierks Bentley

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Biosystems Engineering
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Vision of Virginia

SUMMER 2016

Countdown 10

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State Convention June 20-23, Blacksburg, VA

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D: Young Farmers of Virginia
E: Advisor Highlight
F: Goodwill Tour FFA Week
H: Farm Bureau Young Farmer's Winter Expo
I: State CDE Results
J: Through the Lens
L: VICE Conference
M: Call to State Convention
N: FFA Then & Now
P: VA FFA Foundation Highlight

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www.VaFFA.org

Get Published! Submit articles and photos of your chapter to vaffa.publications@gmail.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 20-23:
State FFA Convention
July 11-15:
Leadership Camp
July 18-21:
VAAE Ag Teachers Conference
September 16-17:
Big E
September 23 - October 2:
Virginia State Fair
October 19-22:
National FFA Convention

Letter to the Members

Dear Members,

What's in a year? Of course there are 365 days, almost 9,000 hours, and over 500,000 minutes, but there are certain things we can't count; memories, new experiences, and people we meet. As the days, hours, and minutes count down on our year as state officers, the memories, experiences, and amazing people only increase. Serving this year, we have experienced all of these things and want to share a few of our memories with all of you!

Over the last year we've made experiences and friendships that are irreplaceable, however, without you, these would cease to exist. Each of you, the over 8,000 individual memories, come together to shape a year that is so unbelievably special. Through you, we have grown and hope that our impact has been one of growth and opportunity. To increase that impact, we do have a couple lasting ideals we'd like to share.

Get involved in every opportunity you are presented! The FFA has led us across the Commonwealth of Virginia and throughout the United States, allowing us to meet friends, make contacts, and possibly talk with future employers. As members in this great organization, it's important to see we all have these opportunities. To seize them, we need to believe we can and reach out with all we have.

This year we have and hope that you have lived by our theme: Unlock. Whether it's unlocking your passion, purpose, opportunity, knowledge, or whatever you make out of it, keep on doing it! Most importantly, keep on Unlocking the next challenge and never limit yourself.
If there is one thing we've learned from you it's to treasure every moment because time flies by fast! Enjoy the memories you make, always strive to reach your dreams, continue to Unlock what's next, because if we don't try, we may never know where we can go.

Forever Blue,
2015-2016 Virginia FFA State Officer Team

74 STATE OFFICERS, 2 WEEKS, 1 AMAZING ADVENTURE

by Cailin Orgen
VA FFA 2015-2016 Vice President

Five of our Virginia FFA State Officers had the opportunity to travel to South Africa in January as a part of the International Leadership Seminar for State Officers. We left on Jan. 4 and after a long flight we arrived in Johannesburg on Jan. 5. We then traveled with our guides, Elizma and Roel, to Pretoria for a welcome dinner at a local restaurant. Our first full day in South Africa consisted of an informational meeting at an International Convention Center, where we learned about the agricultural industry in South Africa. We first visited a vegetable farm where we met some of the workers on the farm and they taught us the proper way to pick carrots. This stop was our first, personal interaction with people involved in the South African agriculture industry. Later we headed to a crocodile farm where we learned about the farm and their operations.

On our second day in Pretoria we visited a Boer goat farm where we learned about the meat production of Boer goats in South Africa. Our second visit that day was to a Protea farm, South Africa's national flower. On the third day in Pretoria we visited a feedlot and a family owned farm that grow over 17,000 hectares (roughly 42,000 acres) of corn, potatoes, soybeans and sugar beans. We then traveled to a private game reserve the next day, where we enjoyed a safari drive through the bush of South Africa. This game reserve served as a habitat for a variety of different exotic animals such as giraffes, cheetahs, lions, leopards, water buffalo, and elephants. The next day we traveled back to Johannesburg airport by taking a scenic route through the country. One of our stops included the beautiful Blyde River Canyon which is the largest green canyon in South Africa. We finally arrived at Johannesburg where we boarded our flight to Cape Town.

In Cape Town we visited a vineyard in the gorgeous Cape wine lands and then we traveled down the road to a community called Kayamandi. In this community we learned about their culture and history as we toured the township on foot. We then enjoyed a homemade lunch with some of the locals. This visit was a very moving visit for our team as we had the chance to connect with people on a personal level. It was truly an unforgettable experience for us as we played games and danced with the children of Kayamandi. These people may not have air conditioning or running water, but that didn't stop them from spreading enthusiasm and love to each and every one of us. This visit to the town of Kayamandi inspired our team to unlock our appreciation for all of the blessings in our lives no matter how small they may seem. Our next stop that day was to the Cape of Good Hope and then to a Penguin Colony, home to an endangered colony of African Penguins. Our second day in Cape Town we visited a fruit exporter that produces and specializes in top quality table grapes for export. Then we visited an olive oil farm later that day, where we had the interesting opportunity to take part in an olive oil tasting. Coming to our final days in South Africa we visited a sheep farm, a wheat museum and a Jersey cow dairy operation. On our final day we traveled to Robben Island by ferry. At Robben Island we toured the grounds and had the opportunity to look into Nelson Mandela's prison cell. That evening we experienced a cultural South African 14 course meal which consisted of traditional music, food and dancing.

Traveling home we reflected on everything we had seen, felt, and heard. We learned a lot about the agricultural industry, but as well as the culture and traditions in South Africa. This trip alone has given us experiences that will last a lifetime. We built relations with people halfway across the world and we learned about our similarities and differences with people that live in other countries. Traveling to South Africa really showed our team how agriculture connects people from different parts of the world. We were happy to see that people in South Africa are just as passionate about agriculture and leadership as we are here in the United States.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

RUTH FITZGERALD

Age: **15**
Chapter: **Nelson County**
Years in FFA: **4**

Why did you join FFA?
I joined because all of my older siblings were in FFA, and through them I saw what experiences they had. After seeing everything they got from the FFA, I had the burning desire to join, and as soon as I could, I did.

What does FFA mean to you?
When I hear the word FFA, I think of all of the members, officers, advisors, and faculty that make FFA what it is. We're all connected through the organization, and its like being part of a second family.

What has been your favorite memory in the FFA jacket?
My favorite memory in my FFA jacket was while I was waiting with my Agronomy team for the results at State Convention to see if all our hard work would pay off and we could unlock the opportunity to represent Virginia at National Convention in Louisville, Ky. The excitement mixed with nervousness and anticipation was amazing when we found out we won!

What is something you would tell someone who sponsors the FFA?
Something I would tell those who sponsor FFA is thank you because they are sponsoring an organization that is impacting and changing lives and unlocking an unbelievable amount of opportunities to those who are a part of it.

What is something you would tell someone that is unsure if they should join the FFA?
I would tell them to set aside their doubts and to join as soon as they can because they will create new friends, meet new people, gain valuable knowledge and experiences, be able to compete in CDE's, make an impact on many people near and far, and that in FFA they will definitely have fun.

Cold Winter, Cool Convention

Young Farmers of Virginia Convention

by Hunter Wimmer
VA FFA 2015-2016 State Secretary

On Jan. 29, agriculture teachers, FFA sponsors, collegiate and high school FFA members and others attended the weekend-long Young Farmers of Virginia Convention in Charlottesville, Va. Convention attendees toured facilities ranging from horse training facilities, a purebred Angus bull operation, and an apple orchard used for making cider. After observing the unique agriculture of central Virginia and a delicious steak dinner, the five state officers who traveled to South Africa gave a presentation on their trip to convention attendees. The presentation highlighted the cultural differences between the United States and South Africa, unique agricultural tours like a mango farm, crocodile farm and purebred Boer goat operation, and how they can make an impact based on what they observed on their trip. During this convention, a wealth of knowledge was shared and gained all in the hope of bettering Virginia agriculture. It was a fantastic conference those in attendance will not soon forget.

OFFICER TO OFFICER

by Chandler Vaughan
VA FFA 2015-2016 State President

Whether we have been serving as a chapter officer, just got elected or are thinking about running for office we might be wondering what our responsibilities are or how we can make this year better than the last. No matter what office we hold, there are a few things that we can all do to boost up our FFA chapter and start this year off right!

1. **Get to know everybody!** You probably already know your teammates, but if your team just takes a couple hours doing something fun, you'll become a stronger team!
2. **Plan out the year.** A little while after your team is elected, take a couple hours to brainstorm new ideas for your chapter. Once all those ideas are jotted down, lay out a simple plan that plots out your chapter meetings and other activities.
3. **Divide up the responsibilities!** No one likes a one-man show. Once your team has that plan laid out, divide the responsibilities amongst the team. The last thing to remember is to stick to the duties of your office, but do not be limited by them!
4. **Be a member too!** We might not think about it, but sometimes, as a chapter officer, we get the feeling that it's no longer important to get involved in other activities in the chapter. If we remember to be a member, as well as an officer, we can have all the benefits that our FFA chapter provides!

If we direct our year by these four guidelines, we will not only succeed as a team, but also grow our FFA chapter. Sometimes, it may help your team to revisit some of these steps. Just be sure to take it slow, because the year will go fast! Good luck!

Advisor Highlight

by Cayla Mutschler
VA FFA 2015-2016 State Vice President

Melinda Hinkle

Advisor - *Alleghany High School FFA*

Melinda Hinkle, or as students from Alleghany High School call her Mrs. Hinkle, is a small town girl from Iron Gate, Va., who had big dreams of becoming a lawyer. Growing up Mrs. Hinkle had family that ran agricultural enterprises but did not grow up on a farm. During her senior year of high school she wanted to take classes that were outside her norm, so she decided to fill her schedule with agriculture classes. "I knew within the first month of being there that this was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life," said Hinkle. When she came to this conclusion she changed her major and graduated from Virginia Tech with a Master's in Agricultural Education. She's had high hopes for Alleghany FFA since she began in 2013. The chapter numbers have doubled in two years and they have their very own state officer this year. In the near future she hopes to have a two teacher program at the high school or to have a program created at the middle school. "Being the only agriculture teacher in the county is challenging but I have great kids that help me on a daily basis to make our program and FFA chapter successful," said Hinkle.

FFA WEEK GOODWILL TOUR

An Epic Week of Friends, Leadership and Service

by Cailin Orgen
VA FFA 2015-2016 State Vice President

National FFA Week was a jam-packed week of workshops, meetings and projects. The state officer team traveled across the state of Virginia, visiting over 30 chapters. We were extremely excited to participate in some of the most unique FFA week traditions including pancake meals, Ag Olympics, cornhole tournaments, bonfires and so much more.

Workshops were provided at some chapters to help members "Unlock" their future in the FFA. The main activity provided in the workshop consisted of four wooden boxes with four compartments. Each compartment had to be unlocked by completing a task or solving a puzzle in order to receive a key for the next compartment. Groups raced against the clock to complete each task. When each group made it to the final compartment, they received a master key to the final box. The final box had four locks on it, which only opened when all groups completed the challenge by receiving their final key. When the final box was unlocked the chapter would receive the grand prize. This activity created a friendly competition between members in their home chapters and with chapters throughout the state.

On Day 1, we kicked off FFA week with workshops at Abingdon, George Wythe, Bland and Carroll County FFA. These chapters were the first to compete in the "Unlock" challenge. Each of these chapters set the bar for the rest of the chapters in the state. At the end of the day we traveled to Woodstock, Va., to meet Peter Muhlenberg and Central FFA for a delicious taco dinner.

On Day 2, we enjoyed a wonderful pancake breakfast with Aylor and Admiral Byrd FFA. Next, the James Wood Middle FFA members participated in the workshop with extreme enthusiasm and determination to make them the fastest team. Then we traveled to Strasburg FFA, where we met up for an ice cream social. Lunch was an event of tasty food and spontaneous dancing with the members at the Signal Knob Middle FFA chapter. Next we headed to Luray FFA before visiting J. Frank Hillyard and Broadway FFA to compete in an epic competition of egg tossing, wheelbarrow races, digging in haystacks and more. We ended our day with Stuarts Draft FFA for an enjoyable pancake dinner.

Day 3 began with a delicious breakfast with Smith Mountain FFA members, bright and early that morning. At our next stop, Nelson FFA pushed their way into the statewide competition to Unlock the fastest time in the workshop. At lunch time we visited Louisa FFA for a workshop and pizza. We then made our way to visit Culpeper Jr. and Sr. FFA chapters. Finally we ended the day with some Ag Olympics between the state officer team, CL Payne, Fauquier, and Kettle Run FFA chapters. It was a great way to end the day!

We started Day 4 at King William FFA with a workshop and some famous breakfast pizza. Next we visited Gloucester for a workshop and time to mingle with members. Throughout the day we visited Lakeland for a fast paced workshop before visiting Parkview Jr. and Sr. FFA chapters. At Dinwiddie, members battled it out in a nail-biting tournament of cornhole for some awesome prizes and ice cream. The last stop of the day was with the members of Amelia and Nottoway FFA for a bonfire. At the bonfire we made s'mores, played cornhole and told campfire stories.

On Day 5, we visited Goochland FFA early Friday morning. Our team was pleasantly surprised at the energy and eagerness of Goochland FFA members to win the "Unlock" challenge while they engaged in the workshop. The next stop of the day was to visit Buckingham FFA before heading to Prince Edward FFA where they stepped up to the Unlock challenge in the workshop with incredible enthusiasm and spirit. We finally wrapped up a week of incredible fun and memories with Randolph-Henry and Central Middle FFA for the last Unlock the Future workshop. At the end of the week we compared the scores for all of the schools that completed the challenge presented in our workshops. The winning chapter for the week with the fastest time unlocking all of the boxes was Goochland FFA with a total time of 6 minutes and 5 seconds.

FFA week was definitely a week to remember. We appreciate the opportunity to have celebrated our week with some awesome FFA chapters. ***As the school year comes to a close remember that we are the keys that can Unlock our future!***

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FARM BUREAU YOUNG FARMERS EXPO

TOURS, NETWORKING, FUN

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

Upon conclusion of the State Officers' FFA Week travels, the team traveled to Danville, Va., to gather with agriculturalists, FFA sponsors, and members of the FFA for the Farm Bureau Young Farmers Winter Expo. On Saturday, expo participants toured the unique agriculture southwest Virginia has to offer. Tours included trips to the Upper Piedmont Livestock Research Facility, Van Der Hyde Dairy, and Gregory Lumber Company. These tours gave attendees a different outlook on our ever-growing industry. After the tours, expo participants gathered at the Olde Dominion Agricultural Complex in Chatham, Va., to enjoy workshops focused on agriculture topics including business and financing issues, feed directives, and marketing opportunities. The evening concluded with an ultimate Young Farmers' Ag Olympics in which teams of four competed in challenges like a round bale roll, chainsaw start, trailer tire change, and milking a cow. The weekend was full of learning, networking, reconnecting with friends, and learning about the vast agriculture that our state has to offer.

Chapter Chats

Eastern View FFA

by Mary Ott
VA FFA 2015-2016 State Treasurer

The Eastern View FFA Chapter has been in existence for six years, and they have been a six-time Superior Rated Chapter on both the state and national levels! They have had one busy year! They have hosted numerous 5K walk/run events to support organizations and individuals, such as breast cancer (Save the Teats 5K Color Run), American Heart Association (4-Leaf 5K) and a local student with Crohn's Disease (Hunting for a Cure 5K). Another way they involve the community is through their Food for America program. About 600-700 students from every elementary school in the county rotate through seven stations to learn about where their food comes from and can interact with live animals. Membership is increasing as the year goes on, and it is evident they get everyone as involved as possible. Members have participated in 23 different Career Development Events, and they do very well! All participants are recognized at their banquet, and gold, silver and bronze awards are awarded to those who excelled on the teams. At their banquet they also present scholarship awards from their chapter and community. The community around Eastern View High is very involved in their FFA programs, and they recognized sponsors and representatives during the banquet. Many members were also recognized for various degrees: Greenhand, Chapter, State and even American Degrees! As they celebrated their year playing a slideshow presentation, they remembered the Color Run and other cool things like making apple butter as a chapter and visiting with many different community members. The officers did an awesome job presenting awards and ceremonies. Keep up the great work Eastern View FFA!

STATE CDE RESULTS

State Parliamentary Procedure

Winning Senior Team: **Fort Defiance**
Anna Foley
Calvin Heatwole
Colton Buchanan
Jessica McCormick
Leah Crickenburger
Samara Little
Advisor: Eric Stogdale

Winning Junior Team: **Strasburg**
Allyson Neal
Brandon Earls
Madison Estep
Mackenzie Kline
Matthew Avvenire
Nadia Rauhala
Shelby Smith
Advisor: Brian Fisher

All-State Junior Team:
President - Madison Estep from Strasburg
Vice-President - Erin Orgen from Sherando
Secretary - Madison Swope from Wilbur S. Pence
Treasurer - Jeremy Petrie from Strasburg
Reporter - Aidan Keller from Signal Knob
Sentinel - Shelby Smith from Strasburg

Meats Evaluation

Junior Meats
1st Place - Peter Muhlenberg Middle FFA
Team Members - Faith Dellinger, Jeremy Viar, Melanie McDonald, and Henry Wakeman
Advisor: Derek Ritenour

Senior Meats
1st Place - Fort Defiance FFA Team A
Team Members - Jacob Lewis, Nathan Zullig, Cassie Simmons, and Brandon Shumaker
Advisor: Eric Stogdale

State Horse Judging

Junior Team **Overall Placings**
1st - Admiral Byrd Middle FFA
Team Members: Hannah Burton, Maya Witt, Emily Blanton, Sarah Moreland
Advisor: Kathy Ritenour
2nd - Marshall Middle FFA
3rd - Randolph-Henry FFA
4th - Ridgeview FFA
5th - Blacksburg FFA

Senior teams returning to state convention to compete in the second portion of this contest are:
Blacksburg FFA
Eastern View FFA
Lee-Davis FFA
Louisa FFA
Powhatan FFA

Through the Lens
of a State Officer

Finding Your Fit
by Chandler Vaughan
VA FFA 2015-2016 State President

Everyone has that place in their house where all the shoes end up at the end of the day. Flip flops, tennis shoes, farm boots, hiking shoes, whatever the variety, they all sit, waiting for their time to stand up to the challenges they are suited for. Whether they're being drug through the mud, paraded on sand, or shuffling down a hallway they all perform the way they're meant to until we trip and fall flat on our face.

Kind of like these shoes, we all have a role and are specifically designed for a task. Occasionally, we forget to tie up our laces, or take a misstep and end up falling straight to the ground. In those roles that we are designed for, we get so comfortable that we don't realize if we are even still performing them, and thus fall flat on our faces. No matter if we are a boot, tennis shoe, or sandal, we have to keep defining what we are meant for, try new things, and stay sharp. By doing these things, we can avoid accidentally slipping up and forgetting what we are meant for.

Put the Pieces Together
by Cailin Orgen
VA FFA 2015-2016 State Vice President

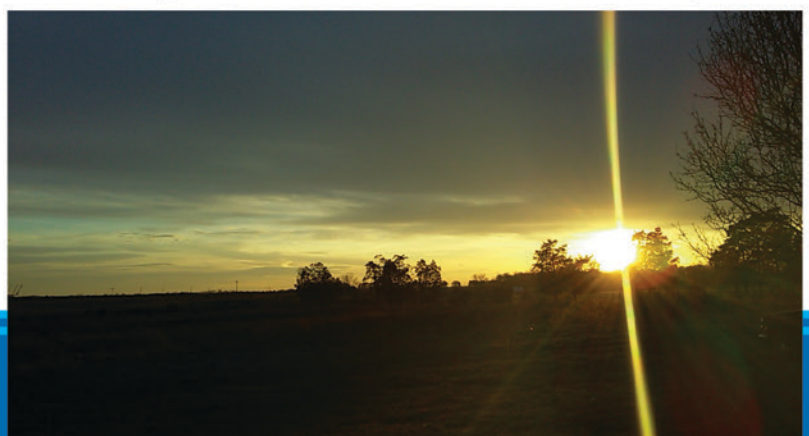
When people ask me what I like to do for fun, the first thing that comes to mind for me is solving puzzles. I know, puzzles can seem boring to some of us, but I have grown up enjoying puzzles since I was a kid. Puzzles are great because we take a bunch of small pieces and put them together in order to construct a final picture. We may not know the full picture by looking at a single piece, but a little hard work can help us find the final picture. When I think about the future, I think about how our future is just another puzzle for us to solve. Growing up, we might have an idea of who we want to be or what we want to do, but we don't know exactly what our future looks like. I constantly think about my future, but the picture keeps changing. As we grow and mature, day by day we discover a new piece to our puzzle of life. These pieces we collect throughout our lifetime help us to construct our final picture of our future. We might not know what it looks like, but we can work hard to solve the puzzle. Our time as FFA members helps us to piece together the foundation of our futures. These pieces are only the beginning to constructing the picture of an amazing future.

Just Another Day
by Mary Ott
VA FFA 2015-2016 State Treasurer

There comes a time in everyone's life where we get tired of doing the same old things day in and day out. We think we see the same sunrise and sunset every day and often get in a slump, and we do not realize what we can to do to help ourselves out of the same slump. Think about the last time you did something just for yourself, just because you wanted to. I find myself wondering the same thing sometimes. Even if it is just a simple walk outside or just reading a book for fun, knowing that you are doing it for you is something no one can change. We take for granted the time we have to ourselves, and we waste the moments we could really appreciate. Everyone is different, so we cannot all solve our own problems in the same ways, so we have to figure out how we are going to become the person we want to be. Similarly, every sunrise and sunset are different, and we just have to find what makes each of them different and how we can make them special.

Memories: Trophies That Never Leave
by Hunter Wimmer
VA FFA 2015-2016 State Secretary

While driving through the unique landscape where we all call home, I use this time to call my friends I went to high school with. One day I was talking to one of my closest friends about the March Madness basketball tournament and how it compared to the time we went 10-1 in our county rec league. When I returned home that night I found a team picture from that year and looked at it reminiscing on the great times I had with that team. I didn't care about the trophy I had gotten that year, all I cared about was the memories I had with my friends. Virginia FFA, it's not about winning that contest and getting that plaque that will go on the wall but the memories and lessons that God gives you. My friend told me a story of how Tony Bennett, UVA Men's Basketball Coach, walked into a student fellowship and started talking about the upcoming tournament. He said " winning a trophy is like eating cotton candy, at first it sweet and is amazing, but after a while it dissolves and goes away." As we get ready for upcoming contests let's remember that awards will not always hang on the wall, but memories and lessons we get will stick with us forever. Trophies will tarnish, plaques will get dusty, and ribbons will fall apart, but the memories you make will be worth much more.



Princess or Agricultural Teacher?

by Cayla Mutschler

VA FFA 2015-2016 State Vice President

Ever since we were little, people have asked us what we want to be when we grow up. If you asked me when I was 5, I would have told you I wanted to be a princess. At the age of 10, I wanted to be a marine biologist and when I was 15 I wanted to be a registered nurse. All I knew is that I wanted to make a difference in the lives of others. Now, I am 18 and I know that I want to be an agriculture educator. We might think that what we will become is about the money or benefits but what we don't realize is if we wake up to do a job where we only care about the money, eventually we will not want to pursue that career anymore. But if we find a job that we love doing, as long as we believe we are making a difference in the world then we will be ok. I never knew how much FFA and agriculture would impact my life but when I took the opportunity to join this organization my sophomore year I knew that one day I would be doing what I love. Virginia FFA, I encourage you to take every opportunity that is available to you. The only opportunities we regret are the ones that we don't take. So whether it's trying out for a sport you love, becoming a part of a new CDE team or something else, always remember to keep unlocking your opportunities!

Shining Our Light

by John-Robert Helsley

VA FFA 2015-2016 State Sentinel

Every morning we are awoken by the sun shining through the blinds of our bedroom window. Every day the sun wakes up the world and gives each of us a new start. Throughout our day, we encounter different challenges that may hinder our progression. Once in awhile, we find ourselves becoming discouraged and feeling that we are unable to do something. Other days we find ourselves just rolling through the motions, while others we are initiating our lives. By the end of the day, we are usually ready to move on, but sometimes we are afraid to achieve our next step. Just like the sun shining new light of every new day, we are able to shine our light on others by giving it our all in everything we do. Even though we may think that we have not achieved what we wanted, we still have made each of our individual impacts. Virginia FFA, let's shine a new light on each day and continue to UNLOCK our potential!

Unlock Our Passions

by Bethany Gochenour

VA FFA 2015-2016 State Reporter

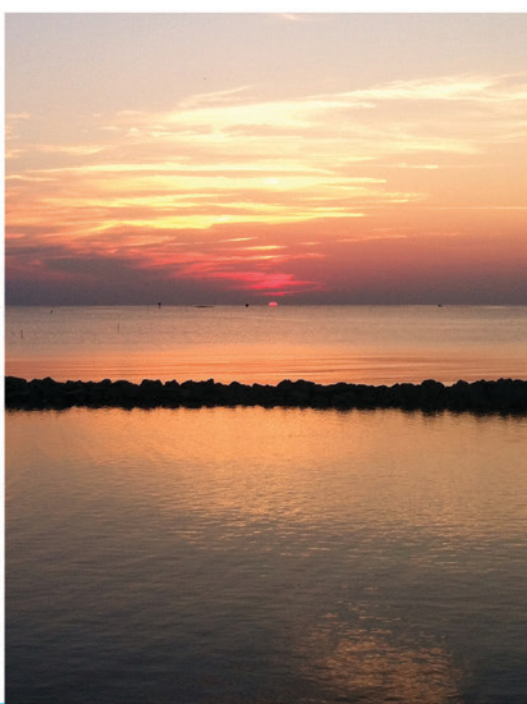
We lose ourselves in the things that we love. We find ourselves there, too. It is incredibly important that we find that thing we love to do. For myself, this includes the livestock industry, supporting agriculture, and teaching others. This has led me to the decision to attend Clemson University to study agriculture education. The relationships that agriculture teachers develop with their students are incomparable to any other teacher. I hope to be able to make an impact like that of the agriculture educators that I have had. I was never an outgoing student, but through the push from my agriculture teachers I started to be more involved in the FFA. My agriculture teachers, along side my parents, are the reason I am where I am today. They pushed me to be the best me I could be. Through finding what we love to do, we can find our perfect career. If you love what you do, they say you will never work a day in your life. I hope that my agriculture classroom will be a home away from home instead of a job. Students who are passionate about agriculture and have developed leadership abilities can move mountains in life. Virginia FFA, I challenge you to take some time to self-reflect and UNLOCK your passions.

Crossroads

by Emily Moyers

VA FFA 2015-2016 State Vice President

Each day we are faced with many decisions. It may be whether to get out of bed each morning or to simply stay put. We all have been placed in a position of choosing what path we will take. The decisions we make and paths we take shape who we are and what we will become. Each path we take can lead us to new opportunities and sometimes they lead us to obstacles that we must learn how to overcome. I am the youngest child in my family so I was always the "little sister"; being the little sister I always thought I needed to follow the path that my big sister took. It wasn't until I joined FFA that I realized that my path doesn't need to look exactly like hers; I am a different person and I will go different places. Sometimes it doesn't matter which path you take, as long as you continue to move forward. Don't get lost in the shadows of others' paths, create your own! I am so thankful that I chose the path in Virginia FFA, it has taken me all over Virginia, to South Africa, and to various other states and I will forever be grateful. Virginia FFA, I challenge you to continue to keep unlocking yourselves this year by taking new paths and always moving forward. As Lewis Carroll once said, "If you don't know where you want to go, it doesn't matter which path you take."



VICE CONFERENCE

by Chandler Vaughan

VA FFA 2015-2016 State President

Every spring, the Virginia Institute on Cooperative Education (VICE) is held at Graves Mountain Lodge in Syria, Va. The institute gets participants engaged and involved while they learn more about Virginia's Cooperatives! This year, the conference hosted 30 youth that, over a three-day weekend, learned how to run their own cooperative, as well as how they operate as a teammate, all through several awesome teachers and guest speakers.

Kicking off the conference, attendees learned more about cooperatives through an interactive game of Jeopardy, followed by rotating through workshops about different types of cooperatives. Before capping off the evening with an ice cream social, we heard from The Honorable Bobby Orrock about how we are all unique, through defining how we are each gifted, challenged, and special. The following morning, we took part in figuring out how we operate as teammates in an activity led by Dr. Kim Morgan, professor in the Agriculture and Applied Economics Department at Virginia Tech. The main aspect of the conference, however, was the "Purdue Agribusiness Management Simulation." In the simulation, teams compete against one another in a simulated feed store market, trying to increase net worth and win the game. Each team sells two feed and two fertilizer products, strategically pricing them to beat out other teams and increase their net worth by the end of the game.

Scholarship recipients include:

Anna Foley
Tess Seibel
Kaleb Marshall

Students that have the opportunity to participate in the National Institute for Cooperative Education are:

Anna Foley
Brooke Fletcher
Kaleb Marshall
Tess Seibel
Ryan Sensabaugh
Austin Zicafoose

When you combine making new friends, building teamwork skills, and learning about Virginia's Cooperatives, it's the perfect recipe for rewarding memories. For me, VICE allowed me to see what the world of business entails and assisted me in my teamwork skills. Overall, the weekend was a great experience for all conference participants!

CALL TO STATE CONVENTION

Lights, Camera, CONVENTION!!!

by 2015-2016 State FFA Officer Team

As the weeks and days are dwindling for this year in Virginia FFA, we want to share the excitement of what we are experiencing with everyone! Along with all the spring contests throughout the past few months, we have been visiting chapters, banquets and so much more. This time has been so special as we celebrate the accomplishments of chapters across the state! As banquet season comes to a close, the convention excitement is rolling on! Virginia FFA has had 90 awesome years as an Association, and we cannot wait to share the cool things that have happened this year with everyone! We are getting ready to host the Virginia State FFA Convention, June 20-23 in Blacksburg, Va. Whether you're coming to receive an award, compete in a CDE or just have a blast, we are excited to have you! Here is a list of 10 great reasons to get PUMPED for the 90th Virginia FFA State Convention!

10. **Compete in and learn** about new CDEs! Over 35 contests take place at State Convention.
9. **Reconnect and learn** more about the State Officers! We are excited to see and meet everyone!
8. **See who** will be elected to serve Virginia FFA as the 2016-2017 state officer team!
7. **See the amazing talents** of Virginia FFA in the 2016 Virginia FFA Talent Show!
6. **Meet State Officers** from other states! They'll be giving workshops, hanging around campus and learning about Virginia FFA!
5. **Recognize and celebrate** the State Degree recipients and CDE award winners! Also, learn about the unique Supervised Agricultural Experiences from our proficiencies and star recipients!
4. **Experience the phenomenal food** at Dietrick Hall! Virginia Tech is known for their award-winning menu options.
3. **Catch up with old friends** and meet new friends from across the entire state!
2. **Hang out for four days** on Virginia Tech's beautiful campus! There are so many sights to see!
1. **It's a party** with 1,500 of your closest friends!

Virginia FFA! Let's get this party started!

FFA Then & Now

Alpha Trivette

About 20 miles south of Fredericksburg Va., Ladysmith is a town home to one of the few state and national FFA officers from Virginia.

Once a tiny country crossroads, where Alpha Trivette was born and raised, there was a blinking yellow light in the road that lie between Richmond and Washington D.C. In those days, there was very little there in the small town but today, it is part of the busy corridor along Interstate 95. One thing about Ladysmith was there was only one high school and legendary FFA chapter. Wickham Coleman was an amazing soul who took over the wooden building adjacent to the school and turned it into a classroom and shop for the boys to study agriculture, excel in FFA competitions, and thrive as a chapter and program.

Alpha shares that when he was growing up, it was almost a right to passage to join the FFA. Small communities had little else to identify with and most everyone prided themselves in the Future Farmers – with many of the boys being just that, farmers of the future. His brother Randy was probably as great an inspiration for him to be in FFA as anyone, setting the bar for him to become involved. Before Alpha was old enough to join, he was attending banquets and meetings in the shadow of his brother. "Aside from playing sports, FFA was a natural attraction because it allowed me the opportunities to take leadership roles and perform before audiences. From early childhood, that is something that motivated me and led me to compete in creed and public speaking contests and being part of the Degree Team (or Parliamentary Procedure today). It is true that speaking in public and performing on stages and platforms still inspires and motivates me to this day."

He confesses that his supervised agriculture experience (SAE) projects were limited to the sprawling seven acres his family owned. Raising feeder pigs for a year or two, he then gained experience working at the local store and gas station. Alpha shares that his projects would pale in comparison to those outstanding projects of students and FFA members today. His first leadership role was Chapter Sentinel and then being awarded his Greenhand Degree. Parliamentary Procedure was one of the contests he participated throughout his time in FFA. Alpha was the George Washington Federation President and then was elected as the Virginia State FFA President. Following that year, in Kansas City he was chosen to serve as the National FFA President from 1974-1975. He went on to study agricultural economics and communications and graduate from Virginia Tech.

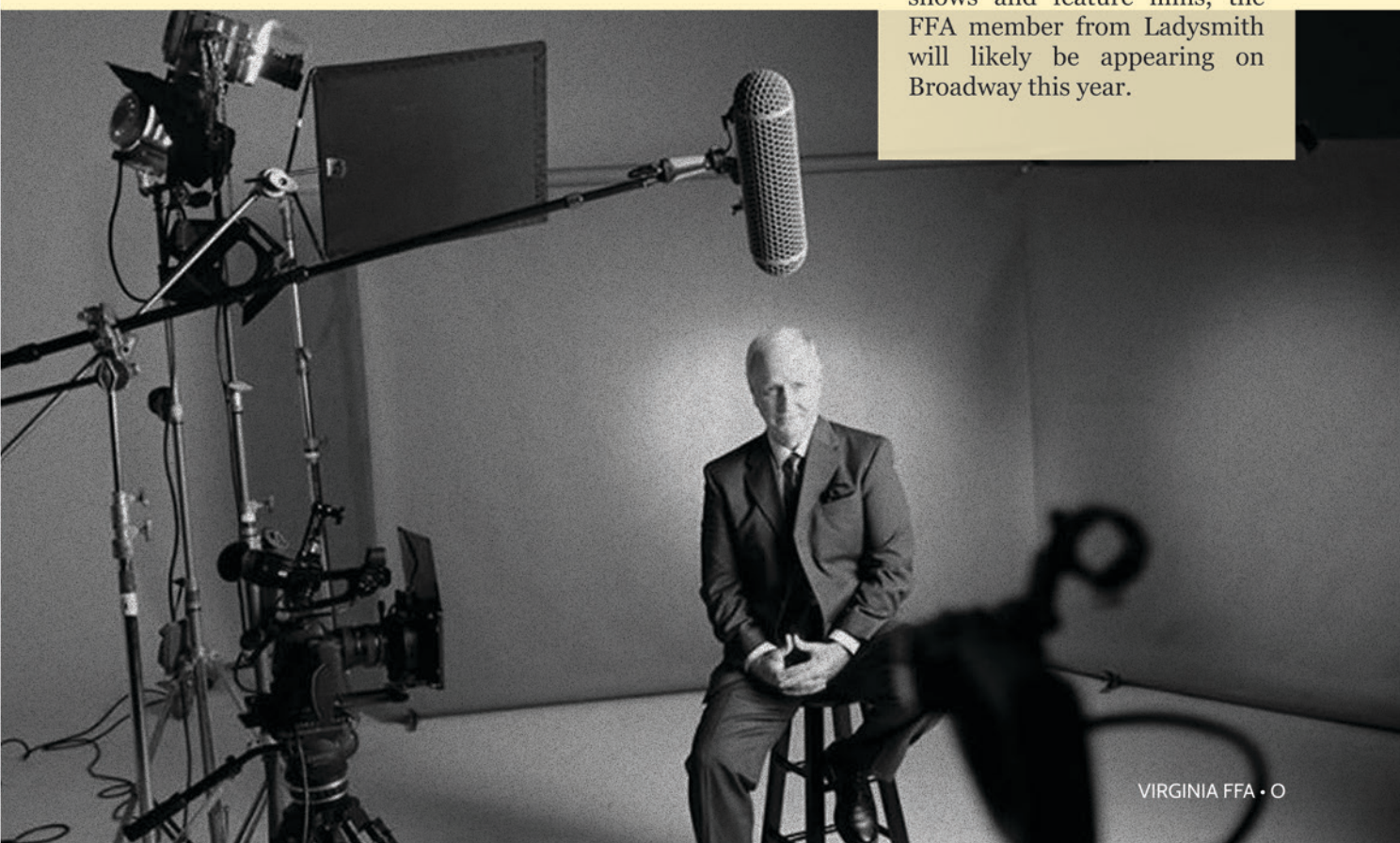
"FFA allowed me to use the talents God gave me and to stretch, practice, and use them in places I never

dreamed I would go. I never dreamed I would stand in the White House Rose Garden and speak with President Gerald Ford. I never ever imagined I would be invited by Vice President Nelson Rockefeller to fly with him to London aboard Air Force 2 to dedicate an American Bi-Centennial exhibit at the London Museum and meet with the Prime Minister and Ambassador. Nor did I imagine interning one summer at the White House on the President's Domestic Council, where I actually got to sit in the Oval Office with the President and Secretary of Agriculture. These are the things that FFA did for me. Things I can never forget or repay."

For the first time in a long time, Alpha attended the National FFA Convention this year–celebrating the 40th anniversary of his officer team. What he saw was amazing, admitting to be astounded by the growth of the organization and encouraged by the enthusiasm of the students. But time will never change the sense of purpose members can find through the FFA. The framework for leadership and the potential for personal growth is true and very real. Feeding, fueling, and clothing the world is a never ending challenge to be part of.

"As I look back I would just say to all potential FFA members to follow those things that inspire you. Gravitate toward those things and people who motivate you to excellence. Though I chose a career path away from agriculture, I still cherish those things that FFA provided." All of his passions and experiences in life have been inspired by the FFA and the building blocks and opportunities it provided him. After working for Virginia Farm Bureau and then as Director of PR for the Kentucky Association of Electric Cooperatives, he pursued a different path through entertainment. Now an actor based in Atlanta, Ga., he has been a stand-up comic and radio personality. Having co-starred in network TV shows and feature films, the FFA member from Ladysmith will likely be appearing on Broadway this year.

Alpha as Israel Proctor



Chapter Chats

Dinwiddie FFA

by Cayla Mutschler & Sydney Baxter
VA FFA 2015-2016 State Treasurer & Dinwiddie FFA President

Has your chapter been trying to figure out some cool things to do to keep members interested? Check out what Dinwiddie FFA is doing! For the past three years, the Dinwiddie FFA chapter has hosted a leadership lock-in for its members and it is facilitated by an outside speaker. Dinwiddie is one of the first chapters in Virginia to offer this opportunity to its members. The advisors started this activity because it was something different that would appeal to more members while also placing them outside of their comfort zones. During the lock-in, members participate in leadership activities as well as recreational games. Even if it is not obvious at first, everything the members do tie into a theme about leadership and teamwork. Some of the activities they do include their version of Capture the Flag called Monkin-it, Pudding Pictionary, and working together to define what a leader is.

"I have gained leadership skills I can use anywhere in life through these activities. Honestly, it is a great experience like no other," said Sydney Baxter, Dinwiddie FFA President.

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FUTURE FOCUS 2016

Our values — your values — guide our work every day. In addition to our belief in the future of agriculture and the value of Agricultural Education, financial oversight, stewardship, and transparency are at the core of our efforts.

Join us as we provide a snapshot of the past, present, and future focus for the Virginia FFA Foundation. Read more about our Future Focus 2016 efforts at vaffafoundation.org.

MISSOURI FFA TODAY
SUMMER 2016

"Keep Raising Your Hand"

FFA taught Ag Director off-the-farm leadership

MEET RICHARD FORDYCE

BY JOANN PIPKIN

From a young age, Richard Fordyce knew he wanted to be a farmer.

In the early 1980s, if you were going to be involved in agriculture, you were in FFA.

Now as director of the Missouri Department of Agriculture, Fordyce looks back on his involvement in FFA as the foundation for who he is today.

"I knew from day one, that I wanted to get my American (Farmer) Degree," Fordyce says. "That was a goal of mine, and I plotted the course to get to that point."

Early on in his high school career, Fordyce admits his knowledge of agriculture was pretty elementary. Yet, through agriculture education and FFA he explored plant and animal science as well as agricultural mechanics. As he got older, business management became an integral part of his studies.

"During (agriculture education) classes you learn how to operate your farm business," Fordyce explains. "Business training, leadership development and competitions (through FFA) all prepared me for my future in agriculture. You go to high school for an education, but being involved in FFA provided the tools and education I needed to be a successful farm businessman."

According to Fordyce, many of the skills he uses daily — whether in his role as agriculture director or at home on the farm — were developed in FFA. From conflict resolution to issue management and parliamentary

Former FFA member and now Missouri Director of Agriculture Richard Fordyce encourages FFA members to get out of their comfort zones and get involved in the organization's activities.

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THE PRESIDENT'S POST

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2015-16 State FFA Officers

Area	Officer
1	Maggie Voisard Mid-Buchanan
2	Adam Kirby-President Trenton
3	Hadley Williams Green City
4	Alex Stichnote - Secretary Ashland
5	Brandelyn Martin-1st V.P. Silex
6	Austin Boland Sweet Springs
7	Rylee Streit Holden
8	Jacob Hoellering California
9	Ty Whittaker Miller
10	Tanner Koenig Wheatland
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13	Hunter Corman Willow Springs
14	Braxton Hoemann Union
15	Alexa Nordwald East Prairie
16	Morgan Taylor Doniphan
	Cole Edwards - Past Pres. Salisbury

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Phone: (417) 732-8552

BY ADAM KIRBY
STATE FFA PRESIDENT

I find myself constantly answering this question no matter where I go. Whether it's eating out with official dress on, traveling to a chapter visit, or simply talking about FFA to newfound friends, everyone always wants to know in a short, concise answer, what FFA really is. It can be challenging to accurately describe what FFA is because it means so much to us. That simple question, "What is FFA," can honestly stump us.

When I really think about what FFA is to me, it can be hard to explain. FFA has been my life for the past few years. I have done everything I could in FFA and never stopped. It wasn't just an organization to me, but rather a lifestyle. How can I easily describe my life to some random person whom I had never met before?

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

PRESIDENT'S POST FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Looking back, there was one simple answer that I could have said. In fact, it's one we can all say. "I am FFA." Each one of us is what makes FFA incredible. FFA isn't just an amazing organization because of the opportunities it presents to its members. FFA isn't just amazing because it helps empower and strengthen agriculture. FFA is amazing because of our members. FFA succeeds because of us, the individuals who make it strong. An organization can't become the largest youth organization in the country by simply being mediocre, or having decent members. We have a close knit family of over 630,000 members and growing. Our FFA organization is the best, and will remain the best because of you, its members.

What should we do, though, when we are no longer in FFA, and someone asks us, "What is FFA?" Still, my answer, our answer, should always be, "I am FFA." As my high school career was drawing to a close, I couldn't help but think my FFA career was over. I couldn't have been more wrong.

FFA lives inside of us forever. It isn't a one and done type of experience; it follows us for the rest of our lives. The experiences we have had, opportunities we have taken, and friendships we have built will last a lifetime. No matter what, this FFA experience doesn't end; it's always there in our hearts. You are FFA. I am FFA. Together, we are FFA.

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Keep Raising Your Hand

Continued from Page A

procedure, all of those skills were used in competition during his time as an FFA member. He points out, though, that those are also important life skills.

"The friendship development and networking through FFA is invaluable," Fordyce notes. "There are people I met through FFA who I work with today. For example, Senator David Pearce was a national FFA officer in 1980-81 when I was in high school. He's someone I met during my FFA involvement and interact with now as director of agriculture."

FFA can fuel the fire in a person so to speak, and Fordyce says if you are passionate about agriculture, FFA is the first step down that path.

"A lot of agricultural organizations and businesses, I think very astutely, position themselves to take advantage of FFA leadership experience and FFA involvement," Fordyce says. "The people I know that are most successful are ones who have a foundation of FFA and then worked up the ladder."

Still, leadership and networking haven't always walked hand-in-hand with life on the farm. "FFA was the basis of where I am today because it introduced me to leadership off the farm," Fordyce says. "My dad was a great farmer, but he never really had a great deal of interest in ag leadership or being engaged in something other than the farm."

Today, however, Fordyce says advocacy and leadership are crucial to the evolution of the agricultural industry as a whole, and it takes on many different roles. Ag leadership is part of a movement to educate fellow producers on better ways to do perform tasks, but that's not all.

"There's leadership that involves policy, how you effectively advocate for issues related to agriculture that have short term and long term effects on the industry," Fordyce

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

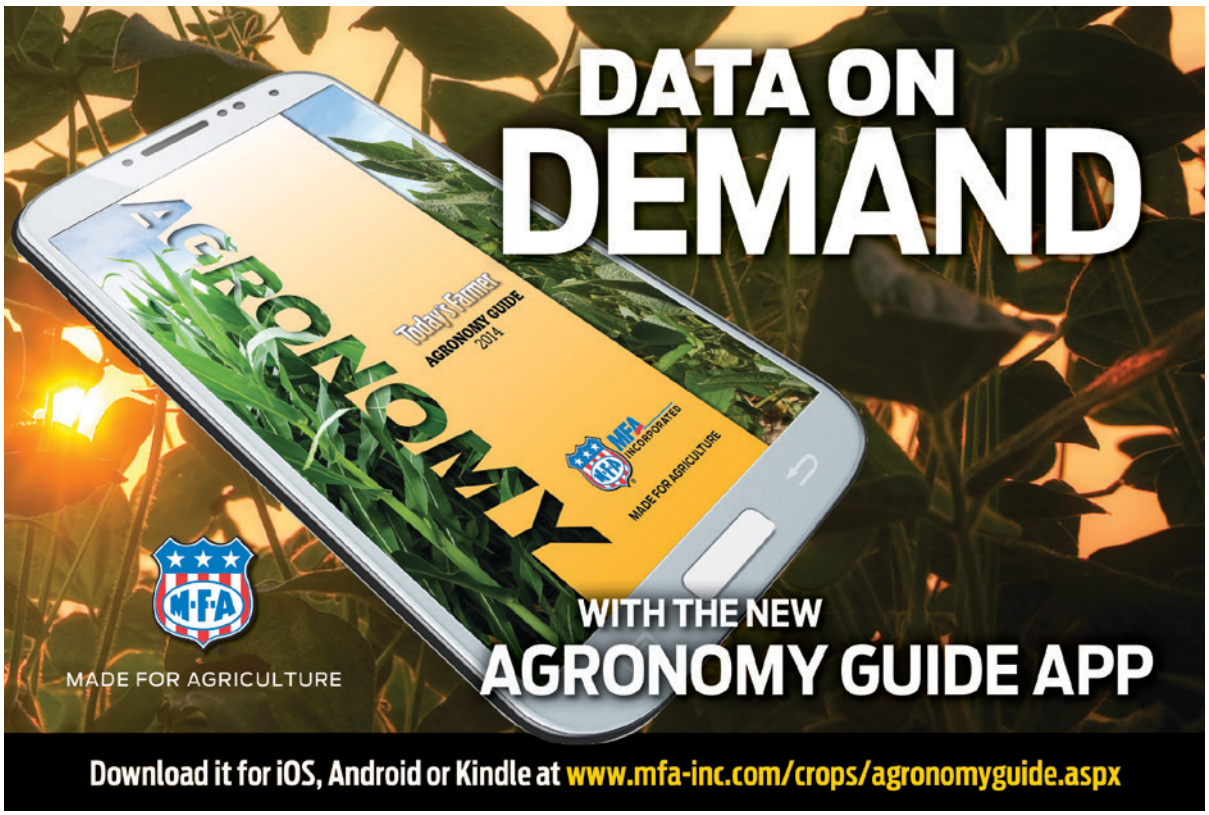
KEEP RAISING YOUR HAND
FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

says. "It's problem solving. It's making people who have absolutely no idea what you're talking about understand why that issue could potentially be a problem and why it's important to the industry. The ability to articulate a situation has become increasingly important. And, through FFA, I was exposed to public speaking, understanding an issue and being able to resolve it."

Getting and staying involved in FFA can be challenging for today's young people, Fordyce says, because they are so busy with other activities in their school, community and church. However, he advises FFA members to continually look at what's available and interesting to them.

"Keep raising your hand," Fordyce says. "Don't stay in your comfort zone. Get a little bit outside of it, because you might be surprised what you find, what you learn and the people you meet."

Director of Agriculture Richard Fordyce says he learned leadership off the farm through his experiences as an FFA member.



In Their Words

Up close with your Missouri State FFA Officers

Living to serve. This phrase from the FFA motto sounds good coming out of the mouths of thousands of FFA members, but do we really mean it? How many people truly live their lives to serve others?

ALEXA NORDWALD
State V.P., Area 15

In today's world, it is easy to get caught up in our own needs. I need that new cell phone. I need to go to this college, earn this degree, and live in this dorm. "I NEED."

In July 2014, I attended the Washington Leadership Conference. That week I whined a lot about my needs. It was hot, I was in corduroy, and I was a really long way from home. Before the week ended, I finally realized that I was worrying about the wrong needs.

On our last morning in D.C., we walked into the banquet hall just like every other morning, but this time everything looked different. Mysterious boxes were stacked from floor to ceiling and a facilitator was standing on a chair with a bull horn in the middle of the crowded room. Instructions were shouted out to us, and it suddenly became clear that we were taking part in a service project.

For just two hours, we packed boxes upon boxes of mac-and-cheese lunches to send to poverty-stricken neighborhoods. By the end of this short period of time, we had packed 70,080 meals for struggling families. More importantly, we

(continued on next page)

FFA Calendar

Missouri FFA is on the move

had made a difference for 70,080 people in what seemed like no time at all. This was the difference that 280 teenagers at the Washington Leadership Conference made in two hours. Imagine if we all made a commitment to truly begin living to serve. Imagine if we made a conscious decision to put other's needs before our own.

After WLC, I came home to a new world. When I passed the East Prairie city limit sign, opportunities to serve began popping up everywhere. I quickly realized however, that people were in need in my community all along. All I had to do was look around and find my opportunity to serve. How can you reach out and serve others?

JUNE

6-10	Missouri AgriBusiness Academy Tour — Springfield area
7-9	Public Speaking Academy — UCM, Warrensburg
9-7/19	Missouri FFA Camp Rising Sun — Kaiser
10-11	Area Officer Institute — FFA Camp Rising Sun, Kaiser
17-19	HYMAX Academy — FFA Camp Rising Sun, Kaiser

JULY

6-10	Missouri State Fair Livestock Entries Due
25-28	Missouri ACTE Conference — Springfield
28-30	Missouri Young Farmer Summer Tour — Boonville
28-8/6	Ozark Empire Fair — Springfield

AUGUST

4	The Leadership Adventure — MU Bradford Farm, Columbia
5	The Leadership Adventure — MSU Darr Center, Springfield
11-21	Missouri State Fair — Sedalia

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THE IMPACT

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

FFA members pack meals during the community service event at the 86th Indiana FFA State Convention.

SUMMER 2016

Are You Ready To AMPLIFY At the 87th Annual Indiana FFA State Convention?

June 13-16, 2016

Tuesday Evening Reflections

Hear about the biggest lessons the 2015-2016 state officers have learned this year on the steps of Hovde Hall at 9:30 pm following the First General Session.

Service Project

Make an impact fighting hunger around the world and improving the local community during the state service project on Tuesday in the Armory.

Retiring Addresses

Don't miss the 2015-2016 state officers' inspiring retiring addresses during the General Sessions all week!

Keynote Speaker

Scott McCain, renowned keynote speaker, will share his impactful message with us during the First General Session on Tuesday!

Dance

Get ready to dance the night away on Wednesday in the Purdue Memorial Union at the State FFA Dance!

Monday Night Fun Night

Relax and have fun on Monday night with food, fellowship, music, and games on the Purdue Memorial Mall.

Leadership Workshops

Boost your leadership potential by attending leadership workshops throughout convention.

National Officer

Taylor McNeil, National FFA President, hailing from Arkansas, will be delivering a keynote address during the Second General Session and presenting a leadership workshop!

KENZIE KRETZMEIER
State President

By Mason Gordon

GET THE FACTS

Birthday: November 25, 1996
Parents: John and Kristi Kretzmeier
Siblings: Clay and Carson
Hometown: Fowler, IN
FFA Chapter: Benton Central FFA
Advisor(s): Amanda Mullins, Chelsey Meluch, & Sarah (Clark)Knapp
Favorite Food: Ice Cream
Favorite Movie: Remember the Titans
Favorite Pastime: Showing Livestock
Favorite Sport: Football
Favorite Animal: Turtle
Favorite Color: Purple
Favorite Music: Classic Rock

KENZIE'S TIMELINE

Freshman Year:
- Star Greenhand
- Livestock Evaluation
- Soils Evaluation
- Chapter Meeting CDE

Sophomore Year:
- National Champion Soils Evaluation
- Livestock Evaluation
- Extemporaneous Public Speaking

Junior Year:
- Chapter Vice President
- District IV Secretary
- Livestock Evaluation
- Prepared Public Speaking

Senior Year:
- Chapter President
- District IV President
- Prepared Public Speaking
- Leadership Ambassador

FUTURE PLANS

Judge livestock at Butler Community College in El Dorado, KS for 2 years, transferring to Kansas State University to major in Ag Economics and Ag Communications.

THE TEAM VOTED KENZIE...

Most likely to overdose on peanut butter.

The thing I admire most about Kenzie is she does everything with her whole heart. No matter what the task in front of her is, big or small, she puts all of her effort into it. She has a contagious energy about everything she does, and people can't help but be influenced by her enthusiasm and drive to succeed. Her servant heart equips her to live with pride and serve with passion.

-Ann Fry, Friend

In the past four and half years, I have taught Kenzie in a number of agricultural education courses, all of which she has excelled. Based on my experience with Kenzie, I can say without a doubt that she is one of the most naturally talented and hardworking agriculture students with whom I have had the opportunity to work with.

-Ms. Amanda Mullins, FFA Advisor

To Our Owls

Mr. Ison, Mr. Carter, and Mrs. Dillon,

There aren't enough words in the English language to thank the three of you for all you've done for me. Carter: thank you for recognizing the potential in eighth grade me. I may never have found my passion for agriculture if it wasn't for you. Ison: thank you for pushing me and instilling in me a sense of adventure through our extravagant summer trips. Both of these things have taught me the importance of never settling for less than the best. Mrs. Dillon: I know you weren't really my advisor and I only truly knew you for a year. Yet, despite both of those things, you helped me more in the preparation for running for state office than you will ever know. Your nurturing, motherly demeanor and support during that time (despite not really knowing much about FFA or state office at all) meant everything in the world to me. Again, thank you all so much. I am who I am because of you.

Love always, Courtney

Mr. Ellison, Mrs. Rapp, Mrs. Dickerson, and Mrs. Begley,

All of you were selflessly dedicated to my future from the second I first met you and for that I want to say thank you! You pushed me to try my hand at forestry judging, a proficiency, the job interview contest, and teaching Agribusiness in order to grow who I was. Whenever I was frustrated, sad, or tired you helped me power through because of kind words and unforgettable gestures. I hope in my future I can be as selfless, kind, and awesome as all of you! Thank you for being my advisors, role models, and friends!

Unbelievably inspired, Joshua

Mrs. Schilling, Miss Williams, and Mr. Jacobs,

When I came to Eastern Hancock, I had no idea where I would fit in or what I would do. Thank you for helping me find my place in FFA. I would not be the person I am today without your guidance and encouragement. Miss Schilling, you may have only been my teacher for one year, but you continued to help me whenever I asked even though you had no obligation to do so. I will always remember your commitment to helping FFA members wherever you were in life. Miss Williams, I will never forget our life talks, the countless laughs, and all the adventures you took us on. You always supported me in whatever contest, project, or goal I was pursuing. I am so glad you chose to teach at Eastern Hancock. Mr. Jacobs, they say that our advisors rub off on us, and I definitely think I have retained your competitive spirit and attitude. You pushed us to strive for excellence because you knew we were capable. I hope you know all I ever wanted was to make you proud. I could not have asked for better advisors during my FFA career. You all three went above and beyond what was required. Thank you for challenging me and supporting me. Thank you for making me the person I am today.

Your grateful student, Annalee

Mrs. Furthmiller and Mr. Kimmel,

I owe all of my success in the blue jacket to both of you. Mrs. Furthmiller, you always challenged me, with an encouraging smile, to do the things I thought I couldn't do. Mr. Kimmel, you always pushed me to go out of my comfort zone and showed me how great the reward could be. I learned true servant leadership by the example you both set in your own lives. Together, you saw the potential in an awkward freshmen and for that I am eternally grateful. Thank you for always being my owls.

Changed for the better, Brett

We Say Thank You!!

Mr. Scherer and Miss Steuer,

You two are literally the best. Both of you have impacted my life in more ways than you could imagine. I have said for the past several years that Tri-County FFA is a family, and you are our loving parents. Mr. Scherer, you are always pushing us to be better than we think we are. Your dedication to your students and school is something that I have immense respect for. I am extremely grateful that you have instilled in me the knowledge that success is a journey, not a destination. Now constantly striving to do your best can be exhausting, frustrating, and just plain difficult. Thank you Miss Steuer for always being there when breakdowns ensue, ready with a hug, shoulder to cry on, or just being there to listen to me vent my exasperations. I truly cannot express how thankful I am to have the both of you.

Thank you so incredibly much, Sean

Miss Clark, Mrs. Meluch, and Miss Mullins,

You all came into my life and FFA career at different times and for different lengths, but each made an irreplaceable impact. Miss Clark, my very first advisor, thank you for taking an insecure seventh grader and showing me what true passion for an organization is. You were not only a mentor and teacher, but a true friend and confidant to your students. Mrs. Meluch, although I only had you during my freshman year, you truly helped me to see that I was capable of being independent and a leader. You let me make decisions and learn lessons from my choices, and that really helped me to become the person I am today. Miss Mullins, thank you for coming into my FFA career when I needed you the most and for pushing our chapter to new heights. You taught me to never pursue a contest without the will to win, and for showing me the importance of having confidence in myself. You've been my second mom, my shoulder to cry on, and my biggest supporter in every endeavor. I cannot say enough how appreciative I am of the love I've received from each of my advisors. You all have allowed me to grow as a student, FFA member, friend, and leader, and for that, I am forever grateful.

Eternally blessed, Kenzie

Mr. Orme, Mr. Harvey, and Miss Wicker,

I entered each of your classrooms as a young, shy student, and I exited a confident, knowledgeable leader. Each of your lessons, inside and outside of the classroom, have given me the right tools to build a successful life. I want to thank you for leading by example and showing all of your students what a true mentor looks like. I hope I can amplify the lives of my future students the way that you have amplified mine.

Forever grateful, Mason

Annalee Witte

State Secretary

By Sean Harrington

ANNALEE'S TIMELINE

Freshman Year:
- Creed Speaking
- Livestock Judging
- Freshman Prepared Public Speaking

Sophomore Year:
- Prepared Public Speaking
- Livestock Judging
- Parliamentary Procedure

Junior Year:
- Prepared Public Speaking
- Parliamentary Procedure
- Job Interview
- District VIII Reporter

Senior Year:
- 1st National Prepared Public Speaking
- Extemporaneous Public Speaking
- District VIII Secretary

GET THE FACTS

Birthday: December 13, 1996
Parents: Mike and Jana Witte
Siblings: Evan, Bella, and Nick
Hometown: Wilkinson, IN
FFA Chapter: Eastern Hancock FFA
Advisor(s): Scott Jacobs, Sarah Williams, and Natalie Schilling
Favorite Food: Velveeta Shells and Cheese with Skim Milk
Favorite Movie: Les Miserables
Favorite Pastime: Appreciating Sparkly Things
Favorite Sport: Volleyball
Favorite Animal: Elephant
Favorite Color: Pink
Favorite Music: Anything Taylor Swift

FUTURE PLANS

Attend Purdue University to study Ag Communications and Ag Marketing and Sale with a minor in Spanish.

THE TEAM VOTED ANNALEE...

Most likely to forget where she is.

Annalee is a character that is entertaining and a blessing to know. Between her love for belting Taylor Swift songs, passion for community service, and family-oriented roots, she is a friend anyone would be grateful to have. Humorous, reliable, and courageous are all characteristics that come to mind when describing the friend, family member, and state officer Annalee is. Her personality continuously shines and her smile is infectious.

-Sneha Jogi, Friend

It was a great honor to work with and get to know Annalee through classes and her participation in FFA. She constantly added a spark and enthusiasm to any activity. Even though she did borrow one of my favorite pens and lost it, never to be seen again, I am very thankful to have had Miss Witte as a student, FFA member, and right-hand person. In any endeavor she may pursue, I know it will be entrenched in her passion for agriculture and will be highly successful.

-Sarah Williams, FFA Advisor

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

OUR MEMBERS MAKE US SHINE!

By Kenzie Kretzmeier

Nathan Blume

Chapter: North Newton
Favorite CDE: Horse Evaluation
SAE(s): Poultry Production
FFA has taught me: "valuable skills and assets, such as public speaking, essay writing, & most importantly the fundamentals and workings of the agriculture industry."
Activities outside of FFA: Swim team, National Honor Society, Academic Spell Bowl, and 4-H

Micaela Anthony

Chapter: White River Valley
Favorite CDE: Creed Speaking
FFA has taught me: "better leadership and how to work with others more creatively, efficiently, and positively."
Activities outside of FFA: Softball, Volleyball, Cheer, FCA, 4-H, Band, Jr. Leaders, Spanish Club, and Riley Dance Marathon

That farmer's tan could kill you!

One of the job hazards of farming is many hours in the sun. Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States with 3.5 million cases treated each year. One of the issues with skin cancer is that more than half the lifetime does of ultraviolet (UV) radiation is received by the time you reach 20 years old. That means you need to act now to save your skin later!

When you're outside, be sure to wear sunscreen with at least a 30 SPF that is broad-spectrum. And don't forget to reapply it often. You should also wear a wide-brimmed hat and protective clothing, and don't forget sunglasses that block 100% of UVA and UVB rays.

Remember, that tan that makes you look "healthy," is anything but. Be safe!

Indiana Rural Safety & Health Council
www.farmsafety.org

Sponsor Shoutout

by Brett Roberts

We all love State Convention but none of the amazing memories would be possible without our Title Sponsor, Farm Credit Mid-America! On behalf of over 11,500 FFA members from across the state, Caitlin Myers, Owen Valley FFA, says, "Thank you Farm Credit Mid-America for sponsoring the Indiana FFA State Convention, you are helping FFA members across the state excel and grow as leaders." When asked why members should attend State Convention, Caitlin said: "I believe members all across the state should attend State Convention because it really is an amazing experience that you won't get anywhere else. You'll make new friends, see what other chapters are doing, and just have an absolute blast!"

farmCREDIT MID-AMERICA

Indiana FFA,

From the moment the final gavel tapped, we faced countless adventures. Whether it was tubing on Lake Tippecanoe during state fair retreat, traveling over 2,000 miles to over 100 chapters during district kick-offs, and taking a trip to Arkansas to learn more about Heifer International, we were able to visit nearly all 92 counties and five different states. This kind of intense travel, intense commitment, and intense schedule would not happen without some support. We would like to say thank you to all who helped make our year successful.

To the group of selfless educators who are not celebrated enough, we say thank you. This year we were forced to leave our own classrooms, but felt at home each time we entered one of yours. You gave us a pep talk when we were frustrated, medicine when we looked sick, and your couch when we looked tired. Most importantly, you gave us your years of wisdom, so that our one year of service could be amplified.

To those who have supported us since before we could walk, we say thank you. Your phone calls may have annoyed us at times, but we always knew that you were there for us when we needed it most. You may not have known exactly what we were signing up for, but never once stopped from giving us your unconditional love and support. From an early age, you taught us the importance of character, and that coupled with your example, allowed us to amplify our role as mentors.

To the group of talented FFA members who made our journey worthwhile, we say thank you. You gave us countless laughs and friendships, traveled many hours to the FFA Center to listen to the lessons we wanted to share, and opened your homes to us when we were too tired to travel any longer. When we felt like we weren't making a difference, your excitement reminded us that we were. We signed up to amplify your life, but as the year went on, our biggest surprise was how much you amplified ours.

This year was the adventure of a lifetime. We cannot believe how quickly it sped by. Without the support of advisors, our families, and FFA members, this year would not have been possible. This year has amplified our character, talents, and futures. For that we will forever be thankful.

Forever changed and always grateful,
2015-2016 Indiana FFA State Officers
Annalee, Brett, Courtney, Joshua, Kenzie, Mason, and Sean

ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION FFA

Summer 2016

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Visit us at www.illinoisffa.org

State CDE *Winners!*

Congratulations *to all of the schools which participated in these Career Development Events. Without your involvement Illinois FFA would not be what it is today. Thank you for all of the hard work and time you put in every day to make yourselves, your chapters and Illinois FFA successful. Once again, congratulations and keep up the good work!*

VET SCIENCE

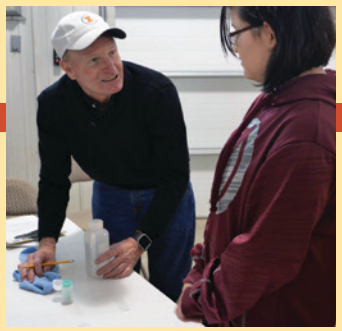
Teams

Rank	School	Score
1st Place	Clifton Central	1261
2nd Place	Tri-Point	1110
3rd Place	Edwardsville	1069

Individuals

Rank	Individual	School	Score
1st Place	Katie Malone	Tri-Point	340
2nd Place	Tony Dupuis	Clifton Central	335
3rd Place	Mara Swapp	Edwardsville	329
4th Place	Dakota Bashah	Clifton Central	317
5th Place	Logan Meier	Clifton Central	310
6th Place	Nyla Maere	Normal West	309
7th Place	Savannah Randles	Clifton Central	299
8th Place	Rebecca Harris	Metamora	296
9th Place	Samantha Koziol	Marengo	293
10th Place	Brendan Smith	Edwardsville	292

FOOD SCIENCE



Teams

Rank	School	Score
1st Place	Somonauk-Leland-Sandwich	1473
2nd Place	Iroquois West	1458
3rd Place	Streator	1376

Individuals

Rank	Individual	School	Score
1st Place	Tess Cummings	Iroquois West	332
2nd Place	Jenna Baker	Somonauk-Leland-Sandwich	329
3rd Place	Edward Vanhoose	Flora	312
4th Place	Kacie Haag	Tri-Point	302
5th Place	Amaya Demick	Clifton Central	302
6th Place	Cauy Warner	Clifton Central	298
7th Place	Macy Tippie	Iroquois West	296
8th Place	Lauren Ehlers	Tri-Point	292
9th Place	Grace Ballas	Somonauk-Leland-Sandwich	290
10th Place	Lauren Cultra	Iroquois West	290

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

TOP TWO TEAMS	Score
Amboy	842.33
Olney	831.00

TOP TWO CHAIRS	Score
West Carroll – Daniel Hartman	140.33
Farmington – Karah Thomas	138.17

TOP TWO SECRETARIES	Score
Olney – Faith Stallard	64
Farmington – Katie Stenger	63.5

TOP EIGHT FLOOR MEMBERS	Score
Amboy 5 – Zach Becker	138.17
Cissna Park 2 – Connor Kaeb	137.33
Cumberland 5 – Kendra Flood	132.83
Farmington 3 – Rosie Roberts	132.50
West Carroll 1 – Cassie Johnson	129.50
Waterloo 5– Joey Birrittier	127.50
Olney 5 – Seth Mitchel	127.33
Cumberland 2 – Penny Flood	126.83

AG COMMUNICATIONS

Winners

RANK	CATEGORY	SCHOOL/INDIVIDUAL	POINTS
1st Place	Team	Prairie Central	658.7
1st Place	Media Plan Proposal	Prairie Central	182.7
1st Place	Media Plan Presentation	Prairie Central	119
1st Place	Writer	Allison Bollmeier – Marissa	96
1st Place	Electronic Media Specialist	Clayton Blunier – Midland	86.5
1st Place	Designer	Genna Bourgeois – Waterloo	93.5

State Proficiency Awards & District Star Winners

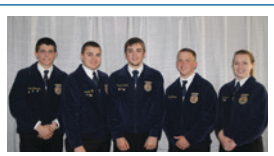
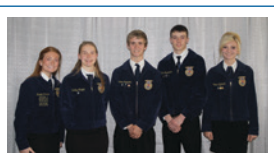
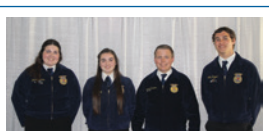
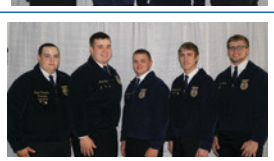
State Proficiency Awards

STATE PROFICIENCY WINNERS	DISTRICT	SECTION	STUDENT	CHAPTER
Agricultural Communications – Entrepreneurship/Placement	4	20	Kendra Flood	Cumberland
Agricultural Education - Entrepreneurship/Placement	4	19	Lauren Robison	Mulberry Grove
Agricultural Mechanical Design and Fabrication – Entrepreneurship/Placement	3	11	Ro Day	West Prairie
Agricultural Mechanics Energy Systems – Entrepreneurship/Placement	1	1	Jacob Casey	West Carroll
Agricultural Mechanics Repair and Maintenance – Entrepreneurship	5	25	John Mitchell Jr.	Galatia
Agricultural Mechanics Repair and Maintenance – Placement	5	25	Sean-Paul Trotter	Hamilton Co
Agricultural Processing – Entrepreneurship/Placement	2	9	Harmony Slagel	Prairie Central
Agricultural Sales – Entrepreneurship	2	10	Braden Ifft	Tri-Point
Agricultural Sales – Placement	1	5	Maddison Caldwell	Elmwood
Agricultural Services – Entrepreneurship/Placement	2	10	Brooke Schafer	Clifton Central
Agriscience Animal Systems Research	1	3	Courtney Wiedenmann	Orion
Agriscience Integrated Research	4	17	Maddie Fugate	Mahomet-Seymour
Agriscience Plant Systems Research	4	23	Matthew Runyon	Olney
Beef Production – Entrepreneurship	2	7	Austin Walter	Ottawa
Beef Production – Placement	1	4	Kassidy Groeper	Williamsfield
Dairy Production – Entrepreneurship	2	10	John Redeker	Cissna Park
Dairy Production – Placement	4	20	Shelby Phillips	Altamont
Diversified Agriculture Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement	1	2	Kyle Hemmersbach	Byron
Diversified Crop Production – Entrepreneurship	2	10	Jared Haberkorn	Tri-Point
Diversified Crop Production – Placement	5	21	Grace Pytlinski	Waltonville
Diversified Horticulture – Entrepreneurship/Placement	2	7	Jackie Marco	Somonauk-Leland-Sandwich
Diversified Livestock Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement	3	11	Halie Runner	West Prairie
Electrical Technology – Entrepreneurship/Placement *State Level Only	1	1	Austin Poffenberger	Eastland
Emerging Agricultural Technology – Entrepreneurship/Placement	4	16	Ben Robinson	Taylorville
Environmental Science and Natural Resources Management – Entrepreneurship/Placement	2	10	Kacie Haag	Tri-Point
Equine Science – Entrepreneurship	5	23	Emily Shilling	Olney
Equine Science – Placement	1	4	Cole Whisman	Rockridge
Fiber and/or Oil Crop Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement	5	21	Blake Hayes	Salem
Food Science and Technology – Entrepreneurship/Placement	4	16	Alec Higgason	Taylorville
Food Service – Entrepreneurship/Placement *State Level Only	1	1	Cassie Johnson	West Carroll

State Proficiency Awards, continued

STATE PROFICIENCY WINNERS	DISTRICT	SECTION	STUDENT	CHAPTER
Forage Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement	1	4	John Campbell	United
Forest Management and Products – Entrepreneurship/Placement	5	22	Seth Weymouth	Marissa
Fruit Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement	5	22	Grace Wolf	Freeburg
Goat Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement	2	10	Tess Cummings	Iroquois West
Grain Production – Entrepreneurship	3	14	Nathan Mayfield	Athens
Grain Production – Placement	2	6	Zack Witek	Indian Creek
Home and/or Community Development – Entrepreneurship/Placement	3	13	Noah Sellars	Winchester
Landscape Management – Entrepreneurship/Placement	4	16	Austin Norris	Taylorville
Nursery Operations – Entrepreneurship/Placement	3	11	Brandon Livingston	Bushnell-Prairie City
Outdoor Recreation – Entrepreneurship/Placement	2	6	Jillian Diehl	Sycamore
Poultry Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement	2	9	Andrew Larson	LeRoy
Safety – Entrepreneurship/Placement *State Level Only	1	1	Lauren Sigafus	Scales Mound
Sheep Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement	3	11	Trevor Torrance	West Prairie
Small Animal Production and Care – Entrepreneurship/Placement	2	9	Casey Engelhorn	Normal West
Specialty Animal Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement	1	5	Marshall Martin	Princeville
Specialty Crop Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement	2	7	Jacob Durdan	Woodland
Swine Production – Entrepreneurship	2	10	Allison McCullough	Clifton Central
Swine Production – Placement	4	16	Brock Burgener	Central A&M
Turf Grass Management – Entrepreneurship/Placement	4	16	Travis Winans	Taylorville
Vegetable Production - Entrepreneurship/Placement	1	1	Drew Groezinger	Stockton
Veterinary Science – Entrepreneurship/Production	5	22	Olivia Reed	Waterloo
Wildlife Production and Management – Entrepreneurship/Production	1	1	Daniel Hartman	West Carroll

District Star Winners

		DISTRICT	SECTION	STUDENT	CHAPTER
Star Ag Business		1	1	Daniel Hartman	West Carroll
		2	10	Braden Ifft	Tri-Point
		3	14	Sam Koehl	Mt. Pulaski
		4	16	Travis Winans	Taylorville
		5	21	Sarah Herrmann	Nashville
Star Ag Placement		1	5	Maddison Caldwell	Elmwood
		2	9	Ashley Harfst	Pontiac
		3	11	Brandon Livingston	Bushnell-Prairie City
		4	16	Cole Fredrickson	Maroa-Forsyth
		5	21	Grace Pytlinski	Waltonville
Star Ag Science		1	2	Ashley Cooney	Prophetstown
		2	10	Kacie Haag	Tri-Point
		3	15	Adlai Schetter	Southwestern
		4	16	Alec Higgason	Taylorville
Star Farmer		1	2	Ryan Reeverts	Byron
		2	7	Austin Walter	Ottawa
		3	11	Trevor Torrance	West Prairie
		4	19	Dominic Ruppert	Nokomis
		5	22	Colton Henry	Waterloo

Farm Bureau Youth Conference

Illinois Farm Bureau and affiliate companies have been hosting the Farm Bureau Youth Conference for the Illinois FFA for over 50 years. The Farm Bureau Youth Conference is one of the premier youth development conferences in the state of Illinois. Over those five-plus decades, this conference has helped FFA members BUILD their premier leadership potential – allowing them to grow by helping them discover pathways for career success. FFA members have the opportunity to learn how to leave their mark on the agriculture industry by attending workshops and growth sessions which help them learn how to be greater advocates for agriculture and explore career options, all while at this conference.

The Farm Bureau Youth Conference opens the door for students to start networking with

industry professionals. When students attend the Opportunity Fair, they are introduced to potential careers and job opportunities. It is a great way for FFA members to open their eyes to what the ag industry truly is all about.

Fortunately for FFA members in attendance, the Illinois Farm Bureau, Country Financial, Prairie Farms Dairy, the IAA Credit Union and GROWMARK partner up each year to make this event a true success. These organizations have a genuine interest in the future of the the agriculture industry, as well as the future of FFA and all young agricultural leaders. This year over 350 FFA members will have an opportunity to BUILD their leadership potential thanks to these great friends of the agriculture industry.

YEAR IN REVIEW

California FFA NEWS

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California FFA NEWS

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We want to hear from you...

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

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

Stay in touch... "California FFA"

STATE OFFICERS ON THE go

TRAVELS, CONFERENCES, CHAPTER VISITS & MORE...

UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY • 6-9 ROLC – Tomales Bay **8-12** State Fair Junior Livestock Show – Sacramento **17-21** State Fair Dairy Show – Sacramento **29-30** San Joaquin Region SOLC – Visalia **TBD** Superior Region SOLC **AUGUST • 12-14** San Joaquin Region Boot Camp – Camp San Luis **29** Central Region SOLC **TBD** Southern Region SOLC **VARIES** Greenhand Leadership Conferences

For a list of current FFA events please visit
www.CalAgEd.org

Lightening in the sky sparks within the blink of an eye. Similarly, it seems our year serving as state officers has occurred just as quick. Our year has been full of wonderful memories- ranging from industry tours and chapter visits to COLC's and Made For Excellence Conferences. In the last issue of California FFA News, we discussed the joy we experienced during our chapter visit season, highlighting a specific moment from each chapter. In the issue prior, we reviewed the knowledge of the agricultural industry that we gained as we ventured through industry tours, as well as the fun we had with each region during COLC's. Since then, we have facilitated Made For Excellence Conferences (MFE), toured extraordinary Supervised Agricultural Experience projects in each region, and spent our time planning for the remainder of our year. Although this year of service has gone by speedily, we look into the future, as we will "Electrify" the accomplishments of all California FFA members at the 88th State FFA Leadership Conference.

Trevor, Breanna, Tim, Joelle, Sydnie and I loved meeting over 1,600 members during the months of January and February as we facilitated eight leadership conferences geared towards sophomores in high school. These conferences, titled Made For Excellence, are geared towards second-year FFA members. At MFE, members will understand the potential within themselves that is necessary to be sucessful future leaders, while discovering their strengths and creating action plans to implement in their lives. These conferences were located at multiple locations across the state, with conferences in Sacramento, Redding, Monterey, Ontario, Modesto, and Visalia. We loved hanging out with all of you at the dance after each conference, and seeing the enthusiasm that each region had! As we ended this season, we were filled with gratitude as well as belief, as we know our communities are in good hands as long as all the bright ideas and promises made at MFE become more than just pen and paper. We are thankful for the relationships we built at each MFE.

PAGE 6
MFE & ALA Recaps

After MFE's concluded, we shifted from the leadership aspect of Agricultural Education towards industry and technical portions with Supervised Agricultural Experiences, or SAEs. Our team has traveled to each region and toured the STAR finalists for each category- Agribusiness, Ag Placement, Agriscience, and finally, STAR Farmer. At these tours, a regional finalist in each area presents their SAE to us through a visual display and a verbal dialogue about their project. It was such an honor to see such diverse projects in each category! After seeing these tours, our eyes were opened to the knowledge, labor, innovative, and dedication each finalist invested towards their projects. We left these tours feeling inspired at the impact Agricultural Education has on the agricultural industry. As members, we must always think of ways that we can grow upon our agricultural experiences and use the resources we can connect with because of our organization. How can you work towards being a STAR finalist in one of these areas?

PAGE 10
Meet the 2016
STAR Award Finalists

State Degree Ceremonies, Spring Regional Meetings, and State Conference preparations now fill our agendas. With the 88th State FFA Leadership Conference just around the corner, we are getting anxious to see every FFA member we have met this year. At State Conference, we will have two keynote speakers, including the nationally recognized Brooks Gibbs, and the author and creator of Kid President, Brad Montague. We will also have two visiting National Officers, Taylor McNeel and Nick Baker. Lastly, we will listen, sing, and dance to the country music duo, Thompson Square, on Monday night! We hope that members will leave State Conference ready to #ElectrifyFFA- giving power and energy to all aspects of agricultural education within their chapters and communities. As we prepare to head to Fresno, the State Officers have been busily working on our theme skit, scripts, and our retiring addresses. If all of these things weren't already exciting enough, it is confirmed that the 88th State Conference will have the highest number of attendees at a State Conference, ever!

Our team is beyond grateful for the experiences we've had and the relationships we have built this year. It is safe to say that because of our members, we have grown immensely and hope that we have opened doors for members to do the same. Thank you, California FFA. We will see you at the 88th State FFA Leadership Conference in Fresno! •

FEATURED CHAPTER

Fillmore FFA

Fillmore is a small town nestled below the Los Padres National Forest in the fertile farming belt of the Santa Clara River Valley in Ventura County. The local agriculture economy consists of orange, lemon, avocado orchard farming and packing houses. The Fillmore FFA chapter has continued to grow, with 165 members currently enrolled in Ag Mechanics, Agriscience, Horticulture and Ag Business courses. A partnership with the middle school includes eighth graders attending chapter meetings and planning SAE programs. Currently, the seventh grade science curriculum is now focusing on career technical education with a focus on agriculture and entrepreneurship in preparation for becoming future agriculture students at the high school. Fillmore High School with just under 1,000 students is central to this small town and plays a pivotal role in the dynamics of the community activities.

Fillmore's FFA chapter roots began in the 1930's , but it wasn't until the 1970's under the direction of the agriculture teacher, Dick Mosbarger that the program would expand to include a school farm. With the help of community support the concept of a school farm was going to become a reality. The community rallied together to pass a bond measure to purchase an 80 acre parcel of land along the Santa Clara River. Today, the farm consists of 20 production acres of oranges, lemons and avocados that are overseen by the farm manager; with additional area for crop production, greenhouse crops and the livestock facilities. The school farm provides space for plenty of student SAE's ranging from small and large livestock production to crop production with over 50 students participating in the local county fair.

Fillmore FFA is a family tradition with generations of children becoming FFA members.

Fillmore FFA takes pride in its unique relationships with the local agriculture industry that provides support to the program by opening their businesses to students for tours and providing internships. This year, the Ag Business class worked with local industry to create a 12 month calendar featuring the different agriculture industries of the Santa Clara River Valley. This small farming community has been integral in the success of the agriculture program and its growth. Additionally, Fillmore FFA alumni serve as booster and advisory committee members, own agricultural businesses in the community and also serve as local school board members.

It is this strong since of community support that has been essential to the growth of the program and the success of the students involved in FFA. Members have pride in the community which can be seen at the annual May Festival and 4th of July Pancake Breakfasts

{ Continued on page 5 }

where they greet, prepare and serve over 800 patrons. Fillmore FFA takes pride in giving back to the community. In December students help the local fire department with their chicken BBQ serving over 1,000 people and providing popcorn to all the children after they select their toy and visit Santa. Once a year, FFA members coordinate and manage the Red Cross Blood Drive on campus by promoting the positive attributes of blood donation to the students on campus.

A tradition for over 40 years has been the Fillmore FFA Tractor Contest which hails students from the South Coast and San Joaquin Regions. Students have the opportunity to get hands-on experience operating a variety of tractors. At the farm each July, Fillmore FFA hosts a livestock showmanship day inviting 4-H, Grange and other FFA members from Ventura County to compete for prizes and belt buckles while honing their showmanship skills for the county fair.

Fillmore FFA is a family tradition with generations of children becoming FFA members. It is this tradition that keeps Fillmore FFA strong. Members not only participate in community activities, they also attend state and national leadership conferences, regional and sectional speaking competitions, have sectional and regional officers, the local county fair and CDE events. Financial support for all of the events is made possible by the funds earned from the 4th of July fireworks booth operated by the FFA boosters. FFA members also find time to participate in athletic events, school clubs and rigorous courses. Next time you drive along Highway 126 past the community of Fillmore, take a turn down Central Avenue and take second look at a town that demonstrates pride in its community and the Fillmore FFA. •

Photo captions

Opposite page, clockwise starting at top:

- *Ventura County Fair Livestock exhibitors with their prizes*
- *Advanced Round Robin Winners Ventura County Fair 1st, 2nd and 3rd place*
- *MFE/ALA participants in Monterey*

This page, clockwise starting at top left:

- *Members at State Conference in Fresno*
- *Quinn-Caterpillar local sponsor for Fillmore FFA Chapter*
- *Beylik Farms industry tour in the hydroponic tomato greenhouse*
- *Fillmore FFA Tractor Driving Contest trailer backing competition.*
- *FFA members serving at the pancake breakfast*

MFE Reflections

"Let us in, Let us in, Let us in" is an all too familiar chant we yelled at the top of our lungs as we waited for the doors to open. During the months of January and February Sophomore FFA members were given the opportunity to attend the Made for Excellence Conference (MFE). I had the privilege of being selected by my agriculture teacher to travel to Visalia, California with 20 of my chapter peers to practice and learn leadership skills. We navigated through seven sessions, put on by our six State Officers, to better our self-discovery of our talents, build our strengths and weaknesses, and explore tools for personal growth. Adventure, Courage, Wisdom, and Power are words that filled the conference room as I entered to take my seat, anticipation of what was to come was tingling at my fingertips. For two days we were constantly reminded of the phrase, "Leadership is Influence". We were taught the importance of our roles as members of our region and the impact we have on others. The State Officers demonstrated action plan activities by having us "travel" through a different role of our self-character; strengths, integrity, choices, interest, and opportunities to teach our chapter members how to identify their purpose in our home community. I will never forget the phrase, "Talent plus Knowledge equals strengths". I learned that we all have hidden talents, and if we gain a little knowledge by participating, we can use that hidden talent to strengthen ourselves. The Made for Excellence Conference allows members, such as myself to develop a personal action plan for our future FFA career.

Sage Clay | Bakersfield-Frontier FFA Chapter

gustineffa 20 proud Gustine FFA members attended the Made for Excellence and Advanced Leadership Academy conferences this past weekend in Modesto. There, they learned different strategies and methods used in order to ensure they make the best out of their FFA experience. Congrats everyone! **#ffaMFE #ffaALA #GustineFFA**

ally_highfill had so much fun this weekend. It was an amazing experience getting to meet amazing people and building up my leadership qualities. Thank you State Officers for making This weekend one that I will never forget!! **#ffaMFE #squadgoals #ffalife #myffafamily**

ALA Reflections

While attending Advanced Leadership Academy I was able to dive into amazing experiences including meeting incredible people and learning new leadership skills. ALA was full of diverse members, all of which had their own ideas. I made numerous friends who live relatively close to me and some that live near the Arizona state line. Throughout the two days, I was able to create relationships with these new friends and gain ideas and opinions that I can add to my life. While attending ALA, I learned not just from the people around me, but from the conference itself. From the conference, I obtained skills necessary to better increase my leadership assets and become more of a helpful aid. These skills allow me to help my local FFA chapter in creating relationships with students who are not active members and knowing how to use their strengths and weaknesses to better their purpose. I hope to use my guidance skills to obtain a career and help others across the spectrum to achieve success. Overall ALA was an experience I will never forget and I encourage others to take this opportunity in hope that they acquire similar ideas to the ones I received.

Addissun Rice | Wildomar-Elsinore FFA Chapter

poway_ffa *And we are back in Poway!!! This has been such an amazing trip! Getting to know new people from different chapters and learning our own strengths and goals that we hope to brig back to our own chapter. Thank* **#ffaMFE** *its been fun!*

tulareffa *To kick off FFA Week, Tulare attended* **#ffaMFE** *and* **#ffaALA**, *where they gained skills to improve themselves as leaders and our chapter as a whole.* **#tulareffaweek**

deafbabe1234 *I had such a blast at* **#ffaMFE** *I'll definitely share my knowledge back at Vtec but I learned many good skills and things I didn't realized I was capable of, overall I had a great time at* **#ffaMFE**

Chapter Scoops

TOMALES FFA
Friends of Ag

Submitted by Jeanette Furlong

Tomales FFA is very lucky to have many local businesses support our chapter, so we can achieve all of our goals, and attend the conferences that we do! To show our appreciation each year, Tomales FFA hosts a Friends of Ag Dinner, where we provide dinner, a live auction, silent auction, and many other fun activities for our supporters to enjoy! Our officer team worked on some of the finer aspects of the event. Each officer was assigned different places to hang informational posters about the event, and a separate list to gather donations for our silent and live auctions! As the day of the event quickly approached, our officer team took two whole days to prepare the hall that we would be using. The night of the event as our advisor walked around the room, he heard nothing but fabulous comments about this year's dinner. We hope that next year, we can expand the amount of people that come, and raise additional funds for our up and coming school farm.

CERES-CENTRAL VALLEY FFA
FFA Week Fun

Submitted by Alondra Gonzalez

February 22-26, Central Valley FFA students celebrated National FFA Week. Students started off their celebration on Monday, February 22 with a sports day dress-up and were given the opportunity to showcase their strength at the lunchtime strongman competition. The next day students showed their staff appreciation by helping out at the staff breakfast in their professional dress attire. Later that day students attended the grass ski race at lunch and learned some cool, new dance moves. February 24 students dressed up in superhero attire and prepared to face off in several minute-to-win-it games during lunchtime. The next day students dressed in western wear and were invited to a special FFA member lunch where they socialized while feasting on hot dogs. Central Valley FFA students finished off the week in either their FFA or school spirit attire while watching the grand finale - a tractor pull at lunch. National FFA week for Central Valley FFA students was an overall success!

Your Chapter **FFA**

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

1) Submit a 100-150 word article about your chapter's recent activity.

a. Please do not include members or advisors names within the article.

b. The article should be about an interesting/unique type of FFA activity. This is an opportunity to showcase new and innovative chapter activities.

2) Attach a GREAT quality digital photo.

a. Photos should be in color and help further explain the submitted article.

b. Photos must include members with appropriate clothing & behavior.

c. Photos must be sent as individual jpeg files.

3) Email the above information to news@californiaffa.org.

The subject of the email must include your chapter's name. In the email, please include the author of the chapter scoop and title of the article.

4) Please reference page two for CA FFA News Submission Deadlines

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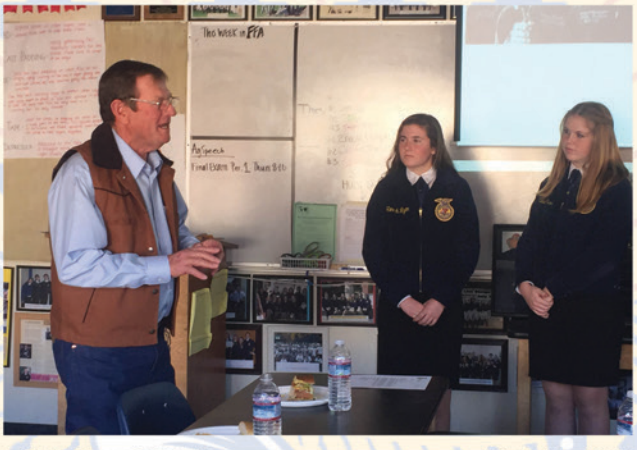
the FFA LEGACY

San Luis Obispo FFA Chapter honored with donated jacket of 1962 National Vice President, Jerry Diefenderfer.



Founded on tradition, service and leadership, the National FFA Organization has been a voice for the agriculture industry for nearly a century. Although the San Luis Obispo FFA chapter is made up of only 300 members, out of the total 620,000 members nationwide, we have pride in our chapter's traditions and the members before us–those who paved a pathway for growth and leadership. We felt honored when Mr. Jerry Diefenderfer contacted us and wanted to donate his jacket. The jacket serves as a symbol of pride, honor and memories embedded within the blue and gold corduroy.

Mr. Diefenderfer served a State Sentinel in 1960, and State President the following year. He continued his agricultural pursuit in 1962, when he served a National Vice President representing the Western Region. He is a true example of what it means to be FFA Proud, shown through his countless years of service. We recognized him as an influential member that inspired thousands of members as he traveled across the nation, and as he stood before our chapter officer team, administrators, and students, with the same enthusiasm while he spoke of his experience and the pride he has in his jacket. He spoke of the opportunities that FFA provided for his adult life and career, encouraging our members as they look to the future, choosing pathways and majors in the agriculture industry.

Mr. Diefenderfer is a true example of what it means to be FFA Proud, shown through his countless years of service.

The walls of the agriculture classrooms are filled with plaques, pictures and banners, documenting the memories of our foundation that we do not want to forget. Throughout our years we have had many jackets donated for students to use as the begin their agriculture journey, and few we have put in shadow boxes, such as Past State Officers, Carey Galliani and Kenna Lewis. Along with the other jackets that have honored our chapter, Mr. Diefenderfer's jacket is a symbol that will be remembered far longer than those blue ribbons and silver bowls. It is truly an honor that Mr. Diefenderfer's jacket will be amongst the jackets that will forever stay on the wall as a legacy of his pursuits, dedication and pride of the National FFA Organization and the agriculture industry. •

He spoke of the opportunities that FFA provided for his adult life and career, encouraging our members as they look to the future, choosing pathways and majors in the agriculture industry.

Meet the 'STARS' of California FFA

STAR IN AGRI-BUSINESS • Recognizes a member with the best non-production entrepreneurial agribusiness SAE and proven leadership skills. The highest achievement for a person pursuing a career in agribusiness.

STAR IN AGRISCIENCE • An SAE program in which the student is actively engaged in agriscience research and experimentation. This includes students who are actively engaged in doing their own research individually, as well as those who may be cooperating on research projects with others. The students must be actively involved in the development of the experimental design, collection of data, interpretation of the data and publicizing the results to be considered.

STAR FARMER • Considered the highest recognition for an aspiring young farmer, the award recognizes achievement in both career and leadership development.

STAR IN AGRICULTURAL PLACEMENT • Recognizing the best placement SAE program including paid labor hours or directed laboratory unpaid labor hours and proven leadership skills.

STAR AGRI-BUSINESS AWARD REGIONAL FINALISTS:

Mitchell Gander • NICOLAUS - EAST NICOLAUS

In 2009, I started out growing pumpkins on a 50' x 50' plot of land, which I grew for my family. In the following years, I expanded to eventually grow ½ acre. In 2014, I grew a ½ acre patch at my home and ½ acre patch at my school as my senior project. It helped me to understand that when growing any agricultural commodity, one cannot just plant a seed and watch it grow. A healthy crop needs proper care, watering, and nurturing. The pumpkins that I grew at home, I sold door-to-door. I also secured a contract with Whole Foods Marked in Roseville, CA and Davis, CA. From the ½ acre pumpkin patch at my high school, I invited the preschool and kindergarten classes from the local schools to visit and choose a free pumpkin while educating them about sustainable farming practices. The remainder of the pumpkins at the high school plot were sold to public, the community, as well as donated. The sales from my high school plot were donated to the local public pool to ensure that it would be open for the community next summer. Through producing pumpkins, I learned how to manage my project's income and expenses.

Caine Valdez • SOLEDAD

My SAE project in the area of turf management was the heavy influence by my grandparents. With the foreclosures and the California drought, many homes where in need of yard make over. Seeing there was a need for basic low cost lawn care I started Caine's Lawn Mowing Service. My motto is "If it ain't green, it's dead". My grandparents loaned me the equipment for my lawn service; a weedwacker and a lawn mower. With no means of transportation, I stayed within a four-block radius of my house for possible clients. I went up to homes whose yards were in dire straights asking if the homeowner could use my services. Many doors closed in my face, but four opened and invited me to make their yards green again. My lawn service consists of mowing, edging, and cleanup of the grass trimmings. I improved my skills in customer service, budgeting, time management, marketing promotion, and knowledge of drought lawn care. This year I have purchased a new leaf blower and I am working with my grandpa on learning proper maintenance and servicing of my lawn equipment. Today Caine Lawn Service covers a mile radius.

Isabella Evans • FALLBROOK

A year ago I started working for a local specialty vegetable/nursery called Diane's Botanical Herbs and Vegetable Shanty. The owner has taught me how to work with herbs and make all-natural supplements, this experience helped me realized I enjoyed working with all natural products, and I decided to create my own business. After starting off with a few products; white sage bundles, rosemary topiaries, lavender sachets, and fire sticks, I decided to expand and create wreaths and potpourri. Originally, I sold the wreaths online and thought that I would only sell the 25 wreaths I made, however within two months I sold about 150 wreaths. I have designed the price point to be customer friendly and sell at an appropriate price to cover my cost per unit. Aside from face to face selling of products at farmer's markets and craft fairs, I have sold a significant inventory to local businesses. Currently, I have established relationships with nine businesses in the area that are either selling products or providing me with raw products to incorporate into my finished products. Building relationships has been the key to my business's success.

Nitin Gupta • TULARE

I own and operate my own business, Simple Sand. Simple Sand was an idea that was designed my freshman year of high school in an effort to remove a large sand pile from my family's walnut orchard. I took ownership of the 25,000 yards of sand as I entered into high school, and began marketing it to dairy farmers for use as bedding, mixing for concrete bases, flooring media base at a local therapy horse ranch, and for sand driveways. I am responsible for the day-to-day operation and care of my project and have invested hours in making customer contacts and marketing. At the beginning of my project I determined the quality and type of sand available. With this knowledge, I did research and talked to various people about the uses of the sand that I had. I then research companies who use sand and give them a call to see if they need my product. If the company needs sand I get an estimated quantity of the sand needed and schedule an in-person meeting with a representative from that company. I have also seen a need for trucking sand for clients, and have contacted a third party trucking service to truck sand for me.

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THE 2016 REGIONAL 'STAR' FINALISTS IN AGRI-BUSINESS, AGRISCIENCE, FARMER AND PLACEMENT SHARE THEIR SAE EXPERIENCES

STAR AGRISCIENCE AWARD REGIONAL FINALISTS:

Halley Jane Lauchland • LODI

I started my SAE research to find an efficient treatment method control a disease prevalent in winegrapes, Eutypa Dieback (Dead Arm). Eutypa is a fungal spore that is carried through the air and enters the vine through pruning wounds, decreasing production and killing the vine. Infections are chronic and spread throughout the vineyard, resulting in the entire vineyard eventually needing to be replanted. Growers incur high costs of replanting vineyards, and then allow for the time necessary for replanted vines to come into production. It is important that vines are producing to their fullest and not further spreading Eutypa. Finding a solution is essential to successful and sustainable farming. My agriscience research was to test cane-pruning, an aggressive pruning technique that would result in a more viable method of disease removal. I selected twelve 18-year-old Cabernet Franc vines with a history of Eutypa and conducted a two-year comparative study using that plot. Each winter, dead-arm symptoms were removed using the cane-pruning method on six of the vines, while the other six vines showed evidence of the disease's progression after being traditionally spur-pruned. In September the grapes were harvested, and bunches counted and weighed to determine which pruning method was most efficient in removing Eutypa Dieback.

Sammie Poldervaart • HAMILTON - HAMILTON CITY

In the area of genetics, I have spent many hours with my dad and a representative from Zoetis. I help with the sampling of the ear from the calves at the dairy to be sent to a lab for genetic testing. After about a month the results back and show many different areas which help us decide what is best for each heifer in terms of breeding, net merit, milk production, body type, and the probability of illness. With these results, my dad and I choose the bottom 20 from the herd and send them to the auction. After we take out the bottom 20, we look at the current results and decide on how to improve these heifer's offspring through breeding. We compare their genetic results with the genetic results of an AI bull and pick which is our best option to better the offspring.

Cody James Ruiz • KING CITY

My SAE program included growing iceberg lettuce and infecting it with Sclerotinia, a fungal disease that causes root rot and leaf drop. This disease has created problems for the lettuce farmers in the Salinas Valley and the pesticides that effectively worked to treat the disease became illegal. It was my intention to try to find an environmentally safe option beginning with regular household items. I learned the fungus lives in the soil, which makes it difficult to control once a field has been infected. To infect health plants I took infected leaves and planted them with the seeds. Plants grew healthy for the first couple weeks, then quickly began to show signs of infection, at this time that I began applying different household items to try to treat the fungus. I treated half of the plants with vinegar and was encouraged to see those plants stay healthy for a longer period of time before succumbing to the disease; I later realized that the life cycle for the disease had not yet started. I moved to detergent and then baking soda and found the same results. I was disappointed to determine that none of those items could treat the fungi.

Tyler Mellott • LAKESIDE - EL CAPITAN

My SAE in argiscience was a two-year study of the effectiveness of regular soap, antibacterial soap, and hand sanitizer in reducing bacterial counts. The first experiment had forty subjects who made three plates each with an unwashed hand, a hand washed with regular soap, and a hand washed with hand sanitizer after handling raw chicken. The plates were incubated and bacteria colonies were analyzed over a five-day period. The goal was to find out if the use of hand sanitizer decreased the risk of foodborne illness by decreasing the number of bacteria on workers' hands compared to regular soap and water. The experiment showed hand sanitizer was more effective than regular soap. The second experiment had 35 subjects who made six plates each with an unwashed hand, a washed finger with l-Lactic acid antibacterial soap, another finger with Benzenecarbonyl chloride antibacterial soap, another finger with regular soap, and another finger with hand sanitizer. The plates were incubated and analyzed for five days. This experiment showed that antibacterial soap with the active ingredient l-Lactic acid eliminated the most amounts of bacteria. From these experiments I have learned how to produce a successful experiment, gained knowledge about microbiology and the uses of different cleansing agents.

Wade Sousa • TULARE

My agriscience SAE experiments have been Maternal Colostrum vs Colostrum Re-Placer and Morbidity and Mortality Rates Based on Stress Levels in Dairy Calves. The information from these experiments were designed to help dairy farmers determine if maternal colostrum is more efficient and economical for calves and determine if increased stress levels could affect morbidity and mortality rates in calves. I conducted both research projects at Casa Blanca Cattle Company in Tipton, CA, our family's dairy heifer calf raising facility where we raise on average around 2,000 calves at a time. I decided to conduct these experiments in order to provide legitimate science-based information to our dairy farming operation and other local dairymen. Morbidity and Mortality rates can be a big problem in dairy herds. There are thousands of pathogens in a dairy cow's environment that a newborn calf is unable to handle, costing dairymen money on treatment and labor. Calf raising is the most critical component on the dairy farm, disease prevention should start with observing stress levels and comparing that to the calf's environment. This could help dairymen determine what factors may decrease immune response as a result of stress.

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LIVE OAK FFA
Donkey Basketball Tradition Returns

Submitted by Shelby Foster

On March 8 our FFA chapter brought back Donkey Basketball, an event we haven't hosted in over twenty years. This is an event that not only brought our chapter, but our entire community together. For this event we invited our middle, elementary, and high school staff members to join us in some friendly competition. This event was hosted in our high school gym with a little more than 250 friends and family members in attendance. In this game students and staff tried playing basketball while riding a donkey. This super fun event brought laughter and good times that we will cherish, with our own high school staff placing first! FFA students are confident they will gain victory next year and are looking forward bring back our beloved tradition.

MERCED FFA
A GLC Experience Unlike Any Other

Submitted by Kathy Moua

My experience at the FFA Greenhand Leadership Conference was an experience like none other. Before I got involved with FFA, I had no clue whatsoever about the organization. My plan was just to experience new things and get involved. When our chapter got there, we were instructed to go inside of a building. Inside the building, there were many other students from different chapters. The idea of meeting new people really excited me. The casting directors were amazing. They were all bursting with energy which I thought was good because you can feel the passion in them. We were assigned to each of the casting directors, depending on the color of our wristband. Our team leader did an amazing job at specifying further details about FFA. Throughout the day, we did various activities with each of the casting directors. Everyone of them talked a little about Ag Education including FFA leadership skills, SAE projects, traveling, etc. At the end of the day, I believe we all learned something and left with a different perspective of FFA. The Greenhand Leadership Conference was incredible. Our chapter, Merced FFA, has really helped me grow and gain more confidence in myself. I would like to thank them and spread my experience with others as well. They open their arms out to anyone. I will continue to stick with FFA, until I've reached my goal and that is receiving the American degree.

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Cal Ag Plate

LICENSE PLATE FUNDS CONTINUE TO BENEFIT CALIFORNIA FFA

Is your plate FFA friendly?

If you still haven't registered for your CalAgPlate, you can purchase a plate at:

www.CalAgPlate.com

MORRO BAY FFA
Greenhand Initiation Morro Bay FFA Style

Submitted by Autumn Boyd

At our annual Morro Bay High School FFA Greenhand banquet we do things a little differently initiating our Greenhands each year. We have the classic Greenhand Degree Ceremony and serve dinner to all of our new members and their families, but after dinner is when the fun and chaos begins! Our Chapter Officers lead our unsuspecting Greenhands out to our school farm located behind the campus where we recreate a military style obstacle course. This year's course consisted of sliding into a giant pit full of cooking oil and pine shavings, then an army crawl through dirt and "snowing" flour, followed by a sticky pass over a tarp raining down pancake syrup! This exciting event is filled with laughter and muck and introduces our new chapter members into the often light hearted and high spirited world of the Morro Bay FFA by creating one of their first fun-filled memories with us. Even though life can become "messy" or "sticky" we always find a way to have fun and stay connected as a chapter!

OROVILLE-LAS PLUMAS FFA
FFA Pride

Submitted by Jenna Maturino

The FFA has been and will continue to be a huge part of many members' lives within our chapter as well as nationwide. It has helped each member grow substantially and find a place they call home on the Las Plumas High campus. In honor to show the love and support for FFA, the Las Plumas FFA Chapter participated in FFA Week, a week dedicated to show the pride that members have for their organization nationwide. Las Plumas participated in this week by having dress up days, lunch time activities, and then a barn dance Friday night. What was extra special about our week is that we included chapters from Redding, Lincoln, Gridley, Wheatland, and Live Oak in our barn dance and were able to connect with FFA members to show our support for the National FFA week celebration.

BAKERSFIELD-NORTH FFA
Zumba Meeting

Submitted by Daniel Moreno

Promoting healthy lifestyles was a goal set by the North-Bakersfield FFA chapter officer team at the start of the year. To show members that being healthy can also be fun, we hosted our first Zumba Workout meeting! We had a certified Zumba instructor lead us in learning some great dances moves to stay fit. Over 80 members attended and dressed in their best 90's workout attire! At the end of the night everyone was tired, but felt so much better about themselves and even more energized than when they first entered the room.

SOLEDAD FFA
Record Membership

Submitted by Angelita Cisneros

As Career Technical Education is getting a facelift across the state of California, Ag Education programs are booming! This year, our FFA chapter has grown exponentially to all time record numbers! In our small, single high school district, approximately a third of the student body is involved in FFA and 90 students are taking livestock to our local fair in the Salinas Valley making our chapter the highest in exhibitors. With the new classes that are being offered, fun FFA meetings and strong participation in Career Development Events, our Agriculture Academy has the ability to meet the diverse needs of many students.•

STAR FARMER AWARD REGIONAL FINALISTS:

Emily Brewer • KING CITY

My SAE focuses on beef production, but also includes sheep production, especially in the market and breeding beef areas. My SAE this year includes four market beef and seven breeding beef. It includes learning responsibility of an animal, how to feed, groom, and tame animals for show, and also how to get involved in the industry. I started in the business when I was nine, and began to show market steers at my county and state fairs. I soon got into breeding beef and showing them as well. I then began to breed those heifers and market the calves. My operation has continued the same way to this day. I use the most modern and effective practices available, such as different feed supplements and grooming supplies, to produce the highest quality beef product for consumers. I am always looking for new things to try to produce as high of a quality product as I possibly can. I also participate in the Farm Day my county fair holds annually and I speak to the public about my animals and what I do every day in this SAE. My everyday tasks include taking care of my animals and keeping them healthy, presentable, and comfortably stress-free.

Emily Nunez • HEALDSBURG

My SAE includes market and breeding beef cattle, market and breeding rabbits, market swine, and market goats. From my first year of 4-H raising three market hogs, I knew that livestock was not just a hobby but a way of life. My freshman year I began FFA with a market hog, market steer, and raising market and breeding rabbits. I decided I wanted to expand my SAE projects to include breeding cattle. In the last three years I have purchased two beef heifers to produce my own cattle. When I purchased my first heifer, I began showing her at jackpots and fairs and found myself in the champion drive at many shows. I was excited when I selected the bull to artificially inseminate her to. I have since increased my herd, flushed my first heifer for embryos, and bred all my heifers via AI. I continue to breed and sell market rabbits for youth. Being able to produce my own herd has motivated me to continue growing each year and major in Animal Science Nutrition in college. Raising such a diverse group of species has allowed me to learn specific skills and common skills needed by all species, such as responsibility and time management.

Andrea Thomas • COLUSA

I raise hogs, cattle, hay, and put on ag educational events for my SAE. I have had as many as three sows in production for show hogs to sell to 4-H and FFA members and feeder hogs for the local butcher market, as well as raising and exhibiting market hogs. For my swine project I have done the boar collecting, AI, farrowing, processing of piglets, and marketing of my product. I also have commercial cows to produce calves for the feeder calf market, and I've added to the herd by keeping two heifer calves. As part of my beef project I am responsible for pasture and fence maintenance, irrigation of the summer pasture, working the herd, and processing calves each winter. I am in a partnership with my dad on 154 acres of alfalfa and oat hay in Williams. I provide most of the labor and share in management and marketing. Before planting the alfalfa I grew a winter wheat crop and oat hay and grass hay on five acres at the school farm the past four years. I have been responsible for ground preparation, disking and rolling fields, irrigation checks and running the swather and rake. Finally, I put on Livestock Skill-A-Thon contests and showmanship clinics for 4-H and FFA members.

Adriana Coonce • PHELAN - SERRANO

Over the past four years I have raised breeding and market sheep and breeding and market swine. Wanting to expand, I decided to raise market beef and start growing grains to feed to my livestock and sell to others. I have had the great opportunity to expand my knowledge further in the area of animal nutrition because of these projects that I take pride in. Raising my swine and sheep has offered me a lot of knowledge and experiences that I had to further my education and skills. I currently have 15 sows, a boar, five ewes, a ram, two steers, half acre of corn, and an acre and a half of barley that I maintain. My freshman year my dad would have to help me do everything, now I am running the barns and telling him what needs to be done. I also have my younger brother that assists me with the care of my stock, and I get the opportunity to teach him. Some of the responsibilities that I have to complete on a daily basis include: feeding, veterinarian practices, farrowing, castration, nutrition, genetics selection, assist in farrowing and lambing, seed, fertilizer application and pest control with my crops, and general care and maintenance of all projects.

Kent Norman • RIPON

The past three years I have grown wheat on acreage leased from Robert Norman Farms, increasing my acreage from 10 to 46 acres. My interest wheat production came around 10-years old when I helped my father on the farm. Upon entering high school I leased my own land to grow wheat through Robert Norman Farms who also offered the equipment necessary for production. Our rental agreement allows me to pay for the equipment and land use after harvest and receipt of income from the crop. The project began with setting up the field for planting and irrigation by a furrowing implement and utilizing a GPS system to create the straightest furrows, maximizing the total number of beds and furrows, which increased ideal planting conditions. I then watched the weather forecast to gauge the soil's moisture level to provide the optimal germination rate. I calibrated the grain drill, to plant 150 lbs. per acre; less would lower the yield and too much would create plant crowding. I irrigated the wheat twice due to the drought conditions. Once the wheat met the required moisture level, I set the cylinder on the combine to the correct setting to not damage the kernels while harvesting.

Mark Cavallero • MADERA

My SAE projects are growing and harvesting grapes that I sell to Constellation Wines for champagne and almonds to sell to Holland Nut Company. As early at sixth grade I would help my dad in the orchard and vineyard after school and on weekends with odd jobs. As I got older my jobs increased and I learned the things to have a successful orchard and vineyard in the future. I inherited ten acres of grapes from my grandfather when he passed; he wanted me to be involved in the family business. While I have always worked in the vineyard and orchard with my family, I started to manage my own acreage six years ago when I rented ten acres of almonds and began to grow my own business in addition to grapes. My first year was rough, allowing me to see the management side versus the worker side of my operation. Now that I'm eighteen I make all decisions for my project. I have continued my vineyards' productivity and grown my almond acreage by renting more acres of mature almonds, and developing long term leases to plant young trees. I am excited to continue growing my business and I plan to purchase the land I now rent.

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STAR AGRICULTURAL PLACEMENT AWARD REGIONAL FINALISTS:

Jacob Eyraud • POWAY

My SAE is a position as a yard worker and delivery serviceman at California Firewood, a supplier of firewood to homeowners and businesses throughout San Diego County. My position allows me to locate trees to be removed, break down trees, recognize the cause of tree decline, identifying different varieties and qualities of wood, and many other aspects of the business. The business has found a niche reselling wood from trees that are removed at a homeowners request or because they are a hazard to residential homes and trees located in a forest with high fire danger due to the drought. This position has given me technical knowledge of forest products, how different woods produce different amounts of heat, the effect that different woods have on structures like chimneys and wood burning stoves, and the experience of working with people of different cultures, ages, and economic status. My bilingual skills have helped me to connect and service the large Latino culture in San Diego County. I have also learned the benefits of knowing my limits by listening to my body and keeping my well-being in mind, thus making myself the most efficient worker I can be.

Matthew Umbarger • KING CITY

My SAE is working at New Holland Coastal Tractor Company where I preform repairs on tractors that are either warranted or are paid to be repaired. My job also consists of sweeping the shop, cleaning parts, maintenance of the shop/store and any tractors that are due for servicing, programming harvester GPS systems, and pressure washing the protective coating on the harvesters. I am also trusted to deliver all tractor parts or items that are away from the shop mainly to local businesses and farms. and repair any tractors that are located within our company's range. My greatest challenge in this are of work was at first not knowing anything about the tractors internal parts such as a radiator, oil reservoir, oil filter, driveline, etc., but after working with the manager of the shop, he was able to teach me along the way what exactly every part and item of the tractor was. Being a part of the FFA Farm Power and Machinery Team has also helped me gain knowledge that is needed for me to move up in my range of work at the shop. After learning these items and parts I am now able to work efficiently and independently.

Anthony Klisura • HEALDSBURG

I was first exposed to the dairy industry when in fifth grade my mother married my stepdad, John Bucher. John is the owner of Bucher Farms in Healdsburg, which consists of both wine grape vineyards and an organic dairy. Since my first exposure I remember waking up at 5:00 am to watch John artificially inseminate the cows, feed, assist in parturition, and decide which heifers would become part of our family's herd. Since then, my experiences have grown. Now my typical workweek includes feeding calves, heifers and cows, palpating cows for pregnancy, cleaning free stall barns and calf hutches, and performing maintenance on various pieces of equipment. My favorite aspect of working at the dairy is performing artificial insemination and preg-checking cows. Since acquiring a job at Bucher Dairy as a freshman I have developed a passion for the dairy industry and hope to return to the dairy after college to begin the transition of taking over. I would like to continue the family tradition while making improvements to our current practices. My work experience is related to the proficiency area because of the skills and tasks that I do on a daily basis at the dairy.

Kaleah Bese • MERCED - GOLDEN VALLEY

Nestled on 30 acres in between the towns of Merced and Planada, Hullana Farms originated in the 1940s as a family based Agriculture Sales entity which got its start attending San Francisco Farmers Markets on a weekly basis to market their locally grown produce. I grew up attending these markets with my grandfather and as my grandparents slowed down in energy, they needed the extra help to stock and market the produce. As I obtained more knowledge and appreciation, my love for agriculture flourished even more and still I attend every weekend to lead the family business. Currently, I grow many various types of specialty vegetables that include squash, bell peppers, chilies, Korean based products, and sweet potatoes. In addition, my project also encompasses the production of various fruits and melons that include yellow watermelon, red watermelon, orange watermelon, cantaloupe, Korean melon Ambrosia melon, Sharlyn melon, guava melon, Canary melon, orange honeydew, green honeydew, Kadota figs, and Black Mission figs. Throughout the years, I have been able to help establish new irrigation techniques that will allow for higher efficiency. The operation, since the beginning, has grown and marketed 100% of the harvested crop.

Paul Barcellos • TULARE

My SAE project is working at Cain Trucking as a foreman in their Composting and Air Pollution Control Operations. In the composting operation we recycle cow manure into effective compost providing the option to mix in special nutrients requested by farmers, based on their soil test, to provide a product that best suits their needs. In the Air Pollution Control Operation, oil is sprayed on asphalt and dirt roads to keep dust from reducing the air quality, helping farming operations prevent fines and pollution. Since this is a family operation I have had the opportunity to work a lot of hours where I have gained a knowledge and appreciation for both recycling agriculture products and preventing air pollution. To gain the knowledge of the company's compost operation and to perform basic duties was not enough for me so I began working my way up the ladder of the success. I was not allowed more responsibility until I could demonstrate my mastery of my current duties. My goal is to manage and gain the necessary knowledge and skill to be successful at making compost and managing the operations. Each day I work I look forward to solving the management challenges that present themselves.

Gus Macy • TULELAKE

My SAE project is working for my family's company, "Macy's Flying Service". Macy's was founded by my grandparents in 1965 and services the needs of the growers by providing a full line of agricultural chemicals and fertilizers to be applied by air or ground, depending on the grower's preference. Since my employment in 2013 my mornings start before sunrise at the shop where I organize and prepare the chemicals the crop dusters will need for the spraying. I am ready and prepared to quickly refuel the aircrafts because the longer that the aircraft sits on the ground the less chemical we are applying. Another responsibility I have is delivering fertilizer tanks to fields to be used to apply fertilizer through a process called chemigation. There is a lot of pre-checking with these tanks because a leaking tank is not good for the environment or the production farm ground and leaked chemicals are lost money that cannot be recovered. My experience working with Macy's Flying Service has led me to pursue a career in the agricultural aviation industry. I have currently logged over ten hours of flight time towards obtaining my pilot's license and expect to have my license by the time I graduate high school. •

by Colton Paoletti
Galt-Liberty Ranch FFA Chapter

From March 8 to 11, sixty seniors from across California had the opportunity to participate in the Sacramento Leadership Experience. I, along with four others in my chapter had the honor of being chosen to act as mock legislators for the week. I was given the title of Assembly Member Paoletti of District 21.

After a day focused heavily on how a bill becomes a law, political parties, and the overall workings of the legislative branch of government we were ready to begin. Both the senate and assembly first met as committees where they were able to make amendments to the proposed bills and debate the issues. Though the various committee meetings were engaging and informative the highlight of the conference was debating on the assembly and senate floor.

SLE was by far the most educational and inspiring event that I have participated in through the FFA. The conference was far more than just learning the workings of government and how to better advocate for agriculture. It led me to the realization that there is hope for the future. All sixty of us were instilled the idea that we could make a significant difference if we work hard to achieve something. Now imagine for a moment those sixty members sharing that idea with the 83,000 members of the state association. I realize now that we have the power to change the world around us for the better. That gives me hope.

by Wesley Woolery
McArthur Fall River FFA Chapter

Every year California FFA seniors apply to attend Sacramento Leadership Experience (SLE), this year there were over one hundred twenty students who applied and sixty got the chance to attend. SLE is the capstone leadership conference for California FFA, during the four days while at the state capitol the attendees stepped into the shoes of a state legislature as either a state senator or state assemblymember. They are assigned a district to represent its constituents while proposing, debating, and amending four different omnibus bills. This year the senators and assemblymembers proposed agriculture, food, education, and environment omnibus bills. During the conference FFA members got the chance to listen to state legislatures share their daily duties. Most attendees say that their most memorable moment during SLE is having the opportunity to sit in the California Senate and Assembly Chambers and debate the bills that were proposed. This once in a lifetime experience opens the eyes of California FFA members of how legislation moves through our government and the importance of living to serve.

SLE Recap

FFA Street Beat

Include #FFANews to be noticed for the next edition

Tz_davis *1313Last week I had the time of my life at SLE!! Thank you to the counselors at the conference for teaching me the importance of our government and how I can make a difference advocating for agriculture and FFA.* ***#ffasle #ffa #californiaffa #foreverblue***

hannahceciliajones *Beyond blessed to have been able to attend the* ***#ffaSLE*** *conference. From studying our bills to creating grand old party schemes it was on overall amazing experience at the Capital.* ***#horsemeatanyone #majesticmoments***

lukeoleary *"The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things." - Ronald Reagan* ***#ffaSLE***

kimberlydstrom *Such a great quote!*