



NEW

Summer 2019

HORIZONS

**PROGRESS IN
PUERTO RICO
CHAPTERS
REBUILD AFTER
HURRICANE MARIA**

**STUDENTS IN
PENNSYLVANIA
BUILD
ELEPHANT
FEEDERS**

**LET
THEM
EAT
HAY!**

**THE
AND OF
CLIMATE
CHANGE**



VIVA PUERTO RICO!

In September 2017, Hurricane Maria ripped across the island of Puerto Rico causing catastrophic damage and numerous fatalities. It was regarded as the worst natural disaster on record in Puerto Rico, and residents of the island were still recovering from Hurricane Irma, which struck two weeks earlier.

Puerto Rico is home to 2,650 FFA members and 150 chapters. One year to the day after Hurricane Maria made landfall in Puerto Rico, I was on the ground there, experiencing firsthand the resilience and dedication of its FFA members.

Take this account from Juan Maury, the agriculture instructor and FFA advisor at Escuela SU Antonio Tulla Torres in Utuado, Puerto Rico:

"We have an 8-acre farm at the school with a small coffee plantation, plantains and vegetable gardens. Trees were uprooted, and the farm had 100 percent destruction."

In typical FFA fashion, however, members and others pitched in and helped rebuild.

"There were people, like angels, who came to help us clean up the school farm. Community members, other teachers from our school and other FFA chapters came. They'd ask, 'What are we doing today?' and then get to work."

To that, I say, **viva Puerto Rico!** And **long live FFA!** The trip was one that moved me deeply, and I'm honored to share it with you in "Puerto Rico: One Year Later," page 10.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the disaster that also recently struck a wide swath of the Corn Belt. Record floods hit Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota and other states in March, and impacted some FFA members. Unsurprisingly, FFA chapters have pitched in to help with cleanup efforts. You can read about some of them at FFA.org.

In this issue, you'll also find articles about a fashion designer with FFA roots, elephant feeders designed by a chapter in Pennsylvania, food waste, steps for starting an agtech start-up and more.

Enjoy and have a great summer!



Justin Davey

Editor, *FFA New Horizons*

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Subscription Information

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

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

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THE FFA VISION

FFA is providing the next generation of leaders who will change the world.

THE FFA MISSION

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

THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MISSION

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

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

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

THE *feed*

TALKING POINTS:

Food Waste



ACCORDING TO THE NO TASTE FOR FOOD WASTE INITIATIVE, THE AMOUNT OF FOOD WASTED IN THE UNITED STATES EQUATES TO MORE THAN 1,250 CALORIES PER DAY, PER PERSON, ANNUALLY. EVEN FFA SPONSORS SUCH AS VALENT USA AND LAND O'LAKE ARE INVOLVED IN THE INITIATIVE TO WASTE LESS FOOD. PREPARE YOURSELF TO ANSWER THESE COMMON QUESTIONS WITH INFORMATION FROM NO TASTE FOR FOOD WASTE.

Q: HOW MUCH FOOD IS REALLY WASTED IN THE U.S.?

A: The average American family throws away about 25 percent of the food and beverages it purchases, which costs each family around \$1,600 annually. Between 125 and 160 billion pounds of food are left uneaten in the U.S. every year – 76 billion of that is due to household waste. This averages out to 238 pounds of food waste per person, per year.

Q: HOW DOES OUR FOOD WASTE IMPACT THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE WORLD AROUND US?

A: Food waste is the No. 1 contributor to landfills, taking up 21 percent of all landfill content each year. Because wasted food has to break down, it's also responsible for at least 2.6 percent of all U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.

Q: WHAT CAN THE INDUSTRY OF AGRICULTURE DO TO HELP?

A: The land used to grow uneaten food makes up about 18 to 28 percent of total U.S. cropland (more than the entire state of New Mexico), and between 21 to 33 percent of agricultural water use is accounted for by food waste. Many farmers have cut back on food waste by using unsold produce as feed or compost in soil.

Others have donated unused food or have found alternate uses for products deemed unfit for sale in a store.

The FFA #SpeakAg Dialogues are a forum for effective conversation to break through polarized opinions regarding agriculture. Visit FFA.org/FoodWaste to download a variety of #SpeakAg cards about food waste, then distribute them to start meaningful conversations. You can also visit FFA.org/FFAVideoCenter and click "#SpeakAgDialogues" to watch videos on this topic.

– By Josh Cook



CELEBRATING WOMEN IN FFA

2019 marks 50 years of membership for women in FFA. Visit FFA.org/50YearsOfWomenInFFA to follow our ongoing coverage of the groundbreakers who paved the way, the momentous events that solidified gender equity and the women who lead today.

JUNE-JULY CALENDAR

June 1:

LIVING TO SERVE DAY OF SERVICE MINI-GRANT DUE

Apply for up to \$400 to be used on a one-time community service project. Applications are due on the first of each month. Visit FFA.org/LivingToServe for more information.

June 1:

ALUMNI AND SUPPORTERS GRANT APPLICATION DUE

Various grants are available for FFA alumni and supporters chapters. Visit FFA.org/AlumniGrants for more information.

June 17:

YEARLONG LIVING TO SERVE GRANT DUE

Apply for \$3,000 to support a service-learning project that spans the entire school year. Visit FFA.org/LivingToServe.

July 1:

VARIOUS ALUMNI AND SUPPORTERS AWARDS APPLICATIONS DUE

Visit FFA.org/AlumniAwards for more information about Outstanding Alumni and Supporters Achievement, Outstanding Chapter, and Outstanding State Association Awards.

July 26-27:

MINNESOTA ALUMNI AND SUPPORTERS REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

Registration opens June 3 for this free RDC in Randolph, Minn. Visit FFA.org/GoToRDC for more information.

#LIVINGTOSERVE

MEMBERS EVERYWHERE SHOW OFF THEIR LIFELONG PASSION TO SERVE ON SOCIAL MEDIA. CHECK OUT THEIR POSTS AND JOIN THEM USING THE HASHTAG #LIVINGTOSERVE ON ANY SOCIAL PLATFORM.



I would recommend all FFA members get involved in their chapter and support community service projects by writing a Living to Serve grant to help fund a project. As a member, I've enjoyed this opportunity to help make our community better. #LivingtoServe

@kodiak_brownbear via twitter

Thank you to seven superstars who helped serve crab to over 2,000 people tonight at the Sonoma County Farm Bureau Crab Feed! #ElsieAllenFFA #livingtoserve

@elsieallenffa via Twitter



Learn more about Living to Serve! FFA provides quality programs, resources, recognition and opportunities for our members to put their leadership into action through service engagement. Find more information at FFA.org/LivingToServe.

Oakland FFA members are #LivingtoServe at the 212/360 Leadership Conference by packaging over 14,000 meals for those in need.

@oaklandffa via Twitter



Special thanks to the "Friends of the FFA" for hosting their annual Chili Supper. #LivingtoServe

@royal_ffa via Twitter

THE *feed*

FROM FIELD TO FASHION

**THIS OREGON FFA ALUMNA LAUNCHES
HER OWN CLOTHING LINE USING
AMERICAN-MADE WOOL.**

Maddie Iverson grew up on a fifth-generation sheep farm surrounded by wool, but she always dreamed of having a career in art and fashion. After graduating from Canby High School in Oregon in 2013, the FFA alumna headed for Oregon State University, where she graduated in 2017 with a bachelor of science degree in apparel design. Then, in 2018, she launched her own clothing line, called O'FIELD Apparel, which specializes in stylish, sustainably made coats, vests, capes, skirts, blouses, trousers and more.

"I've been able to bring my heritage into the fashion world because fashion ties so closely with agriculture," Iverson says. "I use American-made wool as well as cotton, silks, leather and nylon. I do embroidery and beading, too, but wool is central to my story."

Iverson designs all her own styles and makes them to order in her Portland studio. Her unusual designs blend the rugged Wild West with urban sophistication and are made to last for generations.

"It's been so challenging, fun and rewarding to create beautiful, heirloom-quality pieces of clothing for people for the special times in their lives," Iverson says.

She has a great appreciation for her background in FFA and says her supervised agricultural experience, which focused on raising market lambs and breeding livestock, has helped her in business.

"FFA is an amazing organization," she says. "I participated in many events and competitions, and I was president of my chapter my senior year. I've found so much value in what I learned through FFA."

Iverson was honored to be named a 2018 UpNXT Emerging Designer by FashionNXT. Learn more about O'FIELD Apparel at OfieldApparel.com.

— By Jessica Walker Boehm



Quiz:

FFA MEMBERS LIVE TO SERVE

FFA members and alumni and supporters prove that Living to Serve is alive and well. Take our quiz to learn more about how your commitment to service impacted the nation.

1. In 2017, volunteer hours donated by FFA members nationwide had an economic impact of \$14,364,072. How much economic impact did it have per hour?
2. Each year, chapters receive grant money for service projects, and members put it to good use. For every \$1 of grant money awarded in 2017, how much return on investment did communities see?
3. Members live to serve at the National FFA Convention & Expo, too. How many convention-goers volunteered a total of 10,192 hours at the 2017 National FFA Convention & Expo?
4. Even FFA alumni and supporters walk the walk. How many hours of service did 459,000 FFA alumni and supporters give in 2017?

Answers: 1. \$24.14; 2. \$1,234; 3. 2,551; 4. 123,557

THE *feed*



LEADING THE CHARGE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

STUDENTS SHINE IN A HOT NEW PODCAST ABOUT A WARMING WORLD.

Christiane Maertens has one word for her initial attempt at creating a podcast focused on climate issues: Fail.

Although the North American Association for Environmental Education, the nonprofit behind the *Imagine If* podcast, had access to renowned climate scientists, the team, including executive producer and host Maertens, realized it lacked inspiration.

The solution: Talk to students who have experienced impacts of climate change and have found solutions in their communities. The *Imagine If* podcast produced five episodes in 2018. In the episode titled "What's at Steak," Bailey Morrell, third-generation cattle rancher and former Willows FFA member, talked to California Secretary of Food and Agriculture Karen Ross about the impact of drought and efforts to conserve water on her family farm.

"Giving these passionate young people an opportunity to have a voice that's being taken seriously is really just awesome," Maertens says.

"I want people [who are listening to the *Imagine If* podcast] to feel hopeful that there is so much good work happening out there. These students might not be solving climate change at the macro level, but when a listener can see how a student is doing impactful work on the micro level, it's inspiring."

— By Jodi Helmer

LISTEN UP!

Point your phone's camera at any icon like these to access additional digital content. You don't even have to snap a photo — just hover!



Listen to
Imagine If



Tune in to
FFA Today



Convincing COTTON CYNICS

THIS FFA MEMBER PROVES NAYSAYERS WRONG BY SUCCESSFULLY GROWING COTTON IN NORTHERN MISSOURI.

Several people told Norborne FFA member Garrett Heil that he couldn't grow cotton in northern Missouri's Carroll County.

"I remember sitting in my middle school history class when I was 13 years old and learning about the Civil War and cotton production, and everyone said it was impossible to grow cotton this far north," says Heil, currently a 17-year-old junior at Norborne High School in Norborne, Mo. "I told them I was going to grow it, and after a lot of research and hard work, I made it happen."

Heil had a hard time finding cotton seed to plant, initially having to use seed from a discarded bag in a local warehouse, and his first crop was ruined in a flood. However, he wasn't deterred; if anything, he only grew more determined.

"I started by planting just 5 acres of cotton on my family's farm, C&N Heil Farms Inc., and since then, I've gotten up to as many as 130 acres," Heil says. "Growing cotton not only has been a supervised agricultural experience (SAE) project for me, but also has been a way for me to generate an income after it's been ginned and graded. Producing this crop has taught me that taking chances can really pay off, especially if you're doing something you have a passion for."

Thanks to Heil, cotton is now being grown in Carroll County for the first time in roughly 150 years, and he hopes to inspire other farmers in nearby communities — even those farther north — to follow suit.

"If you put your mind to something, you can almost always make it happen," Heil says. "Nearly anything is possible if you have the right attitude."

— By Jessica Walker Boehm



SELECT YOUR SAE

Need ideas and inspiration for your SAE? Visit [FFA.org/SAE-Video-Library](https://www.ffa.org/SAE-Video-Library) to watch videos of interesting projects from members around the country.

NATIONAL FFA OFFICER Q&A



A SUPERVISED AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCE (SAE) IS REQUIRED FOR ALL FFA MEMBERS AND SERVES AS A GREAT WAY TO APPLY CLASSROOM PRINCIPLES IN THE REAL WORLD. WHAT ARE YOUR BEST TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL SAE?



Luke O'Leary



NATIONAL FFA PRESIDENT

Don't be afraid to get creative with your project. I once met a student who was interested in a medical career

and started an agriscience research SAE studying pig lungs. Work with your advisor to find a project that you're really passionate about. We have the most success when our heart is behind the work we do.



Layni LeBlanc



NATIONAL FFA SECRETARY

Do something you love! I always enjoyed working with animals, so I started volunteering with a shelter veterinarian and

experiencing veterinary science.

I now hope to pursue veterinary medicine because of the experiences I had in my SAE. The most successful SAE will be what makes you happy, helps you discover who you are and identifies where your strengths lie for a bright future career.



Jordan Stowe



SOUTHERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT

Find something you are passionate about. Don't just do what everyone else in your chapter is doing! Pursuing an SAE you are interested in helps you work harder and do the best you can. It's completely OK

to explore options. I completed numerous SAEs through high school until I found one I truly loved. Ask yourself what you care most about or the changes you want to see around you. Success grows where your passions flow. Follow them!



Adrian Schunk



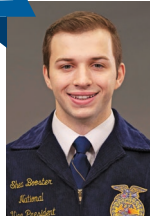
EASTERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT

I believe success comes down to one main factor: passion. Whether it's animals or teaching, research or the outdoors, there are so many options to choose from. When we choose something we are passionate about, we'll likely do it to the best of our ability.

Creating and growing an SAE can be one of the most meaningful aspects of our agricultural education, so find something you love and you will make success happen!



Shea Booster



WESTERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT

A successful SAE is centered around passion. Find something you are passionate about and coordinate with your advisor to make it happen in an SAE. Those who are passionate about their projects find the most joy and fulfillment.



Ridge Highbanks



CENTRAL REGION VICE PRESIDENT

I believe the most successful SAEs are those which meet the student's needs and serve others. In FFA, our members strive to serve. When your pursuits not only allow you to benefit but also meet a certain need of others, that is when you are truly successful. So always be looking for a

need and then find a way you can fulfill it.

Looking for more SAE inspiration? Visit [FFA.org/](https://www.ffa.org/) **FFAVideoCenter** to check out our video library of SAE projects from around the country.

AG 101

THE



OF CLIMATE CHANGE

While there's much concern about the impacts of climate change on agriculture, not all the news is bad. AccuWeather Senior Commodity Forecaster Dale Mohler shares some pluses and minuses of climate change on U.S. agricultural zones.

By Gene Johnston

WEST

- ⊕ The growing season will lengthen, and the risk of damaging freezes will decrease.
- ⊖ Some crops will need to relocate north to escape the increase in heat.
- ⊖ Irrigated crops will continue the tug-of-war with humans for decreasing water supplies.
- ⊖ Mountain snowpack will be highly variable with a likely overall decrease.
- ⊖ Wildfire damage will increase.



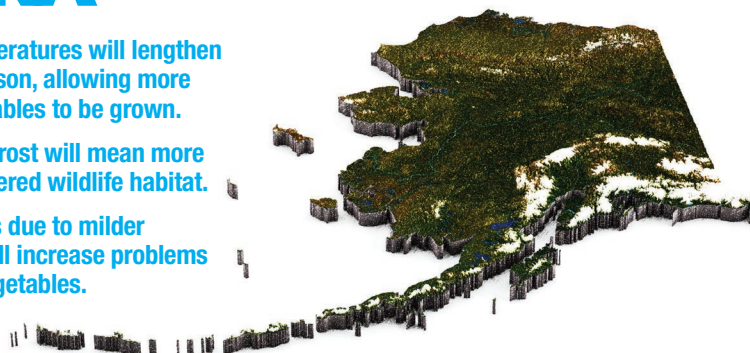
SOUTHWEST AND PLAINS

- ⊕ The growing season will be longer.
- ⊖ There will be more days of 100 degrees or higher temperatures.
- ⊕ & There will be more rain in the north but less in the south.
- ⊖ Wheat and cattle herds will be more vulnerable to drought.
- ⊖ Severe storms, high winds, hail and tornadoes will increase.



ALASKA

- ⊕ Increasing temperatures will lengthen the growing season, allowing more fruits and vegetables to be grown.
- ⊖ Thawing permafrost will mean more wildfires and altered wildlife habitat.
- ⊖ Insect outbreaks due to milder temperatures will increase problems for fruits and vegetables.



MIDWEST

- ⊕ The length of the growing season will increase with less threat from early fall frost.
- ⊕ There will be more opportunity for double crops, such as soybeans.
- ⊖ Hotter average temperatures will mean more days of 95 degrees or higher, increasing stress on crops and livestock.
- ⊕& There will be more overall precipitation but also more heavy downpours and floods.



NORTHEAST

- ⊕ Increased precipitation will aid crops and water supplies.
- ⊕ Warmer temperatures will mean a longer growing season.
- ⊕& Spring crops may develop faster but then be vulnerable to a late freeze.
- ⊖ Extreme precipitation events are likely to continue with more flooding.



SOUTHEAST

- ⊕ There will be less risk of damaging winter freezes for citrus and vegetable crops.
- ⊖ There will be greater heat stress on cotton, soybeans and other crops, as well as poultry and livestock.
- ⊖ Water supplies will be depleted quicker from increased evaporation rates.
- ⊖ Hurricanes and tropical storms may be stronger, increasing flooding risks.
- ⊖ Saltwater intrusion will continue to plague coastal soils.



HAWAII

- ⊕ Some tropical and grain crops may yield better because of higher atmospheric CO₂ levels.
- ⊖ Hurricanes and tropical storms will be greater and more intense.
- ⊖ Fresh water supplies will diminish, limiting irrigation and shrinking drinking water options.





PUERTO RICO: ONE YEAR LATER

One year to the day after Hurricane Maria made landfall in Puerto Rico, I was on the ground there experiencing firsthand the resilience and dedication of its FFA members.

Story by Justin Davey • Photography by Cole Norum



Structures around the island of Puerto Rico were damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Maria. Here, the house on the right was abandoned after the storm. It has been swallowed by vegetation and there is no direct access. On the left, what was once a house before the storm has fallen forward on its face.



Clockwise from top left: SU Antonio Tulla Torres FFA advisor Juan Maury with Puerto Rico FFA Association 2018-19 president Yomar Roman. One year after Hurricane Maria, a crew clears debris from a mountain road. The aftermath of Hurricane Maria. Jose Emilio Lugo High School FFA advisor Nydia Nunez. SU Antonio Tulla Torres FFA members.

provided recovery and relief efforts in Puerto Rico. Reports of response time and levels are varied, and some residents in rural areas went months without government aid. Whether out of necessity or a drive that lives inside them (or probably both), many people didn't wait for outside assistance to start rebuilding their lives. FFA members and advisors in Puerto Rico joined with their communities to clean up their homes, their neighbors' homes, their roads and their schools. In a phrase, they lived to serve.

A Common Scene

Puerto Rico is home to 2,650 FFA members and 150 chapters, including Jose Emilio Lugo High School FFA in Adjuntas (about two hours southwest of San Juan, the capital). The Adjuntas community braced as the storm approached. "It was very nerve-racking because we're 16, 17, 18 years old and we'd never experienced anything like that," says chapter president Genesis Perez. "We didn't know what was going to happen to our families, our friends and our community."

"A week before, we had Hurricane Irma," adds Caleb Velez, chapter vice president. "We didn't expect another storm so soon, so we weren't prepared. It came as a surprise."

Some students saw their worst fears unfold.

Member Fremiud Otero's home was lost in the storm. "We were home when the storm came," he says. "Water came through the roof, so we needed to move outside. A neighbor rescued us, and we stayed in her house for the night. After the hurricane, we went to my grandparents' house, which is close by, and we stayed there for seven months. We're now living on the first floor of our house again, which was reconstructed, and we're in the process of fixing the rest of the house."

Chapter secretary Gabriela Gonzalez's home was also dam-

Imagine this: No electricity. No water. Demolished houses.

Steep mountain roads made impassable by mud and vegetation. Rations at the grocery store to ensure there's enough food to go around. Limited medical supplies at the hospital. A lack of gasoline, even for first responders, and long lines of cars waiting for the next tanker. Helicopters flying overhead, dropping supplies for stranded communities.

While that dire situation may sound like a postapocalyptic movie, unfortunately, it's far from fiction. These terrible events – and more – actually took place. In September 2017, Hurricane Maria ripped across the island of Puerto Rico and caused catastrophic damage and numerous fatalities. It was regarded as the worst natural disaster on record in Puerto Rico, and residents of the island were still recovering from Hurricane Irma, which struck two weeks earlier. Approximately 80,000 people remained without power as Maria approached, and that storm went on to completely destroy the island's power grid leaving millions of residents without electricity.

As I toured Puerto Rico and met with local FFA members in September 2018, the impact of the storm was still evident. Blue tarps provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) were still widely used as roofs. Heavy machinery still cleared debris from mountain roads.

As a territory of the United States, the U.S. government

Some students saw their worst fears unfold.

aged. “A 300-year-old tree behind our house fell on our roof,” she says. “We had to move because the house wasn’t safe.” At the time of my visit, her family still wasn’t living in their home, but they have since returned.

Adding to the emotion and disruption of being without a house, the school was closed for three months after Hurricane Maria for repairs and to house refugees. But FFA members didn’t sit idle.

“Most of the damage was around the school grounds and not to the school building in particular,” says Nydia Nunez, the agriculture instructor and FFA advisor at Jose Emilio Lugo High School. “The students really came together. They made teams to help in the community. Even the students who lost houses and family members came together to help the community.”

The school greenhouse, which sits on the perimeter of the school grounds and is used by agriculture students, was completely demolished. The metal structure was damaged and some pieces blew away. In typical FFA fashion, the students pitched in and rebuilt it. “We worked very hard to put it back how it was. It’s now a little lower than it was, but it’s very functional,” Gonzalez says with pride.

“We also donated clothes, food, water, medical supplies and basic sanitary items to surrounding communities,” Perez adds.

Like Angels

At SU Antonio Tulla Torres school in Utuado (about an hour and a half southwest of San Juan), agriculture instructor and FFA advisor Juan Maury describes a similar scene.

“We have an 8-acre farm at the school with a small coffee plantation, plantains and vegetable gardens,” he says. “Trees were uprooted, and the farm had 100 percent destruction.

“There were people, like angels, who came to help us clean up the school farm,” he continues. “Community members, other teachers from our school and other

FFA chapters came. The spirit of FFA is alive here. It equips those of us who want to know how to help ourselves and others. I saw that in action with the chapters that came to help. They’d ask, ‘What are we doing today?’ and then get to work.”

SU Antonio Tulla Torres also canceled classes for three months while the facility was repaired and served as a distribution center of supplies for community members.

“Ultimately, the students had good attitudes,” he says. “They wanted to know what they could do to help the community,



Clockwise from top: The school farm at SU Antonio Tulla Torres school after cleanup. Jose Emilio Lugo High School FFA members in the rebuilt greenhouse. SU Antonio Tulla Torres FFA members.

their families, the school and our farm. The way they responded proved to me what’s in their hearts and the kind of FFA members they are. This has been the hardest thing in their lives – and mine, too. It’s important for them to know what they are and what they can accomplish. I tell them that every day.”

Progress in Puerto Rico

Today, the people of Puerto Rico continue to rebuild. “Our communities are getting stronger, and we continue to help each other,” Nunez says. “That’s the only way we got through this, by helping each other, and we will carry on.”

After the hurricane, Jose Emilio Lugo FFA members were inspired to continue to turn their experiences into something productive. “We were more motivated than ever to participate in FFA,” says Gonzalez. “The experience motivated me to participate in an English Prepared Public Speaking leadership development event for FFA,” says Velez. “It’s about what happened, what we can learn from it and what we can do to make this island better. It’s our responsibility to make it stronger, so we’re prepared when an experience like this comes.”

Consider this excerpt from Velez’s speech, which embodies the humble, expectant, eager and even grateful spirit the people of Puerto Rico maintain:

“Hurricane Maria gave today’s generation the opportunity to see what life is like without the facilities we have, with the setbacks of our parents and grandparents. That allows us to understand where we come from, appreciate what we have and work to improve for the future.” •



Watch our video

Point your phone’s camera at this icon to get more member stories from Puerto Rico. You don’t even have to snap a photo — just hover!



Members of the Viroqua Fire Department and surrounding departments receive training for new grain bin rescue equipment. The device was donated by the Viroqua FFA Alumni and Supporters.



Viroqua FFA Alumni and Supporters with area firefighters.



PREMIER *leadership*

Chapter, which supports the Viroqua FFA in Wisconsin, raised and donated \$6,000 to the local fire department in late 2017 to purchase a grain bin rescue device, replacing make-shift plywood rescue equipment used previously. In addition, the funds helped cover the costs of associated rescue training that was also available to firefighters from nearby communities within the state such as Ontario, Stoddard and Yuba.

“Our fundraisers are usually very successful, and we try to give back to the community as much as we can,” says Carl Zube, Viroqua FFA Alumni and Supporters president and former president of the Viroqua FFA. “That’s why we decided to help out with the grain bin rescue equipment and training for the Viroqua Fire Department. We saw a need in our town and we wanted to meet it. Plus, this cause was both community- and ag-related, and it seemed like a perfect way for us to help out.”

This wasn’t the first time the group contributed to a worthy cause, and it certainly won’t be the last. In the past, the chapter raised funds for the Viroqua FFA, helping with the costs of new FFA T-shirts, FFA jackets and a tractor restoration. After

a flood in the fall of 2018, alumni and supporters donated \$5,000 to help area farmers replace their fencing and agricultural supplies.

Additionally, in January 2019, Viroqua FFA Alumni and Supporters participated in the 10 Gallon Challenge, where they were challenged via the #10GallonHashtag on social media to purchase 10 gallons of milk and donate them to a local food pantry in an effort to benefit both dairy farmers and families in need. They immediately stepped up.

The chapter also participates in an effort called Hawk Packs,

named for the Viroqua Blackhawks mascot, where members compile packs of food for approximately 15 to 18 children in need on a weekly basis.

“As FFA alumni, we have to be leaders and show young people how important it is to give back and to keep that tradition alive,” Zube says. “It’s also critical for FFA members to know that their involvement in the organization doesn’t have to stop at the high school level, and they can absolutely continue to be part of FFA and contribute to its mission as adults.”

— By Jessica Walker Boehm

“AS FFA ALUMNI, WE HAVE TO BE LEADERS AND SHOW YOUNG PEOPLE HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO GIVE BACK AND TO KEEP THAT TRADITION ALIVE.”

— CARL ZUBE

FUNDING *for* FIRST RESPONDERS

THIS WISCONSIN FFA ALUMNI AND SUPPORTERS CHAPTER HAS A LONG RECORD OF RAISING FUNDS TO SUPPORT ITS LOCAL COMMUNITY.

It’s no secret that the National FFA Organization encourages members to participate in local service projects and to give back to their respective communities, but it’s not just current members who take that message to heart. Many FFA alumni and supporters chapters are working hard to make a difference, too, setting an important example for the younger generation.

For example, the Viroqua FFA Alumni and Supporters

ALUMNI CHECK IN

Are you one of the 8 million+ former FFA members? If so, please take a minute to Check IN at FFA.org/checkin to further unite and strengthen our extensive online community! Imagine the tremendous impact of our collective voice, leadership and lifelong commitment. Let’s build our FFA community! #FFACheckIN

CAREER *Success*

HOW TO LAUNCH YOUR OWN AG TECH BUSINESS

THERE'S A WORLD OF SUPPORT WAITING FOR BIG IDEAS.



It starts with an idea. For 2013-14 National FFA Officer Steven Brockshus, the light bulb came on while he was attending a land auction.

"I realized that people

bidding on the land actually knew very little about the property itself. More than \$1 million was being spent for a high-value asset, yet buyers had few data points to help them make an informed decision," he says.

Brockshus had learned enough about the business world from FFA that, while attending college, he felt ready to get going on his start-up idea.

His concept would become FarmlandFinder, a set of digital tools for landowners, real estate professionals and others buying, selling and appraising farmland.

The next big step in a start-up launch is finding partners and funding support.

"Don't underestimate the importance of a business partner or team," says Seana Day, a leading ag tech expert and partner with investment and information companies Better Food Ventures and The Mixing Bowl. "It's hard to go at it alone, and very few people have all of the important skills needed to take an idea to market."

There are several types of support for ag tech start-ups, including incubators, accelerators and pitch competitions. Incubators provide a workspace, technological expertise and mentorship. With accelerators, early-stage companies typically get access to a business development curriculum and a mentoring or investor network. Pitch events connect start-ups to investors.

"People just don't know what is out there and where the career opportunities exist," Day says. "We need to help young people and educators see the possibilities for many different careers that integrate ag and technology." You can develop innovative ideas of your own with FFA Blue 365. At FFA.org/Blue365, you'll find ideation starters, info on an array of careers and a video library.

— By John Walter

ACCELERATING A START-UP

As an example of the kinds of resources available to entrepreneurs, here are three organizations on the 2018 Ag Funder list of most valuable agrifood tech accelerator programs.

THE YIELD LAB

The St. Louis-based accelerator invests \$100,000 in early-stage tech companies that "revolutionize agricultural and food systems to sustainably provide for the world." The Yield Lab also offers one-on-one mentoring, cohort-based accelerator programming and access to its global network.

INDIE BIO

The biotech accelerator provides \$250,000 to successful applicants. Start-up founders spend four months in San Francisco with access to lab and working space, mentoring and networking with entrepreneurs, investors and corporate partners.

FOOD-X

The New York-based accelerator offers \$65,000 to kick-start young companies, helps entrepreneurs hone investor pitches, provides networking with experts and offers the opportunity to run a new business from a coworking space.





GATHERING



FOR GOOD

FOR THIS AWARD-WINNING ALUMNI AND SUPPORTERS CHAPTER, KEEPING SIGHT OF THE FFA MEMBERS IT SERVES IS WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT.

STORY BY JAMI STALL • PHOTOGRAPHY BY TYLER SMITH

Jason Chester can talk at length about the virtues of what he considers “the coolest job in the world.” The North Carolina agricultural education teacher offers enthusiastic praise for FFA. As the West Rowan FFA advisor and a member of the West Rowan FFA Alumni Council, he knows plenty of pointers for putting together an alumni and supporters chapter that succeeds year after year.

Consider these activities his alumni and supporters chapter conducts.

- **It hosts an annual FFA Chapter and Alumni Barn Dance that brings the community together for an evening of song and dance (and alumni recruitment).**
- **Each year, members of this farming community are invited to John Deere Day, where they socialize and receive free training on equipment operation and safety, new technologies, new planting and harvesting techniques, and to meet area agronomists.**
- **An annual Alumni Tailgate attracts nearly 150 community members to a hopped-up Friday night of hamburgers, hot dogs**

and family fun prior to a big rivalry high school football game.

- **The alumni and supporters chapter's largest fundraiser of the year, the spring Oyster Roast, draws between 200 and 300 attendees the first Saturday of each March. Tickets cost \$60 per person, and they're sold almost as quick as they're printed.**

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

The alumni and supporters also show their community support by working an FFA booth at the county fair each summer where they sell ice cream and roasted corn; tending a community garden to grow produce that is donated to the local food bank; and organizing an Agriculture Day for area second-grade students, where they teach about agriculture through hands-on ag activities. Students leave with a small gift and a vegetable plant.

Their hard work and innovation haven't gone unnoticed.

At the National FFA Convention & Expo last fall, the West Rowan FFA Alumni Chapter was named the 2018 National Outstanding FFA Alumni and Supporters Chapter. The same group has garnered top honors two other times since Chester

“THE GOAL IS NEVER AN AWARD,” SAYS WILHELM.

“THE GOAL IS ALWAYS THE KIDS IN THE PROGRAM.”



Above: West Rowan FFA members Amber White, Ethan Adkins (middle) and Aaron Russell (right) assist at the spring Oyster Roast. Below: Ben Starnes pours oysters.

helped recharter their chapter almost 15 years ago. He humbly credits coworkers, community supporters and a slew of others for winning those achievements, although many members attribute the continued success to his tireless efforts.

“He took something small and blew it up drastically to what it is today,” says West Rowan Alumni Council president Garin Kluttz. “I watched it happen. When I came into high school, it was Jason Chester’s first year here. He inspired me to get involved. Really, all the ag teachers here go above and beyond to always jump in and help.”

Participating in FFA since his teens at South Rowan High School, which is about 10 miles away, Chester holds great respect for the organiza-

tion. With a 2-year-old and a 1-month-old in tow, fatherhood frames his perspective and makes him even more committed to maintaining a thriving alumni council to help serve the student chapter.

“FFA is not the most important thing in my life, but obviously it is a huge part of my life,” he says.

His wife, Brittany, a West Rowan FFA Alumni and Supporters member and former state officer, understands his commitment deeply. She often joins him at FFA events.

“All of us involve our spouses in our program. That’s probably the real secret,” Chester says. “Our spouses get involved in the activities, and they each have FFA backgrounds from all different chapters. So that brings a

broad combination of experience to our program.”

COLLABORATION IS KEY

“Something else that separates us from some of the other alumni chapters around the states is how well our alumni council and FFA advisors work together to make plans of support,” he adds.

The West Rowan FFA Alumni Chapter includes 120 lifetime members and nearly 90 annual members. While some share a blue jacket background, the nontraditional FFA supporters don’t. They might possess experience in agriculture or simply an interest in helping the youth and community.

“I got started in the alumni council when my daughter, Madeline, was in the West Rowan FFA for two years in high school,” says Tony Wilhelm, a corporate information technology director and nontraditional council member. “Jason asked me to serve on the alumni council, and I haven’t been able to get out of it since,” he says with a laugh. Madeline is now an agricultural education major at North Carolina State University.

Wilhelm says being situ-

ated in the middle of farm country makes recruitment efforts easier than it might be for other alumni and supporters chapters. “But you have to show them this is not just farmwork; this is an organization that grows leaders. It’s worthwhile to invest your time and efforts into these kids because they’re going to be your leaders in 10 years.”

Kluttz became a lifetime member as soon as he graduated from high school in 2009. He’s now a beef cattle and grain farmer, and he works in the ag-equipment trucking industry, as well.

“I don’t really have time, but I make time because I care a lot about agriculture,” Kluttz says. “Like with farming, it’s not easy working long after the sun goes down and starting before the sun comes up, but if it means something to you, you’ll make time for it. I help all that I can with the alumni council.”

KEEP AN EYE ON THE PRIZE

So what’s next for the West Rowan FFA Alumni Chapter and can it maintain its winning momentum?

“The goal is never an award,” says Wilhelm. “The goal is always the kids in the program. Everything





Awesome Alumni

Want to develop a strong alumni and supporters chapter? Consider these tips from the West Rowan FFA Alumni Council.

Give alumni and supporters members something to work for or a problem to solve right away. Let them know they have a purpose and they're needed.

Keep events and activities audience-centered. If it's a family event, make sure there's something for all ages to enjoy, from family-friendly games and entertainment to food and music.

Show the community you appreciate its support by hosting occasional events that are not fundraisers. Organize get-togethers for the sake of fellowship and fun without asking for money.

Plan and announce your chapter's events well in advance, which requires solid organizational skills. Don't expect good event turnout if you don't give people plenty of notice.

Be visible in your community so your FFA program remains top of mind. Give them something good to talk about.

Step back and allow alumni and supporters members to spread their wings, but be available when needed.

Additional Alumni and Supporters Awards

Several other alumni and supporters received awards at the 2018 National FFA Convention & Expo. Let's congratulate them!

Outstanding Achievement Award Recipients

Ed Beeler, Ohio: Beeler has supported FFA as a lifetime alumni member of the Talawanda FFA Chapter for more than 40 years.

John H. Arneson, Wisconsin: Arneson taught agriculture in the early 1980s at Rio High School and has been a life member of the Stoughton FFA Alumni Chapter since its formation.

Greg Lincicum, Wisconsin: Lincicum has volunteered countless hours for the Juda FFA Alumni Chapter, serving terms as secretary, president and as a member of the Wisconsin agricultural education department board of directors.

Outstanding Collegiate FFA Alumni and Supporters Chapter

Gator Collegiate FFA Alumni Chapter in Florida

Largest FFA Alumni and Supporters Chapter

Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity with 49,459 members

Largest FFA Alumni and Supporters State Association

Missouri with 64,128 members

we do is about them. If it doesn't benefit the kids in the program, it's not worth doing. We'll keep focused on what our goals are and continue to go after them like we always have. My advice to other alumni chapters: Don't lose sight of the kids."

Competitions and accomplishments represent a tiny spotlight in time, Wilhelm says. "It's a brief moment to shine. The next year, no one is talking about the competition winners from the last year or three years ago. What is noticed, though, are the soft skills that the

students learned during their preparation for those events. They are noticed by teachers, professors, parents and employers. They notice the confidence and dedication. They notice the public speaking skills and ability to work as a team," he adds. "As FFA alumni and supporters, we're helping to prepare them for the next competition, as well as becoming the next farmer, teacher, business manager, PTA president, little league coach and FFA alumni council member. The time and effort we give them now multiplies itself later." •

Top: Members Taylor Walton, MacKenna Clifton and Rebekah Russell serve at the spring Oyster Roast. **Below, left:** Alumni council member Tony Wilhelm with West Rowan FFA Chapter vice president Ryley Corriher. **Below, center and right:** Oyster Roast attendees bid on auction items.





Story by Jodi Helmer
Photography by Jeff Noble

Building hay feeders for elephants as part of an innovative SAE shows these FFA members the diversity of career options in agriculture.

Engineering for Elephants



Berlin Brothersvalley High School FFA members Brady Boburchock, Peyton Harding, Lucas Hayman and Nicole Smiley stand in front of their hay feeder design.



Left: Members Nicole Smiley, Aspen Hay, Peyton Harding and Brady Boburchock. Opposite, top: International Conservation Center senior elephant keeper Thomas Bakke. Opposite, bottom: Advisor Dan Miller and students fabricate elephant feeders.

When Peyton Harding learned that his welding class at Berlin Brothersvalley High School was going to be designing a hay feeder for the elephants at the International Conservation Center (ICC) in Somerset, Penn., he was skeptical.

“An elephant isn’t an animal people are around much; it’s not like we walk out into the field to feed one in the morning like a cow or a horse,” Harding says. “I had no idea how we were going to make something that would hold up to such big animals, but it sounded like it would be a cool project.”

Senior elephant keeper Thomas Bakke was leading a tour at ICC for several school board members and teachers when he overheard FFA advisor Dan Miller talking about the high school welding class. It sparked a conversation about oppor-

tunities to work together for the benefit of the elephants and the students.

ICC is part of the Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium, and it’s considered a premier conservation, education, breeding and training facility that specializes in the care of African elephants.

Hay is the primary diet for the five elephants living at ICC. The herd consumes an estimated 6,000 bales every year; most of the hay is grown onsite. Bakke and the other elephant keepers used to toss hay on the ground, but he

admits the setup wasn’t ideal.

“If we put out a quarter bale of hay, it’s going to be gone in 15 minutes,” Bakke explains. “If we suspend the hay in a net that hangs 20-plus feet off of the ground, it’s going to quadruple the time it takes for them to eat it. Elephants are smart. Their gears are always turning, so we want to keep them busy.”

Enrichment is great for animals, including elephants. It encourages them to think, discover and determine what to do. The hay feeders provide that opportunity by providing a form of mental stimulation.

ENGINEERING ENRICHMENT

Members of the Berlin Brothersvalley High School FFA Chapter were excited about the idea of building hanging hay feeders for the ravenous pachyderms, but they needed more information to get started. Bakke provided a tour of the elephant habitat at ICC, along with information about African elephants and their specific behaviors.

Bakke shared his vision for how the ideal hanging hay feeder would operate, explaining that the model had to be designed from a schedule 40 steel pipe, had to include a mechanism that could raise and lower the hay bag and had to have an arm that rotated 180 degrees so elephant keepers could fill it up without entering the enclosure.

Students came up with several prototypes, and the ICC selected the final design. The feeder stands 21 feet tall, and a bearing system allows keepers to fill

Continuing the Feeding Frenzy

The partnership between the International Conservation Center (ICC) and the Berlin Brothersvalley High School FFA Chapter in Pennsylvania did not end after the first hanging hay feeder was installed last spring. Armed with their knowledge of elephant behaviors and the importance of providing enrichment activities in the habitat, students started developing prototypes for additional feeders.

“The students built several scale models of different prototypes and presented them to ICC,” FFA advisor Dan Miller explains. “We just had one approved, and the ninth-grade welding class has started working on building it.”

The new feeders operate with a series of levers that elephants must push or pull with their trunks to release treats like sweet potatoes and apples. The treat dispensers will be used as tools to help handlers teach elephants commands.

“These are once-in-a-lifetime opportunities that aren’t available in most other school districts,” Miller says. “We’re fortunate to have a partnership with ICC that shows students the diversity of agriculture.” •

6,000

The estimated number of hay bales the herd consumes every year.



a hay bag hanging at the end of a 10-foot arm and swing it out into the enclosure, locking it in position. The feeder is bolted onto a 12-foot-tall I-beam that serves as the fence post.

Selecting materials that can withstand the demands of elephants that weigh up to 11,000 pounds was no small feat. Keeping costs in check was also a challenge.

A pair of brand-new metal bearings cost upwards of \$36,000, sending students back to the drawing board for alternate solutions. Using bearings salvaged from the wheel assemblies of old cars — at a total cost of \$39 — proved to be an affordable and durable alternative.

“It was so rewarding to watch these kids go through the thought process to make this feeder,” Miller recalls.

Despite the challenges, Miller believes the FFA members had a lot of fun and learned that agriculture is not all about corn and cattle.

“It’s not every day you get to work on a project with the Pittsburgh Zoo. Most supervised agricultural experience projects involve gardens or traditional beef or dairy farms,” he says. “With this project, students got to

experience other potential career paths in agriculture.”

INNOVATION IN ACTION

The feeder was installed in May 2018. FFA members were invited to the ICC to help install the feeder and to see the elephants use it for the first time.

Harding says the experience was rewarding. “It was great to make something the elephants could use and to know that we were a part of making something that could help them.”

While all of the elephants loved the new addition to their habitat, for one ICC resident, the innovative hanging hay feeder has been life-changing.

A 40-year-old elephant named Bette, the shy, geriatric female in the herd, loves her feeder and is often the first one out in the morning to eat. Bakke was thrilled.

“Just lifting hay off of the ground might not seem like much, but it significantly impacted their behavior,” he says. “When we see positive changes like that, it shows that providing enrichment and altering their habitat and how we present their food are of critical importance to their health.”



In fact, the feeder was such a hit that Bakke asked the Berlin Brothersvalley High School FFA Chapter to build more. Students are currently working on a second feeder and have made minor tweaks to the design, including a stronger pin to keep the feeder locked in place. The goal is to have six hanging hay feeders in the elephant habitat at ICC.

Bakke believes the project will have an impact that extends beyond the elephants living at ICC.

“The big thing about having elephants is that we’re able to inspire the younger generation to care about them,” he says. “In Africa right now, we’re losing upwards of 100 African elephants per day due to the ivory trade and habitat loss, but we can’t inspire people to care about elephants if they’ve never seen one. With this project, we were able to make our elephants’ lives better but also, hopefully, to inspire the next generation to care for them.” •

FFA *in the* USA

TAKE ME TO THE FAIR! A YEAR-ROUND PASTIME SINCE 1841, STATE FAIRS REMAIN ONE OF THE BEST STAGES FOR FFA MEMBERS AND CHAPTERS TO SHOW OFF THEIR AG SAVVY. HERE ARE SOME OF THE EXCITING FFA HAPPENINGS AT STATE FAIRS, COUNTY FAIRS AND OTHER EXPOS, SUBMITTED BY STATE OFFICERS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY. — Compiled by Julie Woodard

ALABAMA

At the Alabama National Fair, FFA chapters vie for the top spot in the Agricultural Information Exhibit Contest, complete with displays based on an annual theme about the state's agriculture.

ALASKA

How often do you encounter reindeer in a Junior Livestock Showmanship Contest? That's what you'll see FFA members do at the Alaska State Fair. Another unique event is the Giant Cabbage Contest; a 138-pound cabbage holds the Guinness World Record.

ARIZONA

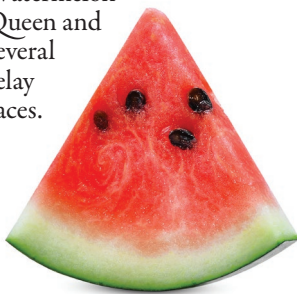
Members compete in a Livestock Judging Contest at the Arizona State Fair, where their skills are tested against other chapters and 4-H members.

COLORADO

During the Heifer Wrangle Show at the Colorado State Fair, members exhibit heifers they have raised as part of a supervised agricultural experience grant program.

DELAWARE

At the end of their state fair week, members show off their skills in the FFA Fair Games. Activities include an egg toss with the governor, a watermelon-eating contest with the Mar Del Watermelon Queen and several relay races.



FLORIDA

At the 115th annual Florida State Fair, Florida FFA continued its partnership with the Iowa Pork Producers to promote the pork industry and to raise money for Florida FFA.

GEORGIA

In the annual Georgia State Fair Legislative Showdown, state senators and representatives are invited to learn about and exhibit livestock alongside FFA members.

IDAHO

Idaho enjoys not one but three state fairs: the Western Idaho State Fair, the Eastern Idaho State Fair and the North Idaho State Fair. At each fair, members sell raffle tickets for a chance

to win a tractor at the state leadership conference. Profits fund college scholarships for graduating members.

ILLINOIS

State officers host the Illinois FFA Barnyard at the Illinois State Fair. More than 15,000 fair-goers travel through the barnyard to visit the animals.

INDIANA

More than 200,000 people walk through the 25,000-square-foot FFA Pavilion at the Indiana State Fair to play miniature golf, pet farm animals, interact with chapters and more.

KANSAS

In the Agricultural Education Building, Kansas FFA presents the Grand Champion animals all week long. Along with caring for animals, various chapters also find ways to advocate for agriculture.



KENTUCKY

Kentucky FFA partners with other agricultural groups to sponsor Ag Land at the Kentucky State Fair and to educate nonfarm families about where their food comes from.

LOUISIANA

It was a family affair at this year's LSU AgCenter State Livestock Show. Twins Sydni and Adisyn Walker from Lacassine FFA won both Champion and Reserve broiler pens.

MAINE

Members volunteer for Lil' Farmers at the Fair, an interactive exhibit that educates your children on the wide reach and impact of agriculture.

MARYLAND

The Maryland State Fair features an FFA Day when members get into the fair for free. They can also visit the U Learn Farm to present speeches, display their show animals and share what they are doing to promote agriculture.

MASSACHUSETTS

Massachusetts may not have a state fair, but it does have the Big E, the largest expo on the East Coast. The only FFA competition of its kind, this regional affair hosts 17 states and serves as a great practice round for national convention competitors.

MINNESOTA

During FFA Weekend at the Minnesota State Fair, members compete in the largest FFA-only livestock show in the nation, as well as landscape competitions, a tractor-driving competition and various career development events.

MISSOURI

FFA members unite at the Missouri State Fair to pack over 100,000 meals for food-insecure families across the state.





MONTANA

Missoula FFA is finishing work on a USDA-inspected meat-processing facility at the chapter's ag center. All products will be produced, processed, packaged and sold by FFA members.

NEBRASKA

Showmen with the top livestock enter the ring one last time during The Final Drive at the Nebraska State Fair. Judges select the overall Grand and Reserve champions.

NEVADA

Nevada FFA holds its annual state livestock competition at the Clark County Fair and Rodeo, which is the largest fair in southern Nevada.

NEW JERSEY

Every year, Northern Burlington FFA sponsors a tent at its county fair to showcase each part of its agricultural program and to display the chapter scrapbooks to the public.

NEW MEXICO

FFA members spend their time at the Red Barn at the New Mexico State Fair and use farm animals to educate the public about agriculture and the impact it has on everyday lives.

NORTH DAKOTA

This year, the North Dakota State Fair will host the 19th annual North Dakota FFA Foundation and Alumni Auction, which raises over \$23,000, on average, to support FFA activities.

OHIO

Edison FFA teamed up with the Ohio Cattleman's Association to serve food at several of the association's food stands during the Ohio State Fair. This gave students the chance to meet and interact with those visiting the fair.

OKLAHOMA

During the Tulsa State Fair, exhibitors can donate their animals to the FFA Hunger Challenge, which helps feed the hungry all across the state.

OREGON

The Oregon State Fair hosts an annual Goat Milking Contest where only state legislators compete. The winning senator or representative earns a trophy.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Each year in October, hundreds of members gather for FFA Day at the South Carolina State Fair and attend a farm-to-table lunch.

TENNESSEE

At the Tennessee Appalachian Fair, FFA members gain community service hours by volunteering as members of the Appalachian Fair Youth Board. The board par-

ticipates in local farm days that promote ag literacy during the fair.

UTAH

Chapters take turns volunteering at the Utah State Fair's Little Hands on the Farm, teaching thousands of kids how food gets from the farm to the fork.

VERMONT

State officers stay cool in the summer and support the dairy industry by traveling to multiple fairs to help out at FFA dairy bars and booths.

WASHINGTON

The Stanwood FFA Chapter cohosted the annual Country Living Expo, which included a large variety of workshops, a keynote address from Dr. Temple Grandin and an expo where actor Chris Pratt's sheep won the fiber prize.

WISCONSIN

The Wisconsin FFA Honors Band and Chorus performs for four days during the Wisconsin State Fair, playing crowd favorites and welcoming alumni back to play in the final concert.



VIRGINIA

FFA Forestry Field Day at the State Fair of Virginia allows members to compete in activities such as log roll, log throw, cross-cut saw, water accuracy and bow saw.



Kip TOM

“GET INVOLVED AND LEARN ALL YOU CAN. THE LESSONS WILL BE APPLICABLE TO YOU FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.”

– KIP TOM

On the RECORD

Northern Indiana farmer, entrepreneur and former National FFA Foundation trustee Kip Tom has been nominated to be the new U.S. Ambassador to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome, Italy. He credits FFA with teaching him many life lessons that he can use on the world stage.

Q: HOW DID YOU FIRST ENCOUNTER FFA?

A: I grew up on a small farm in northern Indiana near Leesburg. My parents, Everett and Marie, raised five kids on 120 acres. We learned the value of working hard and taking care of each other, including our neighbors.

When my siblings and I got into high school, we knew we would be a part of FFA because we would learn the professional skills needed in life. Be it *Robert's Rules of Order*, public speaking or various project skills, they are all things that a person uses just about every day.

Q: WHAT OTHER BIG LESSONS DID YOU LEARN IN FFA?

A: It taught us competitiveness in a spirited way that involves respect for everyone. We learned to strive for continuous improvement in everything we do. And we learned to help others improve, too.

Q: WOULD YOU CONTINUE TO USE THOSE LESSONS AS AMBASSADOR?

A: Absolutely. I often remember and think about the FFA Creed and what it says about growing and serving others. I will use all of that when I'm in Rome.

Q: WHAT ARE KEY ISSUES THAT WOULD BE ON YOUR AGENDA AS AMBASSADOR?

A: I will work with leaders from around the world at promoting initiatives to drive peace, security, agricultural development and accountability. I feel a great responsibility to make sure that the billions of dollars of U.S. taxpayer money that we invest in food and agriculture initiatives are well focused at driving peace and security in an accountable manner.

Q: WHAT ADVICE DO YOU GIVE TODAY'S FFA MEMBERS?

A: Get involved and learn all you can. The lessons will be applicable to you for the rest of your life. Wherever I go, be it in my local area or the halls of Congress in Washington, D.C., I meet so many people who, like me, have a background in FFA and use the lessons they learned every day. Those few years of high school and how you apply yourself there can make all the difference in your success for the rest of your life.

– By Gene Johnston



Ag Angle

TORIE EGGER

LOCATION: Columbus, Neb.

FFA CHAPTER: Lakeview High School FFA

INSTAGRAM: @torieeggerphoto

WEBSITE: TorieEggerPhotography.com

What I love about being a livestock photographer is that everything is caught in the moment; nothing is ever posed. I bring my camera everywhere because I never know when I'm going to catch a great moment. This picture of my brother, Lane, was taken during a regular day of walking show pigs. My goal was to get a picture of Lane walking into the sunset with his pig, and I did. This image means a lot to me because show pigs are a big part of my life.

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

