
FALL/WINTER 2022
NEW HORIZONS
FFA.ORG
1952
CELEBRATING
70
YEARS
OF FFA NEW HORIZONS
2022

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, *FFA NEW HORIZONS!*



For 70 years, *FFA New Horizons* has been on the front lines of storytelling for FFA. Since 1952, millions of copies of national FFA magazines have been circulated to members across the country, sharing inspiring, impactful and unique stories about members, alumni and supporters. Just as the news has evolved over the years, so has this publication.

What began as a motion during a National FFA Board of Trustees and Advisory Council meeting in 1950 has led to decades of stories that have recorded historic moments within U.S. agriculture and FFA, demonstrated the evolution of agricultural technology through FFA member experiences, and shared the many faces and experiences of FFA members, alumni and supporters.

The National Future Farmer magazine, as the publication was called from 1952 to 1989, documented FFA happenings during the race to the moon in the late 1950s, the merger of New Farmers of America (NFA) and FFA amid the American Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, the American agriculture boom in the 1970s, and the farm crisis in the 1980s. In 1989, the magazine changed names to *FFA New Horizons*, representing a new era and a renewed faith in the future of agriculture. Stories at the turn of the century captured life-changing events such as the invention of the internet and the attack on the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001.

Scrolling through the 100-plus archived copies of FFA publications opened my eyes to how the organization has grown and changed, and how FFA members worked together to overcome trials and challenges to ensure the future of agriculture. It's worth celebrating — and we do, in "70 Years of FFA Stories!" on page 30. Although my part in the storied history of *FFA New Horizons* offers but a glimpse into decades of impact, I'm honored to continue sharing the stories of the FFA community within these pages.

In this issue, you'll also find articles about the 95th National FFA Convention, automation in agriculture, how to stay safe on the farm and more.

Have fun this fall!

Kasey Riebel

Kasey Riebel
Editor, *FFA New Horizons*
ffanewhorizons@dotdashmdp.com

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Cover Illustration: Mary Kate McDevitt

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FFA COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER Julie Woodard
EDITOR Kasey Riebel
EDITORIAL CONTENT DIRECTOR Justin Davey
CREATIVE DIRECTOR Matt Strelecki
COPY EDITORS Paula Barbour, Nancy Dietz
EDITORIAL PRODUCTION MANAGER Diana Weesner
EDITORIAL CONTRACT SPECIALIST Kat Lewis

2021-22 National FFA Officers
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TEACHER EDUCATOR/AAAE Jessica M. Blythe, WV
AFNR TEACHER/NAAE Dave Gossman, CA
AFNR TEACHER/NAAE Deanna Thies, MO
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Daphnne Bonaparte, Washington, D.C.
BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY Barbara Jenkins, GA

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THE FFA VISION
Growing the next generation of leaders who will change the world.

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

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

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

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

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FFA New Horizons celebrates a milestone. See how FFA and this magazine have evolved.

Barren County FFA member Mary Schalk flew her personal airplane full of supplies to tornado-torn towns in Kentucky, providing much-needed relief. P. 16

THE FEED

5 Things FROM FFA.ORG

FFA.org offers resources for your success this semester at your fingertips!

95th National FFA Convention & Expo

Enjoy the perks of participating in the convention from afar. Aside from live, gavel-to-gavel session coverage, plan to watch the virtual student workshops to make connections and learn from professionals. Students can learn about various topics, including how to take advantage of all FFA has to offer. Advisors can access the keynotes and national officer retiring addresses after convention to use in their classrooms and with FFA chapters.

FFA Scholarships

Thanks to the selfless individuals and businesses that donate to the National FFA Foundation, FFA members can earn scholarships. Whether you're seeking a four-year degree or hoping to attend a specialized training program, there's a scholarship available for you. The application site goes live this fall.

Scan with your phone.

FFA Brand Center

For those developing social media assets or writing guidelines for sharing the FFA "why," this resource is your one-stop shop for FFA brand materials. If you're hosting an event in your community and need graphics for flyers, access those in the Toolkit tab. Are you trying to establish your chapter's voice on social media? Align your messages with the FFA brand voice, found in the Brand Elements section.

Service Project Planning Tools

How will you serve your community this semester? Ensure your service engagement opportunity is successful by following these four steps: investigate, plan, serve and evaluate. Use the interactive service planning guide to help you create and carry out your service project. Worksheets provide a step-by-step process to achieve the greatest impact.

ShopFFA.org

Show off your FFA pride at the start of the new school year. A fresh batch of FFA apparel is available, including the 2022-23 annual tee. If you're an officer, check out the officer tees and personalized polos. Turn to the ShopFFA Look Book in the center of this issue to get a glimpse at the latest products, and share your #FFAStyle on social media.

Teacher's Pets

This FFA chapter in South Carolina partners with a local humane society to take in, tame and rehome animals.

– By Lauren Denton



Cuddly kittens are a favorite for LTC FFA members.



Mango was the first kitten LTC FFA adopted.

Photography: Courtesy of Robert Bollier

Robert Bollier's classroom at Lexington Technology Center (LTC) in South Carolina unites students from five high schools. The diverse classes get hands-on experience with a variety of small animals, socializing them for adoption.

It began four years ago when a student brought in a stray black kitten named Mango. Bollier remembers saying, "We'll see what we can do for that one wild-as-can-be animal."

The project has grown since. More than 30 animals have been adopted in four years; over half of those found new homes in 2022. In addition to cats, the students have tamed rabbits, guinea pigs and even a parakeet they found in a bush outside the school.

"I draw the line at reptiles," says Bollier, who has taught animal science for nine years at LTC.

Bollier and LTC FFA had been using their own funds for basic care, including spaying and neutering, when a partnership with the Humane Society of South Carolina occurred by chance, Bollier says. The organization's executive director, Dawn Wilkinson, stopped by to donate her family's guinea pig supplies, spotted all the small animals and instantly offered to provide basic care. Now the two groups work together to promote animal welfare and match pets with homes.

"The students get to love on the animals," Bollier says. And the animals love them back. "The animals know when every block starts," he adds. "They wait at the door, and the first thing the kids do when they come in the room is pet them."

"Those animals are living their best lives," Wilkinson says. "I wish every school district had a similar program to take the burden off shelters. Not only are more animals finding a home, but also we know we're sending them out with the best start possible."

"It does the kids good too," Bollier says. "It's one of those things that makes a difference for them — and that they can make a difference in."

SAY "YES!" TO THE BEST

Have you ever thought about your role in the FFA vision? Hint: It likely includes making the most of the opportunities ahead. – By Bev Flatt

Between hours spent preparing for competitive events and getting the final chapter banquet script just right, have you considered how your actions fit into the bigger goals of the National FFA Organization? While your chapter officer team is coming together to plan a killer Program of Activities, the National FFA Board of Directors also is working on organizational plans as FFA grows and changes.

"Just as agriculture has and continues to evolve, so must the opportunities within FFA," says Scott Stump, FFA CEO. "From production to consumption, there are emerging careers like autonomous robotics and sustainability through which our students will shape the future and feed the world. I am excited for the new opportunities we'll be launching in the years ahead to make students aware of, and ready for, the future of agriculture."

While those new opportunities are still under development, it's safe to say they will be laser-focused on the FFA mission as the organization quickly approaches its 100th anniversary.

"The most important role for FFA members in this vision is to say, 'Yes!' to the opportunities and experiences FFA provides," Stump says. "When your advisor asks you to join a career development event or go to a leadership conference, saying 'yes' is your path to premier leadership, personal growth and career success."

Learn more about how saying yes to opportunities contributes to the overall success of the National FFA Organization at **FFA.org**.

Refresh your memory on the FFA mission and vision.

FFA Vision
Growing the next generation of leaders who will change the world.

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.

5 CAN'T-MISS CONVENTION EXPERIENCES

Scan for convention info.

Add these National FFA Convention & Expo activities to your list if you're attending in person.

– By Jessica Mozo

The 95th National FFA Convention & Expo Oct. 26-29 in Indianapolis has something for everybody, no matter your interests. To make the most of your trip, plan to engage in these five exciting experiences:

1. Expo and Shopping Mall

Browse the exhibits at the expo to learn from leading agriculture companies, colleges and universities. Looking for a souvenir? Stop by the FFA Mega Store or visit other vendors in the FFA Shopping Mall.

2. Leadership and Professional Development

Gather with other members and educators at a student, teacher or alumni workshop to sharpen your skills, learn with one another and hear from industry experts about today's world of agriculture.

3. General Sessions

Attend one of many general sessions to convene with fellow members and celebrate one another's accomplishments. Drop in on an opening session for motivation for the week ahead and to hear from a dynamic keynote speaker.

4. Volunteer Projects

Sign up to serve the local community through one of several National Days of Service shifts or stop by the On-Site Service Project booth on the expo floor. Members can also sign up for Courtesy Corps shifts and work behind the scenes with National FFA staff.

5. Finals Hall

The Finals Hall showcases the top competitors in seven career and leadership development events (CDEs/LDEs). Watching these leaders' presentations gives viewers a glimpse of what an award-winning CDE or LDE looks like.

RICH IN TRADITION

Anthony Hernandez celebrates Native American life and his FFA experience. – By Jessica Mozo

November is Native American Heritage Month, a time to celebrate the cultures, accomplishments and contributions of Native Americans. The National FFA Organization now includes more than 12,000 Native American members, and that number keeps growing. Anthony Hernandez, 2022-23 Montana FFA parliamentarian, shares more about the rich culture.

Q: Tell me a bit about yourself.

A: I am attending Montana State University in Bozeman, Mont., where I am majoring in agricultural education. I grew up in Lodge Grass, Mont., located on the Crow Indian Reservation. I am Apsáalooke (Crow) and Shoshone Bannock (Fort Hall). I have been in FFA for six years, and I'm a first-generation FFA member.

Q: How did you get involved with FFA?

A: In 2016, I was going into seventh grade and I saw a sign-up sheet for District Leadership Schools, one of the first trips FFA members in Montana get to go on to learn about FFA. I decided I would attend, not expecting much, but to my surprise, the state officers had me hooked. They had members participate in icebreakers and leadership activities, and I really enjoyed it. That trip was the start of my FFA journey, and I am proud of how far I have come by staying involved in this organization.

Q: Why is agriculture important to Native American culture and heritage?

A: Native Americans have always been involved in agriculture. Many Natives lived a nomadic lifestyle. They would plant crops in the spring, hunt in the summer, harvest their crops in the fall and hunt in the winter. Agriculture and farming have always been important in Native cultures because it helped our ancestors survive. Today, many Native tribes are still involved in agriculture.

Q: Besides agriculture, what else is important to Native American culture?

A: Natives are passionate about family, food and keeping both our traditions and languages alive. Montana FFA has an event called the FFA/American Indian program, where chapters from across the state get to present on topics like Native American heritage, religion, traditions and more to improve the knowledge of Native culture throughout FFA. Though we only have a few chapters that participate, it is always great to see Natives represented in FFA.

Q: Is there anything you feel people sometimes misunderstand about Native Americans?

A: Many people think we follow stereotypes — that we still live in teepees, don't speak English and so on. In reality, we live in our own houses, most do speak English and we are like everyone else — human. It's important to have a genuine understanding of what Indigenous people face, collectively and individually.

Q: What do you enjoy most about being in FFA?

A: I have always enjoyed the friendships I have made in FFA, from attending Washington Leadership Conference my sophomore year to attending FFA camp here in Montana. I will never forget the friendships and memories I have made.



Photography: Courtesy of Anthony Hernandez

IMPORTANT FARM SAFETY TIPS

Recognize the risks. Know what to do. – By Lauren Denton

National Farm Safety and Health Week is recognized every year during the third week in September, intentionally coinciding with fall harvest, one of the busiest and most dangerous times of year for farmers.

However, farming hazards are present during any season, and it's important to know how to spot and prevent them. While agriculture safety applies to a broad range of topics, here are a few general tips to keep in mind, no matter what your task.

1. Educate yourself. Before you begin, learn all about the mechanics and risks of your specific project. Start with the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS), which hosts National Farm Safety and Health Week. In addition to free webinars, you can find an extensive list of resources on its website.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration also has resources dedicated to agricultural operations, including a page for youth. Treat this like a research paper: Find and note as much information as you can.

2. Stock a first aid kit. And restock, emphasizes Dan Neenan, director of NECAS. Neenan, a trained paramedic, has developed a farm first aid kit based on the injuries he and his team see most in farming situations. It comes in a sturdy canvas bag and includes large bandages, a thermal blanket, large shears, and four times the eyewash of standard kits.



In some cases, you might want to stock it with additional supplies to relieve allergic reactions in an emergency. Your kit should go wherever you go.



3. Check your fire extinguisher. Ideally, test it twice a year. Sometimes it will have power but not propellant, so make sure to fill it after each use.

4. Read markings on every vehicle you'll be in or near. Neenan notes that while tractor rollovers are decreasing, ATV/UTV rollovers are increasing. Don't exceed the weight limits, as that can impact steering and braking, and avoid roadways because the tires are created for off-road driving.

Wear your helmet and seat belt, if there is one, and steer clear of moving parts of any vehicle, especially PTO shafts behind tractors.

5. Avoid wearing loose clothing and jewelry. They can get in the way of your job, or worse — snag and injure you.

6. Ask for help. Neenan says stress and emotional health concerns are rising in farming communities. Know who to call, and recognize when you need to call.

For more specific farming safety tips, visit **NECASag.org.**

Photography: Getty Images, rockz, Kameleon007

Quiz:

National FFA Convention Through The Years

How much do you know about the biggest event for FFA?

– By Jessica Mozo

Test your knowledge about the National FFA Convention & Expo. Then visit Convention.FFA.org to plan your attendance in person or online at the highly anticipated 2022 convention.

1. The first National FFA Convention was held in 1928 in what city?
2. The National FFA Convention & Expo is the world's largest student convention. Approximately how many FFA members and supporters attended the 94th annual convention in 2021?
3. How many awards were given out during the 2021 National FFA Convention & Expo?
4. What city hosted the National FFA Convention before it moved to the current host city of Indianapolis, Ind.?
5. In 2020, the 93rd National FFA Convention & Expo was held virtually because of COVID-19, but the convention still had a big impact. More than 280 chapters nationwide participated in National Days of Service in their communities. How many volunteer hours did their projects encompass?

Answers: 1: Kansas City, Mo., 2: 60,000, 3: 5,700, 4: Louisville, Ky., 5: 7,360

Photography: Getty Images, EyeEm

From FFA to Entrepreneurship

Meet three FFA alumni who used their FFA experiences to start successful businesses. – By Jessica Walker Boehm

FFA can teach a host of skills members can use throughout their lives. For some, FFA experiences can also serve as a launching pad for entrepreneurship.

Learn how three former members used their skills to grow their own small businesses.

Adeline's Acre

As a member of Sumner FFA in Washington, Adeline Rang developed a beekeeping business called Adeline's Acre. She sold honey, and lip balms, soaps and body scrubs made from beeswax.

"When people tasted my honey for the first time, they told me I should sell it because it was just so delicious," says Rang. "My FFA advisors encouraged me to create a business, and it grew into something bigger than I could have ever imagined."

To learn more about Adeline's Acre, visit **facebook.com/adelinesacrehoney.**

Coy's Woodshed

After discovering an interest in woodworking, Coy Crull created Coy's Woodshed, a custom woodworking business.

"Not only did I learn about woodworking, but I also learned a lot about sales, marketing and customer service," says Crull, an American FFA Degree holder and alumnus of North Clay FFA and Mount Carmel FFA in Illinois. "I also had the opportunity to create 17 cutting boards for the National FFA Organization that were handed out in the Blue Room at the national convention in 2019."

Crull still accepts custom woodworking orders and can be reached via email at **coyswoodshed00@gmail.com.**

King's Custom Lures

Lane King, an alumnus of the Bergman FFA in Arkansas, developed a business making and selling custom lures after working at a tackle shop and uncovering a passion for fishing.

"I really enjoyed making bass jigs and spinner baits, and that evolved into a full-fledged business that taught me how to manage money, grow a customer base and market products," says King. "Without FFA, I might not have taken the leap to start my business, and that would have been a shame because it did so much for me."

King still creates customized lures upon request and can be contacted via **facebook.com/LaneKingFishing** and through email at **lanekingfishing@gmail.com.**

Post your business in the Forever Blue Network Business Directory.



County Line FFA member Jake Shotzman shows a lamb at the county fair.

DIFFERENTLY ABLED, SIMILARLY INVOLVED

Two FFA advisors share how they cultivated classrooms and experiences for students with disabilities. – By Lauren Denton

December 3 marks the 20th annual International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The observance is threefold: raise awareness, establish support and celebrate all individuals' impact. These goals include advocacy and inclusion, which positions FFA as a model where all students not only belong but also thrive.

"Agriculture is so broad. There are so many diverse opportunities to find something students with disabilities want to be involved in," says Ron Koch, advisor for the County Line FFA Chapter in Branch, Ark. He taught Jake Shotzman, a 2017 graduate with cerebral palsy who uses a motorized wheelchair and a speaking device.

Koch knew Shotzman loved livestock, so he researched assistive technology and constructed a wheelchair attachment for leading lambs around a show ring — some of which went on to win county fair grand champion. "He was just so appreciative to be able to participate," Koch says.

Harrisburg FFA advisor Levi Jones of Arkansas, whose chapter vice president, Sadey Bowen, uses a wheelchair, shares a similar sentiment: "It's really an opportunity more than a disability," he says. "Sadey has found things to do that others haven't."

While Jones updated the ag building's entrance and provided a custom stool for welding, Bowen built her own shop table, and she can farm her own plot of soybeans after assistance into the cab.

Despite separate experiences, the two advisors' takeaways fall right in line.

COMMUNICATE OPENLY. Koch interviewed Shotzman's parents about the wheelchair's mechanics. Jones communicates directly with Bowen to learn what she needs.

OFFER THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES. "Jake just wanted to do the same things as his classmates," Koch says. Jones adds, "If Sadey can't do something, none of us are going to do it."

KEEP YOUR MIND AND EYES OPEN. "Sometimes it's fly by the seat of your pants," says Jones, referring to the time Bowen's classmates carried her down flights of stairs to watch the rodeo at the National FFA Convention. Similarly, Koch didn't consider that wood shavings might interfere with Shotzman's wheelchair. "His brother cleared them out of the way as they piled up in the show ring," he says.

"Sadey has taught me more in three years than I could have taught her in 40." - Levi Jones

HELP STUDENTS FIND THEIR PASSIONS AND SOURCE THE RESOURCES THEY NEED. "Any educator would understand that we do our job for the students," Koch says. "If that's our philosophy, we need to do our best."

Let them teach you. Says Jones: "Sadey has taught me more in three years than I could have taught her in 40."





Harrisburg FFA ensures all opportunities are accessible for all members.

Photography: Courtesy of Levi Jones and Ron Koch

NATIONAL FFA OFFICER

Question & Answer

The National FFA Convention & Expo is upon us once again. What's one thing you think all convention attendees should do while they're in Indianapolis or tuning in online?



'22 WA

Cole Baerlocher

NATIONAL FFA PRESIDENT

Whether you're experiencing convention in person in Indy or online at home, there are memories to be made. One thing I think every student should experience at national convention is the Agriscience Fair! I enjoy getting to see what members have discovered through their hard work and research — and I always learn something new.



'22 DE

Jackson Sylvester

NATIONAL FFA SECRETARY

Every year at the National FFA Convention, I am sure to make time for the expo. I love to walk through the booths and interact with all the people there. I love seeing how each display exhibits some of the latest innovation and technology in American agriculture!



'22 GA

Erik Robinson

SOUTHERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT

For members who can come to Indianapolis, I challenge you to try to take a picture with members from every state association showing off the backs of your jackets. It's a fun challenge I've seen members try! For those tuning in online, I encourage you to gather people from our chapters and communities and have a giant convention watch party.



'22 KY

Mallory White

EASTERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT

Every convention attendee should try to connect with attendees from at least five other states. Convention is a time for all our state associations to come together and recognize the thread that weaves us together. We should take advantage of the unique opportunity to connect with our peers from across the country.



'22 WI

Cortney Zimmerman

CENTRAL REGION VICE PRESIDENT

One of my favorite things to do at national convention is gathering your chapter together for a chapter dinner. My home chapter did this — we all go to a restaurant and sit at one long table. So many memories are made sitting at the table, including laughing with each other and recapping our day. It also is a good time to give your feet a break after a long day at the expo!



'22 OR

Josiah Cruikshank

WESTERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT

Regardless of where you experience convention, embrace the people around you. Take a moment to thank a parent, advisor or supporter. Form a new connection with another FFA member. Make someone else's life better. In my experience, the people around me have been what's made convention so special!

Photography: Copyright © FFA

AG 101

Automation in Agriculture

Agriculture innovations continue to expand rapidly, connecting technological advancements with food production. One particularly fast-growing technology in agriculture is automation.

By Lauren Manning • Illustration by Matt Wood

Automation improves efficiency and accuracy in food production, and it reduces the need for human labor. While some people are concerned that automation may put farmworkers and food producers out of jobs, many find these new tools make their jobs easier while improving profits. For instance, adding computer vision and artificial intelligence capabilities to automation helps identify problems or address issues that the human eye is unable to see. Automation can also alleviate problems that arise simply from routine human error.



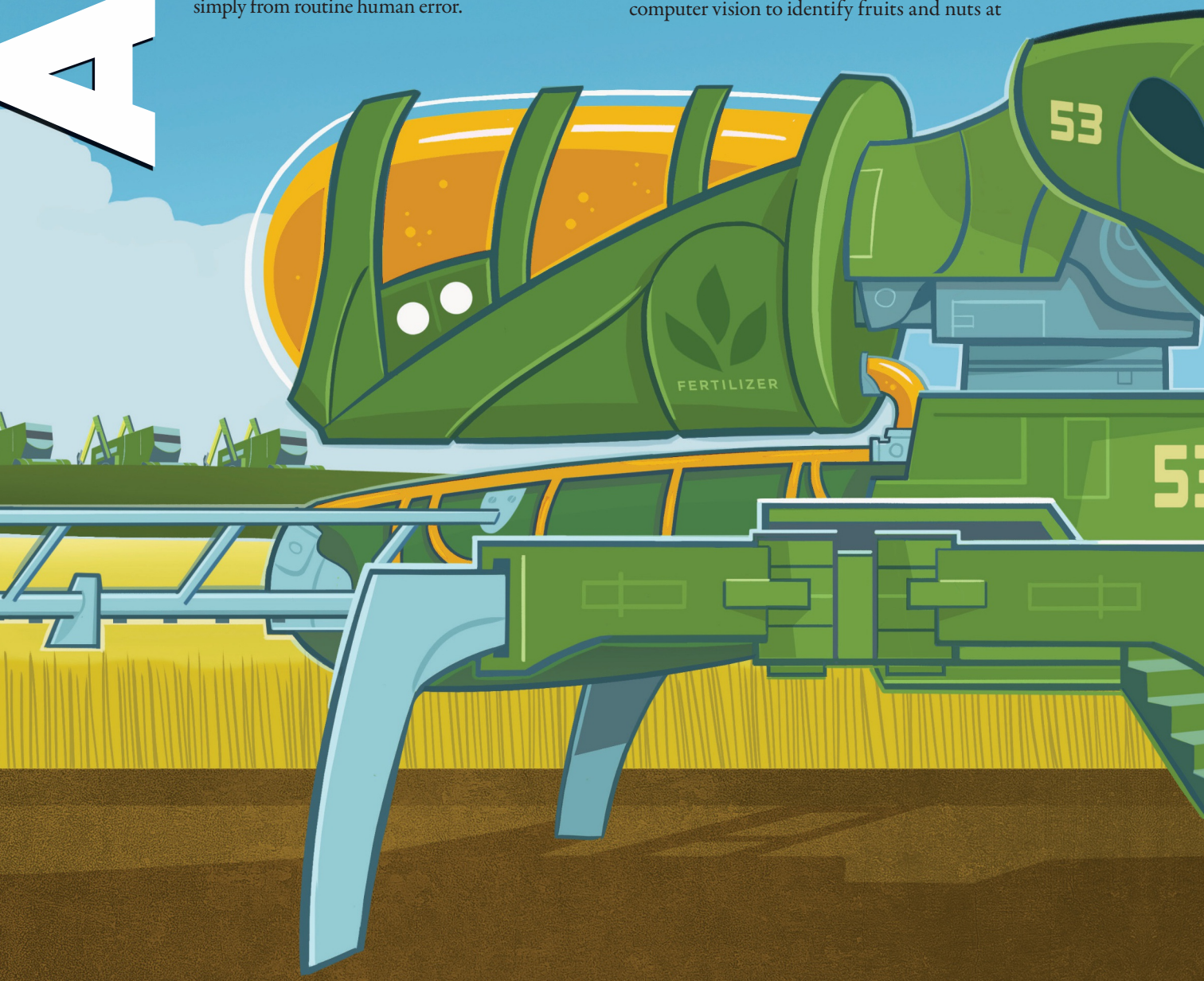
Automation Today

On the Farm

To help farmers tackle weeds around the clock, start-ups have created robots that can reduce reliance on chemical inputs and minimize soil disturbance. These **robots remove weeds** with a variety of methods, such as electrical shock and extraction.

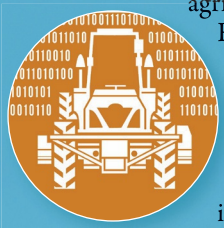


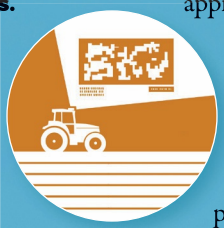
Autonomous robots are also used to **harvest specialty crops** such as strawberries and nuts. Outfitted with computer vision to identify fruits and nuts at



peak ripeness, robots harvest produce gently, reducing any bruising or damage.

One of the widest applications of automation in agriculture is **autonomous tractors.** From major companies like John Deere to burgeoning start-ups such as Bear Flag Robotics, driverless tractors offer farmers a way to get tasks done without spending hours in a tractor cab.





Automation is also being deployed for **crop scouting.** A start-up called Augmenta developed a plug-and-play device that scans and analyzes plants as a tractor moves to alert farmers of disease ahead of visual inspections. Sensors can also provide farmers with automated alerts for inclement weather, pest pressure and more, for a more proactive approach to yield-zapping problems.

Processors and Distributors

The processing and distribution sectors also benefit from an automation boost. As meat processors face increasing pressures, automation can help improve bottom lines through optimal production. Norwegian start-up Völur helps meat processors decide which cuts to harvest from a carcass to meet demand and reduce waste. Automation also helps food producers enhance food safety programs to identify defects the human eye cannot detect or contamination before it spreads.

Careers in Automation

A career at the intersection of agriculture and automation offers promise, given the growing opportunities. Consider a degree field beyond agriculture, such as **computer science, robotics and engineering.**

You can help automation grow in agriculture even if you don't intend to pursue a science or engineering degree.

Sales representatives assist farmers and food producers to understand which tools may be right for them.

Marketing communications professionals create effective communication strategies to tell the story of their product or service.

Customer service positions employ problem solvers and troubleshooters to help farmers operate a given technology.

Wherever your skills and passion collide, there's opportunity in automation.

Beefing Up Community Service

The pandemic created new opportunities for the Rio Rico FFA Chapter.

– By Jodi Helmer

At the beginning of the pandemic, when supply chain issues led to bare shelves in the supermarkets, Richard McPherson, agricultural education teacher and Rio Rico FFA advisor, started getting calls from concerned community members.

"They were hearing about the beef shortage in the news and wanted to know if we could raise cattle for them," McPherson recalls.

The Rio Rico FFA Chapter in Rio Rico, Ariz., was eager to help. The chapter officer team spent several weeks running numbers and working out the logistics to launch a cattle operation at the high school farm. The result: a student-led commercial feeding operation.

Residents purchase feeder cattle from local ranchers and importers, and students raise them to market weight, which takes about seven months. Students divide the responsibilities, taking turns feeding, watering and monitoring the health of the cattle.

When it's time to process the animals, they're transported from the high school farm to local processing facilities, including the meat processing program at Gilbert High School in Gilbert, Ariz. Residents then pick up their cuts from the processor.

The FFA chapter doesn't own the cattle or sell the beef, simplifying the operation, according to McPherson. Community members purchase the cattle and pay Rio Rico FFA for the feed and care.



Rio Rico FFA members run a commercial feeding operation and get hands-on experience raising beef cattle. They monitor the herd's health and care from horseback.

Since 2020, Rio Rico FFA has raised and processed 12 head of Charolais cattle for the local community. Funds from the feeding operation are used to cover the cost of feed and vet care. The remaining revenue goes toward FFA jackets, travel and competition fees.

The funding is helpful but McPherson believes the experience is the biggest return on investment.

"It's a real-life scenario and taking any shortcuts, like missing a feeding or not feeding the cattle enough, results in the livestock not performing," McPherson says. "The students are learning valuable lessons from this."

Even though he comes from a ranching family, Rio Rico FFA member Gerardo Verdugo appreciated the opportunity to expand his understanding of cattle management practices and behavior.

"Taking care of cows and watching them grow up is a huge responsibility and takes a lot of knowledge," he says.

Rio Rico FFA member Jesus Mohinea has a part-time job at a local cattle ranch and understands what it takes to get beef from farm to table. He appreciates that other FFA members are learning about the beef industry too.

"It's very important that students know where their food comes from," he says. "Raising cattle on the school farm teaches them about the beef industry and how much goes into producing the food on their tables."

Residents purchase feeder cattle from local ranchers and importers, and students raise them to market weight, which takes about seven months.

Photography: Getty, 1st Gallery; courtesy of Richard McPherson



AGREE to DISAGREE

LEARN HOW TO RESPECTFULLY HANDLE DISAGREEMENTS AMONG PEERS AS BOTH A MEMBER AND LEADER OF YOUR FFA CHAPTER.

– By Jessica Walker Boehm

No matter how tight-knit your FFA chapter is, conflict is bound to arise occasionally, which can create unwelcome tension and result in an unpleasant group environment.

However, when equipped with the right strategies and tools, you can overcome disagreements respectfully. In the process, you can even cultivate a stronger, more inclusive organization that's built to last.

"People will always have differing opinions and ways of viewing the world, and it's not productive to interrogate someone's identity," says Brandon Bell, the North America diversity and inclusion lead at Syngenta. "The key is to come together and identify common needs and goals to not only meet in the middle, but also collaborate and work toward the mutual goal."

Bell, who also serves as the National FFA Organization executive in residence for organizational development and culture, encourages FFA members to view conflicts and differences as opportunities for innovation rather than insurmountable obstacles.

"If all parties are passionate about agriculture, for example, that's a great place to start," Bell says. "The focus can then turn from the differences themselves to leveraging those differences in a way that draws more people to FFA. What appeared to be an impediment becomes a catalyst for growth when everyone's purpose and end goal align. It's not about compromise; it's about joining hands and creating community."

In leadership roles, Bell emphasizes the importance of keeping community at the forefront and making decisions based on what's best for the group.

He recommends leaders strive to be solution-oriented while remaining collaborative and aiming to meet their community members where they are. This requires thinking more broadly, engaging in respectful dialogue — not debate — and focusing on turning conflict into consensus.

"As a leader, you are leading with your values, but you're serving people who both will and will not share those values," Bell says. "Because this is the reality, leaders need to be objective and not lean so much into their values that they cannot connect with people who hold different views and beliefs. In other words, you can be authentic and true to yourself while still putting yourself in someone else's shoes."

In addition, Bell encourages leaders to acknowledge and be honest about their limitations, biases and imperfections. Self-awareness goes a long way, he says. Without it, Bell says one cannot be a strong, effective leader.

"There are very few people who won't meet you halfway when you are genuine, truthful and humble," Bell says. "You don't have to have all the answers, but you do have to know yourself well enough to identify and own your shortcomings."

Photography: Getty, hocus-focus



Barren County FFA member Mary Schalk

A Force of Nature

Barren County FFA member Mary Schalk is a hero in a storm.

By Jodi Helmer | Photography by Tyler Smith

Mary Schalk will never forget the destruction she witnessed in Kentucky in December 2021.

The Barren County High School junior heard news reports about the tornado-ravaged western Kentucky communities of Mayfield, Princeton, Dawson Springs and Bremen. Looking down from the cockpit of her 1952 Beechcraft Bonanza as she prepared to land at the Mayfield Graves County Airport, the impact of the natural disaster came into perspective.

"It shocked me. I'd never seen anything like that," she recalls. "It kind of tore me apart."

Flying airplanes has been a part of Schalk's life since her father and uncle started flying when she was in kindergarten. She has been certified to fly solo or with another pilot since early 2021.

"I have always loved everything about flying and the different perspective you have on life and the world," Schalk says.

Schalk made her first one-hour flight to the Kentucky communities impacted by the tornadoes on Dec. 12, 2021, just 48 hours after the storm.

The Barren County FFA member was one of several pilots who delivered supplies. Her plane was loaded with bottled water, nonperishable foods, clothing, toiletries and other donated items.

She made two additional trips, delivering more supplies to Madisonville, Ky., on Dec. 14 and bringing Christmas gifts to affected communities on Dec. 22. Each time, she met local residents, heard their stories and felt inspired to continue helping.

"My dad always told me to lead by example. I'm someone who's not going to talk about it — I'm going to go do something and have the proof that I did it," she says. "I think having the mindset that I needed to react quickly and

Mary Schalk flew solo in her personal airplane across the state of Kentucky to deliver supplies to tornado victims.



needed to do something because there were so many people hurting really pushed me and gave me the confidence to go out there."

Inspiration Takes Flight

In helping communities in western Kentucky, Schalk also inspired her FFA chapter to step up.

"I think me personally going out and helping the people who were affected by the tornadoes really brought our chapter together because the members realized we can have an impact and make a difference," she says. "After I took the initiative, they added to it and said, 'This is what our FFA chapter is doing.'"

Barren County FFA advisor Andy Moore says Schalk's volunteerism following the tornadoes had a ripple effect.

"I think what Mary did let her fellow FFA members know that students can take charge and have a passion and stand out there on their own limb and make something happen," he says. "I've never known a farmer or an agriculturist in my life who just admits defeat. When there's not a way, you make a way, and I wouldn't expect anything different from our FFA members."

In addition to collecting donations for Schalk to deliver to storm-torn communities, the Barren County FFA Chapter decided to donate extra fruit from their fundraiser to residents in Bowling Green where the tornadoes had a major impact.

Moore and his fellow agricultural education teachers loaded a cattle trailer full of fruit and embarked on a road trip to get it into the hands of those in need. It was delivered to a school that served as temporary housing for tornado victims.

"Even though the ag teachers helped make that happen, the FFA members encouraged it, they were in favor of it, it was their fundraiser," Moore says. "When young kids have ambition and they create the initiative to go do something, that's a big attention-getter."

Photography: Courtesy of Mary Schalk





Schalk made multiple trips with a plane full of much-needed supplies provided by generous community members.

Blue Skies Ahead

Schalk had the support of her family, FFA advisors and chapter members — plus her desire to make a difference — to motivate her to continue giving back to storm-torn communities. In the process, Moore believes she became an inspiration to her fellow FFA members, her community and a much wider audience who heard about a high school student piloting a plane solo to deliver supplies following the tornadoes.

"Mary's story is much bigger than a 16-year-old and an airplane and a tornado," Moore says. "Young people will read her story and feel encouraged. Older people will read her story and feel reassured that the FFA spirit is as strong as ever.

"Mary could have sat back, could have talked herself out of it, could have just thought about it, could have just planned on doing something, but Mary just did it," he adds. "She got in that plane and made it happen."

Schalk appreciates the accolades, but recognition is not her goal. Instead, she hopes that exemplifying the "Living to Serve" motto encourages others to do the same.

"I want people to realize that natural disasters are going to happen and there's not much we can do to stop them. If you're available and you have the resources to help, be there to help as much as you can," she says. "Try not to be intimidated by the situation. Gather your courage and go in there with a smiling face because sometimes that's all people need: a smiling face and some kind of hope." •

Kentucky Chapters Pitch In

FFA chapters across Kentucky stepped up to help communities affected by the storms.

The **Nicholas County FFA Chapter** partnered with Future Business Leaders of America and Family, Career and Community Leaders of America chapters for a "Donating Dollars" event to raise money and gift cards for storm-ravaged communities. The event raised more than $2,100.

"The assistance others showed our community warranted our assistance to those impacted in western Kentucky," says Cameron Earlywine, agricultural education teacher and Nicholas County FFA advisor.

At Seneca High School in Louisville, Ky., members of the **Seneca FFA Chapter** collected donations, including flashlights, headlamps, batteries, work gloves, socks, blankets, towels, sheets and other items from students, staff, community members and local businesses for storm-ravaged communities.

"After seeing the devastation, our students knew that we had to do something in order to assist those who were affected by the tornadoes," says Kristan Wright, Seneca FFA advisor. "Once we dropped our items off, the shelter was so full that it couldn't take in more items."

The **Caldwell County FFA Chapter** in Princeton, Ky., experienced the effects of the storms firsthand. Several teachers, students and families lost everything. Students helped with cleanup efforts, baked cookies to deliver to workers and distributed gift cards and supplies from other FFA chapters nationwide.

"I never once asked the students to show up. They were always willing to help, stay late and work hard in all conditions and they put in some exhausting hours," says Caldwell County FFA advisor Magen Woods. "They worked right through the holidays and never complained. I've never been so proud of my students as I was after the Dec. 10 tornado." •



Trash to Treasure

TO SOLVE A PROBLEM IN HIS COMMUNITY, MILES LEE CREATED AN AWARD-WINNING SAE THAT'S BUILT TO LAST.

– By Jessica Boehm

Miles Lee grew curious about soil quality, food waste and the decomposition process after smelling the unpleasant odors emitted from the landfill across the road from his northern Georgia home. He followed his curiosity and along the way, he discovered his passion.

"The landfill was getting bigger and bigger, and it got me thinking about the amount of trash and waste we're creating," says Lee, an alumnus of the Arabia Mountain FFA in Lithonia, Ga. "In middle school, I learned how worms break down food through a vermicomposting project. I realized there are better ways to manage waste and care for our planet by reducing our impact."

When he entered high school in 2017, Lee joined Arabia Mountain FFA and, as a freshman, launched a composting supervised agricultural experience (SAE). Lee built a composting bin from donated wood pallets. He began adding fruits and vegetables from the cafeteria and food waste from local businesses, including coffee grounds from Starbucks.

The summer before his junior year, a storm destroyed his bin and Lee had to rebuild. Rather than seeing this as a setback, he turned it into an opportunity to create something even better.

"In 2019, I raised about $600 in donations to build a more permanent composting structure," Lee says. "I trained other agriculture students to use and maintain it, and it's still on the Arabia Mountain High School campus today."

His FFA advisor, Sabrina Davis, knew he'd created something special. She encouraged Lee to apply for a National FFA Agricultural Proficiency Award during his senior year. He was a national finalist in 2021.



Miles Lee enriches soil with compost created from food waste.

"Without Ms. Davis, I never would have applied for the award in the first place," Lee says. "She saw something in me and pushed me to reach goals I didn't believe I could achieve. Now my legacy lives on at my alma mater, and I can say I was the first national proficiency award finalist in the environmental and natural resource systems category from the state of Georgia — that's incredible."

Lee is majoring in sustainable agriculture with a concentration in plant and soil science at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. He is excited to begin an internship with the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Resources Conservation Service and looks forward to building upon what he learned through his SAE.

"I never thought FFA would make such a significant impact on my life," he says. "Not only did it help me find the career path I want to follow, but it also helped me grow my confidence and see how my actions could make a difference in my community and beyond."

Photography: Getty Images, Viorika; courtesy of Miles Lee



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FINDING LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

FOR THIS FFA ALUMNA, MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES LED TO A BIGGER COMMUNITY AND NEW SENSE OF PURPOSE.

– By Jodi Helmer

As a child, Maddison Caldwell experienced racing thoughts, trouble sleeping and constant worries. It wasn't until she took a psychology class at Lake Land College in Mattoon, Ill., that she realized these could be symptoms of anxiety.

In 2016, Caldwell, now 24, made an appointment with her family doctor in Elmwood, Ill. She was diagnosed with depression and anxiety and referred to a therapist, but treatment didn't help.

"The therapist didn't understand the agriculture lifestyle," she says. "The system failed me."

The Elmwood FFA alumna felt helpless. In 2019, Caldwell attempted suicide.

The suicide rate among youth ages 10 to 24 increased more than 57% between 2007 and 2018, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death in this age group. The risks are especially high among rural youth, according to Ron Manderscheid, an adjunct professor in the department of mental health at Johns Hopkins University and former executive director of the National Association for Rural Mental Health.

"In rural areas, there is often a lack of access to mental health and suicide prevention resources," says Manderscheid. "If no one is talking to you about it in your school or community, you won't know about programs that can help."

Following her suicide attempt, Caldwell was admitted for inpatient treatment. She put on her game face, followed the rules and graduated from the program. In April 2020, four months after completing inpatient treatment, Caldwell made a second suicide attempt.

"From the outside looking in, I had the perfect life," she recalls. "I won National FFA proficiencies, traveled all over the U.S. showing cattle and pigs, and had a full tuition scholarship to junior college. I had so much support, but something wasn't right in my brain."

Caldwell attended outpatient treatment in Chicago where the right combination of medication and therapy put her on the road to recovery. She also started talking to others about her experiences.

"I became more open to talking about the fact that things weren't good and talking about it helped me," Caldwell says.

Caldwell has started sharing her story whenever she can. She hopes one day she'll take the stage as the keynote speaker at the National FFA Convention & Expo to share her story and talk about the importance of seeking help.

"I thought I was the only one feeling like I did, and I struggled silently," she says. "We can't be afraid to talk about it."

Photography: Getty Images, Boris Zhitkov; courtesy of Maddison Caldwell



Jocelyne Juarez

Paving Their Paths in Agriculture

By Jessica Walker Boehm
Photography by Jeff Noble



Ivan Trujillo

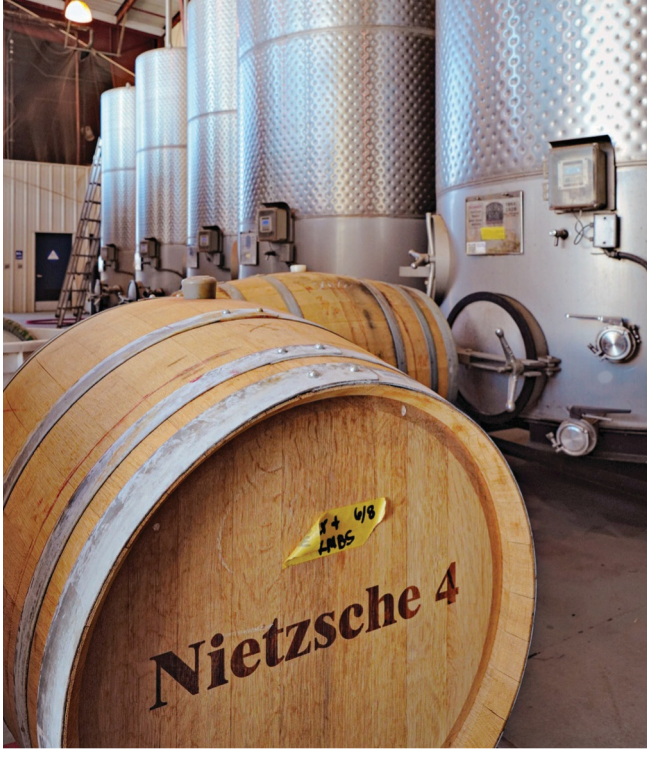
These three Latino-American FFA members and alumni celebrate their agricultural heritage and prepare for their own careers in ag.

"My grandparents worked in the fields in Mexico before immigrating to California, and I remember my grandpa on my dad's side coming home from long days working in the vineyards. I grew up understanding that my grandparents made sacrifices so my parents could be born in the U.S., go to college and pursue their dreams here. Every day, I realize how lucky I am that I'm able to do the same."

Such is the story of Jocelyne Juarez, an alumna of the Wasco FFA in Wasco, Calif., and numerous other Latino-American FFA members and alumni who, inspired by family members who built careers


Tomas Perez









Above, clockwise from top left: Ivan Trujillo greets a dairy calf at the Fresno State dairy. Student-made wine fills the barrels at the Fresno State winery. A curious dairy calf poses for a photo. Come feeding time, cattle gather at the troughs.

in production agriculture, set out to make their mark.

In the process, they honor their rich heritage and their family legacies and prove that sometimes the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

Read on to learn how three Latino-Americans plan to pave their own paths in agriculture.

Paying It Forward

Juarez, who recently earned a bachelor's degree in agricultural education with a specialization in animal science from California State University, Fresno (Fresno State), says she knew from a young age that she wanted to follow in her parents' footsteps and become a teacher. It wasn't until FFA that she decided to focus on agricultural education.

"I joined Wasco FFA as a freshman at the encouragement of my agricultural biology teacher," says Juarez, a second-generation Latino-American who is now pursuing a master's degree in agricultural sciences and a teaching credential at Fresno State. "Even though I came from an agricultural family, I really didn't know what FFA was, but it didn't take long for me to feel like I belonged."

In addition to competing in public speaking events and raising livestock, Juarez served as the Wasco FFA vice president, the South Valley Section president and the San Joaquin Region vice president. Juarez also attended the 2018 National FFA Convention as a national delegate, and as an undergraduate student was part of an FFA Field Day planning committee and an on-campus multicultural ambassadors program.

"One of my biggest takeaways from FFA is the incredible impact advisors can have on their members," Juarez says. "With the right leadership, an FFA chapter can become a family. That's powerful, and it's something I knew I wanted to be part of and help facilitate."

She looks forward to building a career in a role that combines her deep-rooted appreciation for agriculture and education, and hopes to return to her alma mater to support the next generation of leaders in ag.

Top: Tomas Perez handles a pen of pigs. Bottom left: The Fresno State winery reminds Jocelyne Juarez of her Mexican roots. Bottom right: Wine grapes thrive at the Fresno State winery.

"I'd love to teach at Wasco High School and give back to the community that's given me so many opportunities," Juarez says. "I'm also passionate about helping young people who aren't as fortunate as I've been. My family worked hard and sacrificed a lot to help me, and I want to pay it forward."

Passion Meets Inspiration

Ivan Trujillo, an alumnus of the Greenfield FFA in California, is currently a junior at Fresno State.

"I've been surrounded by agriculture my entire life, and I can't imagine not working in the ag industry," Trujillo says. "My grandparents farmed in Mexico for several years. To this day, my grandfather still has a cattle operation. My parents followed in their footsteps, working in agriculture when we moved to California. Even though I don't plan to work in production agriculture, I can definitely trace my career choice back to my upbringing."

Trujillo, a first-generation Latino-American, says his background in agriculture made him a perfect fit for FFA, where he explored a wide range of opportunities. Along with serving in leadership roles in his chapter and participating in horticulture and floriculture events, he raised two heritage breeds of livestock, one











Above: Latino heritage is on display at Fresno State. Left: Perez pauses in an almond grove.

of which was a 78-pound record-breaking goat at the 2019 Salinas Valley Fair.

"I wanted to experience as much as possible in FFA," Trujillo says. "In the process, I was inspired by one of my agriculture teachers and I decided agricultural education was the path for me. I hope to inspire my future students in a similar way. Whether or not they choose to work in agriculture, I want to be a source of encouragement and show them they can do anything they put their minds to."

Trujillo also notes he's excited to represent his culture as an agriculture teacher and an FFA advisor while doing his part to ensure young people from all backgrounds and walks of life can find a home in FFA.

"My family didn't understand why I'd want to be an agriculture teacher at first, but then I explained my vision and the difference I believe I can make," says Trujillo, who remains active in FFA as a college student by serving as a conference facilitator for California FFA and an FFA ambassador at Fresno State. "They're proud of me and they look forward to seeing what I accomplish in my career."

Becoming Part of the Solution

A junior at Mendota High School and a member of Mendota FFA in Mendota, Calif., Tomas Perez is no stranger to agriculture, and he plans to keep it that way.

"Anything that has to do with agriculture excites me," says Perez, a first-generation Latino-American. "I've worked in the fields since I was about 7 years old. My dad was a foreman on a farm and would take me to work on the weekends and during the summer. As I got older, he started to give me my own jobs to complete on the farm, and my responsibilities have continued to grow."

Perez still spends summers, weekends, some afternoons and evenings in the fields, giving him a unique perspective that he documents on his YouTube channel, "Trabajador Nato," which translates to "Born Worker."

"I record the jobs I do, like putting up fences or working with crops like tomatoes, almonds and pistachios, and I post them for others to see," Perez says. "It allows me to be creative while also sharing



Above: Juarez plans to pursue a career in agricultural education.
Right: Trujillo's career path is inspired by his family's agricultural heritage.

something that many people might never see firsthand."

Perez's work has helped shape his career aspirations too. After college, he hopes to find a position where he can make improvements to the production side of agriculture, making jobs easier and less taxing for those in the fields.

"Anyone who works on a farm knows it can be very challenging," Perez says. "It's hard labor often done in extreme heat, sometimes exceeding 100 degrees, and the days are long. I want to make things better for people who have done this kind of work for many years and for those who will take over."

Even though Perez stays busy on the farm and at school, currently enrolled in both high school and college courses, he continues to make time for FFA and plans to raise a goat to show and sell at his local county fair.

"I love FFA because there's so much to learn, and it feels like there are endless opportunities to try new things," Perez says. "I believe that many of the things I'm learning in FFA will help me in the future, especially combined with all I've learned while working in agriculture alongside my family." •



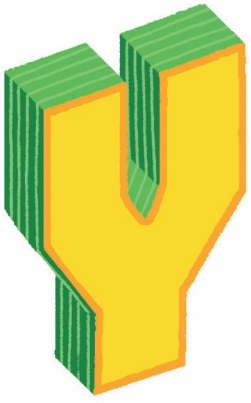
Writing His Own Story

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70 YEARS OF FFA STORIES

FFA New Horizons celebrates a milestone.

Take a tour of National FFA publications past and present to see how the organization — and this magazine — have evolved.



You can find them in doctor's offices across the country. They line the checkout aisles of grocery stores. They arrive through the mail at our homes. Magazines have been an important communications tool since the first literary reviews were published in the 1800s. Distribution of the written word, including pamphlets that drove the American Revolution and gossip sheets of the Victorian era, has developed culture and fostered knowledge transfer throughout society.

The first agricultural magazine, *The Agricultural Museum*, was published in 1810 and served as a "repository of valuable information to the farmer and manufacturer and the means of a free communication of sentiment and interchange of ideas on the important subjects of their occupation," as stated on the cover of the magazine. In other words, it was a publication by farmers, for farmers and about farming. Fast-forward more than 100 years, and the *National Future Farmer*, a publication for FFA members about FFA activities, hits members' mailboxes.

"It would be nearly impossible to measure the editorial impact of FFA publications," says Jack Pitzer, a longtime editor of FFA publications. "Thousands of FFA members have been inspired or motivated to greater achievement and found new ideas to start them on their way to success."

While browsing the National FFA Organization archives, you might run across the National FFA Board minutes from Oct. 7, 1950. The very last line on the very last page reads, "It was moved by Vice President King that the Board of Trustees and Advisory Council advise the delegates at the convention that we are working on a national magazine and have requested that it be published at the earliest possible date."

Since this motion was made more than 70 years ago, millions of copies of national FFA magazines have been circulated to FFA members across the country. "When I joined the magazine staff in the mid-1950s, our editorial

By **Bev Flatt** Illustrations by **Mary Kate McDevitt**


1950
1960
1970
1980
1990
2000
2020



policy at the time was to provide members a well-rounded combination of subject matter," Pitzer says. "In selecting articles for the magazine, we tried for a mix of 50 percent about FFA, 25 percent about agriculture, and 25 percent general youth interest."

Known today as *FFA New Horizons* magazine, each edition has shared inspiring, impactful and unique stories about members, alumni and supporters. Just as the news has evolved over the years, so has this publication.

Where American History and FFA Merge

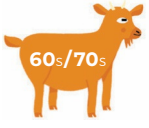
A historical timeline of moments that shaped U.S. agriculture and FFA.

The first national FFA publication was published in the late 1940s as *Future Farmers of America in Action*. It shared convention proceedings and functioned like a scrapbook, printing photos from various national events and programs. The first FFA publication commemorated the 7,188 FFA members who lost their lives while serving in the armed forces during World War II.



By 1952, the publication evolved into *The National Future Farmer* magazine. The cover featured alumnus Howard J. Miller of Tucson, Ariz., and the 1949 Miss America winner, Jacque Mercer. Writer Louis Bromfield covered the need for better farming practices and scientific methods to raise production. Best agricultural practices of that time included creating irrigation channels using dynamite. Robert Louis Ellis was featured in this issue for winning the New Farmers of America (NFA) top degree, Star Superior Farmer.

A few years later, in 1959, the world was caught up in a race to the moon. A decade before Neil Armstrong took his first steps there, FFA members were encouraged to prepare for "Agriculture in the Space Age" and study fields such as engineering, chemistry, pathology, genetics and business management.



Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, *The National Future Farmer* continued to document historical moments in U.S. history as reflected in FFA. President Lyndon B. Johnson spoke at the 40th National FFA Convention, the same convention where NFA and FFA merged, amid the American Civil Rights Movement. American agriculture was booming in the 1970s, but the energy crisis posed a big challenge for continued success, as noted in the editor's letter by Wilson Carnes in the August-September 1973 issue.

The 1980s farm crisis brought skyrocketing farm debt, soaring interest rates, low commodities prices and high input costs to farms. During that time, stories in the magazine expressed optimism for future agriculturists, sharing the promise of biotechnology to increase production. In 1989, the magazine changed names to become *FFA New Horizons*, representing a new era and a renewed faith in the future of agriculture.



True to its name, *FFA New Horizons* captured life-changing events through the turn of the century and beyond, including what the invention of the internet meant for agriculture, and member and chapter reactions to the attack on the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001.

Where Technological Advancements Are Predicted

The evolution of agricultural technology shown through FFA member experiences.

The pages of FFA publications shared practices and technologies that were ahead of the times. Pages within the fall 1980 issue predicted what agriculture might look like in the future. Before ethanol was a mainstream product, readers were encouraged to feed their cattle biomass by-products from energy production. Only a decade later, corn growers in the United States would lead the charge in ethanol production, which today produces by-products that are high-protein, high-fat and high-fiber feed for livestock.

Before the first genetically modified (GM) seed products hit the market, *The National Future Farmer* shared insights into plant breeding experiments. That same year, the first GM seeds were patented, and one year later, the magazine cover featured FFA members studying genetic engineering.

Early issues of the magazine recommended ways for members to simplify record keeping by hand. In 1988, *The National Future Farmer* shared how one FFA member won the Star in Agriscience, National Diversified Crop Production proficiency award and acceptance into a prestigious technology program — all in the same year — because of his ingenuity in using computers on the farm. Mark Knudson from North Dakota created programs from scratch that allowed him to track financial information, crop production records and compliance with government wheat and feed grain programs.

NEW HORIZONS 1952 AT 2022 70









1950s

The National Future Farmer magazine was first published in the fall of 1952. In the same decade, FFA members watched as the world began a race to the moon. Agriculture followed suit, focusing on developments in engineering, chemistry and more.

1960s

Amid the American Civil Rights Movement and the push for women's rights, FFA grew to include African-American males in 1965 and allowed for female membership starting in 1969.

1970s

Agriculture prospered in the 1970s, and FFA continued to grow in diversity. Articles in *The National Future Farmer* encouraged FFA members to pursue production agriculture careers, build business management skills and gain economic expertise.

1980s

Tides turned in the next decade, and agriculture faced its worst financial crisis since the Great Depression in the 1930s. Despite the challenge, FFA members saw promise to increase production through new technology, including biotechnology.

"I was a part of these publications for over half of my life. In all that time, I learned that magic happens in FFA."

— Jack Pitzer,
longtime editor of FFA publications

It was considered revolutionary at the time, but Knudson would likely complete all these tasks from his cell phone today, as smartphones and apps are tools for record keeping, crop monitoring, social media advocacy and more.

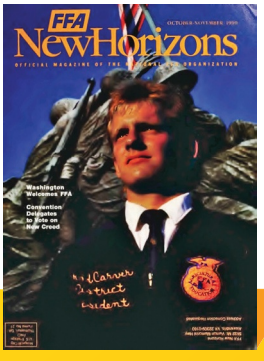
Where Members and Their Stories Shine

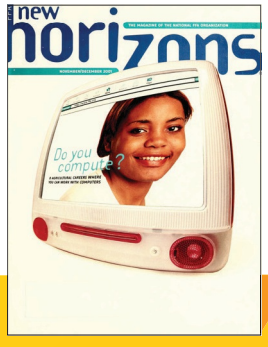
The many faces and experiences of FFA members, alumni and supporters.

FFA members, alumni, and supporters today represent a variety of faces, places and experiences. Throughout the decades, FFA publications have documented how the organization has grown.

As early as the first issue of *The National Future Farmer*, both men and women have graced the cover. However, the first female farmer wasn't spotlighted until 1959, before females gained FFA membership. Mary Jane Zipse of Mt.

Explore past issues of *FFA New Horizons.*









1990s

The FFA magazine began a new decade with a new name: *FFA New Horizons*. With a renewed sense of faith in agriculture, FFA members embraced the changes in agriculture with optimism.

2000s

The invention of the internet changed agriculture — and the world — forever. Careers combining tech and agriculture emerged overnight. FFA members began using the internet to create efficiencies in record keeping and information sharing.

2010s

Technology took the wheel through the next decade. Stories in *FFA New Horizons* captured members using high-tech tools in classrooms, shops, greenhouses and on farms all across the country.

Today

To celebrate the 70th Anniversary of *FFA New Horizons*, editors reflect on the growth of FFA as documented through these pages. A bright future is ahead, and *FFA New Horizons* continues to share stories that connect and inspire FFA members everywhere.

Morris, Ill., grew up in agriculture and always knew she wanted to work on the farm. Her advisor, Melvin Burkhalter, is quoted: "She could have been an American Star Farmer herself if girls were eligible." Ten years later, females were granted FFA membership. Another decade later, Debbie Nelson of Canton, Minn., became the first female FFA member on the cover of *The National Future Farmer* for her work in the equine industry.

Other notable magazine covers include moments with members who represented the true cultural diversity within the National FFA Organization. In a 1954 issue, Floyd Middle River of the Blackfoot tribe from Browning, Mont., was recognized for his part in a tribal dance showcase at the National FFA Convention. In 1981, Hispanic-American and African-American members were represented for the first time by Nicholas Juan of the Baboquivari FFA Chapter in Arizona and Dwaine Rowe of the Paris FFA Chapter in Tennessee.

Scrolling through the 100-plus archived copies of FFA publications marries the worlds of FFA timelines and U.S. history. Their advertisements reflect the evolution of agricultural machinery and technologies. As FFA has evolved, its magazines have shown growth and change through its members. These moments are forever memorialized because of a single motion at a National FFA Board meeting and the work behind *FFA New Horizons*.

"I'm 80 years old now, and I was a part of these publications for over half of my life," Pitzer says. "In all that time, I learned that magic happens in FFA. Members in towns all across America learn things that their families and teachers never even knew existed. They learn what they want to do in their lives and have a big impact on agriculture." •

Surprising Career Paths To Sustainability

An FFA alumnus and rendering expert shares some less-recognized roles for making an impact.

– By Lauren Denton

Pursuing a career in sustainability is a bit like tossing seed into an open field: Given the right conditions, you could land and grow anywhere.

"It depends how you define *sustainability,"* says Kerry Courchaine, director of technical services at Darling Ingredients, a century-old company with the tagline, "We create solutions that sustain life."

In general, Courchaine says, the No. 1 consideration is to "associate with a company that focuses on using its resources to give back to the community and company equally, while also pouring back into the world and its resources."

With that outlook, you may be surprised what roles you find. Courchaine certainly was.

The Newton County FFA alumnus from Georgia started out, not unlike many FFA members, with a general interest in animals and a general goal to "have an impact on the ag industry" but no specific career path in mind. After graduating from the University of Georgia with bachelor's and master's degrees in animal science, he managed a hog farm in Virginia for a few years before returning to Georgia for what he thought was a job at a feed mill.

What he stumbled upon was his real passion: rendering, an innately sustainable industry. Rendering is the process of repurposing waste materials into new products.



"We were sustainable before anyone knew what it was," says Courchaine, whose first rendering role was recycling poultry parts to make animal food. He now supervises and supports quality assurance and product safety teams at the world's largest independent rendering company. Some of his responsibilities include lobbying for livestock feed quality and coordinating with U.S. government agencies to mitigate animal disease outbreaks.

Courchaine encourages today's students to consider a similar career. "Much of this generation's passion is about being advocates and being responsible. Darling's mission is all about giving back. If people knew what we were doing, I think they'd be on board in a heartbeat," he says.

Photography: Courtesy of Kerry Courchaine

UNDER-THE-RADAR CAREERS THAT FIT COURCHAINE'S DEFINITION OF *SUSTAINABLE*

- Human resources: "You're investing in employees to retain them."
- Environmental affairs: "A more obvious career path that directly manages resources."
- Welders, electricians, and other mechanical-trade jobs: Quality-built equipment can enhance efficiency and increase outputs. "Making more with less is a very sustainable message."

SKILLS AND SUBJECTS COURCHAINE SUGGESTS MIGHT HELP YOU THRIVE IN A SUSTAINABILITY CAREER

- Operations: "This is the nitty-gritty of what we do in rendering."
- Economics: "You can help interpret legislation and rulemaking."
- Marketing: "Learn how to promote and sell sustainable products."
- Working with people.
- Mechanical skills.
- Interest in hands-on tasks.
- FFA and agricultural education: "A lot of FFA members already know what it means to be a good steward. Agricultural education provides a foundation for a career in sustainability."

Discover career opportunities and connect with FFA members, alumni and supporters on the Forever Blue Network.

CREATING CONNECTIONS

Through her varied work in agriculture and beyond, FFA alumna Bailey Rayford has learned the importance of networking and fostering diversity — and how FFA contributes to both. – By Bev Flatt

Growing up, Bailey Rayford felt singled out at many points in her FFA journey. She was the first African-American regional FFA officer in her area of North Carolina. She was the only African-American woman to attend leadership camp or be a delegate to state convention. When attending the Washington Leadership Conference, she was the only scholarship recipient to come from a Black farming family.

"Being the 'first' or the 'only' could be seen as a negative thing, but I feel it gave me an advantage," Rayford says. "Through my experiences, I found confidence and belief in myself. I was supposed to be in those rooms at those times."

Today, Rayford draws on her FFA experiences in her daily life. She manages the family businesses, which include logistics, real estate and agriculture. On the family farm, which was established by her great-great-great-grandfather after slavery was abolished, they raise cattle, row crops and ornamental trees.

"It's never felt like juggling; it's just how I was raised," Rayford says. "Diversification is what I've grown up in and what I know — anything from diversifying crops to our revenue sources."

In addition, Rayford sits on the North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University advisory board and recently joined the Diversity Action Team in Agriculture at Purdue University. "Diversity has been ingrained in who I am," she says.

With diversity at her center, Rayford hopes to use her experiences to encourage students of color to join FFA.

"One goal of mine is to volunteer more," she says. "I want to be able to advocate for and work with students of color and get them more involved in FFA. I live in Indianapolis, and I want students in this city to understand there is an amazing organization that hosts its national convention here. I want them to be engaged and involved in FFA."

Rayford's vision applies to more organizations than just FFA.

"I believe all members and chapters and foundations and alumni groups should put time, effort and energy toward figuring out how to be inclusive," she says. "We've come a long way, but we still have work to do. When I was a member, this focus wasn't here. I have a daughter now who I hope will join FFA and be a part of the farm. I want her to have the same great FFA experiences I did, but I want it to be the norm for everyone in all organizations."









"Being the 'first' or the 'only' could be seen as a negative thing, but I feel it gave me an advantage. Through my experiences, I found confidence and belief in myself. I was supposed to be in those rooms at those times."

— Bailey Rayford

Clockwise from left: Bailey Rayford puts family first. Rayford's farming roots taught her the importance of diversity. Rayford's brothers play an important role in her life.

Photography: Courtesy of Bailey Rayford



ON THE RECORD: SAM EATHINGTON, PH.D.

The plant breeding expert helps farmers increase production and quality of their crops while also conserving natural resources.

– By Jessica Walker Boehm

“Be willing to try something new. Explore.”

– SAM EATHINGTON, PH.D.



Sam Eathington, Ph.D., a sixth-generation Illinois farmer recognized as the Illinois FFA Star Farmer in 1986, combines his background in production agriculture with a passion for science and technology in his role as executive vice president and chief technology and digital officer at Corteva Agriscience.

Not only does Eathington collaborate with scientists worldwide to create new hybrid crop variations and crop protection products, but he also works to identify innovative ways to conserve natural resources and create a more resilient, sustainable food production system.

Q: When did you first realize you were interested in plant genetics?

A: While working on my bachelor’s degree at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, I completed an internship with a seed company focused on plant breeding and genetics. Seeing firsthand how scientists and plant breeders worked with crops to enhance productivity and quality and make them more resistant to disease was fascinating. That was when I decided I wanted to become a plant breeder.

Q: What is the most rewarding part of your role at Corteva Agriscience, and what is the most challenging?

A: Helping farmers understand the opportunities available with hybrid crops, such as increasing production while reducing costs, is extremely rewarding. To see an innovation in a lab or a field and turn it into a product that farmers use around the world is special. My biggest challenge is wishing we could go faster. I see the problems we’re facing and how technology can help us solve them, but certain aspects of the global food system make it difficult to move quickly.

Q: What advice do you have for FFA members interested in pursuing a career in plant genetics?

A: Be willing to try something new. Explore. Try different internships, talk to people doing things you’re interested in and learn from them, and go after what you want. If you align your career with your passions and motivations, you’ll be excited to go to work and love what you do.

Q: Looking ahead, what are your predictions for the plant genetics industry?

A: We have a growing population, and we have to figure out how to produce more food. We need to do it in a way that isn’t as taxing on our natural resources. The solution is technology, and we have a lot of exciting things coming up in the next decade. After that, I’ll look to the next generation of scientists to lead us forward.

Photography: Getty Images, dszc; Courtesy of Corteva Agriscience

FFA in the USA

Agriculture is the leading industry in the world and most U.S. states. Read on for fun ag facts from each state FFA association.

— Compiled by Julie Woodard

Alabama

The town of Dothan is the peanut capital of the world and produces over 65% of peanuts in the U.S.

Alaska

Extended summer daylight has helped Alaska farmers claim a few world records, including a 19-pound carrot, 76-pound rutabaga and 127-pound cabbage.



Arizona

Arizona is home to the world's largest contiguous ponderosa pine forest, and it smells like vanilla.

Arkansas

Arkansas is the duck-hunting capital of the world, which pushes nearly $1 million into the state's economy every day of the season.

California



Coffee lovers, unite! California is the only state in the continental U.S. officially recognized as a coffee producer.

Colorado

The state is the leading U.S. producer of proso millet, which is primarily used in bird feed, but can also be used in human food, livestock feed and biofuel production.

Connecticut

In 1981, Connecticut was the first state to formally recognize aquaculture as a form of agriculture and currently has 70,000 acres of shellfish farms.

Delaware

The first U.S. state is home to more chickens than people, totaling 206 chickens per person at the time of this report.

Florida

About 95% of the state's citrus production is used for orange juice processing.

Georgia

World-renowned turfgrass is grown at the University of Georgia and used in the Olympic Stadium in Tokyo, Japan, at the Sydney Opera House in Australia and on golf courses across the globe.

Hawaii

More than 7,500 crop and livestock farms, averaging about 150 acres each, cover some 30% of Hawaii's land. Sugar cane is the leading crop.

Idaho

Idaho ranks first in the U.S. for the production of food-size trout, raising 72% of the nation's supply.

Illinois

The state contains 1,500 soil types that support an array of crops. The state takes top honors as the largest producer of horseradish and pumpkins.

Indiana

More than 80% of the state's land is designated as farms and forests.

Iowa

Iowa is first in the nation for corn, pork, ethanol, biodiesel and egg production.

Kansas

The state's farmers grow about 330 million bushels of wheat each year, which is enough to make 23 billion loaves of bread.

Kentucky

Although best known for horses, Kentucky's No. 1 agricultural commodity is poultry.

Louisiana

Timber! Louisiana's largest ag industry is forestry.

Maine

The state produces the most wild blueberries in the country and comes in second for maple syrup production.

Maryland

Did you know that most states have an official state soil? Maryland's is called sassafras, one of the oldest soils in the country.

Massachusetts

Massachusetts is home to the country's oldest fair, the Topsfield Fair, which has been around for more than 200 years.

Michigan

Michigan leads the nation in the production of milk per cow. The average Michigan dairy cow produces over 27,000 pounds of milk each year, which equals over 3,100 gallons.

Minnesota

Both turkeys and hogs in Minnesota outnumber the state's 5.7 million people.

Mississippi

The state's aquaculture industry ranks first in sales in the U.S. Most popular is its farm-raised catfish.

Missouri

Missouri ranks second in the country for the number of farms and yearly hay production.

Montana

One out of every six Montana workers is employed in an agriculture-related field.



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



Photography and Illustrations: Getty Images, Spauln, TravelCouples, Fernando Trabanco Fotografía, GaryAlvis, Filip Warulik, Yulia Reznikov

Nebraska
Nebraska is first in popcorn production and grows nearly 370 million pounds annually.

Nevada
Nevada is the driest state in the nation and has 44,000 acres of manufactured reservoirs.

New Hampshire
The state's top crops are apples, vegetables, sweet corn and maple products.

New Jersey
More than 200,000 acres of farmland in the state are forever protected for agricultural use.

New Mexico
New Mexico is the green chile capital of the world. The state produced 152 million pounds of green chiles in 2020.

New York
The Billion Oyster Project has restored 75 million oysters to New York Harbor as it rebuilds a habitat for hundreds of species.

North Carolina
North Carolina is the nation's top producer of strawberries and tobacco.



North Dakota
Over 39 million acres of land in North Dakota are owned, operated or managed by farmers and ranchers.

Ohio
Ohio is the nation's top producer of Swiss cheese.

Oklahoma
In 1972, the American bison was named Oklahoma's official state animal. Bison are well-suited for western Oklahoma, and are helping to restore the area to its natural state.

Oregon
Almost all hazelnuts grown in the United States are from Oregon's Willamette Valley.

Pennsylvania
More than 60% of all mushrooms in the U.S. are produced in Kennett Square, accounting for more than 525 million of the 796 million pounds produced.

Puerto Rico
The island's native crops include coffee, guineo (bananas), guava, mango, sweet potato, cacao, pineapple, avocado, papaya and chinas (mandarins).

Rhode Island
Rhode Island may be the smallest state in the U.S., but it's one of the mightiest when it comes to aquaculture, with 60 aquaculture operations.

South Carolina
The state is home to the 127-acre Charleston Tea Plantation, America's largest and oldest tea farm.

South Dakota
South Dakota is the nation's No. 1 producer of honey.

Wyoming
Hay leads the way in Wyoming. In 2019 alone, farmers and ranchers produced nearly **2.5** million tons.

Tennessee
Tennessee's meat goat production sector has grown rapidly and now ranks second in the nation.

Texas
More than 38,000 Texas farms are operated by female agriculturists.

Utah
The Great Salt Lake produces over 2 million pounds of salt per year.

Vermont
Vermont is the largest maple syrup producer in the United States and made over 2.22 million gallons in 2020. Total production in the U.S. that same year was 4.37 million gallons.

U.S. Virgin Islands
Beekeepers from this U.S. territory collect Africanized honey bees from the wild, residents' roofs, trees and abandoned buildings.

Virginia
The state is world-famous for its hams, but hams produced in the town of Smithfield are the only ones that can be called Smithfield hams.

Washington
The state produces more than 300 crops, including apples, blueberries, hops, pears, spearmint oil and sweet cherries — and ranks first in U.S. for production of each.

West Virginia
Of the farms in West Virginia, 95% are family-owned, which is higher than any other state.

Wisconsin
The state produces about 62% of the nation's cranberries, which has been Wisconsin's state fruit since 2004.

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

MEDIA CENTER

ARTS & CULTURE IN AGRICULTURE – By Jessica Wesson

TIKTOK

These state associations are must-follows on TikTok.

Delaware FFA: @delawareffa

Delaware FFA shares a boots-on-the-ground perspective before and during its state FFA convention. Watch as its state officers show their personalities through fun and creative videos.

Idaho FFA: @idahoffa

The Idaho FFA Association features the state officers and their journey during their year of service. Followers are also informed of announcements, info and events in a fun and engaging format.

Illinois FFA: @illinois.ffa

Follow along as Illinois FFA state officers continue their "Tasty Tuesday" series and share food recommendations from favorite restaurants. They also created a series called "Thoughtful Thursday" to share encouraging thoughts with followers.

Texas FFA: @texasffa

Texas FFA state officers share their daily lives with members from across the state. They shine a light on what it's like to be a state officer and the various opportunities Texas FFA has to offer.

Wisconsin FFA: @wisconsinffa

Follow along with Wisconsin FFA state officers and their "Ag Fun Fact" videos. They use TikTok as an education and advocacy stage. They also post insider videos, tips and tricks, and the best things about being an FFA member. You might get a laugh!

DOCUDRAMA

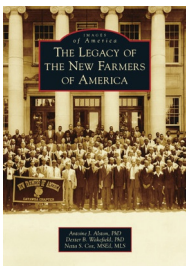
30 HARVESTS

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU ONLY HAD 30 HARVESTS LEFT?

Can farmers and ranchers solve the world's biggest problems — creating sustainable food systems and solving climate change — in just 30 harvests? Feeding more than 7 billion people by 2050 on less land, with fewer resources than ever and sustainably to protect the environment is a big ask. *30 Harvests* takes viewers to Jay Hill's farm in Dell City, Texas, as he strives to make his farm carbon negative. Hill along with farmer and soil scientist Meagan Kaiser of Bowling Green, Mo., shine a light on the challenges this generation of agriculturists face and the opportunities to create sustainable food systems and fight climate change.

BOOK

The Legacy of the New Farmers of America



A picture is worth 1,000 words. This historical picture collection showcases the history of the New Farmers of America through images from the past.

The New Farmers of America (NFA) was founded in 1927 for African-American boys studying vocational agriculture. NFA existed from 1927 to 1965, when it merged as a result of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 with what is now known as the National FFA Organization. The NFA has a rich history of contributing to American agriculture, as seen through the photos in this book.

Purchase your own NFA picture book here.

Photography: Courtesy of Arcadia Publishing, IUPUI Archives

FFA Moment

1947

Among the traditions at National FFA Convention & Expo, the National FFA Band has been a staple since the first group performed at the 20th National FFA Convention. More than 70 years ago, FFA members participated in the first FFA band tryouts for a seat in the ensemble, which features between 80 and 90 members each year. Today, members from across the country submit auditions online, then spend the week of convention rehearsing and performing. Musically gifted FFA members relish the chance to share their talents on the big stage, and convention attendees enjoy the entertainment — thanks to corporate donor Corteva Agriscience.





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