



TRENDING TOPICS

National FFA researches and determines 3-5 topics trending in agriculture, education and FFA each year. These topics are used throughout the advocacy and literacy platform, allowing us to provide better resources and education to FFA members.

Agriculture

- **Reauthorization of [the Farm Bill](#)**

The Farm Bill is a legislative package that Congress reauthorizes (or passes) approximately every five years. President Trump signed the last version into law in 2018 and extended it until September 2024. Twelve titles are included in the bill, and each has a broad impact on the future of agriculture. Portions of the Farm Bill were passed within the “One Big Beautiful Bill,” but many provisions still require attention from Congress, with farm organizations calling on Congress to act.

- [“The future of food and farm policy” by The Hill](#)
- [U.S. House Committee on Agriculture](#)
- [U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry](#)

- **Farm Labor**

The Trump administration has taken a hard-line stance on immigration, raising some concerns among agriculture producers and processors who often rely on immigrant and migrant workforces. Immigration enforcement on farms and in meat processing facilities has farm groups asking for relief to avoid impacts on their businesses and the American economy.

- <https://www.fb.org/issue/labor>
- <https://www.agworkforcecoalition.org/>
 - [USDA farm labor](#)

- **Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) / Public Perception of Agriculture**

The Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) Commission is led by Robert F. Kennedy, the Secretary of Health and Human Services. The MAHA Commission’s reports and work have been highly anticipated by the industry of agriculture. Some agricultural organizations have expressed concerns based on previous positions of Secretary Kennedy.

Statements from Chairman GT Thompson (House AG Committee) and Chairman John Boozman (Senate Ag Committee)

<https://agriculture.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=7918>

National Corn Growers Statement: <https://ncga.com/stay-informed/media/in-the-news/article/2025/05/statement-from-farmers-of-major-u-s-agriculture-groups-on-pending-maha-report>

MAHA Report: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/MAHA-Report-The-White-House.pdf>

- **Status of the Farm Economy**

Numerous places track the farm economy in a variety of ways. This gives insight into all aspects of production agriculture:

- [Purdue Ag Economy Barometer](#)
- [USDA Economic Research Center](#)

- **Trade/Tariffs**

American farmers are very efficient. In many commodity areas, producers grow more than American consumers can use, making exports highly valuable to ensure strong markets for farmers. However, trade negotiations to reach a final agreement are complex and take into consideration many geopolitical factors. Trade has been a long-standing concern and will continue in our global society, especially as the U.S. leverages tariffs to work toward new trade deals.

- [American Farm Bureau Federation Analysis](#).
- [Office of U.S. Trade Representative](#)
- [World Trade Organization](#)

- **Leadership in Agriculture**

The start of the Trump administration ushered in an early retirement program, resulting in a departure of about 15% percent of USDA's employees, according to news sources. Recently, the USDA announced a proposed [reorganization](#) of the department, transitioning work from the Washington, D.C., office to regional hubs. USDA has guaranteed that the functions of the department will continue with minimal interruption, but some stakeholder groups are concerned about the impacts of lost historical knowledge and opportunities for those unable to move to find employment.

<https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2025/07/24/secretary-rollins-announces-usda-reorganization-restoring-departments-core-mission-supporting>

- **Expansion of AI and Tech in and Across the Full Food Value Chain**

- **Precision agriculture and autonomous tech** are reshaping modern farming, requiring new CTE curriculum and career pathways in ag tech and data science.
 - [USDA: Precision Agriculture](#)
 - [Purdue AgFutures Lab](#)
- **AI in supply chain logistics and food systems** enhances efficiency and prediction in production, transport, and marketing.
 - [World Economic Forum: AI in Food Systems](#)
 - [McKinsey: Agriculture's Connected Future](#)
- **Blockchain and IoT drive transparency and sustainability**, impacting traceability from farm to table and shifting consumer expectations.
 - [IBM Food Trust](#)
 - [FAO: Digital Agriculture](#)

Education

- **The Transition of the Administration of Perkins**

This summer, the Trump Administration announced the move of the administration Perkins CTE funds from the Office of Career Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) to the Department of Labor. Some stakeholders have questioned the move. National FFA

has taken a position to ensure that Perkins Funding remains strong for local programs to succeed, regardless of the agency that administers the dollars.

Advance CTE statement: <https://careertech.org/blog/ed-dol-announce-new-partnership-amid-withheld-funding/>

U.S. Department of Labor announcement:

<https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/osec/osec20250715>

Trump Executive Order. Improving Education Outcomes by Empowering Parents, States, and Communities. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/improving-education-outcomes-by-empowering-parents-states-and-communities/>

Trump Executive Order. Preparing Americans for High-Paying Skilled Trade Jobs of the Future. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/04/preparing-americans-for-high-paying-skilled-trade-jobs-of-the-future/>

Interagency Agreement Status Report. https://careertech.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/FILE_6497.pdf

Advance CTE. ACTE & Advance CTE Deeply Concerned About Interagency Agreement that Threatens the Integrity of Career and Technical Education. <https://careertech.org/news/statement-acte-advance-cte-deeply-concerned-about-interagency-agreement-that-threatens-the-integrity-of-career-and-technical-education/>

Federal Funding

- Each year, the federal government appropriates (or spends) approximately \$1.4B on state formula grants (basic state grants), directly impacting the flow of dollars into local career and technical education programs. As this number expands and contracts through the federal budgeting process, the investment made at the local level has a corresponding relationship. Groups like the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) advocate annually for increased investment in Perkins. [Perkins Collaborative Resource Network – State Allocations](#)
- [Perkins V \(Advance CTE\)](#)

• Teacher Recruitment and Retention

- Recruiting and preparing future agriculture teachers through traditional and nontraditional licensure pathways, including teachers with and without agricultural experiences, is essential for the viability of school-based agricultural education. Many of today's future teachers have limited firsthand agricultural experiences beyond what they can glean from their own high school agriculture programs. This also includes preparing industry-experienced teachers (lateral entry/alternative licensure) to be effective in the classroom, with Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAE), and with FFA.
 - [U.S. Department of Education Teacher Shortages Page:](#)
 - [National Teach Ag Campaign](#)

- **Preparing industry-experienced teachers (lateral entry/alternative licensure) to be effective in the classroom, with SAE, and with FFA.** In many states, 45-50% of teachers are industry-experienced teachers (NC = 47%). At least 37% of our new teachers are industry-experienced. Many of these teachers bring a wealth of experience from the industry of agriculture to the classroom. This lived experience strengthens our agricultural curriculum and connection with careers. Some of these teachers have good SAE and FFA experience, but many do not. The challenge for state

staff, NAAE, and university aged faculty is to bring these teachers up to speed on FFA programs in the state and SAE in general. Additionally, state agriculture teachers' associations are adding mentor and other networking programs to help our industry-experienced teachers join the ag educator community.

- Ford & Lambert. Understanding the SAE for All Experience for North Carolina Teachers. <https://jae-online.org/index.php/jae/article/view/2904>
- Hainline et al. Pre-service Teachers' Motivation to Pursue a Career as an Agricultural Education Teacher. <https://jae-online.org/index.php/jae/article/view/2901>
- Queen et al. Factors Influencing School-Based Agricultural Educator Retention and Attrition Rates. <https://jae-online.org/index.php/jae/article/view/2929>
- Norris et al. Professional Rededication to SAE: Describing SAE Implementation in the United States. <https://jae-online.org/index.php/jae/article/view/2895>
- Ford & Lambert. Resources Needed and Barriers Anticipated when Implementing SAE for All. <https://jae-online.org/index.php/jae/article/view/2755>
- Wood et al. Sowing Success: The Impact of Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Professional Development on the Turnover Intentions of SBAE Teachers. <https://jae-online.org/index.php/jae/article/view/2789>
- Marzolino & McKim. Retaining School-Based Agricultural Educators: A System Dynamics Approach. <https://jae-online.org/index.php/jae/article/view/2826>

• Integrating technology into the agricultural education curriculum.

- Pehrson et al. Examining AI Perceptions and Utilization Among Agricultural Educators in Utah. <https://jae-online.org/index.php/jae/article/view/2910>
- Crayton & Norris. Turning the Gears: Assessing Agricultural Educators' Perceptions of Importance and Competence to Teach Agricultural Mechanics. <https://jae-online.org/index.php/jae/article/view/3185>

FFA

- [FFA Strategic Plan 2022-25](#)
 - To keep our programs flexible and engaging, we updated the organization's strategic plan for 2022-25, creating a clear path to meet and exceed our objectives in the next three years.
 - Evolve
 - Awards and Recognition Revision Advancements and Timeline
 - [Revision site](#)
 - [CDE delegate committee](#)
 - [Region delegate committee](#)
 - Engage
 - Belonging and Engagement
 - [Statement of Belonging](#)
 - [FFA Value Statements](#)
 - Opportunities to engage more students
 - [Million membership](#)
 - Middle school agricultural education and FFA chapter program growth

- Article V, Section B: Student Membership - To be eligible for membership in a chartered FFA chapter, a student must be enrolled in a state-approved school-based agricultural education program, not below the 5th-grade level. This was adopted last year at the 95th National FFA Convention and was put into effect for this membership year.
 - [Delegate committee](#)
- [Removing barriers](#) - 100% Membership Initiative, which fits into multiple strategic plan priority areas
- [State belonging cohorts](#)
- Empower:
 - Teacher recruitment
 - [Ambassador program](#)
 - [Teacher resources](#)
 - State leader support and development
 - [State Relations FFA page](#)
- 100th anniversary celebration – Celebrating history while looking at the future
 - [Delegate report](#)
- **Shifts in Federal Policy and Implementation of CTE and CTSOs (Including FFA specifically)**

Increased federal investment in CTE through Perkins V prioritizes career readiness, industry-recognized credentials, and access for underrepresented students. Accountability metrics under Perkins V now require states to report on program quality indicators like postsecondary placement, work-based learning, and credentialing. CTSOs like FFA are federally recognized as essential components of high-quality CTE programs and are promoted as leadership and career development pipelines.

 - [Advance CTE: Perkins V Overview](#)
 - [U.S. Dept. of Education: Perkins V State Plans](#)
 - [Career and Technical Student Organizations](#)
 - [U.S. Dept. of Education: CTSOs](#)
- **Affiliation/100% Membership and the Need to Reinforce the “Integral” Nature of FFA in Agricultural Education**

Today, many agricultural education students are missing out on the transformative opportunities that the three-component model offers because of a financial barrier—FFA student dues. These dues create an obstacle, particularly for students from underserved communities, preventing them from accessing the leadership, personal growth, and career success that a complete agricultural education program fosters.

 - [National FFA: Affiliation Program Overview](#)
 - [National Quality Program Standards – NAAE](#)