

A CALL TO *Communicate*

This FFA alumna credits the organization – and this magazine – with helping her uncover her path to professional success.



It was an *FFA New Horizons* article, much like the one you're reading now, that helped Julie Groce determine she wanted to pursue a career in agricultural communications.

Groce, a second-generation FFA member and former member and past president of the Hillsdale FFA in Jeromesville, Ohio, was interested in agricultural broadcasting and competed at the state level in Creed speaking and prepared public speaking leadership development events. She didn't realize her passions and talents could easily be transformed into a rewarding career. She remembers flipping through *FFA New Horizons* and landing on an article that outlined the career possibilities

in agricultural communications, and that was when she knew it was the path for her.

"I was so excited to discover that people in ag communications often wrote about agriculture or worked on the broadcasting side, because both of those sounded perfect for me," Groce says. "After reading that article, a light bulb went off for me, and I got even more involved in FFA. I became my chapter's first female president and served

in that role during my junior and senior years. During both of those years, I was also selected to participate in the National FFA Band."

Groce went on to major in agricultural communications at Ohio State University. As she was earning her degree, she landed an internship as a farm broadcaster with the National

FFA Organization at the 1987 National FFA Convention.

"As an intern, I interviewed some really interesting people, including celebrities and National FFA Officer candidates, and it really solidified my interest in ag communications," Groce says.

After graduating with her bachelor's degree in 1989, Groce moved to North Carolina and began her first job as a client services manager at a public relations and marketing agency. Since then, her career has evolved as she's taken on roles at Syngenta, Novartis Animal Health U.S., Elanco and the North Carolina Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Groce now serves as the manager of communications and content marketing for the U.S. pork and poultry division of Zoetis.

Although it's her hard work that's gotten her where she is today, Groce credits FFA with helping her find success. She continues to give back to the organization as a mentor and has served on the North Carolina FFA Foundation Board of Directors. She's even passed her love for FFA down to her daughter, a third-generation member who is also pursuing a career in agriculture.

"It's important for me to remain involved with FFA because the organization has given me so much," Groce says. "The leadership and communication skills I learned have benefited me throughout my career; the lessons I learned in FFA have never left me."

To learn more about careers in agricultural communications, visit AgExplorer.FFA.org.

– By Jessica Walker Boehm