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Feature Stories

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Attracting Youth to Agricultural Education Careers

By Deb Buehler

When Oklahoma launched its Future Ag Ed Teacher Academy four summers ago, the goal was to raise awareness about careers in agricultural education. The program has been a resounding success in helping high school students consider teaching as an agriculture career.

“The attention it has brought to our profession has been really positive,” said Kent Boggs, state executive secretary for FFA Oklahoma. “The publicity has raised awareness in a positive way. We are really proud of the feedback we’ve received about the academy.”

Competitive Process

The teacher academy is the result of a collaboration between the state FFA office and the agricultural education department at Oklahoma State University with annual sponsorships provided by Chesapeake Energy, Farm Credit Association of Oklahoma, Oklahoma Department Career Tech, Oklahoma State University and the Oklahoma FFA Alumni Association.

The \$20,000 in sponsorship funding provides for housing, meals, mentor teacher salaries, curriculum materials and a \$1,000 college scholarship for any academy graduate’s first year in ag education at Oklahoma State University. The only cost for participation is getting to Oklahoma State University for the one week academy.

“Students complete an application and go through a very competitive selection process to participate,” Boggs explained. “We focus on students with strong local involvement in their FFA chapter. Students provide an essay about why they desire to one day be a high school teacher. This year’s attendees were announced at our state FFA Convention.”

This year, 10 students will be completing the week-long academy, which includes a day-trip to visit single-teacher and multi-teacher ag programs. Mentor teachers, all with less than 10 years in the classrooms themselves, participate with the students throughout the academy, staying in the same dorms serving as chaperones.

“They hang out in the dorm kitchenettes, and have great conversations with participants about what it’s like to be an ag teacher,” Bogg said. “Mentor teachers and students report that this is one of the most important parts of the week.”

GOAL – Grow Our Ag Leaders

Through a \$50,000 U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secondary Education Challenge Grant, North Carolina agriculture teacher Luke Beam developed GOAL to inspire future ag educators. “Through the GOAL program, high school seniors are introduced to what it is like to be an ag teacher,” Beam said.

Students enrolled in the class access assignments online and work through several projects that include observing ag teachers at work. From tutoring elementary students one day a week to developing a public speaking script for use in an elementary classroom and adult group setting to preparing a Food for America program to present to elementary or middle school students, for an entire week the high school seniors tackle projects designed to prepare them to teach.

“What we envisioned was working with other schools to create an online product any ag teacher could implement free of charge,” Beam said. “I don’t grade anything. Students e-mail me information, start doing their assignments and work with their own ag teacher, who gives the course grade.”

With input from National Board Certified teachers Scotty Cook, Tyler Mitchell and Matt and Kaye Harris, Beam put together the semester-long course. To take the class, students need to be high school seniors and have an A- or B-level track record in ag classes. The unique thing about GOAL is that it’s not a classroom full of students. Students simultaneously access assignments on the Internet, observe an ag classroom teacher and complete related assignments.

“They are participating in the corner of a ninth-grade classroom by working on GOAL assignments throughout the semester,” Beam said. “All of their assignments lead up to teaching the ninth graders for a week.” Students can earn extra credit by tackling tasks, such as grading papers and performing classroom support activities that also provide a glimpse of a teacher’s range of responsibilities.

Beam said that he's learned that teachers using the materials need to put due dates on assignments. As they stand, the online course content doesn't have dates applied to assignments because schools using them have different calendar schedules than his district.

"The most challenging part of the course for some students is the freedom of online courses," Beam added. "Some students get off track because they get behind on assignments they don't like. It is important for students to explore online courses because their educational future will involve online work."

The GOAL lessons can be accessed at <http://www.growouragleaders.com/>.

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Ag Students May Already Hold the Key to their Future

FFA members in high demand for ag ed and a variety of other ag fields

By Beth A. DeHoff

As Coordinator of Student Relations for Clemson University's College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences, Katie Black spends a lot of time talking to high school agriculture students about their future – and how it might start at Clemson. Her main message? The possibilities are virtually endless.

“As you look at the job outlook for 2015, when this year's seniors may graduate from college, there's an obvious focus on careers that help us do more with less – how we can maximize food sources, grow lettuce in outer space, maximize alternative energy sources. What can livestock tell us about medical advances – like why are dairy cows the only mammal that doesn't get breast cancer?” Black says.

As a professional college recruiter, Black knows that students with agricultural and FFA experience are in high demand – and have options available that include teaching, scientific research, medicine, engineering, public policy, marketing, business, communications and more. “We get a lot of push from companies who want graduates in agricultural education and related degrees,” she says. “Companies want sales, marketing and public relations folks with agriculture education degrees. Some companies just want students involved with FFA.”

Black is not alone. Increasing numbers of colleges and universities are hiring professional recruiters to attract students to their schools – and many are focusing on agricultural students. “There is a big initiative on behalf of private and public agricultural sectors for applicable candidates to fill agriculture-related careers,” says Alex D. Meredith, a recruiter for Delaware State University College of Agriculture and Related Sciences. “This year alone, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is expecting to have

a turnover in workforce due to the retirement of the baby boom generation.” That agency and others look to recruiters to help fill the pipeline with college students majoring in related agricultural fields.

Students considering a career in agriculture, ag education, or other related fields should take heart not just in job opportunities, but in the quality of the jobs and benefits available. “Students interested in teaching can find a lot of enjoyment in agriculture education, working with people and working with a wide variety of sciences,” Black says. “The 12-month contracts and salaries of ag education teachers are also appealing.”

Black and Meredith both say that attracting many FFA members and “farm kids” to agriculture is relatively easy, but colleges also want to let students interested in science and business know that agriculture is a real option to consider. “For students who don’t come from a farm background, the biggest myth about agricultural studies is that it only entails production agriculture. Yet 46 percent of agriculturally related careers are related to some form of business, such as accounting, management, marketing, etc.,” says Meredith.

High school teachers can play an important role in helping their own and other students see the career options available within agriculture. Increasingly, teachers find college recruiters willing to help them do just that.

“Clemson University and the South Carolina Department of Agriculture host a one-week summer program for kids interested in agriculture,” Black says. “We also invite every local FFA chapter to a Clemson football game and host them at a tailgate party. FFA is there, and lots of other organizations. And as someone with an ag ed background who’s still involved in FFA, I get to talk with a lot of teachers and students.”

Despite all the concentrated recruitment going on in many university agriculture programs today, Black says the high school teacher is still the most influential person in helping a student understand career options in agriculture. “I really enjoy working with students, but the most important part of my recruitment program is my personal relationships with ag educators in the state,” she says.

“Teachers already know their students, and they can help direct students of agriculture as they consider their options after high school,” Black says. Now more than ever, colleges and universities are increasingly eager to help teachers open a wide variety of doors to some very exciting options for college and beyond.

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Attracting Youth to Agricultural Education Careers
Ag Students May Already Hold the Key to their Future | Tag Your Replacement! But How?

Tag Your Replacement! But How?

By Ellen Thompson, National Teach Ag Campaign Coordinator

In the fall of 1996, I started my freshman year at South Dakota State University majoring in animal science. By November that same year, I switched from animal science to ag business because it was pretty clear to me that my dream job of showing cattle and rodeoing was not going to work out. For the sake of time and pride, let us fast forward a year to October of 1997. I, like many college students, was contemplating my future and contribution to the world. My ag business major was not all it was cracked up to be. I really wanted to do something that combined my passion for agriculture, communication and leadership. Then the light bulb clicked. I met with Dr. Clark Hanson that afternoon. I was going to follow in my dad's footsteps and become an AG TEACHER! I have not looked back since.

Unfortunately for many students, the career path into ag education is not so obvious. Many of you reading this may have a student in your classroom who would make an excellent ag teacher but you are not sure how to help them. Thankfully, there are a plethora of resources, tools and tips available for students, teachers, and stakeholders that address how to become an ag teacher and why it is a great career.

The most comprehensive ag teacher recruitment tool available to date is the [National Association of Agricultural Educators \(NAAE\) Teach Ag website](#). The website contains a listing of post-secondary schools by state that offer an ag education major along with contact information for each one. In addition, students have the capability of looking up the licensing credentials in each state as well as current job openings by state. Visitors to the site are encouraged to sign up for the Teach Ag Campaign where they receive timely correspondence about Teach Ag-related events, tips and other useful information. The site features a monthly spotlight on a current ag teacher, ag education undergraduate, and someone from industry sharing their thoughts on ag education. For teachers and state staff the site is jam packed with easy-to-use and fun lesson plans

about becoming an ag teacher, games, a testimonial video, step by step activities, giveaway prizes and media resources. Is your state interested in holding a Teach Ag workshop for students? Great! The recent addition of a best practices portal, with everything from workshop outlines to sample invitations, makes the NAAE Teach Ag website your one-stop Teach Ag shop. The site is constantly being updated so chances are you will find something new every time you visit. <http://www.naae.org/teachag>.

The ag education family collectively came together several years ago and made teacher recruitment and retention a high priority. In doing so, a significant amount of time and energy has been put forth to make sure students who are interested in becoming an ag teacher are given every means necessary to make that choice a reality. So go on! Tag Your Replacement. The ag ed family has you covered with the resources to help make it happen.

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Perspectives

Successfully Recruiting Future Agricultural Education Teachers

By Gerald Barlowe, Agricultural Education Teacher, Union High School, Rose Hill, North Carolina

Often when I am greeted by my co-workers early each day and they ask how I'm doing, I respond with a line from the old Gus Kahn song, "Carolina in the Morning":

"Nothing could be finer then to be in Carolina in the morning."

I realized a long time ago that I am truly blessed to live in a nation where I am afforded the opportunity to be an agriculture educator. I also realize how fortunate I was that an agriculture educator, Mack Edwards, touched my life more than 30 years ago in his agricultural education/FFA program and secretly guided me into this profession.

I say secretly because Mr. Edwards didn't tell me I was going to be an agricultural education teacher; he just gently led me, without my knowledge, until I found myself at North Carolina State University with plans to follow in his footsteps in my own agricultural education program. Therein lies one formula for the success in recruiting the next generation of teachers: We must lead. In serving a leadership role in recruiting this next generation, I believe there are five steps that we must follow to be successful.

Step one: Have fun and enjoy your careers. We teach the most interesting and important subject on this planet. Make it fun and show your students by your attitude and actions that you love what you do.

Step two: Identify potential teachers. I want to share a secret that many of you probably have already figured out: not everyone is cut out to be a teacher. It takes a special person with certain qualities and a special personality to be a truly successful teacher. Identify students that have the necessary traits and secretly point or lead them toward our profession.

Step three: Encourage students to pursue a career as an agricultural education teacher. A simple suggestion

for some is all it may take while with others it may require a more direct persistent approach.

Step four: Serve as a positive role model for your students. Talk positively about your profession. Many of today's current agricultural education teachers never considered teaching while in high school but later reflected on the positive role model of service that their agriculture teacher provided and chose to follow in their footsteps. We never know the impact we can and do have each and every day.

Step five: Be a professional. One of the professional responsibilities of an agriculture educator is the recruiting of new teachers. If during our careers we could all produce just two new agriculture teachers that would work for a full career then we would have our replacements and enough to double the current number of agriculture educators around the nation.

Recruiting future teachers is the biggest challenge we face in agricultural education. We all need to follow these five simple steps as we lead for our future. Maybe it is time that I change my morning greeting to reflect the positive way I feel about my chosen career. So if you ask, expect "Nothing could be finer then to be an agriculture educator in the morning."

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LifeKnowledge Spotlight

Recruitment through Continuous Improvement

By Katy Mumaw, education specialist, National FFA Organization

Continuous improvement is a key to practicing premier leadership. Stephen R. Covey, in his book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, introduces the concept of “sharpening the saw.” Using a saw to cut wood daily will eventually dull the blades and decrease the effectiveness of the saw. Sharpening the saw gives the tool new life and increases its productivity, effectiveness and efficiency. Leaders must sharpen the saw in order to stay effective.

Teacher’s can inspire their students to enter agricultural education by modeling the elements of the continuous improvement precept.

For teacher effectiveness, this may mean having and enacting a plan for personal growth, seeking mentors, adding to an arsenal of problem-solving strategies and staying current so that we can adapt with new technologies. In order to prepare young people to influence in a continually changing world, we must prepare leaders who practice the skills associated with continuous improvement.

Continuous improvement is a skill we want to display for our students. We want to lead by example. We want them to desire and pursue learning and growth, both personally and professionally. Our attitude can make or break their interest in the agricultural education profession. Let’s take a look at a sampling of the different behaviors we demonstrate to students in developing mastery of the skills associated with continuous improvement.

Those with an awareness of the skills associated with continuous improvement should be able to...

- Explain why they need to have a personal growth plan.
- Define a mentor’s role and explain how a mentor may contribute to personal improvement.
- Identify new technologies and knowledge that may improve their leadership.

Those who currently interact with the skills associated with continuous improvement should be able to...

- Develop and enact a personal growth plan.

- Identify a person to be their mentor and set up a regular time to meet with that person.
- Demonstrate how to solve a problem in a new and innovative way.

Those who have mastered the skills associated with continuous improvement should be able to...

- Evaluate their leadership and personal growth plan and make changes as necessary.
- Analyze and apply mentor's advice.
- Mentor their peers.

As we demonstrate these skills, we do a service to our students. In return, whatever professions our students choose to pursue, these skills and behaviors will be beneficial.

LifeKnowledge Lessons on Continuous Improvement: HS.48 – The Role of Mentors and Coaches HS.49 – Building a Relationship with a Mentor/Coach AHS.13 - Identifying resources for continued growth AHS.17 - Developing professional growth plans AHS.38 – Serving as a Mentor AHS.39 – Becoming a Mentor to Others AHS.43 – Identifying Others to Grow and Develop

Recommend resources for veteran teachers considering mentoring:

Portner, H. (2003). *Mentoring new teachers*, (updated ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Pelletier, C. (2006). *Mentoring in action: A month-by-month curriculum for mentors and their new teachers*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

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Question for the Profession



Teaching Ag: Job or Hobby?

By Nina Crutchfield, Local Program Success Specialist

I recently attended the American Association for Agricultural Education (AAAE) conference for teacher educators. While listening to research presentations, one teacher identified a barrier to agricultural educator recruitment and retention as a battle that ensues when “**the job**” is really “**our hobby**.”

An example: **The job** says that we assist a student with a livestock project. **The hobby** says we travel 800 miles to secure the best animal we can find for a pretty steep price in the hopes of delivering a grand champion at the fair and securing bragging rights among our peers and in the community. **The job** says that we teach a student sound animal science practices in the hopes of that student getting a decent financial and educational return on their investment. **The hobby** says that we research feed additives, make appointments to weigh the animal weekly, travel to jackpot shows every weekend, and take students to fitting and showmanship camp, all in the hopes of bringing home that grand champion at the fair.

Another example: **The job** says that we teach students sound horticultural practices that can be transferred to business and industry. **The hobby** says we stock the school greenhouse from end to end with commercial bedding plants, turning students into free labor. **The job** says that we teach students proper techniques of sexual and asexual reproduction. **The hobby** says that we grow mums through the summer and plant poinsettia liners in August so that the crops can be sold during the appropriate season, gaining funds and recognition for superior plant quality.

What an enlightening and liberating point of view. To really think that there are components of teaching ag that we do just because we like them, not because they are required or part of what is expected. To be able to compartmentalize day-to-day activities into “the job,” “the right-thing-to-do,” and “the things-I-do-because-I-like-it”....

This may seem very cold to many teachers, even heartless. I can just hear it now... “I do it for the kids.” “I don’t want to

deprive a student of an opportunity.” “It’s a skill they can use in life.” “If I do this for one, I have to do something for all.” Heck, I’ve said those things! I’m as guilty as the next woman or man. I propose that we’re all really good at justifying our actions so we seem selfless when the reality is that we do it because we like it.

Is teaching ag a job or a hobby that also happens to be your job? Post your thoughts, comments, arguments in the [NAAE Communities of Practice](#).

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Teacher Resources

Agribusiness Made Easier

The Chicago Mercantile Exchange has an education page. Simply register (it's free) and select from a variety of topics under the Education Resources tab on the right. There are short videos that discuss futures markets, trading options, market commodities, interest rates and even currencies.

<http://www.cmegroup.com/education/index.html>

Water, Water Everywhere

National Geographic's lesson on water is available. Teach students the realities of water shortages domestically and abroad and spice up your agriculture lesson with some real geography.

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/lessons/04/g912/newswater>

Rural Business Opportunity Grants

The Rural Business Opportunity Grants program promotes sustainable economic development in rural communities with exceptional needs through provision of training and technical assistance for business development, entrepreneurs, and economic development officials. The program also assists with economic development planning. The types of projects that may be funded might include identification/analysis of business opportunities that will utilize local material and human resources; provision of leadership development training to existing or prospective rural entrepreneurs and managers; business support centers; centers for training, technology and export trade; and, economic development planning. Full details and applications can be found at the [USDA rural development site](#) and the [Rural Business Opportunity Grant page](#).

Now Seeking Participant Teams for the ITEST Program

The National Science Foundation is looking for participant teams in its Innovative Technology Experiences for Students and Teachers (ITEST) program. The application deadline is April 30, 2010. The project is limited to 20 school teams from across the country. Apply today,

http://www4.nau.edu/CSTL/EYE_POD_Application.pdf.

The Examining Your Environment through the Power of Data (EYE-POD) project provides teachers with the means to implement interdisciplinary, technology-integrated, project-based learning modules with an Earth-science focus in their classrooms. Students learn science and math concepts as

they collect and analyze data in an attempt to solve a community problem and communicate those solutions through the use of geographic information systems (GIS) software.

A team of one secondary career and technical education teacher and one science or math teacher; or pair of science or math teachers from the same school must apply together. Upon completion, participants will receive:

- \$1,000 stipend
- Some travel assistance to scenic Flagstaff, Arizona
- Tuition assistance for optional three graduate credits
- ArcGIS desktop software site licenses for their schools
- Mobile data collection devices and resource materials for their schools
- 10 days of exciting and engaging onsite professional learning experiences with continuing academic year online support
-

Applicants must commit to full participation in one of two scheduled 10-day professional development institutes at the Northern Arizona University—Flagstaff, Arizona Mountain Campus. Institute dates are: June 7-18, 2010, or July 19-30, 2010. *An additional paid week of advanced GIS training will be offered to participants during summer 2011.*

Click for an [application and more information](#).

For more information, contact:

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928-523-6008

Lori.Hare@nau.edu

<http://www4.nau.edu/cstl/>

Extension Experts at Your Fingertips

Broaden your knowledge base and access agriculture experts from all over the country by participating in Extension's [Communities of Practice](#) and [Ask An Expert](#). Check out their YouTube [video](#) that puts agricultural extension into perspective in this digital age. It's impossible for agriculture teachers to know everything, but it's easy to seek help from those in the field with the research and producer contacts. Check out the latest efforts from agricultural extension at <http://www.extension.org/> and <http://www.extension.org/ask>.

GetBiotechSmart.com

As an agriculture educator, you are equipping future leaders to address the dynamic need to feed more people on less land. The science behind biotechnology can be hard to find, and we invite you to learn more at GetBiotechSmart.com. You'll find tools for you and your students to research the connection between biotechnology and critical issues facing the world. Resources on the site include:

- Grade-specific lesson plans
- Biotechnology video podcasts and research links

- E-learning modules that allow you to explore the many aspects of biotechnology

We hope you'll join us in our efforts to equip future leaders to understand biotechnology and how it can ensure a food supply for our growing world population. Please visit us soon at GetBiotechSmart.com.

Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST)

CAST is a professional organization dedicated to assembling, interpreting and communicating credible science-based information to legislators, regulators, policymakers, the media, the private sector and the public. You will find they have a page full of links to resources for the science of teaching agriculture, food and natural resources at <http://www.cast-science.org/educationResources.asp>.

SmartEdge financial literacy program

The National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE), in partnership with SmartEdge-GMAC and the National FFA Foundation, is pleased to provide the SmartEdge-GMAC financial literacy program. This program is aimed at helping people make better financial decisions by providing them with information about budgeting, credit reports and credit scoring, as well as other tools. NAAE and GMAC Financial Services will provide any interested agriculture educator the training necessary to become a SmartEdge facilitator as well as a \$100 incentive for each of the first 100 eligible sessions presented.

To find out more, see the [SmartEdge-GMAC Facilitator Information](#). All agriculture educators who would like to receive this free financial curriculum must participate in an archived training webinar. [Click here to access that webinar](#). If you have any questions about this opportunity, contact Alissa Smith, asmith.naae@uky.edu or (800) 509-0204.

FREE DVDs on Animal Science Topics

Showmaster has created a collection of RFD-TV programs on DVD for use in the classroom! Agricultural education personnel are invited to order free of charge by using [this form](#).

Agricultural Issues in the News

CBS has done a series of stories on agricultural issues. Use the videos to introduce topics, kindle classroom discussions and train agricultural issues career development event teams. The links below address the use of antibiotics in livestock feedstuffs and the increase of drug-resistant biologicals.

Preview - The Early Show 2/9/2010

<http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=6189199n&tag=api>

Part I - Katie Kouric CBS Evening News 2/9/2010

<http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=6191894n&tag=api>

Preview to Part II - Katie Kouric CBS Evening News 2/9/2010
<http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=6192300n&tag=api>

Part II - Katie Kouric CBS Evening News 2/10/2010
<http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=6195682n&tag=contentMain;contentBody>

This link should take you to a page with all of these and more.
<http://www.cbsnews.com/video/eveningnews/?tag=bc>

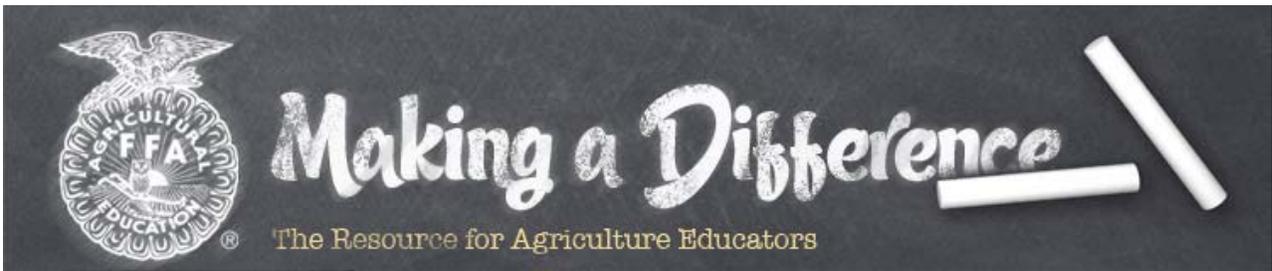
Agriculture Lesson Plans Available from Purdue
<http://www.ydae.purdue.edu/undergrad/aged/links.cfm>

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June 2010

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Free Money For Your Chapter!

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Receive \$1 for every roll of Red Brand fence sold at your local, participating store.
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Local Program Resource Guide

The LPR Guide is now online! Handbooks, applications and more to help you manage your program.
www.ffa.org/lpr



The LPR Guide is sponsored by STIHL as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

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FEEDBACK

FFA Buzz

FFA Buzz
Summer 2010

Going Somewhere?

Each year, FFA loses contact with many of its 60,000 graduating high school seniors so that's why we've started a year-round FFA Beyond High School campaign to try and connect with these transitioning members. We want them to know that there are still many ways they can benefit from FFA, even after they've hung up their blue jackets. For the first phase of this campaign, our goal is to get as many students as possible to sign up for the "FFA Beyond High School" e-newsletter. The e-newsletter will provide subscribers with information about scholarships, internships and Collegiate FFA and FFA alumni opportunities. From now until June 30, any member over the age of 18 who signs up for the e-newsletter will be entered into a drawing for an iPad. Help us get the word out to FFA advisors and members. Tell them to go to www.ffa.org/beyondhighschool to sign up for the e-newsletter.

Changes on the Way for ffa.org

State staff and advisors, take note. FFA is currently undertaking a large-scale project to update the functionality and design of ffa.org. These changes are necessary to allow the website to interact with other critical systems to collect and report data - including membership information. During the next few months, we will be asking for your input and giving you opportunities to preview the site changes. Thanks in advance for your comments, and remember to be on the lookout for important ffa.org updates effective Sept. 1.

Get a Leg Up on the Competition!

Check out this [video](#) for tips and ideas on the National Chapter Award Program. This video, along with general information, will help answer questions such as: What is the National Chapter Award Program? How do I plan for the application? How do I write a strong application?

Save \$50 on a Set of 10 Official FFA Jackets – Now Through Aug. 31!

This set of jackets includes one each of the most popular sizes: ladies sizes 34, 36, 38 and 40; and mens sizes 36, 38, 40, 42, 44 and 46. No front lettering available; back

embroidered with state and chapter name. Order this 10-jacket set by Aug, 31, 2010, and your price is just \$400 – a \$50 savings over the regular price of \$450!

Plus, all orders for ODJKT-10 received by June 30 will receive five “FFA Lead Out Loud” reusable shopping bags (a \$25 value) for FREE!*

10-jacket promo set is item ODJKT-10; limit one set per FFA chapter. Special \$400 price ends August 31, 2010.

*Free shopping bag offer with the purchase of ODJKT-10 is good through June 30, 2010 or until inventory is depleted. To order, call 888-332-2668 or order [online](#).

Free Lesson Plans

It's never too early to start planning your curriculum for next fall! Check out the [Agri-Entrepreneurship lesson plans](#).

These lessons can be used singularly or as a course of study. They are fun, engaging and align to national content standards. And best of all, you can download them for free!

Got a Head for Ag Business?

Do you have students with entrepreneurial supervised agricultural experience projects, but your state doesn't have an agri-entrepreneurship competition? Chapters can send applications directly to the National FFA Center for the national judging. The deadline is July 15; judging takes place the first Wednesday in August. While there can be only one chapter winner (award of up to \$150), it is possible to have more than one winner from a chapter at the national level (award of \$1,000). Last year two of the 10 national winners were from the same chapter in Minnesota.

[Applications are available on the website.](#)

Help Us Reach 1 Million Service Hours by Convention 2010!

The Million Hour Challenge encourages FFA members to improve their communities through civic engagement. To earn credit, service hours completed between Oct. 2, 2009, and October 1, 2010, should be submitted by chapter advisors through their MyFFA accounts to the online Million Hour Challenge database. Awards of \$2,500 will be given during the 2010 National FFA Convention to those chapters submitting the most community service hours in the following categories—Environment, Government, Social/Human Service, Healthy Lifestyles and Education. Hours from state and national programs are also eligible for the Million Hour Challenge. The Million Hour Challenge is sponsored by Monsanto as a special project of the National FFA Foundation. For more program information, contact the Million Hour Challenge office, mhc@ffa.org or 317-802-4345.

2010 National FFA Career Development Event (CDE) due dates:

July 1: Team Certification Forms due
Student Waiver Forms due

CDE Special Needs Requests due
State Speaking Judges Forms due

Aug. 15: Prepared Public Speaking Manuscripts due

Sept. 15: Agricultural Communications, Agricultural Issues,
Job Interview and Marketing Plan Portfolios due

Oct. 19: Add/Delete Forms due

Find forms on the [CDE webpage](#).

Get Your CDE Resources

Studying for a career development event or looking for materials to incorporate in the classroom? Check out the resources and tools available in the [FFA Core catalog](#) under CDE Materials and CDE Q&As.

Risk Management Essay Winners Announced

The top 10 Risk Management essays have been selected! Check out the top 10 students and their essays on the [Risk Management Essay webpage](#).

FFA Volunteer Convention Judges Needed

Nominations are now being accepted for volunteer judges for the Agricultural Proficiency Awards, Agriscience Awards and National Chapter Awards at the 2010 National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Ind., this fall. Agricultural Proficiency and Star awards will be judged on Thurs., Oct. 21. Proficiency and Star judges will be invited to an awards luncheon on that day. Agriscience Awards will be judged on Thurs., Oct. 21. National Chapter Awards will be judged on Wed., Oct. 20. (Convention judging is voluntary. FFA does not cover any expenses for the judges.) [Nominations can be submitted on this form](#). Mail completed forms to National FFA Organization, Attn. Teri Buchholtz, P.O. Box 68960, Indianapolis, IN 46268-0960 or fax to 317-802-5419.

2010 Chapter Innovator's Guide Now Available Online

At FFA, being the best is standard operation procedure for our 7,429 chapters. But each year, four chapters go above and beyond expectations to actively implement the organization's mission and strategies to become Models of Innovation winners. These chapters are recognized for meeting "quality standards" in one of three divisions: student development; chapter development and community development. One outstanding middle school chapter is also recognized. Check out the organization's [2009-2010 Chapter Innovator's Guide](#), which highlights each winning chapter.

Enlist Farmers Support to Apply for a \$2,500 Donation

In this tough economic climate, fundraising can be challenging. But now, through Monsanto's new America's Farmers Grow Communities Project, agricultural youth groups can enlist support from local farmers for a \$2,500 donation. Due to its success, the program has been

expanded to eligible counties in California, Kansas, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina and South Dakota. The application process is simple. Just visit www.growcommunities.com and fill out the short form by July 31 or call 877-267-3332.

Contact Us - FFA Mission - Agricultural Education Mission

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