

Making a Difference

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Attracting Dollars for Scholars

as the costs of higher education continue to rise and government grant and loan programs get squeezed by the sluggish economy, attracting scholarship dollars is more important than ever. By the time your students add up tuition, books, housing, travel and room and board, the looks on their faces can be pretty grim.

One of the great advantages FFA members have over other high school students is the broad range of scholarships for which they are eligible simply for being an FFA member. In addition, the leadership and personal skills developed through FFA programs are often highly sought after by scholarship-granting organizations.

Start Early

To give your students the best possible shot at attracting scholarship dollars, start encouraging them to work on their scholarship applications now. Sure, most of the applications aren't due until after the first of the year, but the earlier your students start, the more polished (and successful) their applications will be. Plus, you won't be so deluged by the last-minute rush of proofing, editing and writing letters of recommendation.

A good place to start is by making sure all of your students who are considering post-secondary education have a well-written résumé. This document is needed for almost all scholarship applications and will contain much of the information that is requested on many forms. As you begin the scholarship process, it is also a good idea to have copies of your students' proficiency and degree



applications available. These documents contain a wealth of already-assembled information.

Comprehensive Applications

Many teachers have made completing the National FFA Scholarship application a mandatory assignment in their classrooms. By completing and submitting this one application, your students become eligible for more than \$2 million in scholarships. Another one-stop shop for scholarships is [www.fastweb.com]. This Internet scholarship service matches students with more than \$1 billion in scholarships.

In addition to scholarships, remind your students that about 70 percent of the student aid that is awarded each year comes from the U.S. Department of Education's programs (approximately \$61 billion in 2000-2001). These funds are distributed via the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. More information on FAFSA can be found online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov].

Another document your students will find helpful is Funding Your Education. Available in English and Spanish, this publication can be found at [http://studentaid.ed.gov/students/publications/FYE/index.html].

This issue of *FFA Advisors Making a Difference* contains a series of stories on scholarships and how several teachers across the country have helped their students reach success in this critical area. The National FFA Organization wishes you and your students the best of luck on your quest for scholarship funds.



Swiss rewards...

I was excited and honored last fall to be named as one of the Teachers of the Year with the National Association of Agricultural Educators. To be recognized for a job that I love was a reward in itself, but to have the opportunity to travel abroad, and learn more about world agriculture was a trip that held more than I ever imagined.

At the 2003 National FFA Convention I first learned of the possibility of trip to Switzerland. Syngenta, a major world agribusiness and supporter of the National FFA, felt it was important to promote agriculture through a new initiative to recruit, retain and reward American agriculture teachers. The six regional winners of the NAAE Teacher of the Year award would be interviewed and one teacher selected to serve as the Syngenta Advocate for Agriculture Education.

Fast forward to Las Vegas in December and the National NAAE Convention. The announcement was made at the awards session and it is difficult to put into words my excitement and overwhelming feelings of pride to be selected to represent my peers. From that moment on, the week was filled with a whirlwind of events including media training and television and newspaper interviews.

The awards for this honor are many: a beautiful trophy, numerous interviews in national agricultural publications and trips within the U.S. promoting agricultural education. However, the ultimate reward has been the opportunity to travel to Switzerland, where the Syngenta world headquarters are located.

The Swiss trip began in North Carolina at the U.S. Crop Protection headquarters of Syngenta. There I met my traveling companions who were also being rewarded by Syngenta for assorted accomplishments in their respective careers. We were treated to an overview of the company's vision and philosophies and a tour of the labs.

After we landed in Zurich, we soon learned Syngenta doesn't do anything less than first class! Our first stop was the quaint, history-filled town of Lucerne, followed by a boat trip to Weggis.

We then traveled to Basel, the world headquarters of our host. We met scientists from all around the world, giving us a global perspective. It is evident they are truly concerned with people. They are working hard to ensure an abundant, safe, cost-efficient global food and fiber source. One example is their research in biotechnology that contributed to the development of golden rice (containing vitamin A), which they donated patents for use in developing countries.

From Basel we traveled to Thun where we dined with the Minister of Agriculture and learned about Swiss agriculture. In Switzerland, 70 percent of the population farms. To farm, one must attend three years of farming school and take continuing education classes throughout one's career. Most are small, family owned operations and all receive government supplements. Switzerland chose not to join the European Union, and as a result faces some uncertainty of how that may affect their import and export potential.

Our trip ended in Geneva, and as we dined together, we all reflected on what the trip meant to us. I assure you that without Syngenta's generous reward, this agriculture teacher would not have been able to travel to Switzerland in the style we were afforded. The trip was a once in a lifetime opportunity and I can't thank Syngenta enough.

As we departed from each location, our guide encouraged us to look back. It is a Swiss belief that if you look back when you are leaving a destination you will return there someday. I assure you I looked back everywhere we went. I sure hope it's true!

Jodi Geiger
2003 Syngenta Advocate for Agricultural Education



syngenta

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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 resources systems.

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[\[www.ffa.org/news/html/ffapubsindex.html\]](http://www.ffa.org/news/html/ffapubsindex.html).

Watch for the LPS Logo



The logo shows how this issue of FFA Advisors Making a Difference relates to Local Program Success, a national initiative to strengthen agricultural education programs. You'll see this icon on all FFA materials. The shaded apples show which areas the materials address.

Perspectives



By Tamara J. (Endecott) Seely, Agriscience Teacher
Naaman Forest High School,
Garland, Texas

Encouragement and Balance the Key

the answer is always 'no' until you ask! That's the advice my FFA advisor, Jim Morgan of Louisburg, Kansas, has always given his students when they are applying for scholarships. He said the same to me, encouraging me to apply for the scholarships provided through the National FFA Organization.

I thought it would be impossible to receive a national scholarship. But, with my advisor's encouragement, I completed the National FFA application, which allowed me to apply for many scholarships with one application. To my surprise, I was awarded a \$1,000 Santa Fe Railroad scholarship!

A Changed Life

Because of my advisor's encouragement, I was able to afford college, and today I am an agriscience teacher. I teach at Naaman Forest High School in Garland, Texas, a suburb of Dallas, working in a three-teacher department that only offers horticulture classes (i.e., floral design, landscape design and maintenance, plant production, tissue culture, etc.), – a “non-traditional” program.

This past year, my teaching partners and I had the opportunity to convince Kedron Todd, one of our students, to apply for a statewide FFA scholarship. Kedron had two main SAEs—landscape management and nursery operations. He was involved in FFA activities, and has served as our chapter president. Before graduation, Kedron received a \$1,000 scholarship from Prestige Ford, in Garland. A good balance of SAEs, leadership and FFA activities has been the key to our student's success as well as my own.

Providing Encouragement

We encourage our students to be involved in FFA activities and to complete scholarship applications by:

- promoting premier leadership—setting into motion a cycle of encouragement so others will achieve success from their examples
- promoting personal growth—building their confidence by telling them we believe in them and their accomplishments
- promoting career success—encouraging higher learning
- promoting financial stability when they receive a scholarship

So, encourage your students. Remember, “The answer is always ‘no’ until you ask!”

Strong Curriculum Leads to Scholarship Success

mention the term “scholarship,” to Rujena Dotson, and you get a lot more than lip service regarding cash for college. Dotson teaches agriculture at the Lincoln County Ninth Grade Academy in Fayetteville, Tenn., and serves a mostly rural student population.

When Dotson started teaching 11 years ago, the Fayetteville program consisted primarily of a traditional production curriculum. Dotson conducted a survey of the school’s graduating seniors, asking them to choose three courses they would have liked to take and rank them.

Student-Driven Courses

Dotson used the survey data to begin reworking the curriculum. She started offering horse production one year, and small animal care the next. Now, the program has expanded to four teachers and the student-driven curriculum includes courses in environmental conservation, floriculture and greenhouse management along with agriculture mechanics and power and equipment.

“This transition didn’t happen overnight,” she stresses. “It took eleven years. However, with the programs growth and the addition of faculty, we can allow teachers to specialize, and we’re attracting a broad cross-section of the student population.”

Dotson says 30-40 percent of the students in the agriculture program are college-bound. “One thing I learned through this process is that good students don’t want to be in bad classes,” she says.

“First, you have to offer the right courses. Then, you need to make the courses challenging. You need to take your course work a step beyond so that the students and their parents feel the courses are worthwhile. You need to show students opportunities and provide links between your program and where they are headed – the colleges and universities.”

Last year, graduates of Dotson’s program earned more than \$100,000 in scholarships. “We had seven Ford scholarship winners last year,” she says. “I encourage teachers to approach the Ford dealerships in their areas. Basically, the local dealership has to agree to provide \$500 and the manufacturer matches it. We invite the local Ford representatives to our banquet and give them the opportunity to present the scholarships.”

Promoting Scholarship

What’s Dotson’s secret to scholarship success? No secret, really, she says. First, build a strong curriculum, and then make students aware of the opportunities. “We make a big deal out of scholarships at our banquet,” she says. “We also place photos of scholarship winners in the local newspaper. During the senior awards program and at graduation, the list of scholarship winners is printed in the programs. All of this gets the parents attention. When that happens, you have a partner in encouraging students to apply for all the various scholarships offered.”

Dotson makes sure students have access to scholarship applications in the FFA chapter and through the school’s guidance office. She and the other teachers in the program start promoting the

scholarship applications during the chapter FFA meetings in October and November.

Students in the program’s leadership development course are required to develop a résumé to document their achievements. “Developing a résumé is the first step in completing scholarship applications,” Dotson says. “With many students, getting them started is the biggest step. Once they overcome that hurdle, they gain confidence and need less encouragement.”

Simple Logistics

Another key, according to Dotson, is making sure students have ample computer access. “It takes time to complete these applications, and many students don’t have computer access at home,” she says. “We open our classroom and give students time to work on their applications before and after school. I have the students download the National FFA Scholarship application and save it to the hard drive. After they’ve completed the application, they e-mail it to me for review.”

Dotson also keeps letters of recommendation for her students on file. “As teachers, we are often asked to write letters of recommendation for our students,” she says. “Save yourself and your students time and energy by keeping those letters on file, whether they are for proficiency or degree applications, scholarships or college entrance. Starting with what you wrote previously saves a lot of steps and time.” Not bad advice from someone whose students have established a strong track record of scholarship success.

“One thing I learned through this process is that good students don’t want to be in bad classes.”

Financing an Education 101

in Jaime Nelson's Worden, Mont., classroom, the lesson on scholarships starts with a discussion on personal finance and moves into various ways to finance a post-secondary education. Nelson is the advisor of the Huntley Project FFA Chapter, which serves a mostly rural, non-farm member base. There are 220 students in grades 9-12, and 130 of them are enrolled in Nelson's agriculture courses.

"My agribusiness course is a senior-level class," Nelson says. "We discuss the students' personal financial situations and each of their goals regarding post-secondary education. We talk about what post-secondary education costs and each student builds a personal budget. I ask them to consider if they could write a check to cover the costs."

Motivating Students

With this stark question out and the realization of what education truly costs sinking in, Nelson continues the lesson. "At this point, most of the students realize that they can't afford college by themselves. Some of their parents can help, but not all that much. By this point, they are motivated to learn more about financial aid options, loans, grants and, of course, scholarships," Nelson says.

As a mandatory, graded assignment, each student in the agribusiness class must complete a Fastweb scholarship application online. "By this time, many of the students are willing to do more,"

Nelson says. "Since they have already assembled most of the information they'll need for any scholarship application, they can see that it won't take much additional effort to apply for any number of scholarships."

At the Huntley Project FFA Chapter, the list of scholarships for which students can apply is substantial. "The alumni give \$6,000 in scholarships each year, plus we have lots of local scholarships," Nelson says. "Add to that the various programs offered by the colleges and universities the students are planning to attend and the National FFA Scholarship program – the opportunities are significant."

Nelson starts the scholarship discussion in October, and starts applying significant pressure right after the holiday break. "Since many scholarship applications are due in February and March, I cover the class discussion portion before the holiday break, and encourage them to work on their applications over the break. I require the graded assignment to be completed by Feb. 1."

Mail Applications Early

In an effort to prevent a bottleneck on her own desk, Nelson encourages her students to submit their applications before the stated deadlines. "There really isn't a good reason to wait and mail an application at the last minute," she says. "I think it's a good lesson for students to complete their materials before the deadlines and get the work checked off their 'to do' lists. I also think submitting applications before the deadline helps the sponsoring organizations so that they don't have to process all the applications at once."

“We discuss the students' personal financial situations and each of their goals regarding post-secondary education. I ask them to consider if they could write a check to cover the costs.”



Alumni member Patti Pollock presents a scholarship to Jenna Kuntz during the annual FFA banquet.

Success Breeds Success

Another element Nelson uses to motivate students is the success of former students. "Winning scholarships is about much more than completing the application," Nelson emphasizes. "It encompasses taking the right classes, working hard on your academic endeavors and being involved in extracurricular activities to build skills and interests."

Nelson references former student Jesse Loffler, who is now a junior at Harvard University on a full-ride scholarship. "Jesse is extremely bright, but his biggest asset according to the people from Harvard who flew here to interview him, was his leadership skills. They get applications from a lot of very smart people, but they want students who have diversified interests and balance in their lives. The leadership activities on his application piqued their interest in Jesse. He did extremely well in the Harvard interview process because of the leadership skills he developed in FFA activities."

Local Program Success

FFA Materials in Spanish

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according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the United States' population continues to diversify. The fastest-growing group across the country is Hispanics.

On June 1, 1997, there were an estimated 29.2 million Hispanics in the United States, comprising 10.9 percent of the total population. Since July 1, 1990, the Hispanic population has grown 29 percent, while the non-Hispanic white population has increased 3 percent. (These totals do not include persons living in Puerto Rico, whose estimated population on July 1, 1996, was 3.8 million.)

In 1995, 74 percent of the nation's Hispanics resided in California, Texas, New York,

Florida and Illinois. The Hispanic population is expected to contribute 44 percent of the nation's growth from 2000 to 2020, and 62 percent from 2020 to 2050. By the middle of the century, the nation's Hispanic population is expected to reach 96.5 million (24.5 percent of the total population).

As you're digesting that information, consider the number of farm workers who are of Latino descent and how FFA and agricultural education are meeting their needs. Now consider that there are 5,808 agriculture students—2,344 of whom are FFA members—in Puerto Rico, where English is their second language.

Add all this up and you find lots of reasons for the National FFA Organization to offer its core materials in Spanish. Working with state staff and teachers in Puerto Rico, FFA has created Spanish edi-



tions of the *Official FFA Manual* and the *FFA Student Handbook*. These materials are available in printed form or as Microsoft Word documents for use with students who are visually impaired.

If you have Spanish-speaking students for whom you'd like to provide these materials in their native language, contact Jim Armbruster at the National FFA Organization, via e-mail at [jarmbruster@ffa.org] or telephone at 317-802-4334.

Materiales de FFA en español

El censo de Estados Unidos (U.S. Census Bureau) nos informa que la población del país sigue diversificándose y que los hispanos constituyen el grupo de más rápido crecimiento en todas partes.

Se calcula que para el 1º de junio de 1997 había en Estados Unidos 29,2 millones de hispanos, cifra que representa un 10,9 por ciento de la población. Mientras la población hispana ha aumentado en un 29 por ciento desde el 1º de julio de 1990, la población blanca no hispana ha aumentado en un 3 por ciento durante el mismo periodo. (En estos cálculos no se incluye a Puerto Rico, cuya población para el 1º de julio de 1996 se calcula en 3,8 millones.)

En 1995, 74 por ciento de los hispanos del país vivían en California, Texas, Nueva York, Florida e Illinois. Se espera que entre el año 2000 y el 2020 el 44 por ciento de la tasa de crecimiento del país lo contribuya la población hispana, porcentaje que aumentará al 62 por ciento entre el 2020 y el 2050. Para mediados de siglo se calcula que esta población haya alcanzado 96,5 millones (24,5 por ciento de la población total).

Considere estos datos y piense en el número de personas empleadas en granjas en Estados Unidos que son de ascendencia hispana y cómo la FFA y la educación agrícola satisfacen sus necesidades. Además, tome en cuenta que en Puerto Rico, donde el inglés es un idioma secundario, hay 5.808 estudiantes agrícolas—2.344 de los cuales son miembros de FFA.

Esta información nos permite entender que hay muchas razones para que la National FFA Organization suministre sus materiales básicos en español. En colaboración con el personal estatal y con maestros de Puerto Rico, la FFA ha publicado ediciones en español del *Official FFA Manual* y del *FFA Student Handbook*. Estos materiales están disponibles en forma impresa y en Microsoft Word para el uso de estudiantes que tengan problemas de la vista.

Si usted tiene estudiantes de habla hispana a quienes quiera brindarles estos materiales en su propio idioma, comuníquese con Jim Armbruster en la National FFA Organization, o bien por correo electrónico a [jarmbruster@ffa.org], o por teléfono al 317-802-4334.

Local Program Success is a national initiative designed to enhance the quality and success of local agricultural education programs. LPS uses the total program concept of Instruction, SAE and FFA and four strategies (Program Planning, Marketing, Partnerships and Professional Growth) to assist local teachers in facilitating successful local programs that meet the needs of students and the communities they serve.

Get a Head Start on Scholarship Season

While it may seem that the school year has just begun and sending your senior members on to higher education is still a blur on the horizon, now is the perfect time to begin talking to your members about the National FFA Scholarship Program. Seniors are now preparing, both mentally and financially, for their lives after high school. Encouraging them to complete the 2004 National FFA Scholarship application is a great way to help them get started.

students successfully complete the application. If you're interested in learning more about the application process, make plans to attend a workshop during the 2005 National FFA Convention that will review the application step by step and provide for its successful completion.

First, students only need to complete one copy of the application to be considered for all scholarships listed in the guidebook for which they are eligible. Based on how students complete the application, the FFA computer database will match their information with the criteria of each scholarship.

Next, make sure students complete all sections of the

scholarship guidebook for more information.

To receive all possible points in the SAE section, the student must show a broad understanding of his or her SAE as a valuable work experience, identify major responsibilities and have clearly related his or her SAE to future plans and goals. Also, the SAE is evaluated for size and scope, which means the student should show expansion in the extent and diversity of his or her program.

In the FFA Leadership section, five of the eight activities listed should be above the chapter level, and none of the eight activities may be repeated activities. For example, a student may have participated in the Livestock Judging CDE all four years of his or her membership, but it should only be listed once. Chapter office over several years is also considered as one activity, even if different offices were held. Additionally, four of the eight listed activities should have been as a member of a team or a group. When deciding which activities to list, a student should give highest priority to those activities that are team or group activities such as CDEs, FFA offices and committees.

Finally, please make sure your students type all portions of the application, as anything handwritten will be immediately disqualified. Students from your chapter who are currently enrolled in college are welcome to apply, but they must maintain a current FFA membership to be eligible.



By *Carrie Powers*
Program Coordinator
National FFA Organization

Program Statistics

2004 marks the 20th anniversary of the FFA scholarship program. In that time, 14,899 students have been awarded close to \$20 million. The program has grown from five sponsors and \$14,500 in 1984 to more than 150 sponsors and more than \$2 million dollars in 2003. The pool of qualified applicants has grown from 360 to almost 6,000. FFA staff hopes to increase it by 2,000 students in the next two years. In 2003 alone, approximately one out of every four students that applied received a scholarship.

Statistics like this illustrate why it is so important to encourage all of your graduating student members to complete the 2004 application. The FFA scholarship program takes into account the total student, and looks for those with a combination of academics, community service, FFA involvement, leadership skills and SAE development.

Do your students have what it takes? Please do everything you can to encourage them to fill out the 2004 scholarship application and give them the potential to earn their part in the 20-year legacy of the National FFA Scholarship program!



Alex Brandes is attending the University of Nebraska on an \$8,000 ConAgra Foods scholarship.

Tips for Success

There are many common questions students and advisors have when completing the FFA scholarship application. Suggestions are provided here to assist you in helping your

application so that it will be considered. The only sections of the application that are optional are the Monsanto/National Association of Farm Broadcasters scholarship essay and the Financial Analysis section. Even though these two sections are optional overall, they are still required for some scholarships. Please refer to the 2004



Nourishing Ideas. Nourishing People.™

***Announcing the
CARGILL COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM***

(for the class of 2004)

The Cargill Community Scholarship Program will award 350 - \$1,000 scholarships in the 2003-2004 school year. The scholarship recipient's school may also be eligible for a library grant!

Cargill Community scholarships will be available to both FFA and non-FFA members.

The program is for high school seniors that live in or near a Cargill community.

**Watch for details in the
2004 FFA Scholarship Book!**

Send e-mail inquires to cargill@ffa.org.

For more information visit www.cargill.com. Keyword: scholarship.

Together with FFA, Cargill is working to enrich communities around the world.

Increase Academics with GLOBE

In this era of high-stakes testing that focuses on math, science and reading skills, many agriculture teachers are looking for ways to increase development of these skills in their programs. Wayne Gilchrest, who teaches environmental science in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., found a great tool in the GLOBE program.

What is GLOBE?

GLOBE is a worldwide hands-on, primary and secondary school-based education and science program. GLOBE is a cooperative effort of schools, led in the United States by a Federal interagency program supported by NASA, NSF, EPA and the U.S. State Department, in partnership with colleges and universities, state and local school systems, and non-government organizations. Internationally, GLOBE is a partnership between the United States with more than 100 other countries.

For teachers, GLOBE provides assistance through:

- training at professional development workshops
- teacher guides, "how-to" videos, and other materials
- continuing support from a help desk, scientists and partners
- contact with other teachers, students and scientists worldwide

Gilchrest's program at the Dutchess BOCES Technical Center is modeled on the GLOBE program, emphasizing experiential learning. His students are in the classroom on Mondays only. Tuesday through Friday, you'll find them in the lab or out in the field gathering data and conducting research.



Members of the GLOBE Learning Expedition in Croatia pause for a picture.

GLOBE in Croatia

This past summer Gilchrest and seven of his students had the opportunity of a lifetime to participate in a GLOBE Learning Expedition to Croatia. "We were in country June 27 through July 7," Gilchrest says. "For most of the students, it was their first travel experience outside the United States. We met teachers and students from 37 different countries. Each team presented the research they had done in their communities. Then, we broke into teams and spent two days in national parks collecting data. Each team, which included a teacher and students from six or seven countries, assembled their data and presented it to the whole group."

Gilchrest says the trip was a great learning experience. "The students received a good dose of how to conduct solid field research," he says. "They had to learn how to work with diverse teams and to deal with adversity. A lot of life skills were honed along with the data collection skills. Even though English was the common language, the students had to learn how to cooperate and translate for each other."

One afternoon's experience brought some of these life skills into sharp focus. "We had spent the day collecting data on an island," Gilchrest explains. "We had been on the island all day. Everyone was hot, tired and sweaty. About 400 of us

piled into a troop carrier-type landing craft for the trip back to the mainland. The heat index in the vehicle rose to 128 F during the 45-minute trip. Instead of complaining, the students started singing a song that had been written for the expedition in English and in their native languages. I

thought, 'This is what it's all about.' It was just amazing to see how they dealt with the adverse situation. It was a real attitude shift for many."

Cultural Diversity

Because of the diversity of countries involved, the students and teachers were able to meet and work side by side with their peers from around the world. "My students now have pen pals in England, Germany and Croatia," Gilchrest says. "It was interesting to watch the group dynamics and how people bridged into cultures different than their own."

Another interesting aspect for Gilchrest was the cultural differences between the U.S. teams. "You expect to see big differences between teams from, say, Egypt, Bahrain and Germany. What I didn't expect to see was the cultural differences between our team and those from other places in the United States."

"Everyone who went will carry the experience with them for a lifetime," Gilchrest says. "Everyone was shedding a few tears when we were saying goodbye. It's amazing how close you become to others during an experience such as this."

For more information on the GLOBE Program, or how to become involved, click on [www.globe.gov].

Official FFA Jacket News

Of all the symbols and pieces of FFA history, perhaps none touch the lives of FFA members as deeply as their official FFA jackets. The blue corduroy does many things for many people as it brings back fond memories, serves as a unifying thread running through the organization's history and plays an active role in providing a rich FFA legacy for years to come.

Background

Seventy years of tradition surround the fabled FFA jacket. Made of blue corduroy from the beginning, the jacket has undergone gradual changes over the years—changes that added together are significant.

While researching the jacket's history for development of a commemorative version, FFA discovered that, beyond subtle styling changes, the original national blue color had been modified to the point where it appears more navy than national blue. Likewise, the embroidered FFA emblems appear more orange than corn gold, and they lack detail when compared to the official FFA emblem. Some quality construction details of the jacket had been

eliminated to reduce costs as material and labor prices increased over the years.

The National FFA Organization, with oversight from the board of directors, has developed a three-year plan to restore the official FFA jacket to its original glory. After collecting input from students, parents and advisors and reviewing these issues with the board, the following plan was put in place.

Fabric and Production

To restore some of the jacket's lost details, it was critical to maintain or lower the price of the jacket over the next several years. Because reducing the quality of the materials was not an option, FFA looked to develop offshore sourcing for the cutting and sewing of a portion of jacket production to lower costs. Foreign factories offer lower overhead and labor costs and provide excellent workmanship, which enables a portion of the jackets to be produced offshore at a reduced cost and results in a reduction in the average cost for all jackets sold. As a result, FFA members will experience higher overall quality in their jackets (with more stitches

per inch and better trimming and detailing) for lower cost. Starting in the school year 2003–2004, jackets will be priced at \$45.00. Details regarding the fabric and jacket production are detailed below.

The fabric will be made of 100 percent American cotton woven into

corduroy, dyed and finished in North Carolina.

The fabric will be shipped to a factory in Van Wert, Ohio, or to southern Vietnam, where jackets will be cut and sewn and emblems attached.

“
The fabric will be made of 100 percent American cotton woven into corduroy, dyed and finished in North Carolina.
”

All jackets sewn in southern Vietnam will be shipped to the Ohio factory for personalization along with the jackets being sewn in Ohio.

Currently, 20 percent of the jackets are imported, and the maximum is not to exceed 50 percent in any given year.



Official FFA Emblem

Over time, the original color and details of the embroidered emblems used on the jacket have been changed or lost. When the emblem embroidery contract came up for bid in 2003, suppliers were asked to create an emblem identical to the original in both design and color. In addition, the quality of the emblems on the front and back of the jacket will now match, resulting in emblems of consistently high quality and detail. Manufacturing begins this fall, and new emblems will be used on jackets shipped in January 2004 and after.





the jacket (outside appearance) will not change. The result will be jackets that better fit the “body types” of today’s students. These jackets will be ready for test marketing in the fall of 2004 and finalized for bulk shipping to all students in the fall of 2005.

Styling Details

Along with changes in the fit of the jackets, FFA will be adding some of the early quality detailing back into the jacket—such as the double needle welt stitching originally used on the side seams, underarm, sleeve and shoulder. The outer appearance of the jacket will remain the same; however, key details that have been lost will be brought back to produce a more durable jacket of higher quality and wearability. Jackets with updated detailing will be rolled out to students when the new fit is ready in the fall of 2005.

In July 2001, the National FFA Board of Directors policy committee indicated support for FFA moving ahead with plans for offshore sourcing of the cutting and sewing of a limited number of FFA jackets. The board has been updated on the status of these plans and asked for input at every board meeting since.

As one of their key topics, delegates to the 2002 National FFA Convention discussed at length the issue of “Global Sourcing.” This discussion provided an opportunity to make the delegates aware of plans and to address questions. After considering the issue carefully, the delegate committee unanimously recommended, and the delegate body subsequently approved, that the official FFA jacket should be manufactured in whatever locations would ensure the lowest price to FFA members while maintaining the highest quality of production in all locations, whether they were offshore or domestic.

Color

Later this year, FFA will work with its fabric supplier in North Carolina to develop a new color standard for the blue corduroy used to make the official jacket. The color will be selected based on samples from archives at Universal Lettering Company, and it will return to national blue after having become a very dark navy and sometimes almost purple color in the last decade. This change in color was not within FFA’s control, but it is now. Once the final color is approved, fabric will be dyed and finished and ready for cutting and sewing. Jackets with the updated color will be shipped starting in the fall of 2004.

“ FFA is hiring a professional tailor to create new patterns that will fit today’s students more appropriately. ”

How We Got Here

The improvement plans for the jacket have been approved and are being implemented. Distribution of jackets undergoing changes will begin soon. But FFA didn’t get here alone; board members, national officers, convention delegates, advisors and parents all played a role.

The Future

The National FFA Organization is pleased to share details of these exciting developments with FFA advisors and members. The end result should be a greatly improved jacket, one that more FFA members will be able to afford. The pride and prestige associated with the jacket will last a lifetime, and future members will come to experience the best of what this important symbol has to offer. That should be good news for FFA and agricultural education.



Fit

Over the past few years, FFA has heard growing concern expressed about the fit and comfort of official jackets. It has been more than 10 years since the jacket patterns have changed, so to address this issue FFA is hiring a professional tailor to create new patterns that will fit today’s students more appropriately. The style of

Get Ready for LifeKnowledge

f **FA and agricultural education** have long been recognized for the leadership development they provide to young people. A little more than a year ago, the National FFA Organization received grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and John Deere to develop comprehensive instructional materials focused on leadership development, personal growth and career success.

Termed LifeKnowledge, the purpose of the initiative is to provide materials and infuse these core objectives into every facet of agricultural education at the mid-

dle school, high school and advanced levels. The materials will provide teachers with additional practical learning strategies and corresponding instructional materials to empower young people to live the FFA mission every day.



Over the past year, 36 writers from within education were selected to write lessons.

Each lesson has gone through seven phases of review, including pilot testing in actual classrooms by teachers who represent a wide range of experience levels. Numerous FFA staff, nine university educators and 212 middle and high school teachers (agriculture and other disciplines) have been involved in the development and evaluation process.

These instructional materials will be delivered via CD-ROM. The instructional materials will include:

- nearly 275 lesson plans
- learning objectives
- transparency masters
- quizzes/tests
- vocabulary lists
- role modeling and scenarios
- age-appropriate activities
- self-assessment or behavioral assessment instructions

The 3-CD set of materials will be distributed free to teachers who attend a training seminar. The training seminars will begin in January 2004 and will be provided at the state level. Additional information about this exciting initiative will be included in future editions of *FFA Advisors Making a Difference*, including an eight-page special section in the November-December issue. Watch for it!



It Pays to be Part of Alumni's Scholarship Program!

t **he National FFA Alumni Association Scholarship Program** awards more than \$42,000 annually to local FFA members. Scholarships are given in two areas – the Washington Leadership Conference and the Future Teachers in Agricultural Education.

The WLC scholarship is awarded on an annual basis based on national alumni membership achievements. For the 2003 WLC season, more than \$37,000 worth of scholarships were awarded to local FFA members. At WLC, award winners gain experience in service learning, character

development, mentoring and volunteerism strategies, building relationship and meeting new friends from across the country. The Washington Leadership Conference is the ultimate leadership experience!



By Frank Saldaña
Executive Director
National FFA Alumni Association

The other well-established program is college scholarships for Future Teachers in Agricultural Education. This program provides five \$1,000 scholarships annually to students pursuing degrees in agricultural education.

For more information on these two opportunities, click on [www.alumni.ffa.org].



2004 Agricultural Proficiency Award Areas

the National FFA Organization and the National FFA Foundation are pleased to announce the proficiency areas that have been approved and sponsored for the 2003 award year. In 2003, there will be 49 proficiency awards available for which students can compete. They are:

1. Agricultural Communications – Entrepreneurship/Placement
2. Agricultural Mechanics Design and Fabrication – Entrepreneurship/Placement
3. Agricultural Mechanics Repair and Maintenance – Entrepreneurship/Placement
4. Agricultural Mechanics Energy Systems – Entrepreneurship/Placement
5. Agricultural Processing – Entrepreneurship/Placement
6. Agricultural Sales – Entrepreneurship
7. Agricultural Sales – Placement
8. Agricultural Services – Entrepreneurship/Placement
9. Aquaculture – Entrepreneurship/Placement
10. Beef Production – Entrepreneurship
11. Beef Production – Placement
12. Dairy Production – Entrepreneurship
13. Dairy Production – Placement
14. Diversified Agricultural Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement
15. Diversified Crop Production – Entrepreneurship
16. Diversified Crop Production – Placement
17. Diversified Horticulture – Entrepreneurship
18. Diversified Horticulture – Placement
19. Diversified Livestock Production – Entrepreneurship
20. Diversified Livestock Production – Placement
21. Emerging Agricultural Technology – Entrepreneurship/Placement
22. Environmental Science and Natural Resources Management – Entrepreneurship/Placement
23. Equine Science – Entrepreneurship
24. Equine Science – Placement
25. Fiber and/or Oil Crop Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement
26. Floriculture – Entrepreneurship/Placement
27. Food Science and Technology – Entrepreneurship/Placement
28. Forage Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement
29. Forest Management and Products – Entrepreneurship/Placement
30. Fruit Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement
31. Grain Production – Entrepreneurship
32. Grain Production – Placement
33. Home and/or Community Development – Entrepreneurship/Placement
34. Landscape Management – Entrepreneurship/Placement
35. Nursery Operations – Entrepreneurship/Placement
36. Outdoor Recreation – Entrepreneurship/Placement
37. Poultry Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement
38. Sheep Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement
39. Small Animal Production and Care – Entrepreneurship
40. Small Animal Production and Care – Placement
41. Specialty Animal Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement
42. Specialty Crop Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement
43. Swine Production – Entrepreneurship
44. Swine Production – Placement
45. Turf Grass Management – Entrepreneurship
46. Turf Grass Management – Placement
47. Vegetable Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement
48. Wildlife Management – Entrepreneurship
49. Wildlife Management – Placement



All the application and information materials for these awards are contained on the 2003-2004 *Local Program Resource Guide CD*. Should you have any questions on this information, please contact Rosalie Hunsinger via e-mail at [rhunsinger@ffa.org] or by calling 317-802-4255 .

TeacherResources

2003 National AgrAbility Training Workshop

The 2003 National AgrAbility Training Workshop (NTW) will be held Nov. 11-14 in Omaha, Neb. An exciting program is being planned that includes four technical tracks with lots of opportunities for participation in hands-on activities:

- Equipment & Assistive Technology
- Farm Business & Financial Management
- Independent Living & Health
- Support Services & Delivery Systems

Several college students will showcase projects they have designed and completed that relate to some aspect of production agriculture. And a special, reduced registration fee of just \$50.00 is available to students only! For more details and downloadable registration materials, visit the workshop website at [www.agrabilityproject.org/events/workshop2003.cfm], or contact Carol Maus at 1-800-914-4424 or cmaus@easters-seals.org.

Convention Planning Guide

The 2nd Edition of the National FFA Convention Planning Guide was mailed to all chapters in late August. For an online version of this publication, visit [www.ffa.org/convention/]. You can save time and effort by registering online at [www.ffaunlimited.org]. It's really that simple. Visit the website for the latest and greatest details about convention.

Americans on Kubota

Kubota salutes American tractor owners and operators as they use Kubota tractors to work the land in many ways in a new book. Stories in the book include how tractors are used in forestry, cattle ranching, small farming, construction, turf and landscape operations through out the United States. If you would like to order a copy of the book, contact:

Kubota Tractor Corporation, Attn. Colleen Quicksey, 3401 Del Amo Blvd., Torrance, CA 90503, or call 310-370-3370, fax 310-370-3846 or e-mail CQuicksey@kubota.com. The item number is: 920601, B&L Series Tractors 0-40 HP, AMK001 M Series Tractors 40-100 HP.

New Classroom Instruction, Monitoring and Testing Software

As the information revolution continues to gather speed, schools are adopting new procedures and teaching methods to accommodate the changing educational and career needs of their students. In many cases, this involves the implementation of classrooms equipped with networked computers. This environment makes it possible to use advanced software to facilitate the effectiveness of this equipment and the training provided. NetSupport School is an interactive software solution that enables teachers and trainers to demonstrate, monitor and interact with their students simply and effectively. This can be done on a whole-class basis or with a select group of students, or even to individual students. For more information, visit [www.netsupportinc.com/NSS/Netsupport_School_overview.htm].

New Textbooks Released

Prentice Hall Interstate recently released five agriculture-related textbooks. *Introduction to Livestock and Companion Animals, 3rd Edition* by Lee, et. al., is a newly revised full-color edition that explores the ever-evolving industry of animal agriculture. Veterinary technology, management techniques and biotechnology updates are included. *Plants and Animals: Biology and Production*, by Lee, et. al., is a new full-color book developed for teachers who cover plant and animal science in one course. This introductory volume pres-

ents a biological approach as the foundation for animal and plant production. *Introduction to Agricultural Mechanics* by Phipps, Miller and Lee is a newly revised full-color edition that connects science principles and mechanical skills. Problem-solving approaches are used to apply skills in all aspects of agricultural mechanics. *Food Science and Safety, 2nd Edition* by George Seperich provides a comprehensive overview of food science, exploring the technology used in the food industry and investigating the entire food system through marketing, product development and international development. Lastly, *Ensminger's Equine Science, 8th Edition* by M.E. Ensminger and C.J. Hammer is a newly revised edition of the book formerly titled *Horses and Horsemanship*. The revised layout allows for planning flexibility, while remaining the most comprehensive text on equine science available today. For more information about these titles, visit [www.phschool.com/catalog] or call 1-800-848-9500.

National Pesticide Information Center

Are you or your students in need of information on bug sprays, weed killers, rat baits or other pesticides? Try calling 800-858-PEST for the National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC)! NPIC is a service sponsored cooperatively by Oregon State University and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency providing objective, science-based information on a variety of pesticide-related subjects. NPIC is staffed by pesticide specialists who have the scientific training needed to help educators and FFA members understand complex information about pesticides. Call NPIC seven days a week from 6:30 to 4:30 PST at 800-858-PEST (7378), e-mail questions to npic@ace.orst.edu, or visit the NPIC web site at [<http://npic.orst.edu>].

FFA Membership Hits 19-Year High

The National FFA Organization is pleased to announce an increase in its membership. The final tally of members for 2002-03 is 464,267, an increase of 3,224 over the previous year, and a number not seen since 1984. According to Dr. Larry Case, National FFA advisor, the increase in FFA membership is a reflection of the dedication and deep commitment of agriculture teachers.

FFA Seeking E-mail Addresses

Providing your e-mail address to a customer service representative when placing a phone order or including it on an order form provides you with some great advantages. It takes a bit of extra work, but the effort will pay off. As a result, people who provide FFA with their e-mail addresses will benefit from the following:

- Order Confirmation-New this year, FFA will confirm orders via e-mail or fax. Customers can verify an order was entered correctly before it's processed, greatly reducing the likelihood of errors.
- UPS Order Confirmation-Track shipment of orders via the Internet. Once merchandise leaves the FFA warehouse, customers will automatically receive confirmation of their order shipment and a tracking number from UPS. If you want to know where a package is during transit, visit [www.ups.com], enter the tracking number and view the most current status. It's that easy!
- Online Promotions-Every month, FFA sends out e-mail promotions to its customers. The only way to find out about these special offers is to provide your e-mail address-either when placing an order or by signing up on [www.ffa.org]. Don't miss out on great savings and other special deals!

School Officials Luncheon

Invite your state officials, school officials or important education partners to experience motivational speakers, outstanding teachers and top students at the School Officials Luncheon. This educational and entertaining event will take place during the 2003 National FFA Convention on Friday, Oct. 31, at 11:30 a.m. Take this opportunity to show your education partners a unique side of the convention. In addition to the luncheon, we welcome them to experience the many suggested activities including convention sessions (4th and 6th), national FFA leadership workshops, and the FFA National Agricultural Career Show®. The luncheon is free, however, seating is limited! Only 300 tickets are available on a first-come, first-served basis, so please respond early to secure a reservation for this activity. To order your school official's complimentary ticket, complete the attached request form or contact Michele Gilbert, [mgilbert@ffa.org] 317-802-4301. Have the attendee's name, title, organization, mailing address, phone/fax and e-mail address ready to share when contacting Michele. For additional information, contact Ernie Gill via e-mail at: [egill@ffa.org], or via telephone at 317-802-4222.

Convention Fee Reminder

The National FFA Board of Directors and National FFA Officers have set the national FFA convention attendance fee at \$30 for pre-registration and \$35 for on-site registration beginning in 2003. The action was taken to offset significant increases in costs for services, decoration, staging, labor and security. As a break-even activity, convention costs are borne by participants and not by general dues. Even with the approved increase, the \$30/\$35 FFA convention fee remains markedly lower than national meeting fees for other

student organizations: VICA/Skills USA - \$90/\$100; FCCLA - \$100/\$110; and FBLA - \$85/95.

American Degree Scholarship

The National FFA Alumni Association has a special scholarship opportunity for FFA members receiving their American FFA Degrees at the 2003 National FFA Convention. If they are currently members of the National FFA Alumni Association (membership is separate from FFA), or if they join the Alumni Association on or before Oct. 31, 2003, they will be entered into a drawing for a \$1,000 scholarship. Information was sent to all American FFA Degree recipients, so be sure to encourage your degree candidates to take advantage of this great opportunity.

Computer Giveaway

Cummins Inc., a new National FFA Foundation sponsor, will be giving away three laptop computers at their career show booth at the National FFA Convention next month. The Dell Inspiron 1100 computers, valued at \$1,000 each, will be given away to an FFA member whose name will be drawn at random (one per day). Winners need not be present to win. Have your students drop by the Cummins booth next to Dodge Trucks at the Career Show to register for the drawing.

Former FFA Member Making a Film

Jared Hess, a 1997 graduate from Preston High School, Idaho, is filming a feature-length film in his hometown. "Napolean Dynamite" tells the coming-of-age tale of a high school teen trying to find himself in a rural, southeastern Idaho farming town. The film is a larger version of Hess' short film, "Peluca" which had its debut last year at the Sundance Film Festival.