Members from across the country greeted each other with excitement at the national FFA convention.

The 73rd National FFA Convention Proceedings is published by the National FFA Organization as a record of its annual convention held in Louisville, Kentucky, October 25-28, 2000.

Editor
Nicole Bishop, Indiana

Associate Editors
Lindsay Williams, Wyoming
Katie Yellen, Florida

Photo Editors
Nicole Bishop, Indiana
Mary Beth Stagg, Indiana

Art Director
Steve Richards, Indiana

Photo Processors
Emily Bisdorf, Ohio
Kelly Robinson, Kentucky

Photographers
J. Gillis Courson, Kentucky
Jim Davis, Iowa
Travis Doster, Kentucky
Sam Harrel, Alaska
Patti Longmire, Kentucky
Kelly Rogers, Minnesota
Ed Zurga, Kansas

The 73rd National FFA Convention Proceedings is published by the National FFA Organization as a record of its annual convention held in Louisville, Kentucky, October 25-28, 2000.
welcome to Louisville

These FFA members enjoyed the exciting convention sessions which featured motivational speakers, award winners and amazing special effects.

The leaves may be turning brown, but FFA members colored Louisville blue and gold at the 73rd National FFA Convention held Oct. 25-28, at the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center. Nearly 46,000 members and guests poured into the Bluegrass state for four days of education, motivation and fun.

At national convention, FFA members developed their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success as they learned how to "Discover the Power" within themselves.

Helping these FFA members discover that power were their dedicated advisors. These teachers devote countless hours above and beyond teaching requirements.

Some of those hours are spent traveling with students. Advisor Pat Henne drove from Michigan with the Springport FFA Chapter to national convention. Their mode of transportation? A motor home with black lights and a strobe light. Other chapters flew to Kentucky or drove more conventional vehicles.
Once they arrived in Louisville, members rolled into convention vying for top honors in career development events (CDE). Students competed in 21 different CDEs, two demonstrations and one activity that helped them build confidence and challenged their critical thinking skills in areas from agricultural communications to public speaking.

Calvin Kenley from the Palmer FFA Chapter in Alabama competed in the extemporaneous public speaking contest. "The contest was nerve wracking, because I'd only done it one other time at the state level," said Kenley. "National competition is a big deal, but it was a lot of fun."

To compete at nationals, individuals and teams must win at the state level in contests ranging from meats judging to the newest official CDE, agricultural communications. Winners at national convention are rewarded with cash or scholarships, plaques and on-stage recognition.

However, CDE winners weren't the only people being acknowledged. At national convention, individuals who dedicate time, money and their hearts to FFA were also honored on-stage.

FFA members and guests visited surrounding attractions while taking in the national convention experience, making their presence felt off-site as well. The convention's impact on the Louisville economy reached nearly $20 million. Blue and gold definitely means green for Louisville businesses.
Students from all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands traveled to Louisville to explore careers, meet new friends and have fun.

Churchill Downs was a favorite for Andrew Wemmer of the Jordan FFA Chapter in Montana who enjoyed watching the morning workouts. Chrissy Cluff of the Lynchburg-Clay FFA Chapter in Ohio thought it was fun to take a carriage ride in downtown Louisville. Some groups also visited local industries such as the Purina Mills plant and the Louisville Slugger Museum.

Sell-out crowds were mesmerized by the three concerts organized by the National FFA Organization. Headliners – Sawyer Brown, Bryan White, Toby Keith and the Wilkinsons – kept crowds entertained well into the night.

And, for an educational twist, convention-goers hit the largest-ever career show with 362 exhibitors where members scaled walls, acted as a pit crew team, saw the latest in horticulture and biotechnology and canvassed the Hall of States area, among many other diversions.

Prizes, activities and information drew thousands of FFA members each day to the 35th annual FFA National Agricultural Career Show, where companies, universities and FFA associations’ booths occupied 400,000 square feet.
discovery the power

FFA members enjoyed the many activities in the career show.

"We went to the show today, yesterday and the day before," 16-year-old Meghan Adams of the Elk City FFA Chapter in Oklahoma said on Friday. "There is so much there, you have to go back to get everything in. There's no way to see it all."

All in all, the four days were jam-packed with speakers, entertainment and fun.

Students may have noticed the stage was quite different from years past. In an effort to make the arena setting more intimate, a "stage in the round" was constructed. The sessions ran smoothly and attendees enjoyed the new setup.

Also new this year, students and advisors were able to tour the career development events. This allowed them to see exactly what is expected of a project in order to become the "best of the best." The tours proved popular. Teachers and students alike gathered ideas to improve projects back home for next year.
FFA members also took home some motivation from the keynote speakers. Deborah Norville, John Alston, Dr. Guy Rice Doud, Sec. Dan Glickman and Carolyn Peck all spoke about success, passion for life and the gifts everyone has been given. They shared personal stories, from trials of gym class through the eyes of a seventh grader to a national basketball championship. Students got into the speeches — laughing, cheering and giving standing ovations. The enthusiasm could be felt in the arena and around the convention center even after the speakers were gone.

Not only does the convention motivate and inspire members about FFA, but about giving back to the Louisville community as well. FFA members left their own enthusiasm behind in the 540 third graders who participated in the Partners in Active Learning Support (PALS) mentoring program while agricultural ambassadors taught over 600 fourth graders about the importance of agriculture in our daily lives. In addition, FFA members spread the wealth with canned goods — 22 tons of food for the "Can Hunger" drive — to feed the hungry of Louisville for nearly nine days!

From motivational speakers to competitive events to tours to the career show to community outreach efforts, FFA members were encouraged to take the power home with them to share with their fellow chapter members and spread the motivation and enthusiasm, not just for FFA, but for life.
For the four American Star Farmer finalists and four American Star in Agribusiness finalists, this was the moment. After years of hard work, diligence and sacrifice, these eight FFA members waited to find out who earned this year’s top FFA honors.

The awards were presented to students who have established profitable agricultural enterprises or agribusiness programs, demonstrated outstanding management skills and excelled in agricultural education and leadership. The finalists went through extensive interviews and record book inspections.

Each finalist received a $1,000 scholarship and have the opportunity to travel to Costa Rica. The two winners received an additional $1,000. As a recognition and thank you, each of the eight finalists’ parents were presented with the Honorary American FFA Degree.

The Stars Over America Film is sponsored by the Farm Service Agency, United States Department of Agriculture and the General Fund of the National FFA Foundation. Cash awards for the national finalists and winners are sponsored by the executive sponsors of the National FFA Foundation.
american star in agribusiness finalists

Travis Ambrose, 19
Amherst, Wisconsin
Amherst FFA Chapter
From an early age, Ambrose was dedicated to working hard to create a sound business. His dedication and hard work paid off through T.N.T Lawn Care Service. Ambrose maintains thorough records, and this past year he was in charge of two high school student employees and conducted much of the hands-on training.

Roy J. Becker Jr., 19
Watkins, Iowa
Benton Community FFA Chapter
Switching to high-demand, high-profit crops such as strawberries and tomatoes helped Becker greatly increase his profits while only slightly increasing his acreage. Sound business decisions like this helped him establish a profitable truck farming operation. Through improved marketing and production practices, he developed a solid business selling to several German restaurants in the Amana Colonies and nearby farmer's markets.

Jamie Herring, 20
Rochelle, Illinois
Rochelle FFA Chapter
Herring’s FFA advisor recommended him for a job that was supposed to last two weeks. Two weeks turned into six years. Working at a nearby research farm gave Herring direction for his supervised agricultural experience (SAE) project and income for his tuition at the University of Illinois where he is a junior majoring in crop science. Herring’s interest of innovations in agriculture earned him the National FFA Emerging Agricultural Technology Proficiency award in 1997.

american star farmer finalists

Levin Keith Billings II, 21
McMinnville, Tennessee
Warren County FFA Chapter
Billings stays in step with technology to improve his dairy operation and maintain good communications with his employees. He has improved the genetics and value of his dairy herd through artificial insemination. Billings has continuously increased his herd size and crop acreage, and he has earned a gold award for dairy production. He attributes his success to the support of his family.

Eric Edward Kracke, 21
Wilbur, Nebraska
Wilbur-Clatonia FFA Chapter
Despite floods and droughts, Kracke started with a 92-acre farm and developed it into a 550-acre business. His love of agriculture and a genuine concern for the environment guide Kracke daily in his drive to make his business bigger and better. His ability to seize opportunities will assist Kracke in his future plans, which include operating 4,000 acres of irrigated and dryland crop ground, a cattle operation, a custom grain vac and a trucking business.

Brady Miller, 21
Wahpeton, North Dakota
Wahpeton FFA Chapter
When Miller began farming, prices were depressed and costs were high. He quickly learned to maximize every dollar. Miller also learned the importance of proper long-term planning and research. Since 1993, Miller has diversified his enterprise into a variety of crops, including soybeans, corn, wheat and sunflowers. An FFA trip to Russia gave him insight into his role in the global agricultural economy.
Thirty-seven candidates competed for the six national officer spots for 2000-2001. These FFA members displayed their outstanding skills, talents and knowledge through personal and group interviews as well as written exams and activities.

Each of the 37 phenomenal candidates waited nervously with sweaty palms to find out if he or she would spend the next year serving more than 455,000 FFA members as a national FFA officer.

Candidates arrived early on Sunday and were tested on their knowledge of FFA history and programs, agricultural facts and parliamentary procedure. Later, they took a writing skills test followed by six rounds of intensive interviews.

The nomination of six distinguished individuals, one from each region and two chosen at large, was the last official business conducted at the 73rd National FFA Convention. These officers were slated by a committee of their peers to devote one year of service to FFA. Throughout the process, all candidates learned to "Discover the Power" within themselves to motivate and to lead.

National Officer Candidates reception sponsored by ABG, Inc.

ALABAMA: Jennifer Dawn Edwards, Gaston
ALASKA: Lem Wheelers, A.J. Dimond
ARIZONA: Stephanie Ann Wellert, Peoria
ARKANSAS: Jordan A. May, Searcy
CALIFORNIA: Angela Marie Browning, Bear River
COLORADO: Timothy C. Ulrich, Valley
CONNECTICUT: Stacey Stearns, Storrs Regional
FLORIDA: Ronnie D. Simmons, South Sumter
GEORGIA: Carl Leland Stalvey, Berrien County
ILLINOIS: Parker Bane, Ridgeway
INDIANA: Lillian Marie Walford, STAR Academy
IOWA: Ryan Foor, Wapello
KENTUCKY: William Brandon Reed, LaRue County
MICHIGAN: Lori Preston, Branch Area Career Center
MINNESOTA: Trista Rae Colbenson, Rushford-Peterson
MISSISSIPPI: Brandon Davis, Greene County Vo-Tech
MISSOURI: Douglas Paul Kueker, Sweet Springs
MONTANA: Becky Kossler, Shields Valley
NEVADA: William Flint Wright, Wells
NEW HAMPSHIRE: Linnea Selinga, Pinkerton Academy
NEW MEXICO: Erin Eileen Morrow, Des Moines
NEW YORK: Matthew Thomas Hobart, Greenville
NORTH CAROLINA: Nicholas Jordon Armendariz, West Carteret
NORTH DAKOTA: Kristy M. Jorde, Towner
OHIO: Katy Pohl, Liberty Union
OKLAHOMA: Robyn Renee Sites, Mountain View - Gotebo
OREGON: J.D. Cant, Imbler
PENNSYLVANIA: Elio Chiarelli, Jr., H.G. Parkinson
RHODE ISLAND: Dennis A. Eichells, Jr., Scituate
SOUTH DAKOTA: Tiffany Anderson, Lemmon
TEXAS: Trent McKnight, Throckmorton
UTAH: Wyatt Gardiner, Morgan
VIRGINIA: Johnny Davis, Aftie
WASHINGTON: Amanda McKinley, Waitsburg
WISCONSIN: Tolea Karee Kamn, New Richmond
WYOMING: Stacy Child, Cheyenne
Self-starting students who took their enterprise ideas to the highest level were awarded the FFA Agri-Entrepreneurship Award. Ten students demonstrated a high level of initiative and imagination to reach the national level. Each student used their creativity to plan and initiate an agricultural-related business, whether by selling wood products at craft shows or starting their own landscape nursery.

The award-winners each received $1,000, and their ideas will be published in an annual report. In addition, the advisors each received $500 with which to promote entrepreneurship in their chapters.

**Clint Jarrell** of Valley, Alabama, owns Jarrell's Lumber and Logging, a sawmill operation that cuts and markets rough-cut lumber. He lives in an area that is experiencing steady growth and recognized the opportunity to provide homebuilders with needed materials. Hard work, dedication and solid business skills have helped Clint create a business that serves the community, is paying for his college expenses and will carry him into the future.

**Doug Jung** of Randolph, Wisconsin, owns and operates C&J Trucking, a business that provides trucking services to area farmers and other businesses. In 1998, he recognized the business opportunity when a local trucking service stopped hauling grain and hay. He already had a commercial driver’s license and negotiated a lease for use of a semi-tractor and trailer. Early successes encouraged him to expand his services, and he purchased an additional tractor and trailer along with a hopper trailer so he could diversify to meet customer needs.

**David McGown** of Fairland, Indiana, owns and operates DM & D Design, a company that develops and markets educational materials. He launched the business when he uncovered a market opportunity for forestry specimen sets and CDs. His business consists of producing and marketing forestry leaf, seed and wood specimens as well as a CD-ROM that features the leaves, seeds and woods of Indiana. He markets his products to agriculture and science teachers who are teaching natural resources courses.

**Travis McSherley** of Middletown, Indiana, launched McRell Productions in 1998 with a friend. The company provides websites and other design services to local clients, and they have created websites for their school, a newspaper, a landscaping company, an auto body shop and a farm. His goal is to provide quality service to agricultural businesses around his local area and to someday be able to spread his business to other parts of the state and country.

**Fran Meister** of West Liberty, Ohio, began mowing lawns for a few neighbors at the age of 10. That business has grown into the operation of a full lawn care and landscaping service that has 38 customers in 3 counties. He has developed the skills necessary to relate professionally and personally to customers and to organize and run a business, including inventory management, supply purchasing, budgeting, customer billing, obtaining insurance and liability coverage and keeping accurate financial records.

**Jana Thies** of Glasgow, Missouri, started Jana's Specialties in 1998. She produces and markets gourds, pumpkins, ornamental corn and other vegetables. In addition, she constructed a greenhouse to facilitate production and extend the marketing season by offering container plants year-round. She joined the Fayette and Columbia Farmers Markets which enabled her to market her products five days a week. She has expanded the varieties of produce she grows which has enhanced her sales and opened up a new niche at the markets she attends.

**Jill Ulrich** of Eaton, Colorado, launched the Youth Livestock Connection newsletter in February 2000. Her objective is to promote smaller livestock shows throughout the state and help young people sharpen their livestock exhibition skills. One of her goals is to promote all livestock shows, grooming clinics, sales and feed suppliers in a five-state region.

**Matt Vlasin** of Imperial, Nebraska, started Holiday Farms four years ago in partnership with his brothers and parents. He holds a 25 percent stake in the business, which produces and markets a variety of bedding plants, perennials, hanging baskets and planters. In addition, he offers a floriculture service featuring flowerbed design, installation and summer maintenance. He has developed several skills including record-keeping, customer service and sales, that have helped in other scholastic areas such as speech and math.

**James Winchester** of Gibbon, Nebraska, started planning Winchester Vegetables and Greenhouses in March of 1999. He has been growing vegetables since he was eight years old and became a Nebraska Master Gardener at age 13, the youngest in the state. Winchester pursued the opportunity of starting his own business when he noticed no one was growing herbs locally. He has built his own greenhouse and is interested in incorporating hydroponics into his operations.

**Joshua Zeithamer** of Alexandria, Minnesota, launched BioBuilder, a company that develops and distributes quality natural and organic fertilizer products, in 1999. BioBuilder turns unwanted rough fish, which diminish water clarity, into a usable, environmentally friendly fertilizer. He has implemented a number of marketing strategies, including exhibiting at trade shows, direct mail, broadcast advertising and face-to-face selling. When marketing products, he has targeted organic farmers, homeowners and the turf grass industry.
prepared public speaking

Sponsored by FMC Corporation, Agricultural Products Group

agricultural instability

National Prepared Public Speaking Winner
Lori Rae Nelson, Kansas

Only a farmer? It seems everywhere I go I am constantly asked, "What do your parents do?" I answer, only to be asked for additional information. "What does your father do besides farming?" "Nothing." That's the truth. Somehow my family survives on my mother's substitute teaching pay and my father's dream of owning and operating a family farm, but today it is becoming a reality that many farmers are being forced to hold more than one job. But why? And why is it that more and more farms cannot survive on farm income alone?

Currently, your average farmer doesn't live off the milk and corn. Many are turning to in-town jobs and secondary incomes to support their habit and love for the land. My family is no different. We know that often, times are tough in agriculture, and maybe a few fields of dreams, even when cultivated and nurtured, are not enough in our present day corporate America to keep your head above water.

The October 11, 1998, issue of The Wichita Eagle invited you to travel back to 1866. The Civil War had just ended, and the United States Department of Agriculture issued its first ever grain report: wheat cost $2.06 a bushel. Yet after grain prices collapsed over the summer of 1998, wheat was selling again for the exact same price as it did over 130 years ago. If wages today mirrored the wheat market, the average U.S. worker would be earning a salary of about 15 cents an hour. At $300 a year, one, maybe two of your car payments have been made. The Dow Jones Industrial Average, if mirroring the wheat market, would be somewhere around 41, not 10380.12 where it sits currently. So while expenses for farmers have increased an average of 58 percent in the last ten years alone, incomes of farmers haven't kept up.

This alone explains many things: why the open plains are feeling pain, and the cities are prospering; why farmers receive crop subsidies, and Congress is calling for more help; why farms keep getting bigger and bigger and why the price of food is literally the bargain of the century.

The true beneficiaries of these price trends are consumers, who are receiving more abundant, low-priced food. Americans now spend only 10 percent of their income on this necessity compared to 34 percent in 1930 as recorded by the Department of Commerce. Farmers, on the other hand, are not gaining from their

Lori Rae Nelson, a member of the Iola FFA Chapter in Kansas, beams as she is named the National FFA Prepared Public Speaking Career Development Event winner.

It was showtime. The prepared public speaking finalists spent six to eight minutes on stage delivering their speeches. Those few minutes were the culmination of months of preparation, research and rehearsal. The audiences rewarded the speakers with warm and enthusiastic applause, but the personal rewards were greater.

Before a speech can be delivered, speakers must research an agricultural topic of their choice until they are comfortable enough to deliver the speech and field questions for five minutes from a panel of judges.

Good speakers grow into great speakers as they compete and advance through local, district, state and national levels of competition. These great speakers master skills such as hard work, perseverance, poise and research. In the future, this knowledge will reward the speakers more than a plaque or applause ever could.
increased productivity that leads to low-cost foods.

It is apparent that consumers are winning and farmers are suffering. By becoming more productive and striving to break even, farmers have instead begun to put themselves out of business. Economists partially blame farmers themselves for their hardships. Too many farmers produce surplus, and prices plummet. In doing so, the field of agriculture is becoming less and less attractive to new, potential farmers.

In 1921 when my grandfather graduated from high school, he entered the world of work as a farmer, when for the first time in U.S. history, more than 70 percent of Americans lived and worked in the cities. My father graduated from high school in 1957, also beginning a career as a farmer, but with only 12 percent of the population. Last year, my brother followed in their footsteps. The difference is that less than 2 percent of our nation today is involved in the same field. Drastically the percentage of the American workforce who are farmers has dropped 28 percent in only 77 years according to the Department of Labor. While there are still about two million farmers in the U.S. today, it is estimated that far fewer farmers are actually needed due to technological advancements.

Trends of American agriculture are what are going to be most difficult in the years to come for the family farmer. This century, farms have grown much larger and more mechanized. In recent years, crop prices have reflected those from the days of our great grandparents. With crop prices so low, young entrepreneurs have little reason to see agriculture as a profitable career. I cannot possibly count the number of times in the last few months alone my mother has encouraged my brother to enter a different occupation and move away from agriculture. She wants his life to be easier and offer stability, but he has always dreamed, like my father, of being surrounded by his own land.

Sons and daughters of farmers grow up around the stress of farming. Each day their parents have to validate why they stay in such a stressful and unpredictable occupation. What becomes hard to see is that farming offers them the opportunity to be their own boss, to explore the world of agriculture, and become laborers of the land. But in time of great economic difficulty, some children of farmers may begin to think that farming is not at all worth getting into, and with too many farmers now, why would we want to encourage more to enter production agriculture?

One simple fact, while there may be a surplus of farmers today, we are heading toward a darker time. The average age of a farmer in 1992 was 53. Unless we provide an incentive for the next generation to take up farming, a shortage of farmers may develop. No, this shortage of farmers won’t mean a shortage of food, but less decision-makers and the potential for monopolies in the food industry may develop. Doesn’t the family farm symbolize the very foundations of our nation? Perhaps as the saying goes, “Farmers need to raise a lot less corn and a lot more…” well, I think you get the picture.

Agriculture has always been considered an important federal concern throughout U.S. history. Now is the time for government and individuals to begin to establish stability in agriculture. How? First, we need to decide what we want from agriculture and the farming sector. We must develop alternative marketing systems. Land Grant Universities need to help find solutions to the family farm problems. Federal farm programs should be altered to reflect a commitment to the family farm. And finally, we must educate consumers about how our food is produced.

George Washington once said, “I know of no pursuit in which more real and important services can be rendered to any country, than by improving its agriculture.” Today is the day to begin finding those improvements for success, and finally, stability for the American farmer.

References:
Extemporaneous speakers really do depend on the luck of the draw. This year’s finalists randomly picked three out of 12 possible agricultural topics and then chose one on which they wanted to present their speech. To prepare, each finalist researched, in depth, a variety of topics so they could speak knowledgeably and also gain the information necessary to field questions from a panel of judges. Even though these impromptu speakers were given only 30 minutes to get ready, the delivery of their speeches sounded as if they had been practicing for months.

**Extemporaneous public speaking**

Sponsored by American Farm Bureau Federation

**National Extemporaneous Public Speaking Winner Erica Der, Florida**

*The Effects of Labeling Foods Concerning GMOs and Point-of-Origin*

The grains of rice that Ingo Potrykus sifted through his fingers did not seem all that special. But that was because they were still encased in their dark, crinkly husks. At the center of this rice, the grains were not pearly white, as ordinary rices, but a very pale yellow, courtesy of beta-carotene, the building block for Vitamin A. For years, Potrykus had labored in order to create a rice that would improve the lives of the poor. Potrykus had visualized peasant farmers wading into paddies to set out the tender seedlings. He had pictured children consuming the golden gruel that their mother would produce, knowing that it would strengthen their eyeglaze and improve their resistance to infectious disease.

This story, taken from *Time* magazine, portrays a technological advancement that has brought many advantages to the agricultural industry, but at the same time has brought many questions for the American consumer. Today, we will look at three areas concerning genetic modification. We will begin with, "What is genetic modification?" Secondly, we will look at the American farm and how agriculturalists are producing genetically modified foods. And finally, we will address the concerns about genetically modified foods and answer the question, "Should these foods be labeled?"

The agricultural industry is continually utilizing genetic modification in order to ensure they are using the best food possible. But in order to truly understand this tool, we must first define it. Genetic modification is best described as a tool used in the science of biotechnology and is the latest development in the centuries-old process of improving plants and animals in order to create a more abundant, better tasting food supply. It’s as old as when people first used bacteria to make cheese and as new as American agriculturalists producing one-third of the nation’s corn crop by genetically modified means. But where does genetic modification occur? And how are agriculturalists utilizing this tool; which leads us into our second point of analysis.

Each and every day, the agricultural industry is continually trying to find new ways to reinvent itself. By utilizing genetic modification, we’re able to plant disease-resistant and pest-resistant crops, therefore reducing the amount of pesticide needed, at the same time reducing cost for the agriculturalists. We are also able to genetically alter animals in order to produce better milks, meats and medicines.

At the same time, by using genetic modification we can produce more crops on less land, therefore providing more food for the growing population. It is estimated that by the year 2050 world population will reach nine billion people, and agriculturalists have to find a way to feed these growing numbers. By using genetic modification, we can produce more crops on less land, therefore giving agriculturalists more food to trade. But consumers have questions about whether or not genetic modification is safe, which leads us into our third and final point. "Should these products be labeled?"

Obviously, whenever a new product hits the agriculture sector that changes the type of food on America’s dinner table, people naturally have questions. But the questions consumers first had about genetic modification have turned into fears, fears that those of us involved in the agriculture industry hope that we can ease. Campaigns have even been launched against genetically modified foods calling them "Frankenfoods," or "superweeds." And slogans have been thrown at companies like Kellogg’s Frosted Flakes calling them "frosted fakes," because they’re produced with a percentage of genetically modified corn.

And we understand that, yes, consumers have questions. But should the biotech products on our shelves be labeled?

According to the FDA, there are laws out right now that require the labeling of biotech products if they change the nutrition, composition or add allergens to a certain product. But we must ask ourselves, "When we begin to label genetically altered products (yes, we want to inform the consumer that these products have been genetically altered) should we label genetically altered foods, food ingredients and dietary supplements?" And, at the same time, should animals that have been fed biotech products be labeled as well? It’s a big question for consumers and agriculturalists alike.

And we must understand that we want to give the consumers the best genetically modified products, while at the same time making sure that their food for the consumers and the agriculturalists stays the same price. Labeling is one example of informing the consumer, but we need to make sure that American consumers have many things that can utilize information for themselves and the agriculturalists as well.

In conclusion, as the agricultural industry continues to advance, we realize that genetic modification is a tool that brings many advantages, but at the same time many questions. Today we have analyzed what is genetic modification, we have looked at the family farm (the place where genetic modification occurs), we’ve analyzed what concerns consumers have about genetically modified products and if they should be labeled. Each and every day, we want to make sure that agriculturalists and consumers alike have the best education on genetically modified products.
Patrick Black, Agriscience Student of the Year, is congratulated by national officer Joe Shultz.

Sponsored by Monsanto and the National FFA Foundation General Fund

Patrick Black’s three-year study of contaminated groundwater cleanup won him the title of Agriscience Student of the Year, $5,000 in scholarships and a plaque.

Black, a member of the Weir FFA Chapter in Mississippi, had his interest sparked while growing up on a family farm and through his supervised agricultural experience (SAE) program. He researched methods of removing all traces of pentachlorophenals (PCP) and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) from groundwater by using a kenaf biofiltration system while being able to use the kenaf as a useful product.

National runner-up, Kendra Butters of Homer, Mich., researched the optimal amount of light required to produce more colorful poinsettias. She plans to pursue a career in agriscience and credits that decision to her involvement in FFA activities. Butters received $3,000 in scholarships and a plaque.
Sandra Dykes took an agriscience program that was in danger of folding and turned it into one of the best in the state of Wisconsin. For her efforts and dedication, she was named Agriscience Teacher of the Year.

Dykes teaches agriscience at Weyauwega-Fremont High School where more than 100 of its 380 students participate in the FFA chapter. As the chapter’s advisor, she believes students should “learn by doing.” Her students apply scientific knowledge with hands-on activities such as water testing, dissection, simulated surgeries and plant growth experiments.

Dykes received a $1,500 cash award and a plaque recognizing her skills in teaching at a ceremony in Freedom Hall.

The Agriscience Teacher of the Year program recognizes outstanding agriculture instructors who emphasize agriscience technology in their curricula through programs in biological, environmental and agribusiness technologies and engineering sciences.

Sponsored by Ford Motor Company Fund
Scholarships sponsored by Ford Motor Company Fund, Caterpillar Agricultural Products and Monsanto

**agriscience fair**

Students interested in science and emerging technology presented their projects at the National Agriscience Fair after competing successfully at their chapter and state contests. The projects are science and technology-based and reflect an agricultural theme. Projects are practical applications of their agriscience courses.

Competitors are judged on creative ability, scientific thought, goals, thoroughness, skill, clarity and teamwork. Students must fully understand their projects from start to finish to earn high scores from the judges. Each winning participant returns home with a scholarship or cash award.

**WINNERS INCLUDE:**

**Category: Biochemistry/Microbiology/Food Science**
- Division I: Jeffrey Graves, Plainview FFA Chapter, Texas
- Division II: Sarah Morrissey, Norris FFA Chapter, Nebraska
- Division III: Jenna Persinger and Amber West, Miami Trace FFA Chapter, Ohio
- Division IV: Elaine Pearson and Holly Perkins, Sumner FFA Chapter, Washington

**Category: Botany**
- Division I: Rosanna Graf, Jefferson FFA Chapter, West Virginia
- Division II: Matt Smith, Byng FFA Chapter, Oklahoma
- Division III: Briana Hargett and Nicole Jackson, John Bassett Moore FFA Chapter, Delaware
- Division IV: Joseph Vrana and Jolene Vokes, Granger FFA Chapter, Texas

**Category: Engineering**
- Division I: Robert Morgan, Caesar Rodney FFA Chapter, Delaware
- Division II: Mark Scherer, Olney FFA Chapter, Illinois
- Division III: Dustin Knauek and Jason Garza, Banquete FFA Chapter, Texas
- Division IV: Ashley Hayes and Lacey Drouet, Sumner FFA Chapter, Washington

**Category: Environmental Science**
- Division I: Rosie Weinbacher, Waterloo FFA Chapter, Illinois
- Division II: Lindsey Fimple, Yinita FFA Chapter, Oklahoma
- Division III: Amber Dove and Bobby Wenschel, Signal Knob FFA Chapter, Virginia
- Division IV: Brian Schmidt and Sean Sletten, Red Wing Central FFA Chapter, Minnesota

**Category: Zoology**
- Division I: Candice Harris, Wasco FFA Chapter, California
- Division II: Gretchen Wilson, West Central FFA Chapter, Iowa
- Division III: Megan Gentry and Lena Hill, Westwood FFA Chapter, Arizona
- Division IV: Corrie Ellis and Lisa Sanderson, Sumner FFA Chapter, Washington
The H.O. Sargent Award existed in the New Farmers of America (NFA), the former organization for African-American agriculture students, before NFA was incorporated into FFA in 1965. All applicants have been involved in agricultural education and have implemented new programs to promote diversity in agriculture.

Jennifer Kidd of the South Rowan High School FFA Chapter in China Grove, N.C., increases diversity through a mentoring program. Kidd, the H.O. Sargent award recipient, recognized a need to educate non-English speaking high school students about agriculture and FFA topics after she took part in a similar situation working with elementary students. She recruited FFA members to help her teach their fellow mentally and physically challenged classmates. Jennifer also encourages her students to get involved in school activities. As a result, FFA enrollment has grown.

Gonzalee Martin of Fort Wayne, Ind., Mamie N. Oatis of Deltona, Fla., and Alvin Larke, Jr., of College Station, Texas, received the non-member H.O. Sargent awards.

Serving as an extension educator, Martin created the GATE program to teach inner city youth about the diversity of careers in agriculture. Growth in Agriculture Through Education was started in 1992 and has led many young people to become members of local FFA chapters and pursue careers in agriculture. Along with the GATE program, Martin coordinated an Ag Day in the local middle schools, bringing in industry representatives to tell students about the ways agriculture affects their daily lives.

The assistant principal of Volusia County Schools, Mamie Oatis, works closely with socio-economically disadvantaged students in the agriculture program. She helps ensure students’ eligibility in extracurricular activities by personally checking each FFA member’s report card for academic progress.

A former state officer of the NFA, Alvin Larke, Jr., continues to conduct research on diversity in agriculture and works closely with student teachers to help supervise their field experiences. Larke served as an agriculture teacher for 12 years in his home state of South Carolina and regularly helped his students succeed in ag classes.

National Finalists:
NORTH CAROLINA: Jennifer Kidd.
South Rowan FFA, China Grove
PENNSYLVANIA: Hope Roush.
Greenwood FFA, Millerstown
VIRGINIA: Dajohn Washington, King William FFA, King William
WISCONSIN: Sara Tischauser, Marion FFA, Marion

Jennifer Kidd shows her excitement after being named the student H.O. Sargent award winner for her work in establishing a mentoring program.
career development events

Individuals and teams used classroom instruction and skills to compete in 21 career development events (CDE) at the national level. Students also participated in one activity, dairy cattle handlers and two new demonstrations, job interview and agronomy. CDEs help FFA members develop technical knowledge and decision-making, reasoning and other skills that will prepare them for challenging careers.

Years of study, training and practice paid off for this year’s participants of the national career development events. The results of each event were announced at sponsor-hosted awards banquets at the end of the week. During Saturday afternoon’s session, the high team and individuals took the stage to receive recognition for their achievements.

Agricultural Communications
Sponsored by Successful Farming
Winning Team: Sumner FFA Chapter, Sumner, WA
High Individual: Jarrod Reeves, Cotton Center FFA Chapter, Cotton Center, TX

Agricultural Issues Forum
Sponsored by Elanco Animal Health, A Division of Eli Lilly & Co.
Winning Team: Plainview FFA Chapter, Plainview, TX

Agricultural Mechanics
Sponsored by Bridgestone/Firestone Trust Fund - Firestone Agricultural Tire Division
Winning Team: Southwest Star Concept FFA Chapter, Heron Lake, MN
High Individual: Ryan Pohlmans, Southwest Star Concept FFA Chapter, Heron Lake, MN

Agricultural Sales
Sponsored by Monsanto Company
Winning Team: Battle Lake FFA Chapter, Battle Lake, MN
High Individual: Jocy Christianson, Battle Lake FFA Chapter, Battle Lake, MN

Creed Speaking
Sponsored by Papa John’s International, Inc.
High Individual: Albert Brasil, Tulare FFA Chapter, Tulare, CA

Dairy Cattle Evaluation
Sponsored by Associated Milk Producers Inc. and Westfalia-Surge, LLC
Winning Team: Hilmar FFA Chapter, Hilmar, CA
High Individual: Lindy Pate, Logan FFA Chapter, Logan, NM

Dairy Foods
Sponsored by Dean Foods Company
Winning Team: Hanford FFA Chapter, Hanford, CA
High Individual: Julie Mello, Hanford FFA Chapter, Hanford, CA

Environmental & Natural Resources
Sponsored by Michelin Tires, Mississippi Chemical Corporation and National FFA Foundation General Fund
Winning Team: Bartlett-Yancey FFA Chapter, Yanceyville, NC
High Individual: Bobby Bouz, Bartlett-Yancey FFA Chapter, Yanceyville, NC

Extemporaneous Public Speaking
Sponsored by American Farm Bureau Federation
High Individual: Erica Der, J. G. Smith FFA Chapter, Plant City, FL

Farm Business Management
Sponsored by John Deere
Winning Team: Montezuma FFA Chapter, Montezuma, IA
High Individual: Allison Brinker, North Calloway FFA Chapter, Kingdom City, MO

Floriculture
Sponsored by American Floral Endowment, Ball Horticultural Company and National FFA Foundation General Fund
Winning Team: Eastern Randolph FFA Chapter, Rumsey, NC
High Individual: Elizabeth Mathias, Southwest Star Concept FFA Chapter, Heron Lake, MN

Food Science & Technology
Sponsored by Dairy Farmers of America, Kellogg Company, Suiza Foods and The Coca-Cola Company
Winning Team: Florence FFA Chapter, Florence, TX
High Individual: Daryn Garrido, Sumner FFA Chapter, Sumner, WA

Forestry
Sponsored by International Paper and Schrade Cutlery
Winning Team: Pocahontas FFA Chapter, Danmore, WV
High Individual: Greg Hamons, Pocahontas FFA Chapter, Danmore, WV

Horse Evaluation
Sponsored by DaimlerChrysler Corporation
Winning Team: Arroyo Grande FFA Chapter, Arroyo Grande, California
High Individual: Andrea Troyer, Jay FFA Chapter, Jay, OK

Livestock Evaluation
Sponsored by Purina Mills, Inc.
Winning Team: Clovis FFA Chapter, Clovis, CA
High Individual: Neil Frank, Athens FFA Chapter, Athens, CA

Marketing Plan
Sponsored by Menati, Ltd.
Winning Team: Clovis FFA Chapter, Clovis, CA

Meats Evaluation & Technology
Winning Team: Eastern Randolph FFA Chapter, Rumsey, NC
High Individual: Angela Richardson, Eastern Randolph FFA Chapter, Rumsey, NC

Nursery & Landscape
Sponsored by American Nursery & Landscape Association, Aventis CropScience, Kubota Tractor Corporation, Valence USA Corporation and National FFA Foundation General Fund
Winning Team: Eastern Randolph FFA Chapter, Rumsey, NC
High Individual: Angela Richardson, Eastern Randolph FFA Chapter, Rumsey, NC

Parliamentary Procedure
Sponsored by Novartis Crop Protection, Inc.
Winning Team: Pioneer FFA Chapter, Cheyenne, WY

Poultry Evaluation
Sponsored by Aventis Animal Nutrition and Tyson Foods, Inc.
Winning Team: Eastern Randolph FFA Chapter, Rumsey, NC
High Individual: Jayme Mair, Eastern Randolph FFA Chapter, San Antonio, TX

Prepared Public Speaking
Sponsored by FMC Corporation, Agricultural Products Group
High Individual: Lori Rae Nelson, Iola FFA Chapter, Iola, KS
national FFA talent
Sponsored by Ford Division – Ford Motor Company

DIRECTOR: Gary L. Maricle, Liberty, Missouri
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Robert Enbody Toledo, Washington
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Scott Stewart Warrensburg, Missouri
ALABAMA: Daryl Aldridge, Red Bay; T.C. Barnett, Eufaula; Deana Berry, Red Bay; Lee Berry, Red Bay; Sara Borchuk, Enterprise; Lindsey Carlton, Eufaula; Alison Carter, Billingsley; Devin Dotson, Red Bay; Cody Edwards, Isabella; Daniel Griffin, Eufaula; Kristin Holland, Red Bay; Hank Hughes, Eufaula; Maria Humphries, Red Bay; Katie James, Red Bay; William James, Red Bay; Johnathan Mangino, Red Bay; Kevin Martin, Isabella; Cory McKee, Enterprise; Dana Medley, Eufaula; Gretchen Nagel, Enterprise; Joshua Pittman, Marbury; Ken Rakestraw, Enterprise; Jaime Ramsey, Eufaula; Kevin Ridge, Red Bay; Barry Roper, Isabella; Courtnee Shelly, Eufaula; Joshua Smitherman, Isabella; Kevin Smitherman, Isabella; William Smitherman, Isabella; Rishi Spurlock, Eufaula; Sharlon Taylor, Isabella; Brooks Warren, Eufaula
ARKANSAS: Dana Bohanan, Kingston
CALIFORNIA: Aaron Johnson, Serrano; Allylia Johnson, Serrano
DELAWARE: Heather Freeman, Sussex Central
IDAHO: Chace Elkington, Firth
ILLINOIS: Laura Black, Pleasant Hill; Jenna Hubbard, Pleasant Hill
INDIANA: Jenny Brubaker, Manchester; Michael Reed, Pleasant Hill
KENTUCKY: Emilee Kaykendall, Webster County
MICHIGAN: Katheryn Majeske, Grant; Jessica Whitis, Lapeer County Vo-Tech
MINNESOTA: Heidi Eckers, Owatonna
MISSOURI: Mary Stundebrock, Salisbury; Matthew Stundebrock, Salisbury; Leah Reid, Sweet Springs
NEBRASKA: Gretchen Bergquist, Platte Valley Academy
NEVADA: Jacob Miller, Silver Sage
NEW MEXICO: Caitlin Taylor, Alamogordo
NEW YORK: Levi Cahan, Schuyerville
OHIO: Taryn Baker, Carrollton
OKLAHOMA: Valerie Campbell, Coalgate; Jodi Davis, Elk City; Dawn Drummonds, Stigler; Hailee Holliday, Coalgate; Charity Lemons, Coalgate; Micah Perry, Elk City; Anna Trissell, Elk City
SOUTH CAROLINA: David Dorn, Calhoun Falls; Alexander McCloud, McBee; Cierra Montgomery, Bowman; Shanessa Montgomery, Bowman; Malcolm Simmons, Bowman; Marvin Simmons, Bowman; Thomas Simmons, Bowman; Patrick Stephens, Bowman
SOUTH DAKOTA: Kathy Strom, Beresford
TENNESSEE: Carla Harris, Campbell County; Victoria Muney, Campbell County
TEXAS: Candice Hernandez, Barbers Hill; Chad Johnson, Barbers Hill; Justus Loftin, Barbers Hill; Nathaniel Moore, Barbers Hill; Eric Vargas, Barbers Hill
UTAH: Brittaney Murray, Uintah
WASHINGTON: Gayla Graves, Cashmere; Dan Tedor, Cashmere
WISCONSIN: Brandon Brader, Prairie Farm; Megan Femrite, Stoughton

FFA members kicked up their heels as fellow members showed off their talent on center stage at the 73rd National FFA Convention. The Barbers Hill FFA Band started the show’s momentum by performing JoDee Messina’s "Bye Bye," and it didn’t slow down for the entire 90 minutes. Freedom Hall rocked with awesome bands, yodeling acts and even a tune from Grease. Stage crew kept up with the more than 20 acts who performed. Gary Maricle directed the show while numerous talents, wearing everything from evening gowns to official dress, awed spectators. The Jam Trio from Oklahoma performed Dixie Chick’s "I Can Love You Better," and the Johnson duet, a brother and sister act from California, sang "Freedom," an accapella tune.
The National FFA Chorus encouraged members to "Loosen Up Those Chains and Dance," with a song performed during the chorus and band talent show Friday at the national FFA convention. Under the direction of Patti LaJoye, singers began practicing on Monday and put on a dazzling performance only two short days later. The chorus, sticking to the theme of convention, moved people with songs like "Power of the Dream" and entertained the audience with their choreographed dancing to songs like "Jump and Jive." Lifting spirits and increasing energy, the chorus is an integral part of the convention as they perform before and during each session.

Sponsored by Ford Division – Ford Motor Company

DIRECTOR: Patti LaJoye, Hastings, Michigan
ALABAMA: John Barnwell, Billingsley; Erin Blankenship, Billingsley; Alison Carter, Billingsley
ARIZONA: Lila Trujillo, Westwood
CALIFORNIA: Jamie Drew, Nevada Union
CONNECTICUT: Teri Underhill, Rockville
GEORGIA: Jennifer Schowalter, Tattnell
IDAHO: Joey Ishida, Fruitland
ILLINOIS: Danielle Blackburn, Windsor; Kyle Dickhoff, Delavan; Jade Hornbaker, Northwestern; Christina Merriman, Bluffs; Nathan Rahe, Hillsboro; Christina Rosentreter, Carlinville; Brad Sennfer, Central of Clifton; Timothy Spoor, Blue Ridge
IOWA: Alesia Bassler, Maquoketa; David Blackmore, LeMars; Sarah Carlson, Rockwell; Daniel Devries, Diamond Trail; Monica Ehret, Waukon; Karl Groszkurzer, Hampton Talkcorn; Erena Jensen, St. Ansgar; Christina Kinzie, Anita; Sarah Tweed, Decorah; Justin Wilkinson, DeWitt Central
KANSAS: Adam Engelman, Altoona-Midway; Rhet Svaty III, Ellsworth; Nathan Weiser, Altoona-Midway
KENTUCKY: William Wann, Fulton Co.
MAINE: Jerry Sinclair II, Presque Isle
MASSACHUSETTS: Sarah Sullivan, Easton
MICHIGAN: Erica Carpenter, Fremont; Elizabeth Reeves, Ithaca
MINNESOTA: Neil Arkell, Madelia; Christian Eberhart, Madelia; Andrea Halverson, Blue Earth; Adam Rothering, Fillmore Central
MISSOURI: Mark Baker, Linn; Megan Cox, St. Joseph; Heidi Ricks, Clopton; Rachel Wyss, Russellville
MONTANA: Jodie Johnston, Forsyth; Rachelle Menish-Geryk, Cascade; Theodore Wiegand, Shelby; Dana Wiegel, Darlington

NEBRASKA: Anita Bowser, Pender; Traci Dais, Diller; Jared Hartman, Laurel-Concord; Michaela Hoffman, Bayard; Spencer Munson, Harrison; Tyler Niedermeyer, Nemaha Valley; James Novoinoy, Raymond Central; Kate Schmoll, Bayard; Bruce Wiebe, Centura
NORTH CAROLINA: Joshua Davenport, Plymouth
OHIO: Kara Fent, Parkway; Mary Ann Harris, Oak Harbor; Angela Lowell, Hillsboro; Kalina Miller, Hillsdale; Jill Tyson, Hillsdale
OKLAHOMA: Joel Ambrose, Fletcher; Aaron Chaloner, Hinton; Julian Colte, Fletcher; Jacob Conger, Merritt; Lyndsey Deck, Thomas-Fay; Jason Frantz, Balko; Molly Hamlin, Collinsville; Ryan Kubiak, Chisholm; Alexia Malson, Reedon; Nathan Miller, Thomas-Ray; Rebecca Nida, Tonkawa; Ehrynn Pack, Fletcher; Rebel Phillips, Ryan; Drew Sawaszky, Thomas-Fay; Ashley Wallace, Sharton-Mutual
OREGON: Andrea Loya, Oakland; Lucy Overholt, Hermiston
SOUTH DAKOTA: Colin Greenfield, Beresford; Katie Larson, Woodsocket; Kristy Rolling, McCook Central; Amber Sonnenberg, Woodsocket
TEXAS: Shana Webster, Snyder; Landon Gilmore, Madisonville; Lacey Lilly, Cleburne; Grant Montgomery, Marcus; Mary Willford, Dayton
WASHINGTON: Leah Heurnhill, Garfield-Falouse; Josh Kidwell, Heritage; Randi Kivett, Burlington-Edison; Jessica Smith, Yelm
WEST VIRGINIA: Lacy Garby, Tyler; Andrew Negre, Tyler
WISCONSIN: Alexandra Cooper, DeForest; Jamie Daupre, Wil Heights; Jonathan Edington, Johnson Creek; Haylee Hall, Shell Lake; Sheena Krebs, Blackhawk; Bradley Locke, Marshall; Ian Prust, Marshall; Teresa Rinholen, Durand; Joey Schuett, Dodge; Laura Skinner, Rico; Ruth Talford, Durand; Charles Webster, Gilman; Ryan Weiskircher, Mineral Point; Patrick Whelan, Gilman; Jason Winte, Thorp

National FFA Chorus members lifted their voices and inspired convention goers' spirits.
The National FFA Band energized each of the convention sessions with a variety of musical numbers.

National FFA Band members were easy to spot in their crisp white pants and skirts, but it was their performances that truly made them stand out. The 115 band members entertained FFA members and convention-goers many times, including four performances Wednesday alone. They energized each of the nine convention sessions with uplifting renditions of "The Star Spangled Banner." At the reflection sessions, the chorus lent their voices to the band as they performed "The Power of a Dream."

Musically talented FFA members applied for seats in the band and arrived in Louisville four days before the convention started to begin practicing together. They were ready when the national FFA convention started, thanks to hours of practice and dedication.
When FFA members choose their supervised agricultural experience (SAE) projects, some don’t realize that they will work on this one project for years. Many students focus on an entrepreneurship project involving ownership of an agricultural production or agribusiness enterprise, while others devote time to a placement project for work or experience only. All students learn specialized skills that will apply to future careers. The students who excelled in their SAEs were awarded with the national proficiency awards.

This year saw 45 categories of awards, ranging from specialty crop production to agricultural communications. All finalists received plaques for their hard work, and the national winners in each category received cash awards.
DIVERSIFIED CROP PRODUCTION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Sponsored by Cargill
Kansas: Nicholas Lee Bowser, Holton
Kentucky: Ashley Neal Fackler, Meade County
Nebraska: Jason Penke, Tekamah-Herman
Tennessee: Matthew Lee Hancock, East Robertson

DIVERSIFIED CROP PRODUCTION, PLACEMENT
Sponsored by Cenex Harvest States Foundation, National Crop Insurance Services and Rain & Hail Insurance Services
Indiana: Tim Scagnoli, Carroll
Iowa: Jeremiah T. Johnson, Prairie Valley
Kansas: Kyle Cott, Clay Center
Nebraska: Kevin Small, Fullerton

DIVERSIFIED LIVE- STOCK PRODUCTION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Sponsored by ContiBeef LLC and Quality Farm and Country Stores
Indiana: Laura Morrical, Rensselaer
Kansas: Caleb Tyrel McNally, South Barber
North Dakota: Julie Kleven, Maddock
South Dakota: Clay Edwards, Artesian/Letcher

DIVERSIFIED LIVE- STOCK PRODUCTION, PLACEMENT
Sponsored by ContiBeef LLC, Allflex USA Inc. and United Soybean Board
Georgia: Jonathan Matthew Bradley, Franklin
Indiana: Dwayne Simpson, Southmont
Missouri: Ben Bennett, Verona
Oklahoma: Drew Mosburg, Thomas-Fay-Custer

EMERGING AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY
Sponsored by Caterpillar Agricultural Technology
Iowa: Kelly Clarence Kreber, South O'Brien
Kansas: Bridget Tipton, Arkansas City
Minnesota: Nathan Earl Hemming, Alexandria
Texas: Eric Pesak, Weimar

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE
Sponsored by Carolina Biological Supply Company and IMC Global, Inc.
Connecticut: Martin Alfonso Vito, Middletown
Illinois: Amanda Lorraine Street, Annapolis
Kentucky: Michael Seth Nett, Meade County
Minnesota: Gregory W. Delaney, Perham

EQUINE SCIENCE, ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Sponsored by Purina Mills, Inc., American Paint Horse Association and Red Brand Non-Climb Horse Fence/Made by Keystone Steel & Wire Company
California: Natalie Kraut, Petaluma
Kansas: Jamie Branscom, Butler
Oklahoma: Randus London, Alva
Tennessee: Laura Danielle Peters, Powell Valley

FEED GRAIN PRODUCTION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Sponsored by Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc., a DuPont business
Indiana: Jason Masters, Shenandoah
Nebraska: Curtis Johnson, Imperial
Oklahoma: Rachel K. Bobbitt, Deer Creek-Lamont
Wisconsin: Kurt Allen Williams, Randolph
Missouri: McLain, Stokes.
Ohio: Bremen
South Dakota: Kent Peterson, McCook Central

FIBER CROP PRODUCTION
Sponsored by CK Wilco Corporation, Griffin L.L.C and National FFA Foundation General Fund
Alabama: Jonathan Spruell, Lawrence County Center of Technology
California: Christopher Crivelli, Dos Palos
Tennessee: Cleve Crook, Halls
Texas: Jeremy McFerrin, Cotton Center

FLORICULTURE
Sponsored by American Floral Endowment, The Kroger Company and National FFA Foundation General Fund
Missouri: John Graham, Montgomery County R-II
Nebraska: Chelsey Wasem, Aurora
Oklahoma: Ezra Zochke, Thomas-Fay-Caster
Wisconsin: Travis F. Ambrose, Amherst

FOOD SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
Sponsored by H.J. Heinz Company, Mayocks & Preube Advertising, Inc. and Seneca Foods Corp
Illinois: Miranda Perdue, Oregon
Minnesota: Michael S. Farr, Blooming Prairie
North Carolina: Greg A. Lipe, South Rowan
Ohio: Kyle Wilson, Laurel Oaks

FOREST MANAGEMENT
Sponsored by DaimlerChrysler Corporation Fund – Dodge Trucks, John Deere Consumer Products and subsidiary Homelite and Smurfitt-Stone Container Corporation
Alabama: Abby Dewberry, Lineville
Florida: Jimmy C. LeFits, Pine Ridge
Iowa: Joel David Strand, Emmetsburg
South Dakota: Curt Smith, Harrisburg

FRUIT AND/OR VEGETABLE PRODUCTION
Sponsored by Briggs & Stratton Corporation Foundation, Inc.
California: Curtis Wayne Joe Jr., Lemoore
Indiana: Kyle Kohlhagen, Rensselaer
Minnesota: Jeff W. Warnka, United South Central
North Dakota: Miles Patricie, Fessenden-Bowdon

HOME AND/OR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Sponsored by Carhartt, Inc.
Arizona: Josh Horner, Peoria
Georgia: Jason Ronald, Mullen, Colquitt County
Kentucky: John William Duvall, Rockcastle County
South Dakota: Ern Leigh Huffman, Harrisburg

HORTICULTURE
Sponsored by Bayer Corporation, Agricultural Division, Farmland Mutual Insurance Company/Nationwide Agribusiness Insurance Company and Nationwide Foundation
Indiana: Ricky Rafael Reyes, North Newton
Kansas: Amy Brothers, Labette County
Missouri: Deanna Leah Thies, Glasgow
North Carolina: Drew Evans, Piedmont

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT
Sponsored by Novartis Crop Protection, Inc.
Nebraska: Douglas Ray Daum, Emerson Hubbard
Oklahoma: Ezra Zochke, Thomas-Fay-Caster
Tennessee: Brian J. Elrod, McMinn County
Wisconsin: Travis F. Ambrose, Amherst

NURSERY OPERATIONS
Sponsored by DaimlerChrysler Corporation Fund – Dodge Trucks and Quality Farm and Country Stores
Florida: Victor Owsley, North Marion
Georgia: Jordan Downs, Oconee County
Kentucky: Leigh Amber Land, Madison Central
Wisconsin: Mike Zander, Randolph
OIL CROP PRODUCTION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Sponsored by Novartis Seeds, Inc., and United Soybean Board
Kentucky: Brandon Beauch
Reesor, Meade County
Ohio: Andrew M. Sipple
Loudonville
Tennessee: Joe Henry, East Robertson
Texas: Colton Scott, Loop

OIL CROP PRODUCTION, PLACEMENT
Sponsored by BASF, Asgrow brand of Monsanto and National FFA Foundation General Fund
Kansas: Wade Newland, Neodesha
Missouri: Nathan Thomas
White, Norborne
Oklahoma: John Roland, Carnegie
Tennessee: John Carroll, Halls

OUTDOOR RECREATION
Sponsored by Chevy Trucks, Cabela's, Inc. and O.F. Mossberg and Sons, Inc.
Connecticut: Jacinda Wintrow, Killingly
Iowa: Caleb Hockison, Creston
North Dakota: Ryan Shively, Rugby
Tennessee: Lacey Lakins, Cherokee

POULTRY PRODUCTION
Sponsored by ContiGroup Companies, Inc. – Poultry Division and United Soybean Board
Georgia: Brandy Shae Pritchett, Cass High
Indiana: Lyda Emmline Ertel, Jennings County
Kentucky: Brian Gertingswal, Warren East
Missouri: Andrew Baker, East Newton

SHEEP PRODUCTION
Sponsored by LA-CO All Weather Paintstik Markers and Quality Farm and Country Stores
California: Jared Penfold, Kingsburg
Illinois: Jason Seelow, Sullivan
Kansas: Amber E. Brazle, Erie
Tennessee: Matt Barnes, McNairy Central

SMALL ANIMAL CARE
Sponsored by Novartis Animal Health U.S., Inc.
California: Danielle Cunningham, Lodi
Connecticut: Ashle Brooke Hupchick, Woodbury
Indiana: Amy Weaver, Warsaw
Ohio: Kathy Branch, Live Oaks

SPECIALTY ANIMAL PRODUCTION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Sponsored by Purina Mills, Inc.
California: Regi Hall, Lodi
Connecticut: Ian Gereg, Woodbury
Georgia: Ryan C. House, Oconee County
South Dakota: Melissa Elshack, McCook Central

SPECIALTY ANIMAL PRODUCTION, PLACEMENT
Sponsored by Laredo Western Breeds and Quality Farm and Country Stores
California: David Keith Bergthold, Lodi
Minnesota: Sam Raser, Chaska
Oklahoma: Lacey Herbel, Thomas-Fry-Custer
Wisconsin: Nathan Terpstra, Delavan-Darien

SPECIALTY CROP PRODUCTION
Sponsored by farmland.com, Elf Atochem North America, Inc. and National FFA Foundation General Fund
Illinois: Joel Mecklenburg, Manteno
Minnesota: Steven Mark Wels, Nicollet
Oregon: Kevin L. Richards, Madras
Wisconsin: Dan Vredenburg, Randolph Cambria-Friesland

SOIL AND WATER MANAGEMENT
Sponsored by BASF (formerly American Cyanamid Company)
California: Nicholas Henning, Hamilton City
Georgia: N. Elizabeth Webb, Morgan County
North Carolina: Jacob Waller, South Rowan
Oklahoma: James Eric Ramsey, Carney

SWINE PRODUCTION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Sponsored by BASF (formerly American Cyanamid Company)
California: Nicholas Henning, Hamilton City
Georgia: N. Elizabeth Webb, Morgan County
North Carolina: Jacob Waller, South Rowan
Oklahoma: James Eric Ramsey, Carney

TURF GRASS MANAGEMENT
Sponsored by The Scotts Company
Indiana: Anthony Joseph Bennett, Southmont
Kansas: Ryan LaDow Smith, Center
Utah: Ben DeHart, Payson
Wisconsin: Daniel James Drone, River Ridge

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT, ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Sponsored by Bass Pro Shops, Inc. and Buck Knives
North Dakota: Shannon L. Reardon, Medina
South Dakota: Jeremy Pulse McCook, Central
Tennessee: Joey Austin, East Robertson
Wisconsin: Cody M. Oakes, Menomonee Falls

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT, PLACEMENT
Sponsored by Cabela's, Inc., National Rifle Association of America, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and National FFA Foundation General Fund
Indiana: Brian Runyon, North Newton
Tennessee: Gary Bradley Moore, Lexington
Virginia: Charles Lewis Simmons, Central
Wisconsin: Amanda Beyer, Waupaca

Rita Loginov

**American FFA Degree**

Sponsored by BASF (formerly American Cyanamid Company); Case Corporation; Farm Credit System Foundation; and Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc., a DuPont business

Earning the American FFA Degree, the highest degree an FFA member can achieve, requires commitment and hard work. It is also the final step in a degree system that builds students’ knowledge through academics, extracurricular activities and hands-on experience.

The degree system is organized so all members have a chance to earn the American FFA Degree, but only a small percentage acquire the coveted golden key. Before earning their American FFA Degree, members must obtain their Greenhand, Chapter and State FFA Degrees. Candidates need to show significant progress in their supervised agricultural experience (SAE) program and demonstrate exemplary leadership skills. Members who walked across the stage at national convention to receive their degree and golden key have set and achieved goals that will prepare them for challenging careers later in life.

Katherine Biggers, Chowchilla; Nathan Bisio, Santa Rosa; Rick Blankenship, Visalia-Redwood; Daniel Adam Blunt, Hughson; Rebekah Jane Bond, Atascadero; Linda Booth, Phelan-Serrano; Melissa Booth, Phelan-Serrano; Natalie Borba, Escalon; Joni Borges, Hanford; Michael Borges, Tulare Union; Chandra Borrelli, Gustine; Courtney Borrelli, Gustine; Michael Bosworth, Nicholas-East Nicholas; Pascoe Bowen, North High; Bakersfield; Diane Boyer, Salinas-North Salinas; Carl Brasil, Tulare Western; Julie Brennan, Campbell-Westmont; Heather Laurine Briggs, Littlecrop; Lorenza Briones, Chowchilla; Joyce Brown, Templeton; Sandra Brown, Lompoc; Angela Browning, Grass Valley-Bear River; Justin Bruecker, Chowchilla; Emily Ann Burfeind, Greenville; Erin Bushell, Sanger; Joshua Camahan, Fresno-Pershing; Cecilia Carreno, Lompoc; Hanna Carver, Lake Isabella-Kern Valley; Josh Cody, Writers; Caitlin Cooney, Elk Grove; Amanda Marie Costa, Hanford; Lonnie Courtney, Lucerne Valley; Christopher Crivelli, Dos Palos; Carli Marie Crutcher, Dos Palos; Julia Daehling, Elk Grove; Jason Davis, Firebaugh; Robin Elaine Demney, Paso Robles; Scott DeVol, Norco; Nicholas Diaz, Fresno-Central; Morgan Dieckmann, Livermore; Jason Diedrich, Firebaugh; Cassie Dill, Chowchilla; Angela Duff, Bloomington; Jennifer Durjava, Hilmar; Lindsay Dutton, Santa Rosa; Sarah Edwards, Lake Isabella-Kern Valley; Benjamin Curtis Ehler, Earake; Sean Embury, San Pasqual- Escondido; Frances Patricia Lee Escheverria, Fresno-
Central, Tacker Eslingier, Grass Valley-Nevada Union; Judy Diane Etcheverria, Petauma; Anthony M. Evangelho, Hanford; John David Evangelho, Lemoore; Dorothy Marie Faris, Fontana; Travis Ferreira, Hanford, Shaw Fertig, Grass Valley-Nevada Union, Shaw Foster, Porterville-Monache; Samantha Frankovich, Santa Rosa; Grady Gallagher, Morro Bay; Joe Gardner, Santa Maria-Righetti, Jessica Corrie George, Santa Maria-Righetti, Sage David Gilbert, Livermore; Devin Gilette, Turlock; Eddie Goode, Chowchella; Jose Lupe Gonzalez, McFarland; Scott Grumbles, Kingsburg; Jesse L. Guerrero, Santa Maria; Summer Hall, Templeton; Julie Hallam, Madera; Chou Hang, Orovil-Las Plumas; Sheryl Hardesty, Elk Grove; Kane Haygood, Atwater, Seth

Lake Isabella-Kern Valley: Jennifer Molder, Tulalake; Amy Eileen Monsen, Shingle Springs-Ponderosa; Nathan Allen Mord, Hilmar, Jaclyn Myers, Tollhouse-Sierra, John Nash III, Lake Isabella-Kern Valley; Stephanie Nelson, Selma; Zac Nelson, Newman-Orestimba, Aaron R. Nering, Riverside-Norte Vista; Brian Newman, Lakeside-El Capitan, Benjamin L. Nunez, Galt, Alan Oliveira Jr., Atwater; Ken Cabezut Ortiz, Merced Golden Valley, Heidi Lea Ortman, Brentwood-Liberty, Casey Pace, Porterville; Shelby R. Parker, Orland; Amanda Ann Parks, Ridgeview-Bakersfield, Andrea Parrerra, Tulare Union; Gino Pedretti III, Dos Palos; Mark Pedro, Tulare Union, Kacie Pedrozo, Merced Golden Valley, Jared Peinfield, Kingsburg, Roberto Perez Jr., Nicole Rowland, Groveland; Jacob Rudnick, Lake Isabella-Kern Valley; Joshua Ruiz, Salinas-North Salinas, Amanda Leigh Samons, Orland, Daniel Sanchez, Porterville;Leonard Sanchez, Fresno-Pershing; Jessica Jean Sandholm, Brentwood-Liberty; Corrine Santos, Hilmar, Michael Santos, Tulare Western; Christina Lynn Sechof, Carpinteria, Alyson Seibert, Madera, Eric Lee Sheller, Santa Maria; Adrienne Shor, Santa Rosa, Kristi Silva, Atwater, Kristina Lyann Silva, Orovil-Las Plumas, Tony Silva, Laton, Melissa Simoni, Lompoc; Brian Slower, Visalia-Redwood; Allison Smith, Atwater, Bobbie Jo Smith, Chico, Darrin Soares, Turlock; Dustin Soares, Turlock, Chris Spence, Fallbrook, Crystal Stanford, Chowchilla; Jessica Stokes, Lakeside-El Capitan, Corrie Stone, Atwater, Brandon

Hearn, Lemoore; Christina Hendrickson, Atwater, Pamela Whitney Heuvel, Elk Grove; Renee Higgins, Riverside-La Sierra, Sean Hodges, Kerman, Paul Andrew Staley Holland, Lemoore, Johnathan Hook, Corcoran; Joey Horta, Atwater; Gregory Huford, McKinleyville, Dustin Hard, Dos Palos; Bryce Iden, Visalia-Mt. Whitney, Charles Edward Jenkins II, Lone Pine, Melanie Jensma, Santa Maria-Righetti, Kerri Jimenez, Fallbrook; Jacob S. Johnson, Apple Valley; Chad Jorgensen, Tollhouse-Sierra, Karnig R. Kazarian, Fowler, Brad Kessler, Atwater, Jenna Knight, Lake Isabella-Kern Valley, Natalie Dori Krouth, Petaluma; Lacie Lufterty, Lemoore, James John Leal, Lemoore; Erik Leff, Riverside-LaSierra; Ian Leff, Riverside-LaSierra; Tim Lewis, Elk Grove; Lauralee Locke, Hilmar, Janice E. Lohse, Hamilton Clay, Michael Lopes, Newman-Orestimba, Roberto Jose Lopez, San Marcos; Rob McLoquay, Madera; Leigh Ann Love, Calipatina; Megan J. Loveridge, Loyolan; Taylor Ludke, Fowler; Kevin Luiz, Elk Grove; Niels Lund, Nicolaus-East Nicolaus; Danny Machado, Atwater, Carl Michael Minko, Lompoc; Manuel Marr, Madera; Joe Martin Jr., Lodi; Tamara L. Martinez, Kingsburg; Amber Martinho, Tulare Western, Lindsay V. Massenge, Tollhouse-Sierra; Thomas B. Mathews II, Santa Maria-Righetti, Michelle McCoy, San Marcos; Elizabeth McKean, Covina; Lisa McKinley, Madera, Jill McMahan, Hanford; Megan McReynolds, Fallbrook; Rianna McBane, North High-Bakersfield; Mike Menefee, Laton; Sophia Meyer, Fortuna; Jesus Michel, Lompoc; Kelli Middleton, Santa Maria; Amy Michelle Miller, Mira Loma-Jurupa Valley; Kalia Moffatt, Firebaugh, Heidi Lee Brooke Peterson, Fresno-Central; Jared Allen Pew, Greenville; Tom Phelen, Firebaugh, Dominic Pettigiano, Tulare Union; Lisa Potter, Susanville-Lassen, Leanne Ramos, Fresno-Central, Kimberly Ann Rawls, Dos Palos; Kristina Marie Rawls, Dos Palos; Penny Rector, Hilmar; Pamela Reese, Lompoc; Elizabeth Reeves, Atascadero; Cortney Regalo, Merced Golden Valley; SSundae M. Rist, King City; Michael Rivera, Fresno-Central; Franklin Robinson, Newman-Orestimba, Leslie Michele Roche, Orosi; Scott Michael Rodgers, Atascadero; Jermaind Roduner, Chowchilla, Amber Roland, Norco; Katie Rommel, Atwater; Andrea Streeter, Sanger; Misty Maria Svenska, Lebec-Frazier Mountain, Marco Tavares, Lemoore, Laina Teixeira, Kerman, Brian Harlan Terry, Tollhouse-Sierra, Donnadee Thrall, Mira Loma-Jurupa Valley; Jake Tillman, Corcoran, Leslie Tiner, Wasco, Michael Arthur Tingley, Shandon; Alberto Torres, Firebaugh, Tamera Nicole Toutenson, Tollhouse-Sierra; Jennifer Trindade, Atwater, Craig Tristao, Corcoran, Jesus Uribe, Gonzales; Dana Van de Pol, Esalon, Gregory D. Van Dyke, Nicolaus-East Nicolaus; Greg Cornelis Van Egmond, Galt, Jennifer Van Train, Riverside-Rubidoux, Karen Veendendaal, Hanford; Henry Veendendaal, Hanford; Sarah Venutroca, Morro Bay, Gerard
Villalobos, Fallbrook; Kyle D. Victorian, Fresno-Central; Beth Waaramaki, Elk Grove; Matt Wagner, Atascadero; Joshua Lee Weaver, Ripon; Nicholas Brent Webb, Elk Grove; Justin Gabriel Weber, Campbell-Westmont; Emmett Dalton Wemp, Hamilton City; Dave White, Eureka; Kimberly M. Weiks, Shandon; Joe Williams, Ripon; Abigail Wilson, Lakeside-El Capitan; Jaene Worth, Lemoore; Nicole Xanthus, Hollister-San Benito; Joey Xavier, Atwater; Roxane Marie Young, Brentwood-Liberty; Matt Zook, Santa Maria; COLORADO: Brian Anderson, Northland Pioneer; Derrick Arend, Valley; Lanetha Beard, Springfield; Casey Blach, Eaton; Karrie Rae Blake, New Raymer; Carrie Bolinger, Delta; Jesse Boyd, Burlington; Molly Brown, Briggsdale; Josh Burns, Eaton; Shane Carpenter, Hotchkiss; Nicholas J. Colclazier, Holyoke; Brian R. Cunningham, Yuma; James William DePue, Woodlin; Jarrod Dilla, Eaton; Justin J. DiSanti, Pueblo County; Tiffany Doane, Arickaree; Killingly: DELAWARE: Kenny Brode, Lake Forest; Jo Ann Lane, Smyrna; Buddy Masten, Smyrna;

FLORIDA: Joseph Curtis Agner, Madison County; Bradley Jason Ainslie, Tavares; Jeremy C. Allen, Bradford; Ashley Elizabeth Brown, Trenton; Josh Brown, North Marion; Jennifer L. Carpenter, Riverview; Sarah Clemmons, South Lake; Stephanie Suzanne Crowe, Suwannee Senior; Ashley Adell Dobbs, North Marion; Wiley Fenton Feagle, Columbia; Jared Figley, Lecanto Sr.; Erin J. Hudson, Branford; Drew Jackson, Suwannee Senior; Katherine Anne Johnson, Interlachen; Jesse E. Sapp, Lake Placid Senior; Ronald Douglas Simmons Jr., South Sumter; Andrew Philip Soliz, Charlotte Senior; Jonathan Laurence Swindle, Plant City; Paul Eugene Cambridge; Laura Hooper, Harbor; Audrey A. Hougland, Aberdeen; Michael D. Larsen, Raif River; Bridgett Leach, Emmett; Cheryl Needs Fruitland; Karisa Parish, Bulloch; Nikkala Parish, Bulloch; Robert C. Reid, Firth; Kenna Seid, Cambridge; Josh D Tewalt, Meridian; Jed Woolsworth, Bear Lake; ILLINOIS: James M. Adams, Stillman Valley; Shawn Anderson, Aledo; Nolan Bangert, Bluffs; April L. Barker, Liberty; Kimberly Bartlow, Southwestern; Krista Marie Buitla, Blue Ridge; Elisabeth Anne Carroll, Brimfield; Elizabeth Coldwell, Pleasant Hill; Darcy J. Crawford, Iroquois West; Nathan Dinderman, Pearl City; Derek Dunkirk, Morrisonville; Dawn Fennigan, Normal; John Fennigan, Normal; Catherine Floto, Oregon; Jill Frank, Athens; Chad Gerken, Cissna Park; Amanda Lee Grundy, Morrisonville; Tiffany Halvorson, Oregon; Jennifer Herman, Taylorville; Jamie Herring, Rochelle; Marcus F. Hess, Bushnell-Prairie City; Derek Hodel, Roulston;

american FFA degree

Kelly Erwin, Platte Valley; Bill Evans, Valley; Kaprice Franke, Woodlin; Suzanne Gail Genova, Pueblo County; Matthew J. Geu, Peetz; Jennifer Dawn Gibbs, Kit Carson; Roy Timothy Gillham, Peetz; Travis John Hamilton, Eaton; Casey Hay, Burlington; Adam Thomas Hendrickson, Grover; Justin Holmes, New Raymer; Aaron Hovey, Montrose; Brett Franklin Jones, McClell; Shilo L. Jones, North Park; Cody W. Kalous, Eaton; Matthew David Kautz, Merino; Erin Lane Kitch, Eaton; Jaclyn R. Knaub, Merino; Terrie Lessenden, Eads; Melissa Meade, SoRoCo; John David Michal, Flagler; Jeremy Paris, Eaton; Thad Robertson, Yuma; Tommy Rossi, SoRoCo; Tyler Schmidt, Valley; Kyle Schmabel, Kit Carson; Chad Steven Seggelke, Peetz; Sara Sharp, Woodlin; Mary Loraine Strickert, Arickaree; Allison Stroh, Hotchkiss; Brad Allen Ulrich, Eaton; Timothy Creed Ulrich, Valley; April Wheelerburg, Rifle;

CONNECTICUT: Emily M. Anderson, Northwestern Regional; Michael Hart Case, Northwestern Regional; Christine R. Cummale, Woodlin; Bronden Keatman, Northfield; Northwestern Regional; Danielle Renee Laperle, Killingly; Amanda Peterson, Woodbury; Brian James Poole, Woodbury; Hilary A. Sepe, Woodbury; Daniel Laurence Welch, Lyman Hall; Lisa Marie Williams, Waters, Lake Butler; Daniel Slade Williams, Williston; GEORGIA: Kelli Michelle Bass, Colquitt County; Steve R. Campbell Jr., Effingham County; Kimberly D. Chastain, Madison County; Jennifer Lorenc Cornell, Effingham County; John Albert Cosahan, South Effingham; Brent Crowe, Worth County; Day Ann Davis, Bainbridge; Ashley Fowler, Colquitt County; Simon Garrett, Oconee County; Lisa Michelle Gibson, Seminole County; Matt Griffin, Brantley County; Jennifer Hendrix, Worth County; William Ridgeway Henry, Johnson County; Daniel G. Jaudon, Effingham County; Blake G. Kessler, Effingham County; John Jackson Lee, Ware County Magnet; Kris McDaniel, Cook; Jonathan L. Milligan, Toombs County; Ryan Eugene Parks, Gilmer County; Carl Stalvey, Berrien; Richard Anthony Surratt, Wayne County; Jeremy Lee Wallace, Effingham County; Samuel Lawrence Watson, Colquitt County; Justin Craig Weeks, Jefferson; Joey Williams, Cook; IDAHO: Adam Alder, Malad; Melissa Asay, Malad; Ty M. Beck, Burley; Deborah Christensen, Fruitland; Cole E. Clark, Firth; Karen L. Crank, New Plymouth; Kelley Derrick, Fruitland; Aletha L. Falen, Genesee; Phillip Firth, Malad; Derek John Fisher, Meridian; Bret Garrard, Burley; Levi Harrison, Cambridge; Laura Hooper, Harbor; Audrey A. Hougland, Aberdeen; Michael D. Larsen, Raif River; Bridgett Leach, Emmett; Cheryl Needs Fruitland; Karisa Parish, Bulloch; Nikkala Parish, Bulloch; Robert C. Reid, Firth; Kenna Seid, Cambridge; Josh D Tewalt, Meridian; Jed Woolsworth, Bear Lake; ILLINOIS: James M. Adams, Stillman Valley; Shawn Anderson, Aledo; Nolan Bangert, Bluffs; April L. Barker, Liberty; Kimberly Bartlow, Southwestern; Krista Marie Buitla, Blue Ridge; Elisabeth Anne Carroll, Brimfield; Elizabeth Coldwell, Pleasant Hill; Darcy J. Crawford, Iroquois West; Nathan Dinderman, Pearl City; Derek Dunkirk, Morrisonville; Dawn Fennigan, Normal; John Fennigan, Normal; Catherine Floto, Oregon; Jill Frank, Athens; Chad Gerken, Cissna Park; Amanda Lee Grundy, Morrisonville; Tiffany Halvorson, Oregon; Jennifer Herman, Taylorville; Jamie Herring, Rochelle; Marcus F. Hess, Bushnell-Prairie City; Derek Hodel, Roulston;
Simms, Pope County; Matthew Alan Sullivan, Paris; Brandon M. Tate, Northwestern Jr./Sr.; Teri Taylor, Oregon; Roy Templeton, Paxton; Buckley-Loda; Graham Utter, Jacksonville; Kandra L. Walker, Cinc.; Leah Wall, Greenville; Miles Daniel Warren, Flora; William F. Wesson Jr, Somonauk-Leland; Scott Willett, Hinckley-Big Rock; Beth M. Wilson, Olney; Justin Woodrow, McLeansboro; Steve Woodrum, Franklin; Abel J. Wumesten, Gibson City; Melvin-Sibley; INDIANA: Elizabeth Adams, South Adams; Terris Ayres, Carroll; Rachel Ann Bailey, Owen Valley; Dawn Marie Becher, Adams Central; Andrea Faye Bennett, Southmont; Anthony Joseph Bennett, Southmont; Jennifer Bishop, Orlans; Matt Bistler, Owen Valley; Brad Briggs, Switzerland County; Robert Kyle Broshers, Brownstown; Renell Diane Calloway, North Miami; Kevin Cooper, Owen Valley; Jared Crum, Rossville; Lyndon Crumpacker, Rossville; Charles A. Davis, South Wawasee; Brianne Wilson, Carroll; Megan L. Wilson, Rossville; Jordan Zook, Carroll; Benjamin Zuercher, Adams Central; IOWA: Jayna Appleby, Vinton; Cory P. Bailey, Creston; Roy J. Becker Jr., Benton Community; Ryan Besson, Red Oak; Ryan Curt Benning, Fredericksburg; Hans L. Belden, Valley; Justin Boege, Gladbrook-Reinbeck; William W. Cannon, Newton; Tim Creveling, Mount Ayr; Reggie Derscheid, Mount Ayr; Justin Thomas Doyle, Agri-Power; Ryan M. Foo, Wapello; Chad R. Fritz, Tri-Star; Dustin Gleason, Audubon; Jacob Groth, Decorah; Tina Marie Hansen, Anamosa; Adam E. Happel, Vinton; Rick Hehrlich, North Linn; Traci Lee Hemmingsen, DeWitt Central; Michelle Hildebrandt, Fredericksburg; Matthew Ralph Hoch, Cascade; Gloria Hulme, Denver; Debbie Hurburt, Algona; Nathaniel W. Jackson, Creston; Katie Jacobs, Reno Smith; David Jenkins, Red Oak; Darin Johnson, Red Oak; Daniel Kaiser, Waverly-Wellington; Sarah Grace Geiger, Troy; Larry T. Glinecki Jr., Chapman; Ryan Austin Grable, Troy; David Michael Grisell, West Elk; Matt Gustin, Chapman; Jacob Charles Harmon, Neosho; Nick D. Holst, Atwood; Joshua K. Keesler, Highland; John Koelzer, Onaga; Caleb J. Larson, Smith Center; Abigail Lawrence, Tonganoxie; Beth Ludlam, Uniontown; Derek Luedke, Troy; Nathan L. Lundsberg, Blue Valley; Travis Donald McCaughr, LaSalle Village; Brandon Meis, Neosho; Regis Tyler O'neill, Blue Valley; Dan Parker, Valley Heights; Jessica Porter, Holton; Crystal Lyn Reichart, Arkinson County; Cade Brier Rensink, Minneapolis; James Allen Robbins, Holton; Jamie Robinson, Atchison County; Pamela Schlosser, Holton; Brook Shurtz, Arkansas City; Kelly Springer, Neosho; Philip Justin Weltmer, Smith Center; Janice E. Young, Erie; KENTUCKY: Eric M. Barker, Garrard County; Ryan Dale Bivens, Spencer County; George Donald Mulberry, Scott County; Misty Murphy, Apollo; Jennifer Lynn O'Bannon, Taylor County; Stacy K. Oak, Trimble County; Holly Suzanne Orme, Montgomery County; Timothy R. Palmer, Calloway County; Phillip Perkins, Scott County; Heather Michell Pfleuger, Fulton County; Jason Phillips, Apollo; Jessica Rene' Powell, Owosso County; Tyler Clay Powell, Ballard Memorial; Clint R. Quarters, Mary County; Mary Nicole Redding, Bourbon County; Brandon Reed, LaRue County; Dewayne M. Reynolds, Lincoln County; Matthew Rodgers, Logan County; Nathan J. Rount, Jessamine County; Scott Ruber, Scott County; Jeffrey M. Ruddy, Ballard Memorial; Ryan Scarr, Owosso County; Andrew Nicholas Shelley, Fleming County; Ashley Jonell Smith, Breathitt; Eric B. Smith, Owosso County; Regina Ann Smith, Montgomery County; Kenneth Milton Stratton, Logan County; Jessica Elayne Strunk, Jackson County.

american FFA degree

Ripley; Kenneth Anthony Edwards, Norwell; Suzann Fellows, New Washington; Todd Feichter, Southern Wells; Robert Lee Fodge, Franklin; Lynn Mac Dwight Garrison, East Noble; Brant Gilbert, Carroll; Andrea Gregory, North Newton; Grant N. Harnes, Carroll; Joseph Heater, Rossville; James Douglas Higdon, Franklin; Angela G. Hoel, Rushville; John P. Hunt, Sheridan; Zackariah Johnson, Star Academy; Holly S. Kenimond, Carroll; Kevin Luebbenhusen, Forest Park; Toby L. Manges, Bremen; Matt McDowell, Star Academy; Travis Duane McKinney, Sullivan; Eric E. Meador, Rossville; Katrina Mimmich, South Adams; Laura Morrical, Rensselaer; Matthew R. Morris, Clinton Central; Chad A. Nussbaum, Adams Central; Matthew J. Oswy, South Adams; Nick Parkevich, Carroll; Ryan Patterson, Orleans; Sarah Elizabeth Pence, Hope; Joshua Alan Phe, Rossville; Jonathon Pollert, Seymour; Emily Powell, Union City; Scott Edward Priese, Southmont; Caren Noel Pickett, Rossville; Mindy Reef, South Adams; Katie Lea Robertson, Southwestern; Tim Scagnoli, Carroll; Chad Shaffer, Carroll; Doug Sherwood, Rushville; Donald Shoemaker, Brownstown; David R. Skiles, Carroll; Luke Turner, Eastbrook; Robbie B. Voehl, Adams Central; Lillian Mari Wafford, Star Academy; Kurtis Wagoner, Rossville; Brian Warren, Shell Rock; Samuel James Kessell, Lamoni; Shawn Kreutzer, Vinton; Jerrod Lane, Humboldt; Jennifer Lansing, North Fayette; Jaia Laige, West Marshall; Nicholas T. Larson, Rockford; Michael Reed Lockie, Riceville; Brent Magg, Colfax; Minken; Nathan Nathan Mann, Cascade; Joshua Marth, Charles City; Andrew Martin, Lamoni; Nicholas R. McKenna, Vinton; Philip J. Moberg, Creston; Jeffrey R. Moeller, Stormont; Ryan J. Moestchen, Reno Smith; Stephanie Marie Munson, Pilot Creek; Buckley A. Neck, Oelwein, Jeremy Peak, Decorah; Brandon David Potrzeline, Vinton; Nicholas S. Pudenz, Carroll Area; Michael R. Schmidt, Northeast; Gabriel L. Schrader, Benton Community; Robin Schulte, Benton Community; Mark Scadden, Algona; Gordon Owen Seams, Nashua-Plainfield; Conrad Scott Shada, Anamosa; Joshua M. Sieren, Washington; Jim Soppe, North Fayette; Nathan A. Studer, Creston; Mike Taylor, Creston; John Tuinan, Mount Ayr; Joshua F. Tuinum, Cascade; Josh Woldt, Rockford; Doug Wallace, Orient-Macksburg; KANSAS: Justin James Barrett, Chapman; Emily C. Bergkamp, Arkansas City; Daile Ryan Brown, Girard; Lucas Carlson, Centre; Kyle Chamberlin, Chapman; Matthew G. Clayson, Arkansas City; Craig Cook, Chapman; Stephanie Cott, Clay Center; James Covey, Black, Fulton County; Kimberly Bowling, Owosso County; Brian Edward Brammell, East Carter; John Burnett, Southwestern; Carly Burton, Scott County; Phyllis Combos, Owosso County; Gary Cornett, Owosso County; Scott Denham, Boyle County; Jason Scott Deter, LaRue County; Joseph Foster Edwards, Heath; Chris Elliott, Jessamine County; Jacob Warren Falwell, Calloway County; Michael Craig Gershman, Caldwell County; Donald L. Frederick, Jessamine County; Sara Thomas Gibson, Breckenridge County; Alan Glass, Scott County; Stephanie Goode, Apollo; Jacob Todd Goodlin, Central Hardin; Bradley Green, Grayson County; Kenny Guerin, Fulton County; Dennis S. Hart, Hardin County; Richard Matt Hawkins, Apollo; Christi Gayle Helton, Bath County; Lory Beth Holbrook, Wolfe County; Adam Holloway, Logan County; Nathan Thomas Howard, McLean County; Lindsay Johnson, Logan County; Kristen Jordan, Central Hardin; Lindsay Lane, Fulton County; Jeremie Leet, Apollo; Terry Logan Lunsford, Jessamine County; Thomas Joshua Lynch, Fulton County; Jeremy Lee McCuistion, Todd Central; Aaron J. McDonald, Madison Central; Jason Mercier, Apollo; Julie Metcalf, Owosso County; Sara Nicole Moore, Breckinridge County; Stephen Moore Jr., Apollo; Adam Moss, Jessamine County; John Casey County; Jonathan Franklin Thomas, North Hopkins; Timmy N. Tucker, Breckinridge County; Joseph L. Vessels, Meade County; Michael Ryan Williams, Taylor County; Sabrina Rene' Wright, Bourbon County; Brian R. Young, Trimble County; LOUISIANA: Jill Frances McMahan, DeQuincy; Lana G. Myers, Hathaway; Bridget Anne Parks, Central LaFourche; Tiffany Ann Pops, North Central; Mary Reeds, New Iberia; Presque Isle; Noah G. Winslow, Presque Isle; MARYLAND: Laura Elizabeth Keilholtz, Catoctin; Shaun Wayne Shrinier, Catoctin; MICHIGAN: Nathan L. Adams, Saint Louis; Angela S. Berry, Montague; Meghan Braden, Byron; Amy Gleason Broshaker, Gladwin; Megan Burgess, Montague; Darcy Bushue, Breckenridge; Mark Daniels, Standish-Sterling; Carrie Anne Cornett, Gladwin; Jacob Fisk, Standish-Sterling; Emily Green, Ovid-Elsie; Jason King, Montague; Amanda Klinkler, Walthan; Joseph P. Ladegast, Montague; Sarah Ellen Martz, Marshall; Katie Lee McCune, Saint Louis; Michelle McPherson, Montague; Paul Michael Miller, Ogemaw Heights; Ken Murphy, Marshall; Wade Thomas Prestonise, Byrnedale; Frank County; William R. Dentsche, Montague; Ryan D. Rentschler, Montage; Saline; Erin Roach, Centreville; Rodney A. Robinson, Unionville-Sebewaing; Joy Ross, Montage; William R. Schmidt, Montague.
Ryan Rutenberg, East Buchanan; Jeanne Lea Sapp, Ashland; Rhonda Schniefer, Troy; Joshua Schneider, Warrenton; Kristin Scholz, Northwest Technical; Brandon Schuchmann, Brunswick; Derek A. Segelhorst, Union; Seth Seitz, Aurora; Katrina M. Saul, Smithville; Risha Sheets, Fredericktown; Jarod Shelton, Ashland; Jennifer M. Sherman, Higginsville; Brian E. Sproand; Ashland; Sylvia Mae Skoby, Ashland; Abby L. Smith, Chillicothe; Adam Smith, Willard; Charla Smith, Galena; Shannon Snyder, Marionville; Jeff Sparks, Brunswick; Paul Speichinger, Belle; Jennifer Nicole Spreekmeyer, Hermann; Hoyt C. Stemme, Hermann; John Sticht, Advance; Stevensville; Julie Ottum, Hays; Garth L. Pelton, Absarokee; Amanda Lynn Sarrazin, Shields Valley; Brent T. Smith, Shields Valley; William Jacob Stevenson, Hobson; Kody Tacke, Park; Eric Tillerman, Chinook; Jessica Leigh Whitney, Carter County; Holley Anne Wooley, Shields Valley; Steven Anthon Zellmer, Chinook.

NEBRASKA: Jon Anderson, St. Paul; Art Bailey, Schuyler; Jacob N. Barg, Wauneta; Kathryn Helen Barger, Wauneta; Aaron Beckman, Norfolk; Nathan Beckman, Norfolk; Judd Behrendt, Tekamah-Herman; Jennifer Diane Blevins, Superior; Karl Block, Hampton; Justin Roger Brodersen, Hartington; John Michael Bunks, Lexington; Sherry Lynn Cargill, North Loup-Scott; Jamie McCormick, Tekamah-Herman; Mark Miller, Kimball; Matthew D. Niport, Diller; Talley A. Norseen, Loup City; Michelle L. Novak, Schuyler; Suzanne Nunnenkamp, Sutton; Tyler O’Neel, Ord; Jeremiah Ochsner, Sutton; Nathan Panko, Tekamah-Herman; Keisha Marie Paten, Randolph; Jason Penko, Tekamah-Herman; Shawn M. Peters, Central City; Aaron Joseph Petersen, Randolph; Lisa Pfeiffer, Seward; Mike Pedany, Howells-Clarkson; Erin Fay Poensnecker, West Holt; Randi Renee Pycha, Scribner; Tyler Snyder, Brad C; Rasmussen, Ravenna; Mark Rasmussen, Mead; Todd Reeds; Waverly; Jeremiah Richardson, Grant; Curtis A. Rickertsen, Lexington; Matt Roberts, Ansley; Jonathan Roth, Milford; Jum R. Ruggles, Republican Valley; James Michael Ryan, Norfolk; Cory Lynn Schlacter, Sibert; Snyder, Justin D; Schoenholtz, Imperial; Maynard Schriner Jr., Wilcox; Sara Shamburg, Tekamah-Herman; Katie Sissel, Shickley; Eric Smith, Hampton; Jason Spiehs, Centura; Kimberly Ann Stone, Franklin; Douglas A. Stoutfier, Howells-Clarkson; Michael Thomassen, West Holt; Andy Tillman, Bayard; Rebecca Torpy, West Holt; Blake Troester, Hampton; Kurt Van DeWalle, Cedar Rapids; Barbara Von Seggern, Scribner;Skyler; Kayle Wagner, Douglas; Angela Walker, Norfolk; Michael K. Wall, Heartland; Rita Jane Wallace, Blue Hill; Travis Wegner, Wobash; Duane C. Welsing, Platte Valley;
retiring address

life doesn't frighten me  Chris Vitelli, President
73rd National FFA Convention
Ninth Convention Session

Kerry what would you want to do... "I want to become a professional ballerina." John what about you... "I plan to play professional football, baseball and preach like my dad." Chris what would you like to do when you grow up... "Well Mrs. McIsaac, one day I want to become the President of the United States of America."

On one of her "dream days," Mrs. McIsaac, my fourth grade teacher, asked all of my classmates, including myself, one simple question: What do you want to be when you grow up? It was without hesitation, reserve, qualm or fear that I quickly blurted out with all the confidence in the world... "I want to be the President of the United States of America."

There was something about that day. Not one of my classmates held back what they really dreamed about. It was a true lack of fear. When I presented my dream, there was inside of me a faith that I could do anything I wanted. And beside me, a courage that eliminated even the ugly words "comfort zone."

There are many concepts and behaviors that we adopted as children, but none are greater than the lessons of believing in yourself and acting upon that belief with courage. It was a combination of belief and courage that eliminated our fears.

Of course, children fear things—the monsters in the closet, strangers speaking in front of large crowds, haunted houses, our great grandmother's false teeth or dad's leather belt. I personally feared an occasional pinch on the cheek by the jolly, fat man at my church. But children don't fear the big things we are faced with in life.

They don't fear challenges, goals, dreams and ambitions. They're not afraid to voice their opinions, express themselves, share their goals or provide a helping hand. In simple words, children don't fear LIFE.

I would love to say that as teenagers and young adults we are no different from children, that we still share their views on life, but it's not true. Although we weren't so fearful as children, I am afraid that through time we have lost the confidence to face some of life's most challenging obstacles. We fear life, and some of us even let that fear control our choices.

When you were a child you might have said, "I want to be an astronaut, a scientist in Africa or even a marine biologist." We can all relate to this untouchable faith that we once possessed. Unfortunately, as we grow up we lose this belief that we once had as a child. Slowly, yet inevitably, that immense faith has lessened and we've been robbed of our childhood BELIEF. Now, you need to search for it.

As children we were tough. We fought battles, pitched fits and stood strong for our beliefs. Our foundation was solid as a rock, and more importantly, we had the courage to defend it. Nothing in the world could change our convictions, passion or ability to speak our minds. As we grew up, we developed a sense of apprehension, trepidation and fear. Someone or something introduced us to our comfort zones, thus eliminating the once popular world of COURAGE. Now, you need to build it.

Two special gifts, belief and courage, seem to have diminished from our daily lives. We have developed our own identities and grown far beyond that childhood passion. We need to search and find that indescribable belief and immense courage that we once exerted so proudly. It is then and only then, that we can reach our true potential. Limitations, barriers and fears will be left behind, and we will proudly say... "Life doesn't frighten me."

Belief, a simple six-letter word, is defined in the Webster's dictionary as "an assent of the mind; persuasion; creed or opinion." But in the eyes of a child the definition of belief is simple.

We all had our own definition of belief as a child. In fact, we were even taught about faith and belief within our homes, churches, communities and classrooms. We developed that belief through time which led us to our dreams and goals in life.

I distinctly remember my mom reading me a book that describes belief to perfection. I just loved sitting in the big red chair in our living room and listening to my mom read the book, "The Little Engine That Could." That story defines the true meaning of belief.

I could recite this favorite childhood book for each of you just like my mom did for me, but I realize that would just be down right silly. Imagine me, 21 years old, reading each of you a book written for children under the age of five. However, I still wanted to share this story in case you have forgotten it. I've chosen to take this powerful story of belief and share it FFA style. The moral of the story hasn't changed, only the scenario. Our engine is not struggling to conquer a mountain, instead his challenge is to travel across the U.S. So use your imagination and prepare for the first ever story of "The FFA Engine That Could."

"There was a blue and gold engine that pulled a long train. His membership stretched from Alaska to Puerto Rico and from Hawaii to Maine. As he struggled he chanted... 'I think I can, I think I can, I am the blue and gold engine... commonly known as the man.'"

"For this journey he started in Virginia, Bealeton to be exact. His belief began to build as members of the C.L. Payne and Strasburg FFA chapters jumped on his back."

"It got a little tough as he rolled through the mountains of Tennessee, but before long he was rolling through fields of Missouri. His chant was loud and the message the same... 'I think I can, I think I can, I'm not just any of engine... I am the man.'"

"It wasn't too long before he needed some fuel, so he stopped by the Vinton FFA chapter in Iowa, and they taught him a special rule. Believe in yourself and know that you can. The engine replied sharply, 'Someone must have told you that I am the man.'"

"Over through Nebraska where the plains are real smooth, the engine was inspired when members of Hartington FFA helped him move. He swept through the Midwest where he faced a few tests, but through it all you could here him chanting... 'I will do my best.'"

"It got extremely tough as he began to scale the Rocky Mountains, but he thought of his strengths and what he could do. He started to scream to himself... 'I believe in you!'"

"Up, up, up the blue and gold engine went, faster and faster his belief never bent. It was a wonderful feeling as he reached the top. He could see the West Coast where he would finally stop."

"This was only one of his many journeys when he gave nothing less to serve all his members across the U.S. It was faith and belief that pulled him straight through from Virginia to Colorado to finally California... It's the blue and gold engine... more commonly known as the FFA."

Of course this is a little twist to the original book, "The Little Engine That Could," by Watty Piper. But the little engine had a faith we can all learn from.
This year I have had the opportunity to meet members that truly believe in their abilities to achieve great things. Kelly Cloutier from Massachusetts struggled through state officer elections not because she looked forward to the agony of defeat, but because she believed in herself. That belief will be the reason she will run again next year. Jesse Marcus from Ohio took his faith to the state finals in prepared public speaking. Kyle Gilbert from Alabama is now serving as the senior class president of Geraldine High School and Joe Carbone and Andy Perry from Maine are competing in their first national career development event. Each are finding success because they, in their own way, have total belief in their ability to achieve. Just imagine the wonderful opportunities that are awaiting if you just believe.

We all possess fears and limitations that often control our beliefs. You say to yourself, "I want to become chapter president, but I’m not organized enough. I want to compete in prepared public speaking, but I’m not polished enough. I want to earn an A in Biology, but I’m not scientific. I want to serve as a class officer, become the quarterback of the football team, travel internationally or even become an agriculture teacher, but I’m not gifted enough." Slowly, these doubts eliminate the belief inside of you. Excuse after excuse—we allow these fears to limit our lives. However, the solution is simple. Begin to believe in your abilities, your strengths and your gifts. Rebuild the faith you once had as a child, and do whatever you want to do. FFA members with belief, there are no limitations! Believe in your ability to achieve the impossible. More importantly, have the courage to act upon that belief. It is the moment when belief meets courage that fear truly begins to diminish. Rediscover the concept of courage that once dominated your childhood days.

Courage is a powerful concept. It allows us to step out of our comfort zones and pursue the dreams and goals we have. Nancy Anderson, representing "Work with Passion" says that, "courage is not the absence of fear; rather it is the ability to take action in the face of fear." Children probably can give us the best definition of courage. They live by the concept on a daily basis.

During the fall of 1994 my hometown church developed a campaign entitled "Carry the Cross." Each week three individuals within the church were challenged to test their faith by carrying a one-foot by one-half foot wooden cross with them everywhere they went for one week. The task may seem simple, but the true test was standing for your convictions at all times and sharing your beliefs with others.

Each Sunday night after the three participants shared their stories, they proudly passed their cross to someone new. I remember one Sunday night in particular, as if it were yesterday. Our pastor encouraged, for the first time, young people to carry the cross to school with them. The congregation fell silent, and I started feeling the pressure to volunteer.

I sat there thinking about carrying this cross during my first year of high school for one full week. Every reason possible not to volunteer crossed my mind. "What if students laughed at me?" "What if I don’t exert or possess high enough standards?" "What if my peers poke fun, call me names or challenge my beliefs?"

These "what ifs" served as the foundation of my fears. To carry the cross it would take a willingness to go against the grain, step out of my comfort zone and exert the courage I once possessed as a child. As the congregation waited patiently and silently, I took a simple step. I raised my hand to volunteer.

The week was challenging, and yes, some students didn’t respect my courageous efforts. But many did. In fact, most were excited and encouraged by such a courageous stand. Whether you worship in a synagogue, mosque, temple, shrine, home or church you know that it takes courage to stand up for what you believe.

When is the last time you had the courage to say "no" to ideas that don’t coincide with your morals or beliefs? Courage isn’t a necessity. Courage is a positive choice to face your persecutions, test fear and challenge the norm.

The next time you are challenged to take an alcoholic drink at a party, have the courage to say "no" and walk away. If your friends find humor in making fun of the quote "outsider" in school, you don’t have to help, have the courage to say "no" and make friends with that person. If your best friend asks you to experiment with drugs, have the courage to say "no." Your boyfriend or girlfriend has nearly convinced you that sex is the next logical step in your relationship, have the courage to say "no" and find someone that respects your decision to practice abstinence. FFA members, there is one word that often takes immense courage. We might not like using it, and it may not be popular, but sometimes we just have to say "no."

Courage can also test your ability to respond "yes" to the wonderful opportunities presented to you. We often fear opportunities, not because we don’t believe in our abilities, but because we don’t exert the courage to pursue them.

When is the last time you said "yes" to one of your challenges? When your FFA advisor encouraged you to participate in parliamentary procedure, attend the Washington Leadership Conference, run for state office or develop an agriscience research project, did you have the courage to say "yes" or did your fears limit your decision? What about when you were asked to serve as the captain of your basketball team, run in a marathon, join a service club or pursue higher education, did you have the courage to believe in your abilities enough to say "yes" to the opportunity?

Consume yourself with positive challenges and learn to courageously tackle some of life’s most challenging obstacles. The next time you are encouraged to participate in something new and positive. Take a risk and step out of your comfort zone. Proudly say "yes" to the challenge.

Children live pretty simple lives. They don’t have to worry about the struggles each of you face on a daily basis. They’re not exposed to the violence, immorality, social problems, discomforts and poverty that seem to consume our society. They’re not thinking about relationship problems, peer pressure, school, college decisions, career choices or acceptance. However, through time these once innocent children are introduced to these struggles, which serve as the root of the fears we now possess in our lives. It is your responsibility to search deep to find that child.

In each of our lives we can still relate to the simple concepts of belief. When your fears and doubts scream out—"You stink." "You don’t have what it takes." "Don’t try." "You’re going to fail."—don’t listen. Instead think, "I can," and discover that true belief in yourself.

Belief isn’t enough alone. You have to put your belief to the test. Have the courage to say goodbye to normality, simplicity, complacency and comfort.

As a child, you stood strong for your convictions. You believed in doing what was right. In today’s society it is imperative that you rediscover that childhood courage. Use it to pursue your dreams and follow your ambitions. Don’t let limitations serve as a barrier, instead use your courage to break through that comfort zone.

Within each and every one of your FFA jackets there is a child waiting to be discovered. We may have lost that childhood innocence, but we haven’t lost the ability to relate to our childhood days. No matter where you are right now in your life, you are capable of finding that belief and building courage to pursue and achieve great things.

FFA members, discover the child within that blue and gold jacket, and when limitations, fears and challenges come your way....Stand strong upon your beliefs and courage and say..."LIFE DOESN’T FRIGHTEN ME."
peanut butter and a mirror

Jodee Ruppel, Secretary
73rd National FFA Convention
Second Convention Session

My reflection has always been a big part of who I am. From the time I was little, I would rehearse my smile and funny faces in the mirror. I would practice being a cheese at family reunions and in front of the camera.

As you can see, that practice paid off. I made sure all the aunts and uncles would never forget this face.

But as I got older, the mirror that had been my best friend became my worst enemy. You just can't get away from your reflection. You see it everyday in windows, mirrors and sometimes newly polished floors. I started using my reflection to scrutinize every detail and feature. I thought I was too short, my nose was too wide and my calves were so big they weren’t calves, they were cows! The mirror was the tool I used to see if I measured up to the supermodels in the magazines, the Olympic athletes and most of all—the other students in my school. Every time I looked, I was coming up short.

We have all felt self-doubt like this at one time or another. This year I have come to see just how crippling that self-doubt can be. I now realize there is a way to stop questioning your value and focus on reaching your potential. This may sound like the makings of an infomercial, but there is honestly a way to erase self-doubt, and it doesn’t even require three small payments of $19.95.

Too often we let self-doubt keep us from reaching our goals. We must look beyond our shallow reflection, deep inside to where true talents lie. By embracing those strengths we will find the self-confidence that will lead us to success.

Worth can be defined as "having value, usefulness and/or importance." Self-worth is defined as "a person possessing those traits of usefulness and importance and providing value." By questioning our self-worth, we begin to doubt that we are important and have value. We contain our true potential and don’t seize moments and opportunities.

When I obsessed about my reflection in the mirror, I began to question my self-worth. I soon began passing up chances and dreams because of my inhibitions and self-consciousness. Because of my insecurities, I let one of my childhood dreams fade away.

I grew up in Indiana, a state known for its basketball fever. As a little girl I developed my own hoop dreams. My dream was big and had two parts. One, I wanted to be Miss Basketball in Indiana, and two, I wanted to play basketball in college. Big goals, I know, but I wasn’t worried. When it came to basketball, I’m not bragging but—I was good. I could run, shoot and score with the best of them. I was so good they even named a play after me! I started every game my sophomore year and then moved up to Varsity my junior year. Suddenly, I found it hard to fit in with the older girls. Whether it was playing defense or shooting a lay-up or three pointers, I couldn’t do anything right. I became so self-conscious that I stopped giving 100 percent. Pretty soon, I found myself sitting on the bench, riding the pine and watching the games from the sidelines. When I did get into the game, I was so worried that the fans in the bleachers would think that I ran funny or had knobby knees that I wouldn’t even notice the girl dribbling the ball towards me, dribbling around me and dribbling behind me to make the basket. My constant worrying kept me from getting to play in the final game of my high school career. I missed out on my dream, all because I thought I didn’t compare.

How often have you looked into a mirror and scrutinized and judged yourself until you felt inadequate? Did you let those feelings hold you back from trying something new? Did they keep you from striving for something you have always wanted like becoming a football star or trying out for speech team? Did you let a dream, even the smallest dream, pass you by because you were worried what someone else might say or think?

Too many times we fall short of our dreams simply because we doubt our ability to reach them. But the truth of the matter is, if you turn your focus inside, you can find all sorts of amazing things. No not millions of dollars, a new car or a surefire way to get a date. But you can find your true talents—those things that will help you reach your true potential. I’m sure you’ve heard your parents say that you have traits inside of you that make you special. You start to think, "they’re my parents, they have to say that,"—but I’ve learned it’s true! All it takes is finding that thing that you love to do, the thing that you are great at doing or can’t live without. That "thing"—an object, habit or trait, is the beginning. It will lead you to discover all the strengths that lie within you.

After my high school graduation, I was elected to a state FFA office. I thought I’d grown out of scrutinizing my abilities, but once again I began judging and comparing myself to all the state officers that had come before me. I had heard stories about how organized, dynamic and thoughtful they were. How could I ever be that good? That year, I met FFA members from around the state who had accomplished more in FFA than I had. How could I rate?

It was during that state officer year that my team, and my favorite food, helped me discover my strengths.

I was blessed to have six other individuals that made up my state officer team, Stacia, Jonathan, Matt, Kyle, Robert and Chris—one girl and five boys. I had never had brothers before, so the boys took extra precautions to break me in good. Whether it was wrestling in the living room, smashing cherry pie in my face or waking me up at 3 in the morning to throw me in the lake, they always treated me like a sister. At least that is how they justified it.

It didn’t take long before, just like brothers, they were teasing me about little habits and traits I possessed. One habit in particular seemed to get a lot of attention—my love for peanut butter. They teased me because I always had a jar of JIF and a spoon on my desk when I worked. I had a jar marked with my name, so I could just take the spoon and eat out of it at my leisure. The boys stole my peanut butter, burned my peanut butter and even traded my personal jar with the jar of peanut butter we used to bait the mice in our house. Now in all my past experiences when I was teased about a habit, I’d try to change it to fit in or feel normal. Now I faced a diffi-
cult choice—to keep eating peanut butter or to give it up so I could fit in. I thought it over and, of course, peanut butter won. No silly teasing was going to keep me from the food I loved. Instead of giving it up, I embraced my love for peanut butter. I began eating it with everything—pancakes, chocolate chips, maple syrup, honey, pickles, Doritos, mayonnaise and bananas, applesauce—you name it, I tried it. Hey, it’s a part of my identity! I realized my love for peanut butter went far beyond normal. But if I could stand up for my love of JIF, Skippy, Peter Pan and Reese’s then I could be proud of all those other qualities that made me different as well. So I started looking for more things that made me unique. It was like I opened a giant jar of peanut butter and found out just who I was.

I found that my Nike sandals had become a trademark of mine. Whether it was in official dress or a pair of khaki’s they were always on my feet.

I found that I really didn’t like wearing make-up after all.

But even more important, I looked on the inside and found out...

...that I have a random and sarcastic sense of humor;

...that I love to talk to people;

...that I believe in having a positive attitude; and

...that I am a person who loves to take action and reach for my goals.

Now these revelations weren’t new. They’d been there all along. I just hadn’t stopped to recognize them and realize what they meant. Besides making me unique, the qualities I possessed on the inside were really my strengths—things I should be very proud of.

What strengths and talents should you be proud of? Are you patient, organized, good at meeting new people? Do you have a strong work ethic? We all have something that sets us apart. The neat thing is that you don’t see these things in a mirror. You find them in your heart, in your head and in what you love to do. They are there, we just have to see them and choose to be proud of them.

Once you have found those things that make you unique, that capture your passion, you need to focus on them. By embracing your talents, you no longer question your self worth. Instead you begin to believe it. With your improved self-confidence, you will seize opportunities and reach your goals and dreams. Many members I have met this year focused on their talents to find happiness.

Of course you don’t have to win trophies or honors to use your talents. Shawn, from New Hampshire, showed his talent for making people feel good. During a brief lunch conversation with me, he found out about my love for peanut butter. He brought me a jar of Skippy peanut butter as a present that same day. It made me feel wonderful, when I was so far from home.

I met Lindsey at a camp in South Dakota. She and I spent almost the whole time together as we traded stories of boys, sports, family and FFA. When she got up before the sun just to give me a hug goodbye, I realized one of Lindsey’s strengths was being a true friend.

Patrick from Mississippi has an uncanny way of making people laugh, even when they are on the verge of tears. He could tell a joke, do a dance or just say something that would make everything seem brighter.

These FFA members are just a few of the people I have met this year that have embraced their strengths and used them to reach their potential. I’ve seen a special talent in every FFA member I’ve met, whether it was a passion for agriculture, a love for FFA or their amazing ability to be a friend.

Each of us are unique, and we must not be ashamed to focus on those qualities. If you want to be an artist, don’t hesitate to create new works of art for that local art show. If you have a knack for working with children and want to spend your days volunteering at a hospital in the pediatrics ward—do it! After all, if you aren’t yourself, who will be? By focusing on your talents, you will learn not to compare yourself, but instead you will learn to like you for who you are and build your confidence.

Rachel from Alaska had a knack for science so she joined up with three classmates to do a science research project. They studied the effect of cosmic radiation on lichens, which is no small feat. Their experiment was so good that NASA picked it up, and it will be tested on a space flight.

Alison, a freshman from Peoria, Arizona, possessed a strong work ethic. She applied herself fully in sports, academics and FFA. Because of her effort, she is on the junior national swim team that will swim in Australia. She maintains a 3.8 GPA, and she was named Arizona’s State Star Greenhand.

You have a choice. You can continue to question your value, or you can stand confident in your strengths and talents. Don’t waste your time in front of a mirror questioning your reflection. Realize not only is what you see what you get, but what you see is something to be proud of. It took a jar of peanut butter to help me find my talents. What will it be for you? FFA members, it is up to you to look within your own peanut butter jar and find your strengths. Choose to let your reflection shine from the inside.
Deborah Norville, anchor of Inside Edition, relayed a message about perseverance and overcoming obstacles and shared secrets to success using a Dr. Seuss story as an example saying, "Sam-I-Am asked that little guy 16 times to try those green eggs and ham, and he finally did. That's perseverance!"

"True power is achieved, not by being dictatorial, but by being servants." Former U.S. Teacher of the Year Dr. Guy Rice Doud delivered a message about the importance of living a life of service and inspired members to believe in themselves. Doud's appearance was sponsored by Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc., a DuPont business.
Motivational speaker John Alston encouraged FFA members to “get out of the box” and had Freedom Hall roaring with laughter before he got down to serious business. He stressed the importance of curiosity and learning, sharing that even ants can be fascinating. Alston’s appearance was sponsored by the Kroger Company as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman addressed members during Thursday’s session and stressed the importance of agricultural involvement in this year’s political campaign. He encouraged members to exercise their right to vote.

WNBA coach Carolyn Peck stressed that dedication is key to being successful in day-to-day life and encouraged FFA members to work hard, embrace all people and listen to others’ goals. “As long as there is time on the clock, you can still win,” she told the crowd gathered in Freedom Hall while comparing her basketball philosophy to life.
There comes a time when we heed a certain call. When the world must come together as one. Many times we hear inspirational songs like this and let the words just pass us by. We don't stop to think about how they apply to our own lives. However, when I heard the words to "We are the World" I couldn't ignore their powerful message. I believe they apply directly to us as FFA members. Let me show you what I mean.

Fairbury High School, Nebraska, 322 students, 65 FFA members. W.B. Saul High School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 725 students, 618 FFA members. Arkansas City High School, my hometown in Kansas, 827 students, 118 FFA members. The United States of America, 13.5 million high school students, 455,306 FFA members. There are so many students out there that don't benefit from FFA's opportunities to build confidence, character and vision.

While there are many of us in FFA, we are only a small piece of our generation. We've got to step up and share the benefits we're receiving. We must bring our generation together as one. FFA members, this is our call.

I first started thinking about this song, "We are the World," during our national officer trip to Japan in January. One evening some students that were members of the Future Farmers of Japan took us to karaoke (which, by the way, means "to sing off key" in Japanese). This explains why they do karaoke a little differently in Japan. You know, here in America we grab a mic and stand up in front of anyone who will listen as we belt out our own unique rendition of "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun" or "Old Time Rock and Roll." Well, in Japan, they figure it's more appropriate to just humiliate yourself in front of those who know you best. So they give each group their own karaoke room to "sing off key" in.

We had a great time as the Japanese students taught us some of their cultural songs, and we taught them a few traditional American songs. But the final song of the evening was truly powerful. It created the unforgettable energy that brought us all together. We linked arms, stood tall and joined together in singing "We Are the World." I sang in amazement at the wonder of the moment. I was thousands of miles from my home, arm in arm with Japanese students, singing a song that meant something special to all of us. A song that united us. The moment was imprinted in my mind forever. I've decided that the words of the chorus brought us together. "We are the world, we are the children" is the first line. It's a simple message. Every individual is important. And the final line, "It's true we make a better day, just you and me." challenges us to create that better day, to create that future.

Wouldn't it be cool if every one of you in this auditorium, from the floor to the very top row, showed your commitment to loving all people, your commitment to letting no one sit alone, your commitment to creating the future? What will you stand for?

While traveling to state conventions this year, I met an FFA member who taught me what the song's first line, "We are the world, we are the children," truly means. While at the state convention in upstate New York, I had a conversation with a student named Jorge. Like many of you, Jorge has a strong interest in agricultural education and enjoys hands-on classes. But what really surprised me about Jorge is that he is from the heart of New York City!

Immediately, this Kansas farm girl thought of The Big Apple, Times Square, 5th Avenue, the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, subways, pizza, bagels and Broadway! "How could an FFA member be from New York City?" I asked him. He changed my perception as he began to explain. He told me that being from New York City is one of the greatest advantages he's been given in life. There are countless colors, tons of talents, infinite interests, millions of minds, a plethora of passions and dozens of differences. Listen carefully to what he said next. Are you ready to hear this? He said, "Growing up in a big city taught me to appreciate all people." Don't ever forget that! Let me say it again. It taught me to appreciate all people. Jorge showed me that he stands for differences. He stands for love of mankind. He stands for all people.

And you know what? I can feel that same energy and acceptance at this convention. Everyone walks around and tries to get signatures from people from all 50 states to fill the back of their convention program. People unite to do the wave before a convention session. All you see are friendly faces and happy people who want to get to know one another.

But let me ask you something, is it that way at your schools? Do you walk up and openly talk to every individual? Or are you a member of a group that sometimes doesn't talk to other groups? Maybe there's a student in the back of your class that looks a little different, dresses kind of weird or sleeps everyday in class. Have you ever talked to that student? Maybe our convention is different because we all dress the same, or because we all have a common interest in agriculture. Maybe that's why it's easier at convention. But if we truly appreciated all people, it wouldn't matter. We've got to remember that first line of the song, "We are the world, we are the children." I'm asking you to do something so simple, appreciate each other.

The final line of the song's chorus, "It's true we make a better day just you and me," reminds me of a life-changing realization I had at my high school graduation. All of my family and friends had come to visit. I was all decked out in
my school colors, purple and gold. My classmates and I were smiling as nearly 200 of us arrived for the ceremony.

As we paraded in and took our seats, I turned to my left. There sat a friend of mine, Ronnie. I asked him if he was ready for the big day, and he assured me he was. But then I looked to my right, and I realized that I had done something terribly wrong. I didn’t know the person sitting next to me. I didn’t even know his name. In fact, he didn’t look familiar to me at all.

As I sat there and looked around at my classmates, time seemed to stand still. I saw so many students that I had never taken the time to truly get to know. I wasn’t a quiet girl in high school. I smiled. I was happy. And I had plenty of friends. But I had missed out on so many opportunities to meet special people. I had walked by Jess, Donnie and Jeff everyday without saying a word. I had avoided Emily, Jamie and Tiffani, because I already had friends. The only thing I ever said to the girl who had the locker below me was “Excuse me,” or “Oops, I’m sorry.”

It really comes down to the fact that I didn’t take the time to appreciate each and every one of them. I didn’t make the personal choice to reach out to all people. But at my high school graduation, as I sat there disgusted with myself, I vowed that I would change this part of my life. I would stand for giving. I would stand for making days brighter for those around me. I wouldn’t let others make the same mistake that I had.

A year and a half ago my sister, Lindsey, started her freshman year of high school and became an FFA member. One day after school, she and I went for a walk. I told her the story of my scary realization at graduation. She listened, but really didn’t say much. However, toward the end of Lindsey’s freshman year she sat down and talked to me about it. She said that everyday as she walks through the halls of her school and sees students that she’s never met before, those words go through her head. Although it’s difficult, she stops. She talks to them. She gets to know them. Lindsey stands for reaching out to others. It’s a personal choice, and it’s a beautiful example.

Walk with me down your hallway at school. Do you see them? The people you’ve never noticed or taken the time to talk to? Maybe there are a few, or maybe there are many.

But the question is, what are you going to do about it?

Appreciate the interests, gifts and differences each and every person possesses. Then make the personal choice to reach out to others and share your heart, hope and happiness. I think Mother Theresa put it best when she said, “Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God’s kindness: kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes and kindness in your smile.” If you follow this example, you’ll probably see some returns. Who knows? Maybe you’ll make a new friend. Maybe you’ll change someone’s life. Or, you might just make the future a little bit brighter.

As the chorus of this song comes together, I am reminded of the power I felt the night we sang “We Are the World” in Japan. I remember feeling pride, hope and unity. But as I look around this room tonight, I realize that night was only the beginning. There is so much potential in this auditorium, but more importantly, there is so much potential in our entire generation.

It’s our job, leaders, to recognize that potential in others and reach out to them so that we may all create the future. Wouldn’t it be neat, wouldn’t it be so powerful, if we could create that same pride, hope and unity that I felt that evening in Japan? Only this time on a much larger scale. Wouldn’t it be cool if every one of you in this auditorium, from the floor to the very top row, showed your commitment to loving all people, your commitment to letting no one sit alone, your commitment to creating the future? What will you stand for?

Each of you, stand with me now …

Link arms with each other …

And join me in singing “We are the World.”

We are the world.
We are the children.
We are the ones
who make a brighter day
so let’s start givin’.
There’s a choice we’re making,
We’re saving our own lives.
It’s true we make a better day
just you and me.

It’s moments like this that can help us see the power of unity. But is a moment enough? Take this moment, take what you feel right now, and turn it into a way of life. Appreciate others. Reach out to others. The choice is yours. What will you stand for?
you’ve got a friend in me

City friends, country friends, church friends, family friends, funny friends, crying friends, work friends, play friends, school friends and even FFA friends.

I can think of a lot people that I have called "friend." However, my most important friends in my life have been my blizzard friends. A blizzard friend? What’s that? Somebody you meet at Dairy Queen? Not quite. Let me tell you about my blizzard friends.

It was the middle of my sophomore year in high school and my four best friends—Nick, Joel, Eric and Gabe—and I were listening to the radio waiting for the weather report. We finally heard that a huge blizzard was headed straight for our part of western Ohio, and to our surprise and delight, school for the next day was cancelled in advance!

My friends and I imagined all of the exciting possibilities that existed with a day and half free from school. So I suggested that we all do something together, something adventurous and something just a little crazy.

We had just watched a video on exploration of the North Pole in one of our classes, so naturally we decided that we would go on our own camping adventure behind my house. Now, we could have set up our camp fifty feet behind my house, but oh no, we decided to fire up the tractor and drive it almost a mile into the woods behind my house.

We piled on as many clothes as humanly possible and headed out into the woods with sleeping bags, a tent and some cooking supplies. We arrived at a suitable spot in the woods, cleared out enough snow to pitch our tent and then attempted to build a fire.

Now, I am not sure how many of you have tried to build a fire in a half foot of snow but it is rather difficult when every time you get a good fire burning, it just melts the snow around it and puts the fire out. It was only after three attempts and much clearing of snow that we finally saw some results in our small fire. We decided to celebrate this achievement by breaking into our cooler of soda pop. Yes, I did say “cooler.” By this time, our pop needed a heater, because it was frozen solid. We had to set the cans beside the fire so they would melt enough to drink.

As darkness fell, the storm increased and our small fire was doing little to protect us from the bitter wind. Now, just to recap, here we have five friends who can hardly manage to camp out in the summer, and they are now sitting in the middle of a blizzard almost a mile from civilization with a fire that can’t keep them warm. We considered climbing back into our tractor and calling it a night. But no, we decided to be brave (that’s macho talk for guys) and stay in our tent.

After three more hours of shivering and chattering, we decided being brave didn’t matter much when we were freezing! We made the decision to put our egos aside and head back to the house. As we piled into the tractor cab I almost taste the hot chocolate with those tiny marshmallows waiting for me at home as I turned the key—once, twice, three times. Nothing. The tractor was dead.

Popsicles. By morning, we were all going to become human popsicles. At this point we gave up any hope of continuing to be brave. We swore each other to secrecy and put our manhood aside as we combined our sleeping bags and cuddled together to conserve heat. We did make it through the night safely, and we were only slightly embarrassed when Dad came to check on us the next morning.

It might seem odd to you that I found out the true meaning of friendship in the middle of a blizzard. But I think that is exactly what happened. I saw that true friends are willing to accept each other no matter what the circumstances and that they are willing to support and strengthen each other in times of need. This is why I call my best friends “blizzard” friends.

Henry Ford said, “A best friend is the one who brings out the best in me.” These are the people who know you and love you for what you were and who you are. They share in your hopes and dreams, and they help you see your potential. Each of us desire friendships that bring out the best in us, but sometimes we get distracted by people who aren’t true blizzard friends.

It can be so easy to make friends with people who wear similar clothing, listen to similar music and have similar interests. However, blizzard friends don’t need to match perfectly or have lots of things in common. In fact, blizzard friends learn to appreciate your differences and make you feel totally accepted just the way you are—imperfections, faults and quirks included. These friends look beyond your external characteristics and value and appreciate you for who you truly are on the inside.

I have been lucky to have several friends that fit into the “blizzard” category, especially on my high school soccer team.

You need to understand that our soccer team wasn’t made up of the best athletes in the school. To be honest, we were lousy. During my high school soccer career we played a total of 45 games, and we lost every single one. Yup, I can look back and say that we honestly had a perfect record—0 and 45.

But it isn’t our record that I remember about my soccer-playing days. It was the friends. No matter how bad the score or how poorly we played, the team always stuck by each other as friends. We had every type of person that you can imagine on our team—girl, boy, short, tall, skinny, fat, fast and slow. Everyone was included, and everyone was valued for what they brought to the team. On our soccer team, even a slow, unathletic, chubby kid who lived on a sheep farm could feel valued and appreciated.

There was one cold Saturday morning game that I remember in particular. The game was getting pretty ugly. I think we were losing something like 14 to nothing, which sounds more like a football score than a soccer score. I can clearly remember defending our goal when a player from the opposing team took a shot. I thought this was my chance to really make a great play, and save a goal. Well, that was my hope anyway; until I misjudged the angle and sent the ball flying off of my head and into our own goal.

Oh sure, I can laugh about it now, but I didn’t feel that way on that cold Saturday morning. I can remember looking around the field after I had scored the goal for the other team. Their players were jumping up and
down, cheering and even laughing while I hung my head in shame. It was then that my own teammates gathered around me and made it clear that my goof up didn’t change the way they saw me. Their actions said loud and clear, “You’ve got a friend in me.”

Those simple words had a profound effect on me. I realized my friends on the soccer team valued me as a person even though I wasn’t a star athlete. I didn’t have to be the fastest, biggest or strongest. My friends liked me, not for what I could do, but rather for who I was.

What do your friends value in you? Do they like you because you win games, or because you walk into a room or think about the close friends you have right now. How many friendships do you have that are based on superficial qualities like how someone talks, dresses or does their hair? Do you make fun of them when they turn the radio to rap because all you want to do is country? Do you stay away from the preps because they always wear those Abercrombie and Fitch shirts, or are you someone who gets mighty uncomfortable when you see someone wearing a belt buckle that could substitute for a hubcap? If any of you went to the dance last night then you know our organization is full of wonderfully diverse people. We have to stop and appreciate the differences people have on the outside as well as accept them for their uniqueness on the inside.

You see, blizzard friendships are not based on common clothes, hobbies, backgrounds or even personality. Instead, they are based on common values.

Having the same values as your close friends is critical, because one of the key roles a blizzard friend plays is to support and strengthen you in times of need. All of our friends shape us to some degree, but our close friends have a tremendous amount of influence over us.

My buddies from high school sure taught me how influential a group of friends can be. There was a group of us that had been best friends since we met in third grade. As we grew older, we developed very different interests—from musicals to sports to FFA. Our bond as friends stayed strong, though, because of our common values and goals. Things like trying to get decent grades in school, keeping ourselves out of trouble, and of course, helping each other find dates for our high school dances. We were as close as friends could be. It was a wonderful feeling to know that there were four friends that I could always count on to support me if I ever needed it.

I think it was almost a year after we had graduated from high school that my buddy Nick gave me a call and said that he would be home for the weekend. He wanted to know if he could stop over and chat a bit. I couldn’t wait to see my old pal who had a quick wit and a funny story for every occasion.

As Nick came to the door I could tell something was wrong. His silly smile that usually stretched from ear to ear was now a forced grin. We sat in my living room and talked. Nick told me about how his life had changed since high school. At college he had made new friends that lived life a little differently than our old gang had. Nick had started staying out late, lying in bed all day and skipping his morning classes. He told me about how he had started to use a drug that was popular with his new friends. To support his new habit, he even began to sell the drugs to others.

Luckily, Nick realized he had enough of that lifestyle and was moving back home with his parents to get away from the influence, the temptation and his new friends. He confessed his story to me in a flood of emotion, which it seemed he had been holding back for while. Nick, my long-time friend, was overwhelmed by the new influences in his life and he felt he no longer had control. Nick wanted to change his life and was asking for my help. I was speechless. In fact, all that I could say to my friend was that no matter what, he would always have a friend in me.

I heard somewhere that friends are like elevators. They can either take you up, or they can take you down. Just a few months ago Nick and I had the chance to talk again, and he told me it was his friends that had most influenced his lifestyle. It was so easy for him to do the right thing in high school, because our whole group of friends had the same values and were strong as a group.

After my experience with Nick I began to think about my friends and which direction they were taking. Do their values and goals consistent with my own? As a freshman in college, I realized that the friends that shared my values were those that I had met in the FFA.

Nick allowed people into his life that were poor influences. Who will you let into your life? Are they people who will challenge you to reach your potential? Will you hang out with someone who will stay up late to help cram for that exam, or someone who distracts you even though they know you need to study? Do your buddies make fun of you when you want to learn to play the guitar, or do they sit and listen to you even though you sound horrible? Do your friends support your goals and encourage you to reach your dreams?

I have heard that if you are looking for a great friend then look no farther than a dog. My family just got a new puppy, so I decided to test that theory. Let me tell you about our new puppy, He is a three-month-old Great Pyrenees. He is white, round and fluffy kind of like a marshmallow with four legs. I really like this dog because we share some of those common values we were just talking about. We both would sleep all day long if we could. Neither of us is very fond of cats, and we both love to eat (just not the same food).

My family bought this puppy to guard our sheep from coyotes, but he doesn’t protect anything. He is afraid of cats, and he doesn’t even know how to bark yet. When strangers come to our house, does he bare his teeth and growl? Nope, he just runs right up to them starts licking their hand. Our new puppy is a horrible guard dog, but he makes a wonderful friend.

We could all be a little bit more like my puppy. We could all treat strangers like friends and our good friends like blizzard friends. I have seen FFA members talk to perfect strangers from clear across the country. I have seen FFA members give high five’s to encourage those around them. And I have seen FFA members that offer each other support as they talk about their goals and dreams.

We all need to take this closeness that we share with each other in the FFA and start putting it to good use everywhere in our lives—in the classroom, on the ball field, at work and in our homes.

I’ve made my choice. I want blizzard friends who support, appreciate and believe in me. I want to be that kind of friend to others. To all of my friends—those of you here today, those members I met while traveling this year and to my friends back at college—I want you to know that you will always have a friend in me.

Now, what will your choice be? Do you want to be a selfish friend, a fair-weather friend, a gossip friend, or do you want to be a blizzard friend? Will you search out friends who appreciate you and accept your differences? Will allow into your life those friends who will support your values and encourage you to reach your goals? Will you do the same for others? If so, then tell those people, “Hey, you’ve got a friend in me!”
the greatest gift

I have been given many gifts in my life. I have been blessed with a great family and many friends. I have learned important life lessons on our farm stacking hay and driving tractors. I treasure special moments, like graduating from my first bike with training wheels, being pulled around in a little Radio Flyer wagon with my brother and sister or getting my first visit from the tooth fairy. Then, there are other gifts that can’t be represented here this morning like sudden rain showers, sunrises and laughter.

These are all small gifts and are easily overlooked. That’s why I believe the greatest of all the gifts one can receive is the ability to appreciate these small treasures.

We go through life at mach speed running to and from every scheduled event and activity in our daily lives. Every minute is a test, and we are all competing for the best spot. We want to fulfill our dreams and achieve success.

Walking down the hallways of a typical American school, you see many people who talk, dress and act differently. They are from all races, creeds and backgrounds, and they are participating in this race on a daily basis. However, if you look closer, they seem to share the same dilemma. We have all heard comments like these before, and we are probably even guilty of saying them:

"I just can’t do it."
"She’s expecting too much."
"I am going to quit."
"How am I ever going to be happy?"
"Life is full of good and bad times, where are the good times?"
"Why does everything bad always happen to me?"
"Life isn’t fair."

We hear comments like this every day, but it is hard to tell what’s causing the negative emotions and feelings. I decided to watch a few of these people to see what was really happening in their lives. They all seemed to deal with rough classes in school, families who were stressed, friends who wanted attention or who pressured them to be popular, coaches who needed their time or parents who wanted their attitudes to change. These are tough problems, but they aren’t much different from the struggles we all face everyday.

Surprisingly, I found lots of good things were happening to these students too, but they hadn’t stopped to realize it. They each had little gifts given to them daily. Some of them had younger brothers and sisters who looked up to them, others were making good grades in school and all of them participated in fun activities and had friends. The real problem was that these students weren’t opening their hearts to realize what gifts they had been given.

An old story tells of a farmer who had a mule for sale. He claimed that this mule would obey any command it was given. One prospective customer was somewhat leery of this claim and decided to put the mule to the test. So he said to the mule, "Sit down." But the mule just stood there. "Sit," the customer yelled. But nothing happened. The frustrated customer turned to the old farmer and said, "You claim this mule will do anything it is told, but I can’t get the mule to sit down." The farmer just smiled. He reached down, picked up a two-by-four and hit the mule in the head. "Sit," he said, and the mule sat right down. Turning to the shocked customer, the farmer said, "First, you have to get his attention."

We are all guilty of running so fast through life that we fail to appreciate the gifts we are given. Sometimes all it takes is a little knock upside the head to make us stop and realize the beauty of our lives.

I can remember one particular time that I was knocked in the head and realized all that I had been blessed with. I entered ninth grade with the typical concerns of a freshman. Where is my locker and when do I go to lunch? What is a GPA and why are they already asking me what career path I want to choose?

Despite my fears, I started off at Jackson County High School with enough ambition to rule the world. I was active in 4-H and showing horses, and I had started my FFA career. I had been to the livestock judging competition and had even attended national convention that fall.

Little did I know that December of 1994, when I was just getting started in all these activities, my life would change forever. During Christmas break, I went to the doctor because I had a soreness and swelling in my neck. To me, it was just annoying, and I really wasn’t too concerned about it.

Three doctors later, I had reason to get a little worried. I can remember sitting down with a doctor on a chilly Friday afternoon and listening to the possible diagnosis of the lump on my neck. The two words that stuck in my mind were "benign" and "malignant."

On the drive home, my mom asked solemnly, "Do you know that if it is malignant, then you have cancer?" Silence filled the car that day, and my house for the next few months. Fear had replaced the joy and laughter that was normal for us during the holiday season. It was the first time I had ever thought of my parents as fragile. My parents, who would do anything to protect me, now seemed powerless. This scared me.

I had the mass removed from my neck on January 30, 1995. The tumor was analyzed, and Dr. Parker, my surgeon, was able to tell me exactly what it was. He said it was a sarcoma—a cancerous tumor that forms around the sheath of a nerve. My tumor had been the size of a tennis ball. In a heartbeat, I went from a carefree, healthy teenager to a questioning patient wondering what would be next.

My doctor and family decided that the best form of treatment would be three months of radiation. So every morning
during the Spring of 1995, my mom and I made the trek to Atlanta. One thing that kept me going was my introductory agriscience class. My teacher always made me laugh and kept me involved. I even remember one morning when he turned off the lights as I walked into class and said, "I just wanted to see if radiation makes you glow."

It was the combination of good humor and support from my teachers, friends and loved ones that helped me to continue as an active freshman. However, I was still fighting a battle with myself. You see, I never wanted charity for being a victim, and I got angry at my friends and family when they would ask how I was doing. I remember sitting in my living room every night reading my Bible, crying, praying and wondering if I was going to die. I would have to crawl under the nearest bed and never come out, but I knew that wouldn't solve anything.

Because of the adversity I faced, I am now a stronger person. If I had to go back and re-write the story of my ninth grade year in high school, I wouldn't change the time I spent in the hospital or in radiation, but I would change the way I reacted to it. For years after getting a clean bill of health, I continued to hurt on the inside. I hadn't opened my heart to the wonderful gifts around me.

Most of you here this morning who know me, even my closest friends, have never heard this whole story. That's because it took me over five years to truly come to terms with what happened. I haven't been able to share this story until today. In fact, I have just become comfortable saying that I am a cancer survivor. If only I had looked around me sooner to see that I was not the only one struggling. It took my battle with cancer to open my heart to realize the gifts in my life.

What caused this change? Well, this year I have grown and come to accept that everyone faces challenges, and we all need time to recover. From members who don't believe in themselves to students who need friends, we have all been through times of trial or hurt. As I met each of you this year, I learned from your strength and acceptance. I now appreciate my past struggles, and I realize that life is precious. Twice this year, I have been asked the question, "If you could share one thing this year with FFA members, what would it be?" It is this—we all have gifts, we just have to open our hearts to receive these blessings.

I think the best way to share this message is to quote my mom. A few months ago, she said, "You never realize how precious life is until you have reason to believe that it may be taken from you." This really hit home for me. Please don't wait for this moment to come in your life, open your eyes to see your gifts.

You may think that the hardest part of having cancer is the surgery or treatment, but really it is the lingering doubt that invades your daily life. You see, after my tumor was removed and I completed the final round of radiation, the fear remained. My worry was fueled by monthly visits to the hospital to see if I was still healthy. I was trapped by the constant wondering. As the years went on, the appointments became less frequent, but I still have to visit once a year.

This past year, I went for my check-up and was again consumed by bad memories and emotions. I'm sure I had a blank stare on my face when I stepped into the hospital elevator two months ago, but I was greeted enthusiastically by a young, bald boy who had obviously been through chemotherapy and looked really sick. I immediately began to feel guilty for frowning, because I wasn't sick anymore. In the short elevator ride, the boy turned to me, smiled and said, "Isn't this a wonderful day?" I wondered how he could be so positive when it seemed his world looked so dim. Though I never found out his name, I have had his image in my mind for several months. This young boy made me smile in the dreary hospital elevators. More importantly, he taught me his secret to happiness. He had found the greatest gift in life which is, ironically, the simple ability to appreciate life. This young boy opened my eyes so that I could see the beauty and gifts around me.

FFA members and guests, the greatest gift in life is not fame, fortune or popularity. The greatest gift is a respect and appreciation for life. Some of you may have experienced a similar health situation or maybe you just moved, lost a friend or loved one or almost had a wreck. Use these eye-opening experiences to see the small gifts you have been given, because there are many of them. For those of you who feel lucky to have not been faced with difficult times, your job is a little harder. Please realize that you, too, can find the greatest gift. Just open your heart and eyes to appreciate every opportunity and moment.

I now know that life is too short, and we all take it for granted. We have many gifts in our lives and we often fail to recognize their value. I now keep my eyes open for small treasures like coloring books, shadow puppets, ice cream, candy, cards from friends, snow angels, rainbows and long phone calls. If you can appreciate all of these gifts too, then you will have found the greatest gift of all.

Life is fragile. Learn to live for each moment. Don't be alarmed if you get hit in the head with a two-by-four every once in a while. My obstacles were a gift from God.

Don't wait for a difficult experience to open your heart and eyes. We are only placed here on earth for a short time, and each moment is one to treasure. I challenge you to do everything you can each day to find the gifts in your life, and to remember these words:

FFA members and guests...

Hold who needs holding. There are people who need to know you care and who value your friendship.

Mend what needs mending. Never leave anything undone. You can make a difference everyday.

Walk what needs walking, though it means an extra mile. Continue your journey no matter what obstacles get in your way.

Pray what needs praying. Stay strong in your faith and hold true to your beliefs. I thank God each day for the blessings and guidance in my life.

Say what needs saying. What do you need to say to those around you today? Is it asking for forgiveness or thanking those who have sacrificed for you?

FFA members and guests, I challenge each of you to keep your eyes open to see gifts and your heart open to receive them. Your greatest gift might be right under your nose. This morning, consider yourself whacked on the side of the head.

We are only here for a little while, and sometimes it is a rough journey. You have the power to grow and appreciate life. Take time to value all of your blessings and small treasures. Reach out to find the greatest gift. Thank you for being one of the gifts in my life, and may God bless each of you.
one voice

I can remember as if it were yesterday, sitting up here for the very first time as a ninth grader. I had chills as I gazed at the sea of blue corduroy. Lasers blazed across the arena, and the crowd went crazy. But I was most impressed by the members who spoke on stage. I couldn’t even say the creed in front of ten people, and they were speaking in front of thousands. They had a voice, and it made a big impact on my life. However, as I sat here listening to them speak, I never realized that my voice, and the voices of thousands sitting around me, could be just as powerful.

One voice, what makes a voice such a powerful thing? It’s not the physical voice that people hear, but it’s the passion, beliefs and convictions that allow us to affect others and make a difference. Martin Luther King Jr.’s famous words “I have a dream” will forever ring in the minds of Americans, because those words represent a life dedicated to helping minorities. Rosa Parks never said a word, but by refusing to allow someone to take away her freedoms and challenging the rule requiring her to sit in the back of the bus, she started a civil rights movement that would change the minds of a country. Helen Keller didn’t have the ability to share her physical voice, but her message of courage and overcoming adversity has been an inspiration to millions. These individuals will forever impact our lives, not because of the actual words that came out of their mouth, but through the life they lived and the message they were so adamant about sharing. These individuals had strong voices, and this year I have discovered that your voice can be just as strong.

Your one voice may not spark a civil rights movement, but it can give others a sense of hope and happiness much like Mandy from California did for me through her cowboy poetry. The words you say may not be remembered by an entire nation, but your voice can make those around you stop and think about what they value—just as A.J. from Oklahoma did late one night as we talked about the things he values in life. Two members shared with me through sign language their story of courage and how they have overcome adversities in their life.

Your one voice may not be heard all over the world, but it can make a difference. Martin Luther King Jr., Helen Keller and Rosa Parks probably never guessed as teenagers that their voice would be heard, but it was. And it’s exciting to know that yours can be as well. This world is in need of people who are willing to let their voices break the silence. If anyone has the right message to share, it’s you.

A voice is so much more than just words, it’s the way we make a difference. All of us need to take the time to figure out what is important to us and develop our voice so that it will reach out and touch the lives of others. Then we must commit to making our life reflect our voice.

Your one voice is a unique gift. Don’t underestimate it’s power. Each day your voice is heard by everyone you meet, and many times you never have to say a word. You could share your voice by smiling at someone when you see them, by giving them a hug or by shaking their hand. Your voice is also conveyed by the way you live your daily life. It’s an expression of the things you love. For some it may be the friends you have or your hobbies such as basketball, rodeo, or riding dirt bikes. Your voice is what you believe. It’s your faith and your values. It’s a reflection of your decisions. Your voice is the impact your life has on the people around you!

Personally, I am a peanut-producing farm boy from the deserts of New Mexico. I love to spend my afternoons riding the sand hills on my dirt bike and spending time with my eight nieces and nephews. I crave good home-cooked enchiladas and love pole vaulting. These things develop a part of who I am, but there is much more to my voice. I believe that there is a bright and exciting future in agriculture, and the FFA will be a big part of it. I believe strongly in my faith, family and friends. I believe in standing up for my convictions and beliefs no matter how tough it is. I believe in you, the 455,000 members in corduroy jackets. These things define my voice. It’s much more than my external appearance or the words that come out of my mouth, it’s what I believe in.

Seventy years ago an agricultural educator from Wisconsin shared his voice. From his beliefs and experiences, Erwin Milton found the words that expressed the voice of the 33 farm boys that founded our organization. If only he could stand on this stage tonight and realize how powerful his one voice was. You might know him as E.M. Tiffany, and the author of the FFA Creed. He understood how important it was to be proud of what you believe in and he expressed that with the powerful words, “I believe.”

E.M. Tiffany chose to express his voice in the form of a creed. What form will your voice take? As you define your voice, what five statements would you place after the words, “I believe”? We now realize that a voice is much more than words. It’s your actions, decisions and opportunity to impact someone’s life. A voice is powerful, and it’s important that we discover what things define our voice.

What is on your mind and in your heart? If you are going to share your life and voice with people everyday it is important that you discover what your message really is. Every once in a while we need to step back and think about what we really believe in, what things we love and what is important in our lives. This isn’t an easy process, and it’s not done overnight. Develop a strong foundation. Instead of waiting for someone else to define who you are, find your own voice and determine the direction of your life.

As I defined my voice, I experienced an exciting, fun-filled adventure. Looking back, I can remember the first time I was asked to do something I didn’t believe in. I am reminded of trying to fit in and the fads I jumped in and out of as well as the times I felt pretty comfortable with who I was. I can look at my life step by step and see how my voice developed.

Early in my life I was an angel living in a house with three older sisters. Ok, so I was a spoiled brat that had to deal with four moms. When all the decisions are made for you, it is pretty simple to define your voice. I strongly disagreed with any type of whippings. The last thing I wanted to do was take a bath and
my hobbies included writing in my sister’s schoolbooks, raising tadpoles in the bath tub and helping dad on the farm.

However, school, friends and an ounce of freedom began to test my voice for the first time. Take a look. To you this may look like an ordinary school picture, but take a closer look. Note the fashionable Nintendo watch that I sport so proudly. At this stage of my life, Mario Brothers and Zelda were my life. I had decided to be an “individual.”

Prepare yourself, this one is a doozy! Yee haw! Welcome to the cowboy version of Marshall. In the seventh grade, everyone wore brush poppers and a cowboy hat. It only seemed appropriate that I do the same. My friends looked so cool in their western apparel, but I just couldn’t get the same look, obviously. I found that it just wasn’t me.

As I developed, I discovered my athletic talents, and they weren’t on the football field. Do I look like a football player to you? I quickly learned to stick with basketball and pole vaulting, the sports I loved. All of these stages bring me to the present.

Today, I realize that my voice is guided by my faith and family. I value my friends like those on my state and national officer teams who support the voice that I share. This year I have found joy in watching members grow and plan to let my voice be heard as I become an agricultural educator.

What are you passionate about? Dig deep within your soul, and put aside all the perceptions and influences of others. Develop your voice, the things you love, the things you stand for, the things you believe in, and then use that as a tool to guide your life.

Okay, so you have figured out what you believe, what you stand for, and that is your voice. But is that where it ends? Every day you must make sure that your life is in line with your voice. Do you live each day so that those you meet are certain of your convictions and beliefs?

The way we live our lives is so much more important than the words that we say. It only takes one person willing to break the silence and stand up for what is right. Every decision you make, conversation you have and things you participate in reflect that voice. It takes courage to allow your voice to be heard, because day in and out you will be tested. Don’t allow yourself to blend in to the things that are popular or easy. Stand strong and share your voice with those around you. Your voice can improve your chapter. It can motivate your peers to get involved. It can serve as an example to others. Your voice can lead those around you away from the negative things that tear people down, and into a life of success, happiness and doing what’s right. Your voice can and will change lives.

I was blessed this year to meet a young man whose voice was amazingly strong. He never had to say a word, but through his actions you could see what really mattered in his life. He loved his family and valued every single day he had with them. His state officer team described Daniel as the rock, foundation and life of their group. He continually lightened the mood with his humor and friendly attitude. Daniel’s number one goal was to start a family and be the best dad that ever lived. Everyone knows Daniel as a person that stood for what was right no matter how hard it sometimes was. He never hesitated to tell you what he believed in, and his actions reflected those beliefs. In this blue and gold jacket, Daniel’s voice gripped my heart as well as thousands of others. Only two short months after Daniel and I became friends, his life ended doing what he loved most, spending time with his brother. I tell this story because even though Daniel can’t put on this jacket and be here in body with us today, his voice still echoes in the hearts of many. Daniel was committed to living a life that was exactly in tune with what he knew was right, what he loved and what was important to him. Daniel showed me that a person’s voice can leave a legacy.

What effect will your voice have on those around you? How will people remember you? Daniel is remembered as someone who stood strong for his beliefs, faith and convictions. As you leave this session, commit to being a person who is willing to stand up and share your voice. This world is full of those who allow their life to be determined by what people say, what is popular or what everyone else is doing. Don’t be one of those people! Be remembered as a rock, a solid foundation that is not easily moved. Don’t be afraid to tell others what you believe in, and be a part of only those things. Dedicate yourself to FFA if that is what you believe in. If you love working with children, agriculture or teaching, put your whole heart into it. Show your friends how much you care by letting them know that there are certain things you don’t want to be a part of. Let your life be a living testament of what you believe, because that is how you share your voice.

This world is in need of something positive. It’s in need of a voice that is willing to stand up for the things that are right, a voice that is powerful and passionate about bettering the world around them. It’s not easy, and it’s going to take some pretty strong and confident hearts. I just happen to know where they can find 455,000 of them.

Many times the people we meet change our lives. This year you have changed my life by sharing your voices. You may feel like just a face in the crowd, but your voice can always be heard. Make a commitment to share that voice with your friends, family, teachers, community and world. Your voice is how you can make the people around you better. The voice you share is what people will remember about you.

Every day and each time you meet someone, participate in something, hang out with friends or talk to your teachers your voice is heard.

Within each blue corduroy jacket is one life that can explain things in a way that only one person can. That will be the one message that changes someone’s life. You have to take the one chance you may have, to make the one choice that isn’t always easy and share your one voice.

Your voice is the impact your life can have on the people around you.

Develop your voice—the things you love, the things you stand for, the things you believe in.

Share your voice. Make who you are speak so loudly that you don’t have to say a word.

Your words may not make you famous, but they will give encouragement and hope to those around you. Your voice may even inspire others to find their own.

All it takes is your one voice.
Model chapters that earn the National Chapter Award exceed standards in student, chapter or community development. These exemplary FFA chapters actively implement the mission and strategies of the organization by seeking opportunities to improve themselves, give back to the community or develop stronger chapters.

The country’s top chapters competed for the three Models of Innovation awards. Students from the two winning chapters received plaques in an on stage ceremony.

**NATIONAL WINNER STUDENT DEVELOPMENT**
**Ravenna FFA Chapter, Nebraska**

The 68 members of the Ravenna FFA Chapter, led by advisor Kent Zeller, participated in a variety of projects throughout the year to enhance student development and encourage leadership. Members attended leadership conferences, conventions and the Leadership Academy. They also traveled to Lincoln, Neb., to visit with Nebraska senators and participated in workshops and mock activities to experience the law making process.

**NATIONAL WINNER CHAPTER DEVELOPMENT and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**
**Perrydale FFA Chapter, Oregon**

Perrydale FFA Chapter’s 78 members, led by advisor Kirk Hutchinson, held an Agriculture "Olympigs" to promote agriculture and leadership skills among members. The event involved more than 300 community members and 75 percent of the student body. For the past 16 years, they have also held a corn feed, which is prepared by the chapter and served to the community. Standards for the chapter development award include increasing chapter membership and participation and improving the financial health of the organization. This chapter has excelled in both.

The Perrydale FFA Chapter also earned the community development award by coordinating progressive projects such as a pancake feed, a canned food and clothing drive and the Oklahoma relief project. The Oklahoma project was organized by the chapter and brought the entire school and community together to provide immediate aid to victims of an Oklahoma tornado.

**THREE STAR**

**ARIZONA:** Gilbert
**ARKANSAS:** Melbourne, Searcy
**CALIFORNIA:** Norco
**CONNECTICUT:** Housatonic Valley
**GEORGIA:** Jackson County
**IDAHO:** Cambrige, Kuna
**ILLINOIS:** Amboy, Chicago Ag Sciences, Cisena Park, Franklin Center, Monticello, Mt. Vemon, Newark, Olney, Seneca, Valmeyer, Warsaw
**INDIANA:** Carroll, Clinton Central, Heritage, Shenandoah, South Adams, Southmont, Tri-County
**IOWA:** Benton Community, Creston, G & G/Tri-Star, Harlan, Mid-Prairie, Monticello, Osceola, St. Angar, Wapsie Valley
**KANSAS:** Abilene, Arkansas City, Chapman
**KENTUCKY:** Apollo, Fulton County, Jessamine County, Meade County, Scott County, Spencer County
**LOUISIANA:** Hathaway
**MARYLAND:** Easton
**MICHIGAN:** Marshall, Perry
**MINNESOTA:** Benson, Forest Lake, Stillwater, USC, Zumbrota-Mazeppa
**MISSISSIPPI:** Carthage
**MISSOURI:** Aurora
**MONTANA:** Bridger, Park, Shields Valley
**NEBRASKA:** Franklin, Freeman, Imperial, Ravenna
**NEW JERSEY:** Allentown, Woodstown
**NEW MEXICO:** Alamogordo
**NORTH DAKOTA:** Garrison, Rugby
**OHIO:** Bowling Green, Cardington, East Clinton, Emlwood, Greenville, Indian Valley, Madison Plains, Miami Trace, New Bremen, Probie Shawnee, River Valley, Talawanda, Versailles, West Muskingum
**OKLAHOMA:** Burlington, Laverne, Ripley
**OREGON:** Perrydale
**PENNSYLVANIA:** Twin Valley, West Snyder
**SOUTH CAROLINA:** Aiken
**SOUTH DAKOTA:** Garretson
**TENNESSEE:** Portland

**TWO STAR**

**ALABAMA:** Enterprise, Eufaula, New Brockton
**ARKANSAS:** Mountain Home Jr., Prairie Grove
**CALIFORNIA:** Arroyo Grande, Easton-Fresco, Fresno Central, Imperial, Jumapa Valley, Lompoc, Quartz Hill, Ripon
**COLORADO:** Arickaree, Eaton, Flagler, Mc Clave, Pueblo County, Woodlin
**CONNECTICUT:** Matabeset, Northwestern Regional
**DELAWARE:** Smyrna, Sussex Central
**FLORIDA:** Colonial, Fort White Middle School, North Marion, Pine Ridge, Suwannee Senior
**GEORGIA:** Colquitt County, Gilmer County, Hutto Middle School, Irwin, Jeff Davis, Miller County, Perry, Worth County Middle School
**HAWAII:** Leilighua (James Dole)
**IDAHO:** Meridian
**ILLINOIS:** Blue Ridge, Burtles, Bushnell-Prairie City, Eastland, Leroy, Liberty, Manteno, Midland, Midwest Central, Mt. Carroll, Oregon, Paxton-Buckley-Loda, Payson, ROWVA, Serena, Somonauk-Leland, Tri Valley Comm, Unity
**INDIANA:** Adams Central, Benton Central, Carroll, Delphi, North Harrison, North Montgomery, Switzerland County, Tippecanoe Valley, Warsaw, Western Boone, Woodlan
**IOWA:** Algona, Bismark, Cascade, Hawkeye, Indianola, Marengo, North Fayette, North Mahaska, Red Oak, Rockwell-Shelby, Sibley-Ocheyedan, Sioux Center, Vinton, West Marshall

**UTAH:** Morgan, Wasatch
**VIRGINIA:** Central, Culpeper County Senior, Laurel Park, Stonewall Jackson, Strasburg, Turner Ashby
**WASHINGTON:** Monroe, Yelm
**WISCONSIN:** Stevens Point, Weyauwega-Fremont
KENTUCKY: Bereckinridge County, Caldwell County, Central Hardin, Daviess, McLean County
LOUISIANA: Breaux Bridge, Fontainebleau, North Central, Oak Grove
MAINE: Presque Isle
MICHIGAN: Bronson, Unionville-Sebewaing
MINNESOTA: Battle Lake, Blue Earth, New Ulm, Perham, Tracy, Upsala
MISSOURI: Albany, Carthage, Clopton, Dadeville, East Newton, Eldon, Eldorado Springs, Logan-Rogersville, Marionville, Monroe City R-1, North Shelby, Salem, Salisbury, Sarcoxie, Strafford, Sweet Springs, Troy, Union, Wellsville
MONTANA: Carter Co., Cascade, Conrad, Flathead
NEBRASKA: Broken Bow, Fullerton, Norfolk, Norris, Pender, Schuyler, Superior, Sutton, Syracuse-Dunbar-Avoca
NEVADA: Ruby Mountain, Silver Sage
NEW JERSEY: North Warren, Penns Grove
NEW MEXICO: Artesia, Goddard, Mesa Vista, Santa Rosa
NEW YORK: Cuba-Rushford, Central, Medina, Pioneer
NORTH CAROLINA: Piedmont, South Rowan
NORTH DAKOTA: Divide County, Finley - Sharon, Lisbon, South Heart
OKLAHOMA: Adair, Carter, Cushing, Durant, Elk City, Grandfield, Hooker, Indianola, Medford, Morris, Roland, Stillwater, Stroud, Tecumseh, Waynoka
PENNSYLVANIA: Conocoqueag/James Buchanan, Manheim, Middletown
SOUTH CAROLINA: Belton-Honea Path, Central, Loris, Manning, McBee, Wagener-Salley
SOUTH DAKOTA: Elkton, McCook Central, Milbank, West Central
TENNESSEE: Anderson County, Bradley Central, Cherokee, East Robertson, Munford, Riverdale
TEXAS: A&M Consolidated, Bowie-Austin, Bryan, Calallen, Clear Brook, Clear Creek, Clear Lake, Cleburne, Columbus, Hartley, Jacksboro, Katy, Kingwood, Klein Forest, Klein Oak, Lewisville, Mansfield, McCullough, Mission, Navasota, Pilot Point, Pleasanton, Quanah, Rockdale, Sanger, Tomball, Weimar
UTAH: Bear River, Grantsville, South Summit, Tooele
VERMONT: Central Vermont
VIRGINIA: Beverley Manor Middle School, Dinwiddie, Faquier, Fort Defiance, James Wood, King William, Northumberland, Sherando, Signal Knob Middle School, Stewart Middle
WASHINGTON: Cathlamet, Elma, Granger, Heritage, Liberty, Mountain View Ritzville, Snohomish, Sumner, Sunnydale, Walla Walla, Wenatchee, White River, Winlock, Zillah
WEST VIRGINIA: Ravenswood, Ripley, Roane County, St. Marys, Tyler, Wirt County
WISCONSIN: Beaver Dam, Big Foot, Bloomer, Clear Lake, Cochrane-Fountain City, Denmark, East Troy, Fort Atkinson, Freedom, Granton, Lodi, Marion, Mauston, Mishicot, Mondovi, Montello, New Auburn, Prairie Farm, Pulaski, Randolph, Spencer, Waupaca, Waupun
WYOMING: Cheyenne, Riverside, Wind River

ARKANSAS: Mountain Home Sr.
CALIFORNIA: Del Norte, Dimbu, Fallbrook, Firebaugh, Fontana, La Puente Valley ROP
COLORADO: Fort Lupton, Springfield, Yuma
FLORIDA: Armwood, Columbia, Coral Reef, Dale City Senior, Lafayette Jr., Lafayette Sr., New Smyrna Beach Middle, Okeechobee Brahman, Ponce de Leon, Suwannee Middle School, Tate Sr., Williston
GEORGIA: Cook, Emanuel County Institute
KANSAS: Linn, Stockton, Wilson
KENTUCKY: Bourbon County, Pendleton County
LOUISIANA: Beau Chene, Grand Lake, Grant, Ruston, Walker
MARYLAND: Caroline, Frederick
MICHIGAN: Allegan County Tech. & Ed Center, Byron, Corunna, Laker, Sanilac, St. Louis
MINNESOTA: Buffalo Lake-Hector, Chaska, Mendota, Nicollet, Randolph, Staples/Morley, Willmar
MISSISSIPPI: Neshoba Central, Nettleton
MISSOURI: Boonville, Bowling Green, Cameron, Gallatin, Glasgow, Nevada, Owensville, South Shelby
NEW MEXICO: Aztec, Clovis, Grants, Hobbs, Morenci, Portales, Roswell, Silver City, Socorro, Taos, Tucumcari, Las Vegas
NEW YORK: Auburn, Bath, Binghamton, Buffalo, Camillus, Canandaigua, Carthage, Cortland, Oswego, Syracuse
NORTH CAROLINA: Bartlett Yancey, Clinton, Eastern Randolph, Forest Hills, North Iredell, North Lenoir, Purnell Swett, Southern Guilford, Sun Valley, West Carteret, West Craven
PENNSYLVANIA: Brookesville, Closter, Couesetts Area, Cumberland Valley, Dover Area, Greenwood, Hans Herr, Penn Manor, Selinsgrove
TENNESSEE: Dyersburg, Gordonville, Johnson County, Lexington, Lincoln County, McMinn County, North Knox, Peabody, Powell Valley, White House
WYOMING: Pine Bluffs

Dr. Larry Case, national FFA advisor, extends a handshake and congratulations to members representing the Chicago Ag Sciences FFA Chapter. This chapter was one of the hundreds recognized through the National Chapter Award program.

ONE STAR

ARKANSAS: Mountain Home Sr.
CALIFORNIA: Del Norte, Dimbu, Fallbrook, Firebaugh, Fontana, La Puente Valley ROP
COLORADO: Fort Lupton, Springfield, Yuma
FLORIDA: Armwood, Columbia, Coral Reef, Dale City Senior, Lafayette Jr., Lafayette Sr., New Smyrna Beach Middle, Okeechobee Brahman, Ponce de Leon, Suwannee Middle School, Tate Sr., Williston
GEORGIA: Cook, Emanuel County Institute
KANSAS: Linn, Stockton, Wilson
KENTUCKY: Bourbon County, Pendleton County
LOUISIANA: Beau Chene, Grand Lake, Grant, Ruston, Walker
MARYLAND: Caroline, Frederick
MICHIGAN: Allegan County Tech. & Ed Center, Byron, Corunna, Laker, Sanilac, St. Louis
MINNESOTA: Buffalo Lake-Hector, Chaska, Mendota, Nicollet, Randolph, Staples/Morley, Willmar
MISSISSIPPI: Neshoba Central, Nettleton
MISSOURI: Boonville, Bowling Green, Cameron, Gallatin, Glasgow, Nevada, Owensville, South Shelby
NEW MEXICO: Aztec, Thoreau
NORTH CAROLINA: Bartlett Yancey, Clinton, Eastern Randolph, Forest Hills, North Iredell, North Lenoir, Purnell Swett, Southern Guilford, Sun Valley, West Carteret, West Craven
PENNSYLVANIA: Brookesville, Closter, Couesetts Area, Cumberland Valley, Dover Area, Greenwood, Hans Herr, Penn Manor, Selinsgrove
TENNESSEE: Dyersburg, Gordonville, Johnson County, Lexington, Lincoln County, McMinn County, North Knox, Peabody, Powell Valley, White House
WYOMING: Pine Bluffs

national chapter awards
States with increases in FFA membership include:

Alaska
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
Florida
Georgia
Illinois
Iowa
Kentucky
Maine
Massachusetts
Michigan
Missouri
Nebraska
New Jersey
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
South Carolina
Tennessee
Texas
Wisconsin
Virgin Islands

Five states were recognized for having 100% FFA membership: California, Colorado, Oklahoma, Ohio and North Dakota. This means that every chapter in each of these states has all their students who are enrolled in agricultural education as FFA members.

A successful program will have quality classroom and laboratory instruction, a leadership and recognition component (FFA) and a career preparation segment (supervised agricultural experience). These characteristics make agricultural education stand out from other programs because of the intracurricular nature of the programs and activities offered to students. Students benefit from the instruction they receive while they apply what they have learned to their career choice.

There are hundreds of other chapters in the country who have 100 percent FFA membership, we pay tribute to you and commend you on a superior job of preparing our youth for tomorrow.

A representative from the California FFA Association happily accepts recognition for achieving an increase in membership. In addition, California was recognized for 100 percent membership.
VIP citations

R. Mack Strickland of West Lafayette, Ind., has worked with the National FFA Agricultural Mechanics Career Development Event for more than 20 years and is now the associate superintendent for the machinery area. As a professor in the Department of Agriculture and Biological Engineering at Purdue University, he has taught more than 75 percent of Indiana’s agriculture teachers.

Paul R. Vaughn has been committed to agricultural education for more than 30 years. He began as an agriculture teacher in New Mexico and most recently served as an agricultural education teacher educator at Texas Tech University. He currently serves as the associate dean of academic affairs at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Phillip B. Winters of Elizabethtown, Ky., has taught agricultural education for 37 years before retiring in 1998 although he continues to contribute his time to improving agricultural education. A recipient of the Honorary American FFA Degree, he most recently served on the Governor’s Task Force for Reinventing Agricultural Education for the Year 2020.

Howard Minig of Parsippany, N.J., was key in developing the relationship between FFA and American Cyanamid Company through his former role as president of Global Agricultural Products. He served on the National FFA Foundation Sponsors’ Board from 1995-1999 and was instrumental in securing a $100,000 gift from American Cyanamid Company for the “I Believe in the Future” capital campaign.

Leslie Olsen of Mayetta, Kan., served as the Kansas State FFA Advisor for 28 years before retiring this year. His vision played a key role in the implementation of numerous new agricultural education programs and FFA chapters across the state of Kansas. He also served on the Kansas FFA Executive Committee and the State Board of Education for 24 years.

Stephen E. Poe of Yuma, Ariz., is a professor in the Department of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering at the University of Arizona and was previously an associate professor at Utah State University. He started working with the agricultural mechanics career development event in 1980 as a graduate student at Purdue University and currently serves as the assistant superintendent of that event.

Gilbert E. Kuretsch of Pleasanton, Texas, served 46 years as an agricultural education instructor and FFA advisor in Pleasanton, Texas, before retiring in 1999. His outstanding instructional program, supervised agricultural experience supervision and personal development led his students to a multitude of honors including at least 113 American Degree recipients. He received the Honorary American Degree in 1971.

William T. Boehm of Cincinnati, Ohio, served as the 1999 National FFA Foundation Sponsors’ Board chairman. During that time, he led the efforts in achieving an all-time fundraising record of over $7.4 million for FFA programs. He currently serves as Vice President-Logistics for the Kroger Company. He was a national FFA officer in 1968 and is the first national officer to return to serve as sponsors’ board chair.

Charles Snyder of Lincoln, Mich., retired in 1999 after serving as an agriscience teacher for 21 years and working as the state FFA project director for 11 years. He was instrumental in starting the Michigan FFA Foundation as well as the creation of a Foundation Board of business and industry leaders. He received the Outstanding Service Award in 1999 from the Michigan Association of Agriscience Educators.

Donald R. Margenthaler of Moline, Ill., is president of the John Deere Foundation and has worked with John Deere for more than 37 years. He has been active in overseeing John Deere’s sponsorship of the farm business management career development event by participating in committee planning and activities, hosting the committee at John Deere Headquarters in Moline and assisting at the national event.

Gilbert E. Kuretsch was one of the ten individuals providing exemplary service to the National FFA Organization who received VIP Citations at the 73rd National FFA Convention.
honorary FFA degrees - FFA supporters

Many people from various backgrounds give unselfishly of themselves on behalf of FFA members. The Honorary American FFA Degree is presented to thank those individuals for their constant support and guidance and mostly for making an impact on the lives of FFA members.

This degree is conferred upon individuals who have rendered outstanding service to help advance agricultural education and the FFA. Degree recipients hold a variety of positions ranging from farmers to principals to business people who may or may not have a background in FFA. These mentors offer counsel and guidance to agricultural education students and provide members with direction to help them further develop their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success.

The Honorary FFA Degree program is designed to honor individuals who have rendered outstanding service to FFA. National FFA Secretary, Jodee Rupel, presents her parents with the degree.

honorary FFA degrees

ALASKA: Fredric Husby, Fairbanks
ARIZONA: Neil Schneider, Phoenix
ARKANSAS: John Humphrey, State University
CALIFORNIA: Luanne Silkwood, O'Neals, John Welty, Fresno
DELAWARE: James Borel, Wilmington
FLORIDA: Gilbert Bowen, Dundee; William Cockrell Sr., Gainesville; Janet Jackson, Lakeland; Jim Johndrow, Ponca City; Ben Mather, Gainesville; Robert Raulerson, Tampa
GEORGIA: Gale Buchanan, Athens; Norman Gay, Hawkinsville; Jerald Taylor, Alma; Howard Turner, Monroe;
IDAHO: Dark Kemphorne, Boise
ILLINOIS: Sally Duckworth, Roanoke; Susan Hodel, Roanoke; Peggy Kaye, Champaign; Carolyn Scott, Rantoul; Penny Wittler, Urbana
INDIANA: Curt Farkhauser, Indianapolis; Bill Fish, Carmel; Charles Hines, Swite City; Delmar Johnson, New Albany; Don Parkhiser, Monticello
IOWA: W. Thomas Phillips, Des Moines
KANSAS: Michael Dikeman, Manhattan; Darrell Smith, Overland Park; Rod Stewart, Washington
KENTUCKY: William Kuegel, Owensboro
MARYLAND: Helen Troxell, Thurmont; Robert Troxell, Jefferson
MICHIGAN: Randy Showerman, East Lansing
MINNESOTA: Paul Aakre, Crookston; Bonnie Bassert, Arden Hills; Robert Bollesen, Thief River Falls
MISSOURI: John Christens, St. Paul; John Hill, Lester Prairie; Phil Johnson, Minneapolis; Pamela Koener, Alden; Jim Ladhe, Hollandale
MISSISSIPPI: Lester Spell Jr., Jackson; Agnes Conrad, Kansas City; Charles Conrad, Kansas City; John Saunders, Jefferson City
NEW HAMPSHIRE: Peter Thomson, Orford
NEW JERSEY: John Grover, Highstown; Desiree Little, Princeton; Carol Shipp, Trenton
NEW MEXICO: Thomas Dormody, Las Cruces
NORTH CAROLINA: Denny Tart, Goldsboro
NORTH DAKOTA: Dale Hildebrand, Valley City; Warren Schlecht, Mandan; Steven Strefe, Fargo
OHIO: Alan Andreani, Alliance; Joanna Kister, Columbus; N.L. (Mac) McCaskin, Columbus; Jimmy Harrel, Elk City; Bill Husted, La Verne
OKLAHOMA: Robert Klubene, Okmulgee
OREGON: Pat Bruce, La Grande
PENNSYLVANIA: Everett Newsweinger, Ephrata
SOUTH CAROLINA: Laurie Lawson, Columbia; Daniel Schussler, Columbia; Nikki Setzler, Columbia
TENNESSEE: James Butler, Martin
TEXAS: Eric Moorehead, Houston; Larry Wright, Dallas
UTAH: John Harrison, Logan
VERMONT: Gail Sanders, Norwich
VIRGINIA: Larkin Phillips, Ashland
WEST VIRGINIA: Roy Cooper, Beckley; John Jones, Elizabeth
WISCONSIN: Kenneth Harter, Oconto Falls
WYOMING: Cody Talbott, Laramie
honorary American FFA degree - agriculture teacher

ALABAMA: Harold Pittman, Smiths Station

CALIFORNIA: Jerry Clark, Templeton; Jerry Delsol, Woodland; Sheila Folan, Florin; George Green, Arbuckle; Richard King, Hanford; Bill Loveridge, Loyalton; Don Martin, Valley Center; Don Miller, Tehachapi; John Ramos, Dixon; Jim Slater, South; Joe Terra, Orestimba; Stan Uchiyama, North Salinas

NEW YORK: James McClay, Greenwich

NORTH CAROLINA: David Cress, South Rowan; William Fouts, Smoky Mountain; Harry Hodges, Plymouth; Ralph Pegram Jr., Southern Nash; James Smith, Polk County; RJ Terrell Jr., Southern Guilford

OKLAHOMA: Martin Adams, Hooker; Larry Liston, Moore; M.L. Lockwood, Roland

OREGON: Kenneth Ball, Creswell; John Fine, Glide

SOUTH CAROLINA: Clark Woods, Hillcrest

TEXAS: J. Barnett, Iraan; Gary Chandler, Quitman; Jerry Dornak, Goliad; Charles Edwards, Lometa; Terry Hausenfluck, Bryan; Donald Henson, Goldthwaite; Craig Ingram, Rivercrest; Michael McMahon, Comfort; Alton Mitchell, Eastland; John C. Saunders, Follett; Ronnie Vineyard, Lampasas; Sue Witt, Gilmer

WISCONSIN: Richard Bockhop, Cambridge

honorary FFA degrees

parents of national officers parents of STAR finalists

Florida: Alice and Arnold Vitelli
Georgia: Ada and Jack Spruill
Indiana: Barbie and Tony Small
Indiana: Miriam and William Ruppel
New Mexico: JoAnna and Wayne Baker
Ohio: Susan and William Shultz

Star in Agribusiness
Illinois: Richard Herring
and Mary Ellen Hagemeyer

Iowa: Roy J. and Carolyn Becker, Sr.

Nebraska: Dennis and Cheri Else

Wisconsin: Jim and Sarah Ambrose

Star Farmer
Nebraska: Robert L. and Vergene M. Kracke

North Dakota: Kelly and Jolene Miller

Tennessee: Levin and Rachel Billings

Wisconsin: Roger and Donna Bark

retiring national FFA board of directors, trustees and consultants

Ronald L. Reische
Robert Terry, Jr.
Jana Register
R.W. Porter
Mac Hodges
outreach efforts

PALS, can hunger & agricultural ambassadors

FFA members from across the country, as well as local schools, participated in the "Can Hunger" food drive to benefit Kentucky Harvest. Their efforts paid off as more than 43,000 pounds of food were collected!

The Partners in Active Learning Support (PALS) conference during national convention brought local elementary students to the fairgrounds to participate in a variety of fun activities. The PALS conference was sponsored by Meijer.

"Living to serve." At national convention, FFA members embody the motto through community outreach programs like the Partners in Active Learning Support (PALS) conference, Agricultural Ambassadors and the "Can Hunger" food drive.

Over 600 FFA members educated and entertained their new "pals," 540 elementary students, through agricultural-related activities. Sixty state officers served as ambassadors to agriculture by visiting fourth-grade classrooms in the Louisville area, making friends and teaching the students about agriculture. More than 43,000 pounds of food, enough to feed Louisville’s hungry for nine days, was collected during the convention.
Some people just can't get enough of FFA. Years after they officially belonged to the organization, many alumni still travel to the national convention and dedicate time and enthusiasm to the thousands of current FFA members. Unlike the National FFA Foundation that donates finances, alumni members volunteer their time and resources. Traditionally, they host silent and live auctions at the national convention. This year, a 2001 Silverado Extended Cab pickup truck was one of the items auctioned.

FFA isn't confined to the borders of the United States. Programs abound that let agriculture students travel internationally to learn about agriculture and other cultures around the world.

FFA Global

Members aged 16 through 24 can travel with the EARTH Tour Seminar, Adventure New Zealand, and the Australia Homestay Program, as well as other short-term programs.

For older FFA members, longer internships and study abroad opportunities exist through United States Embassies for the Foreign Agricultural Service of USDA. Students can also travel to Costa Rica for a month at EARTH College.

The Global Village in the career show at national convention increased awareness for travel and study opportunities through activities and information sessions.
The Distinguished Service Citation was presented at the 73rd National FFA Convention, October 27, to three companies and organizations providing outstanding service and opportunities to the National FFA Organization – Ford Motor Company Fund, Tractor Supply Company (TSC) and Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

Ford Motor Company Fund has been a supporter of the National FFA Foundation for 52 years. Through its partnership with Ford Motor Company and Ford dealers, they are the largest contributor to the National FFA Scholarship Program, providing more than $400,000 in scholarships for the 2000-2001 school year. The Ford Motor Company Fund is also the original sponsor of the National Agriscience Fair program. Education remains a top priority for the Ford Motor Company Fund and is an important part of the company’s legacy of corporate citizenship. Not only does the Ford Motor Company Fund continue to provide sponsorship dollars, but its employees provide insight and direction in the areas of technology, the environment and education for FFA.

Tractor Supply Company is in its 16th year of sponsorship with the National FFA Foundation and has had four executives serve on the Foundation Sponsors’ Board. In addition to investing more than $400,000 during its sponsorship period, TSC helped start the Job Interview Career Development Event, invested in the “I Believe in the Future” capital campaign, started a scholarship endowment and is participating in the convention shopping mall. They have also provided insight for the FFA branding study by providing an industry perspective. TSC has an excellent understanding of agricultural education and works to promote FFA through their stores and employees.

Members of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture have worked for many years to encourage agricultural education and FFA by working closely with the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Secretary of Agriculture. Samuel Hayes and his staff have provided resources, meeting locations, agriculture knowledge, industry insight and overall support for FFA in Pennsylvania on all levels. A collaborative partnership has developed between the Department of Agriculture, Department of Education and FFA that will continue to strengthen agricultural education and FFA throughout the state for many years.

2000 retiring sponsors’ board

Curt Fankhauser  
President & Chief Executive Officer, ffi Corporation  
John R. Hill  
Senior Vice President, Sales, Lester Building Systems  
James L. Irwin  
Vice President, N.A. Agricultural Equipment Sales, Case IH  
Phil Johnson  
President, Colle & McVoy Marketing Company  
James S. Ladle, Ph.D.  
President & Chief Executive Officer, Agri-Growth, Inc.  
Eric L. Moorehead, Ph.D.  
Vice President, Technology, Kellogg Brown & Root, Inc.  
G. Kenneth Mosheneck  
President and Chief Operating Officer, Royster-Clark, Inc.  
Douglas E. Puntke  
Vice President, Merchandising Manager, North American Corn Milling, Cargill  
Darrell J. Smith  
Vice President Agricultural Investments, MetLife
executive council

2000 Chairman
R.W. “Bud” Porter, Retired Senior Vice President, North American Agricultural Marketing, Deere & Company

2001 Chairman - Elect
Lawrence J. Gundrum, Senior Vice President, Operations, Kraft Foods, Inc.

2002 Chairman - Elect
James C. Borel, President, DuPont Crop Protection

Past Chairman (1999)
William T. Boehm, Vice President – Logistics, The Kroger Company

2001 sponsors’ board

Dwight Armstrong Ph.D., President and Chief Operating Officer, Akey, Inc.
Charles M. Berger, President and Chief Operating Officer, The Scotts Company
Mike Blair, Ph.D., Director, Technical Services & New Product Development, Aventis Animal Nutrition

Gerald W. Brase, Senior Vice President, Merchandising & Marketing, Tractor Supply Company
Joseph P. Burke, Vice President, Customer Business Development, Coca-Cola Enterprises, Inc.

Christopher M. Cashman, Senior Director of Product and Business Development, Pfizer Animal Health

Tom Davis, Director of Advertising Sales, Successful Farming

Ted Farnsworth, Chief Executive Officer, farmbid.com
Max A. Fisher, Vice President, Public Relations and Communications, Purina Mills, Inc.

Gary Flickinger, Vice President Manufacturing/Engineering, Dean Foods Company

Kenneth A. Gregersen, Industry Liaison, The National Council for Agricultural Education

Jerry Hardy, Assistant Vice President, Kansas City Service Region, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad

Michael N. Harrell, President & Chief Executive Officer, PNC Bank

Lynn O. Henderson, President & Chief Executive Officer, Doane Agricultural Services Company

Jerry Hillard, Officer – Farmowners/Ag Strategy, Farmland Insurance Companies

Stan J. Howell, Global Leader, Urban Pest Management and North America Trade Area Leader, Dow AgroSciences

Diane D. Knutson, Vice President and General Manager, Agricultural Products – Marketing Transportation, Union Pacific Railroad

Tom Larson, Executive Vice President, Member and Public Affairs, Cenex Harvest States Cooperatives

Karen J. Pedersen, Vice President and Director of Human Resources, Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc.

Dennis M. Plummer, Chief of Staff to the Chief Executive Officer, Monsanto Company

Kreeland Pulliam, Director, Zeneca Ag Products

John C. Rabby, Group Vice President North America, BASF

John Rakestraw, President and Chief Executive Officer, ContiBeef LLC

Stephen L. Rhea, President, Rhea and Kaiser Marketing Communications

Stanley A. Riemann, Executive Vice President and President of Crop Production Division, Farmland Industries, Inc.

Judy Russell, Senior Director, Global Marketing, Communications and Brand Promotion, Case IH

Bruce A. Schertz, President & Chief Executive Officer, Sparks Companies, Inc.

Diane E. Stadlen, Senior Vice President, cmf&z

Bill Waack, Senior Vice President of Merchandising, Advertising and Marketing, Quality Farm and Country Stores, Inc.

Alan Willits, Vice President, U.S. Ag Producer Services, Cargill

David R. Zerfoss, President, Husqvarna North America

15-25-35-50 year sponsors

50 Year Sponsors
Progressive Farmer Magazine - Birmingham, Alabama

35 Year Sponsors
The Scotts Company - Columbus, Ohio
John A. Stearns - Corona Del Mar, California
Universal Lettering - Lima, Ohio
Wrangler - Greensboro, North Carolina

25 Year Sponsors
Archer Daniels Midland Company - Decatur, Illinois
Eldon R. Aupperle - Toulon, Illinois
Bassett Livestock Auction, Inc. - Bassett, Nebraska
Citizens Bank & Trust Company - Big Timber, Montana
Farmers & Merchants State Bank of Pierz - Pierz, Minnesota
Farmers Mutual Hail Insurance Company of Iowa - Des Moines, Iowa
Eros B. Heisey - Lebanon, Pennsylvania
Clarke A. Nelson - Jackson, Wyoming
Quality Farm and Country Stores - Muskegon, Michigan
C. McCheyne Swortzel - Greenville, Virginia
Tyson Foods, Inc. - Springdale, Arkansas
Lu Achilles Wall - McPherson, Kansas

15 Year Sponsors
Ambraco, Inc. - Dubuque, Iowa
American Quarter Horse Association - Amarillo, Texas
Nicholas C. Babson - Chicago, Illinois
Bemis Company Foundation - Minneapolis, Minnesota
Capital Agricultural Property Services, Inc. - Lisle, Illinois
Delta and Pine Land Company - Scott, Mississippi
Delta Inc. of Arkansas - Raleigh, North Carolina
Fimco, Inc. - Sioux City, Iowa
M. Fine & Sons Mfg. Co., Inc. - Louisville, Kentucky
GKN Walterscheid Inc. - Burr Ridge, Illinois
Tom Hennesy - Brentwood, Tennessee
Henry Company - Sagamore Hills, Ohio
John Hillison - Blackburg, Virginia
Virgil L. Kline - Arlington, Virginia
Manna Pro Corporation "The Calf-Manna® Corporation" - Chesterfield, Missouri
David A. Maurer - Carmel, Indiana
Morgan & Myers, Inc. - Jefferson, Wisconsin
Larry and Susan Reese - Quincy, Florida
Mark Rumbold - Speer, Illinois
Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. - Bentonville, Arkansas
Wearhouse, Inc. - Beltsville, Maryland
career show

FFA members packed the 2000 FFA National Agricultural Career Show and made contacts, learned about companies, researched colleges and had fun. Blue corduroy filled the 400,000 square-foot building, which is equivalent to 43 football fields.

This year’s career show brought 362 different companies, universities and organizations to the thousands of FFA members who eagerly participated in games, contests and physical challenges while learning about career opportunities. Booths offered rope-, tree- and rock-climbing; chin-up tests; remote control four-wheel races; and one featured professional rough stock riders on hand to give autographs. Another booth gave students the unique chance to take a timed pit crew challenge and change the tires on a NASCAR stock car. The free information and promotional items—from pencils to hats and food—weighed down FFA members as they left the show, curiosities satisfied for another year.
National FFA convention is one of the few places where students apply to work for free. These giving individuals perform a wide variety of tasks ranging from passing out the daily FFA Today newspaper to helping with security backstage.

"It's an honor to be part of the courtesy corps," said Emily Smith of the Altus FFA Chapter in Oklahoma. "It's a good opportunity to develop leadership qualities, and not many people get to do it."

Courtesy corps members received a certificate and many thanks from staff, members, advisors and convention goers. The exposure to behind-the-scenes happenings and meetings with convention speakers was a bonus to those who helped make convention run smoothly.
In a united effort, the national officers and staff call to order another year of unforgettable memories and experiences. The delegate assembly was sponsored by the City of Louisville.

business

Convention delegates from each state worked diligently to provide direction for future generations of agriculturists as they recommended specific changes for the entire FFA program. Each year, state FFA officers meet at the State Presidents’ Conference in Washington, D.C., and decide on committee assignments for national organization work. These committees came together a few days before convention began to take care of business.

Some changes recommended by the committee on agricultural education trends included creating a new career development event requiring the skills needed to pursue a career in agricultural education. The chapter development activities committee recommended adding a 30-hour community service requirement to the American FFA Degree.

FFA delegates on the communications and public relations committee recommended hosting chat rooms on National FFA Online, which will allow students to exchange ideas and promote learning and friendships.

By the time most members started to arrive in Louisville, the 475 delegates were putting the finishing touches on their committee reports.
ALASKA: Kurt Miller, Homer; Crystal Shumaker.

ALABAMA: Amy Alverson, Munford; Mary Ellen Blackwood, Douglas; Dennis Busby, Kinston; Nikki Hyed, Slocomb; Josh Elliott, W.S. Neal; Daniel Ganus, Leroy; Thomas Hall, Wiley Harper, Section; Michael Hotcomb, Fauhopoe; Alyson Johnson, Geraldine; Heath Moorehead, GW Long; Rocky Oliver, Sand Rock; Grace Smith, Billingsley; Lybby Stiefel, Trimayne Wilson, Billingsley; Brad Woodward, Comer.

ARKANSAS: Kim Cooper, Valley Springs; Renee Durham; Josh Garner, Melbourne; Chase Groves, Lewsville; Andrea Hanks, Cabot; Travis Hiltom, Melbourne; Chase Hilton, Mena; Jeremy Holmes, West Fork; Brittiany McAdams-Taylor; Jay Minus, Mountainburg; Holly Nance, Cabot; Jeff Pratt, Melbourne; Kristyn Woodrow, Cabot.

ARIZONA: Jamie Gibble; Holly Mann; Deni Parrish; Ryan Peterson, Amelopoe; Brittiny Schmidt.

CALIFORNIA: Charles Abe, Strathmore; Jeff Alves, Galt; Melisa Augusto, Lemoore; Dennis Blackman, Norte Vista; Seth Brown, Tulare; Zachary Bush, Grass Valley-Nevada Union; Robby Christian, Santa Ynez; Kyle Comely, Fortuna; Amanda Courtney, Grass Valley-Nevada Union; Anne Diener, Riverdale; Heather Fultz, Ripon; Maria Giacomini, Bishop; Neil Gibson, Lavarne Valley; Amanda Gipe, Merced; Autumn Glick, Yucaipa; Mark Gonzales, Fresno-Central; Scott Grumbles, Kingsburg Tracy Haas, Elk Grove; Meghan Harrah, Grass Valley-Bear River; Jonnalee Henderson, Association; Jennifer Hooper, Littlerock; Wednesday Kirven, Visalia-Redwood; Julie Kondoff, Association; Carolina Machado, Merced-Golden Valley; Megan McNerdy, Fallbrook; Jonathan Moon, Fresno-Central; Douglas Paasch, Association; Ashley Parker, Elk Grove; Sammy Ramirez, Association; Stacy Robinson, Newman; Rebecca Roland, El Capitan; Tracy Schohr, Gridley; Beth Sepeina, Hanford; Jenna Smith, Fresno; Meghan Soderstrom, San Luis; Ruben Soliz, Rosemond; Terry Ann Sturgeon, Indio; Michelle Therom, Fullerton; Pedro Trinidad, Laton; Anna Villabobos, Fallbrook; Valerie Walker, Grass Valley-Nevada Union; Ashley Walters, Fortuna; Jacob Wenger, Modesto; Dana White, Eureka.

COLORADO: Erin Arnold; Nicholas Colglazier, Holyoke; Cody Kalous, Eason; Christy Thomas, Caliche; Jessica Unruh, Cheyenne Wells.

CONNECTICUT: Emily Anderson, Northwestern; Jennifer Pilsbury, New Britain; Hilary Sope, Storrs Regional.

DELAWARE: Jeffrey Billings, C.R.; Marian Handlin, Middletown; Holly Scuse.

FLORIDA: Diana Alamo, Miami; Jack Candler, Miami; Will Dakes, Lake Butler; Josh Griffen, Durant; Barrett Keene, Plant City; Patrick LeFils, Pine Ridge; Chad Lyons, Lafayette; Tate Mikell, Williston; Caetia Painoef, Charlotte; Ryan Rimmer, Lake Gibson; Amanda Thomas, Lake Butler; Kristen Wood, Miami; Leanne York Tate.

GEORGIA: April Campbell, Ocoee; Stephanie Cleary, Tift County; Caci Cook, Johnson County; AJ Davis, Irwin County; Gregory Ellis, Murray County; Elaine Galliard, West Laurens; Charles Gay Jr., ECT; Miranda Greeson, Cook County; Ken Hendrix, Franklin County; Emily Howard, Morgan County; Ben Kennedy, Tattnall County; Georgia Matthew, McCauchan North Hall; Cali Meeks, Coffee County; Abby Spruell, Jackson County; Emily Tyson, Portal; Jody Underwood, ECI.

HAWAII: Melvin Jadulang, Kohala High; Pomai Roberts.

ILLINOIS: Leon Adams, Mt. Vemon; Danice Borders, Gibson City-Melvin-Sibley; Colleen Dickinson, Amboy; Jenny Frisnche, Athens; Sharon Glazerer, Waterloo; Jennifer Herman, Taylorville; Trevor Kipers, Iniquious West; Mike Martin, Camp Point; Rene Metter, Highland; Danny Miller, Farmington; Alexis Pope, Lincolnwood; Sarah Swenson, Normal; Ted Ulke, Southeastern; Steve Woodrum.

INDIANA: Amir Faghiti; Kim Hall; Katrissa Hedrick; Kyle Kohlhegen; Renselser; Erin Menchhofer, Switz; Justin Moneyheffer, Warsaw; Liza Moore, Whitko; Josh Perry; Rajean Robertson, Northwestern.

KANSAS: Lori Alexander, MC/V; Emily Bergkamp, Chad Bontrager, Orrin Holle; J.J. Jones, Atwood; Sarah Lind.

KENTUCKY: Marc Adams, Lee County; Amanda Applegate, Fleming; Chad Aull, Ronza Chellis, Lone Oak; Brandon Davis, Green; Brent Fields, Butler; Curtis Jones, Marion; Whitney LeGrand, Gallatin; Josh Long, Madison; Kevin Murphy, Adair; Julie F'Pool, Brandon Swonder, Shelby; Joe Stuitt, LaRae.

LOUISIANA: Beaufor Bergeron, Rayne; Allison Brackhaus, Hattaway; Ashley Gerber, Iota; Keith Gates, Lakeview; Bart Hime, St.; Amant; Kevin Mooreau, Northwest; Morani Redditt, Grand Lake; Nikki Roach, Ruston; K.C. Toops, Thibodaux.

MACHUSETTS: Kristin Cerato; Timothy Sidley; Robin Wager.

MARYLAND: Bill Callahan, Eastern; David Eaves, Walkerville; Amy Jo HASHMAN, Ligonore.

MAINE: Michael Ireland II; Darcy Walsh, Mars Hill.

MICHIGAN: Dan Kiesling, Perry-Morrice; Kurt Purtee, Alcona; Megan Schweider, North Huron; Glenn Stener, Pewamo-Westphalia; Pam Swihart, Vicksburg; Aftalmme Hardy, North Adams.

MINNESOTA: Sarah Clemenson, Zumbrota; Keelee Ladle, Albert Lea; Ida Mathys, Lakeview; Michael Miron, Forest Lake; Jeff Nelson, Albert Lea; Kris Poirier, Mountainview; Erik Resl, Cannon Falls; Tim Uhlenkamp, Staples Molley.

MISSOURI: Lane Baldwin, Mountain Grove; Jake Davis, Seneca; Brad Detting, Farmington; Jessi Eckler, North Shelby; Krissie HIll; Hermann; Molly Kajumann, Troy; Chris Myers, Houston; Lorin Price, Hannah Scharff, Norborne; Duna Stanley, King City; Robert Swart, Doniphan; Jeff Stone, Climax; Joe Worthington, Dadeville, Chad Yarnall, Cusavi.

MISSISSIPPI: Patrick Black, Weir; Brian Dunn, Neshaka Central; Emily Kilpatrick, South Panola; Angie Neil, nettleton; Justin Sullivan, Mize; Ryan McBride, South Panola.

MONTANA: Joel Farkell, Conrad; Amanda McClure, Missoula; John Meyer, Stevensville; Kody Tacke, Park.

NORTH CAROLINA: Tiffany Baulcom, Piedmont; Josh Davenport; Stephen Emerson, Croaton; Rebecca Irvine, East Carteret; Phillip McLain, North Edenton; Hollb Nordan, South Johnston; Jennifer Richardson, Kim Russell, Southwest; Andy VintCann, South Rowan; Melissa Weston, Clayton; Brittany Whitmore, Rosman; Erin Worley, Princeton.

NORTH DAKOTA: Zachary Hall; Amber Haugland, Divide County; Carie Kannel, Jennifer Larson, Taja Spohla; Joshua Swanson; Justin Swanson.

NEBRASKA: Kyle Arganbright, Valentine; Kyle Brand, Seward; Tony Jensen, Elgin; Amanda Merttens, Medicine Valley; Heather Myers, Cenura; Melinda Sonderup, Fullerton.

NEW HAMPSHIRE: Christyna Brady, Piskerton; Abbie D'Agnoe; Elizabeth Latch.

NEW JERSEY: Michael Butler; Patty Fanella, Newton; Christopher Nardi; Penn Grove; Christine Chan, Allentown.

NEW MEXICO: Epafano Baldonado; Mary Beth Bond; Britt Carter; Raylyn Dunlap, Lovington; Amber Jones, Belen.
NEVADA: Joe Buffington, Diamond Mountain; Jessica McKay, Ruby Mountain; Andrea Paris, Diamond Mountain

NEW YORK: David Bader, Greenville; Anthony Cronk, South Jefferson; Jason Hatzko, Greenville; Jocelyn Smith, Medina; Susie Vaughan, Penn Yan

OHIO: Jennifer Barton, Greenfield Mc Cain; Alicia Dickerhoof, Marlinton; Mindy Dye, Lynchburg; Jacqueline Faust, River Valley; Rachael Garrett, Westfall; Adam Lohny, Preble Shawnee; Kenington Loose, Moreoville; Sarah Meyers, Preble; Shari Moffett, Marysville; Mikal Nolan, Western; Cole Sanford, Jessica Sharp, Scott Tedrick, Harrison Central; John Torres, Pettitville; Julie Tyson, Hillsdale

OKLAHOMA: Mike Albert, Beaver; Dusty Burchfield, Fairview; AJ Butler, Reydon; Cody Chaloner, Hinton; Derrick Davies, Fletcher; Kinny Efurd, Eucla; Elisha Henderson, Tuttle; Brian Jerman, Amber Pocaset, Jamie Johnson, Wyandotte; Elizabeth Kinney, Mooieland; Waylon McKinney, Coalgate; Derek Mitchell, Empire; Jake Peters, Tecasus; James Roller, Clinton; Brady Sidwell, Timberlake; Casey Smith, Medford; Shaw Sparks, Buffalo Valley; Blayne Spencer, Chickasha; Jodi Stephens, Bristow; James Wells, Stroud

OREGON: Kjer Ames, Jen Bodnar, Bonanza; Julien Dennis Bowns, Adrian; Kellie King, Kirk Maq, Kevin Richards

PENNSYLVANIA: Lisa Allen, Wilmington; Andrew Finchbaugh, Eastern; Heidi Good, West Snyder; Michael Livingston, Conrad-Weiser; Jimmy Mullen, Solanco; Kristen Pfeiffer, Derry; Tony Rosh, Dover; Jennifer Whiteman, Cumberland Valley; Jennifer Zanman, Closter

PUERTO RICO: Juan Alvarez, Omar Alveaer, SU Caquuma Franckes Jordan; Joel Ramos, Salto; Alfonso Santiago

RHODE ISLAND: Cheri Beaulais; Andrew Kettle

SOUTH CAROLINA: Blake Berry, Hilcrest; Zane Bryant, Kimberly Coggins; Franklin Davis, Brann's Neck; Christopher Harrington, Manning; Jeffrey Whisenhunt, Edisto

SOUTH DAKOTA: Sarah Anderson, Tri Valley; Brian Cooper; Clay Edwards; Andrea Klein; Zach Rada, Scotland

TENNESSEE: Emily Britton, Lincoln; Travis Crisp, Braden Fletcher, Brighton; Joseph Greene; Gary Jenkins, Riverside; Glenn LaFollete, South Greene; READY Lewis, Munford; Landon Lingerfelt, Landon Loveall, Beth May, White House; Crystal Reynolds; Jason Scarles, Beech

TEXAS: Casey Hogan, Arlington-Martin; Lora Weishun, Columbus; Dustin Akin, Cedar Park; Kasey Bowman, Jim Ned; Cody Bullock, Krum; Clay Cade, Rotan; Davis Clark, Wes Cooper, Olney; Travis Cotton, Boiling; Russell Coufal, Troy; Sarah Dowdy, Henriette; Lacey Durham, Kress; Kynbrely Edds, Central Heights; Russell Farrow, Sinton; Meagan Fenley, Hudson; Lance Frazee, Lubbock Cooper; Onica Garza, Edinburg; North; Erin Grazier, Tulio-Midway; Kelly Green, Harmony; Kendall Jenkins, Franklin; Matthew Kenpen, Someret; Dustin Kinder, Livingston; Mae; Laas, Yoakum; Erin Lawler, Devine; TJ Lewis, Anson; Brad Mabry, Weatherford; Jason McClure, Caney Creek; Chelsea McDonald, James Madison; Katy McLaughlin, Chillcotte; Jackie Milander, Midlothian; Lindsay Milligan, Decatur; Justin Mitchell, Winnboro; Cody Mize, Malcon; Brandon Nelson, Chapel Hill; Ben Pigg, Valley; Shannon Redwine, Lubbookie; Julie Rice, Perrin; Tate Rosensbush, Glen Rose; Ann Marie Sael, Lamesa; Timothy Sandles, Madisonville; Bright Scott, Fairfield; Trista Stirling, Fredericksburg; Paul Terrell, Sherman; Kurtis Thomas, Padadena; Dustin Warren, Dumas; Halle Webb-Jones, Odessa; Melissa Westbook, New Waverly; Byran Yates, Harlingen-South; Danyon Young, Minnola

UTAH: Leslie Bohman, Terry Distan, Kristan Jo Gribb, Sky View; Rebekah Krause, Morgan; Amy Willrutt, Pine View

VIRGINIA: Renee Bruchon, Leslie Funkbouse, Jonathan Heishman, Johann Kocs, Austin Lineberry, Becky Mellott, Beth Stover, Turner Ashley, Andy Wierman; Adam Wampler

VIRGIN ISLANDS: Damaso Rivera; Alma Joseph

VERMONT: Harold Deering, Middlebury; Keven Taylor, Central

WASHINGTON: Teresa Blanch, Chehal; Brian Faw, Quincy; Carrie Hart, Odesa; Brent Roberts, Prairie; Jessica Sachs, Eastmont; Craig Shindler, Rosalia; Justin Stone, Prairie; Becky Wallace, Yelm

WISCONSIN: Jocelyn Becker, Rick Henningfeld, East Troy; Tara Herbst, Black Hawk; Ann Jarek, Bouchon; Becky Kyles, Green Bay Preble; Beth Lautenberg, Alma Center Lincoln; Michelle Meier, Lodi; Cortney Peissig, Colby; Nikki Petersen Clear Lake, Mary Paschinski, Sun Prairie; Matthew Reinders; Adam Weling, Fall Creek; Jeremy Wilson, Monello, Jon Woolever, WOnesvoc-Center; Jeff Zweifel, Juda

WEST VIRGINIA: Jason Dalymple, St. Mary's; Glendoria Halfos-Mount, Cabell-Millard; Traci Krutke, Greenbrier; Michael Monroe, Cameron, Julie Wilkins, Vada Zinn

WYOMING: Janet Barr, Ryan Ford, Cheyenne; Seth Heinert, Devil's Tower; Lisa Nelson

Delegates diligently take notes during a business session and brainstorm ways to improve the FFA experience for thousands of members. Specialized committees were formed to debate serious matters and report back to the general session.
agricultural education trends

We recommend:

Teacher Trends
1. Create a new career development event (CDE) that would require the skills needed for a career in agricultural education. This CDE could include writing a lesson plan, presentation skills incorporating technology and solving a practical classroom situation.
2. Support the implementation of teacher aides, student teachers and alumni participation within the classroom, as well as the development of programs that would establish upper classmen internships and student laboratory assistants.
3. Encourage state agriculture teacher associations, in collaboration with state FFA associations, to promote in-service programs stressing the use of upcoming technologies, such as Internet courses, PowerPoint, and CD-ROM presentations and mentoring programs for agricultural educators utilizing retired teachers.
4. Encourage the National Council for Agricultural Education to continue offering teaching materials via CD-ROM and/or the Internet. Request that the National Council for Agricultural Education work with business leaders and partners to create educational field trips and learning experiences for agricultural education teachers.

Agricultural Education in Diverse Environments
1. Incorporate sensitivity training for students, teachers and state staff into all programs, workshops and curricula, without making it a focus area.
3. Develop a national media campaign that showcases the diversity of students and programming within agricultural education.
4. Highlight the diversity of supervised agricultural experience (SAE) opportunities through publications, websites and other marketing tools.
5. Incorporate cultural awareness highlights and stories in "FFA New Horizons" and the FFA website.

FFA and The New Mission and Vision of Agricultural Education
1. Develop training at leadership conferences for state officers such as BLAST Off, specifically designed to enable state officers to present and promote agricultural education and FFA at state administration conferences. It would also be adaptable so that state officers can then train regional, district or sub-district officers at events such as state leadership school in order that individual follow-up at local levels may be accomplished.
2. Develop a database to be included on the World Wide Web and in the annual mail out grant programs that FFA chapters could utilize to promote agricultural education/FFA literacy.
3. Include, in the chapter resource guide, the benefits of establishing a partnership with a business/industry (e.g., public relations, career shadowing, etc.) and tips for effectively promoting agricultural education and FFA literacy.
4. Develop a National FFA Scholars Program that recognizes high academic students (e.g., top 10%, valedictorians, etc.) on a local level to promote agricultural education and FFA to the general public.

Agriculture and Academic Standards
1. Create an accreditation program that recognizes outstanding agricultural education programs based on FFA, instruction and SAE that is nationally recognized by secondary and post-secondary institutions and industry for the purpose of ensuring a nationwide quality standards base for agricultural education.
2. Further develop the National FFA Organization's nationwide publicity highlighting the academic achievement of FFA members and programs. Utilize national media (magazines, national paper and national TV) and interactive websites to highlight science and technology that FFA incorporates into its program.

Respectfully Submitted:
Dustin Kinder, TX (Chair)
Lorin Price, MO (Vice Chair)
Leon Adams, IL
Blake Berry, SC
Clay Cade, TX
Wes Cooper, TX
Abbie D'Agnese, NH
Nick Davis, ID
Brandon Davis, KY
Brandon Fletcher, TN
Heather Fultz, CA
Jamie Goble, AZ
Scott Grumbles, CA
Attalee Hardy, MI
Amy Jo Harshman, MD
Glenoria Hatfield-Mount, WV
Karissa Hedrick, IN
Kristie Hill, MO
Michael Huston, IA
Jamie Johnson, OK
Michael Livingston, PA
Jason McClure, TX
Matthew McCutcheon, GA
Megan McRenoydls, CA
Kurt Miller, AK
Holly Nance, AR
Angie Neal, MS
Jake Peters, OK
Ben Pugg, TX
Morami Redditt, LA
Kevin Richards, OR
Kim Russell, NC
Holly Scuse, DE
Jessica Sharp, OH
Grace Smith, AL
Justin Stone, WA
Beth Stover, VA
Scott Tedrick, OH
Amanda Thomas, FL
Emily Tyson, GA
Anna Villalobos, CA
Jeffrey Whisenhunt, SC
Brad Woodward, AL
Jon Woolever, WI
Vada Zinn, WV
career success activities

We Recommend:

FFA Degrees
*1. Split the American FFA Degree ceremony into two sessions or spread out the ceremony throughout the entire convention.
2. Remove the dollar sign that is currently in place of the factor $3.33 in the American FFA Degree application.
3. Define the type of work hours that should be included in order to earn the American FFA Degree.

Proficiency Awards
*1. Create a new proficiency award based on agricultural leadership, agricultural awareness and agricultural education. The award may include but not limited to, teacher assistance, agricultural safety, agricultural demonstrations, agriculture related community service or committee work.
2. Feature proficiencies in *FFA New Horizons* to increase awareness.
3. Provide proficiency applications online. Suggestions for the format include:
   a. One to two paragraphs describing the award.
   b. One picture of past winner and a short description of his/her project.
   c. Applications should be available to print on-line but not to submit.

Career Development Events
*1. Develop and send a survey to the National FFA Career Development Event (CDE) participants and viewers concerning the value of guided tours and have a future committee make a permanent decision based on those results.
2. Start the process of adding a Veterinary Technology CDE based upon the Connecticut proposal.
3. Continue developing workshops for advisors involving career development events.
4. Create more career-oriented incentives such as business tours for national CDE winners.

Supervised Agricultural Experiences
*1. Promote the diversity and importance of supervised agricultural experiences (SAEs) by the following suggestions:
   a. Create an SAE interest survey modeled after a career finder on the website.
   b. Use a national media outlet such as Channel One to promote SAEs.
   c. Showcase SAEs in *FFA New Horizons*.
2. Implement an SAE fair in the form of a career fair in conjunction with corporate or agricultural organization sponsors. The following are further suggestions:
   a. Reward scholarships or monies toward national convention trips for students in various SAE areas.
   b. Winners will be selected through an essay contest describing the SAE.
   c. Winners will display the winning projects at the FFA National Agricultural Career Show in conjunction with their sponsors.
3. Provide national grants to local chapters to encourage the development of chapter-wide SAEs such as chapter farms or cooperatives.

Respectfully Submitted:

Sarah Meyers, OH (Chair)
Jeff Alves, CA
David Bader, NY
Janet Barr, WY
Beau Bergeron, LA
Teresa Blanco, WA
Leslie Bohman, UT
Danie Borders, IL
Renee Brochon, VA
Nikki Byrd, AL
Rae Gunn Dunlap, NM
Meagan Fenley, TX
Elaina Gaillard, GA
Racheal Garrett, OH
Erlin Grazier, TX
Josh Griffin, FL
Tracy Haas, CA
Kim Hall, IN
Casey Hogan, TX
Jeremy Holmes, AR
Jolene Keim, MN
Wednesday Kirven, CA
Brady Lewis, TN
Sarah Lind, KS
Chris Mays, MO
Waylon McKinney, OK
Rene Mettler, IL
Cody Mize, TX
Heather Myers, NE
Brandon Nelson, TX
Caela Pauhoff, FL
Ryan Peterson, AZ
Maryn Ptaschinski, WI
Zach Rada, SD
Adianez Santiago, PR
Brian Santistevan, NV
Nikki Schae, IA
Tracy Schohr, CA
Ruben Soliz, CA
Joe Stults, KY
Joshua Swanson, ND
Paul Terrell, TX
Shannon Tubbs, AR
Melissa Weston, NC
Jeremy Wilson, WI
Jennifer Zimmerman, PA

committee reports

FFA members had the opportunity to talk with representatives from different types of industry at the career show.

Meats evaluation is just one of the 21 career development events in which members can compete at the national level.
chapter development activities

We recommend:

Power of Service - (Community Service)
*1. Make an additional requirement of 30 hours of community service for the American FFA Degree.
2. Provide a booth at the FFA National Agricultural Career Show to showcase opportunities for community service while at the national convention (e.g., Habitat for Humanity or teaching at local elementary schools), as well as provide literature about community service options for chapters.
3. Offer grants and scholarships to the top ten chapters in the National Chapter Award program from the community development category. Post service-related scholarships in FFA New Horizons magazine and the FFA webpage.

Focus the Power - (Assisting the Advisor)
*1. Provide a Chapter Advisor Arsenal to motivate chapter advisors to help assist their advisors in organization.
2. Provide a database for any high school graduates who may volunteer to help FFA chapters.
3. Provide a video containing information to help motivate and organize chapter officers.

Power of Diversity - (Creating a Diverse Organization)
*1. Create a workshop geared towards increasing counselor/teacher involvement in the FFA presented to the state officers at BLAST Off in their arsenal. The state officers would then pass this information on to chapter officers, who will deliver it to the intended audience.
2. Provide incentives for chapters and for counselors who show the most involvement in the organization.
3. Develop and implement a mass advertising campaign geared towards all age groups, utilizing TV, radio, written publications and the Internet to promote the diversity in the FFA organization.

Empower by Example - (Participation in PALS)
*1. Develop non-competitive national award recognition for the PALS program involvement: gold, silver and bronze awards based on the number of years of involvement. Use a short application and award a plaque with ‘stick-ons’ for every year, to be sent from the National FFA Organization.
2. Create a new, fun video of high quality to promote the PALS program.
3. Prepare a workshop that explains the PALS program, to be given on the state level by national officers and state officers to use while traveling.
4. Expand the FFA website to include more basic information about the PALS program and how to get involved.

Delegates took time out of their committee meetings to have some fun!
communications and public relations

We recommend:

National FFA Online
*1. Provide an online supplement to the FFA New Horizons Magazine.
2. Establish a list-serve to directly contact members about nationally sponsored programs and events.
3. Incorporate a search function into wwwffa.org for easier navigation of the site.
4. Establish links to sponsors and supporting post-secondary educational institutions.
5. Provide an optional online roster program and registration program for national events.
6. Place a privacy statement on the FFA website.

Technology
*1. Utilize direct e-mail to FFA members to notify them of opportunities such as conferences, FFA programs and scholarship opportunities.
2. Make available for each FFA member the opportunity to create his or her own personal profile in order to receive information on specific topics chosen by the member. Furthermore, we recommend the National FFA to do its utmost to protect the privacy of the members and security of the data collected.
3. Online creations of a chapter profile that will allow chapters to register online and receive direct e-mails and promotions.
4. Create chat rooms on National FFA Online that will allow for the exchange of ideas, common interests and would promote learning and friendships.
5. Make extensive use of online surveys that will allow for direct input by members and advisors to better develop programs, products and services to meet members' and advisors' needs and interests.
6. Dedicate time and interest to further development of two technologies such as Internet Service and e-mail provider and affinity/associate benefits.

Public Relations on a Local Level
*1. Develop a program on CD-ROM capable of upgrades via the FFA website. The program should include: sample press releases, secretary's minutes, treasurer's reports, Program of Activities (POA), thank you formats, invitation formats and a section on positive FFA public relations with all partners, parents, administration and businesses.
2. Create FFA promotional TV and radio commercials for education and national use. The commercials should include FFA facts, history and general promotions.
3. Create a series of posters, brochures and inserts that explain FFA history, jacket, emblem and colors that can be displayed throughout schools and communities.

With more than 90 tour sites, 362 career show exhibitors, a huge shopping mall and nine convention sessions, FFA members were not at a loss for things to do.

committee reports

Respectfully submitted:

Dustin Clark, TX (Chair)  Matthew Reinders, WI (Vice Chair)
Lisa Allen, PA          Kjer Ames, OR
Cheri Beauvais, RI     Patrick Black, MS
Mary Beth Bond, NM     Seth Brown, CA
Joe Buffington, NV     Ronza Dee Childress, KY
Harold Deering, VT     Will Dukes, FL
Susannah Eddy, IA     Russell Farrow, TX
Lacey Fraze, TX        Sharon Glanten, IL
Chase Groves, AR       Amber Haugland, ND
Jonnaeke Henderson, CA Orrin Holle, KS
Emily Howard, GA       Elizabeth Kinney, OK
Traci Kinkel, WV       Beth Laufenberg, WI
Austin Lineberry, VA   Liza Moore, IN
Kevin Moreau, LA      Jessica Sachs, WA
Timothy Siddles, TX    Hannah Scharff, MO
Hilary Sepe, CT        Crystal Shumaker, AK
Jenna Smith, CA        Blayne Spencer, OK
Glenn Sterne, MI       Robert Stewart, MO
Tim Uhlke, MN          Andy VonCanon, NC
Jacob Wenger, CA       Amy Willtrout, UT
Tremayne Wilson, AL    Kristyn Woodrow, AR

Public Relations on a State Level
*1. Throughout the state officer leadership continuum provide more training in the areas of workshop development, diversity training, media relations, partner development, foundation cooperation, etc. This can be accomplished through the use of national staff as well as state human resources.
2. Provide literature to state officers geared toward membership recruitment containing facts, statistics and information pertaining to the effectiveness of the mission statement.
3. Provide literature to state officers geared toward partner development containing facts, statistics and information pertaining to the effectiveness of the mission statement.
4. Unite state officers and state staff on the national website through a list in conjunction with message boards to exchange new ideas and gain assistance and advice.
5. Announce and advertise a National FFA Community Service Day supported by prominent individuals in each state from diverse cultures.
committee reports

Respectfully submitted:

Kody Tacke, MT (Chair)
Brian Faw, WA (Vice Chair)
Marc Adams, KY
Juan Alverez, PR
Epifanio Baldonado, NM
Lane Baldwin, MO
Tiffany Bowcom, NC
Kylie Brand, NE
Zane Bryant, SC
Dennis Bushy, AL
Stephanie Cleary, GA
Nicholas Colgazier, CO
Anne Marie Diener, CA
Randy Dreher, ID
Amir Foghin, IN
Ashley Garber, LA
Neil Gibson, CA
Mark Gonzales, CA
Kelly Green, TX
Marlan Handlin, DE
Andrea Hankins, AR
Christopher Harrington, SC
Elisha Henderson, OK
Ken Hendrix, GA
Brian Jerman, OK
Erin Lawler, TX
Landon Lingerfelt, TN
Kirk Maag, OR
Carolina Machado, CA
Holly Mann, AZ
Chelsea McDonalld, TX
Danny Miller, IL
Jeff Nelson, MN
Mikal Nolan, OH
Alexis Pope, IL
Tony Resh, PA
Pomai Roberts, HI
Brent Roberts, WA
Tim Sidley, MA
Trista Stehling, TX
Michelle Thomer, CA
John Torres, OH
Ted Ulke, IL
Susie Vaughan, NY
Darcy Walsh, ME
Melissa Westbrook, TX
Kristen Wood, FL

FFA publications

We recommend:

FFA New Horizons
1. That the FFA New Horizons magazine create a 50th anniversary issue to show the progress of FFA through a comparison style edition incorporating FFA and its advancements, now and then pictures and "what's hot and what's not."
2. The FFA New Horizons magazine include the following:
   a. Agricultural Issues
   b. Ask the Owl (Question and Answer)
   c. Where are they now?
   d. This day in history ...
   e. Personal, Chapter and Career Development
3. The FFA New Horizons magazine display the FFA's enthusiasm and maturity of FFA cohesively with the magazine through more active colors, a more mature color scheme layout, as well as display the FFA vision through diversity in people, states and groups.
4. The mission statement is more visible on the content page in the FFA New Horizons magazine.

FFA Website
1. To make information on the FFA webpages more accessible, as well as eye appealing with better search engines, indexes, navigation bars, graphics, current updates, etc.
2. Provide a link from the National FFA website to a translated Spanish version.
3. Provide more material on the website regarding national/international experiences including pictures, contact information, interviews and trips.
4. Make article information from the FFA New Horizons magazine accessible on the national website.
5. Have general education information for teachers and students with career opportunity information.
6. Provide a resource center for members to access information, links to other websites and agricultural issues.

FFA Manual/Handbook
1. To add non-constitutional officer parts (historian, chaplain, parliamentarian and student advisor) for opening ceremonies to the Official FFA Manual.
2. To clarify and improve the Operational Chart on page 29 of the Official FFA Manual.
3. To update the FFA Student Handbook every three years.
4. To promote the Local Program Success Guide by making it available to colleges for agricultural education material and to stress the importance of its use.
5. That the LPS guide themes with an option to purchase a binder.
6. That the National FFA endorse the LPS guide in the newsletter, FFA Advisors Making A Difference.

New Ideas
1. To create a page on the National FFA Organization webpages dedicated to a list of agriculture institutions for continuing education categorized by state.
2. Create a database of scholarships available for students enrolled in agricultural education.
3. Promote a link on the website to connect students to a college search engine.

Extra! Extra! Read all about it. These FFA members stayed abreast of convention happenings by reading the daily newspaper, FFA Today. The newspaper was sponsored by The Courier-Journal, Lexington Herald Leader and Landmark Communications.
leadership and personal development

We Recommend:

Healthy Lifestyles
1. Maintain the Body and Soul website in connection with wwwffa.org. Have it include links to various positive prevention and information websites where students can search for information about the five categories of a healthy lifestyle.
2. Continue the programs in Made For Excellence (MFE), Advanced Leadership Development Conference (ALD), Experiencing Discovery, Growth and Excellence (EDGE), and Washington Leadership Conference (WLC) that promote healthy lifestyles.

Community Involvement
1. National FFA Organization establish one day as a National Community Service Day in which chapters nationwide serve their communities. Also, we would like to challenge other youth leadership organizations to participate. We request that this is promoted through national media sources.
2. National FFA Organization develop a program focused on senior citizens to develop a relationship with the community and encourage youth interaction with senior citizens (eg. similar to PALS).
3. FFA New Horizons highlight a chapter or individual member for outstanding community service. We would like to call it “Spotlighting Service;” chapters or members would be selected based on an article, submitted by members, describing their community service.

Global Education and Experience
1. Develop task force to update the global agriculture curriculum and promote infusion into state curriculums.
2. Utilize new technology, such as CD-ROMs, develop new and updated videos and update the website with more information on global opportunities as well as adding a list of previous participants who are willing to present workshops on global experiences.
3. FFA global staff place a strong emphasis on developing and promoting a regional agricultural exchange program.
4. National FFA develops an international agriculture proficiency area.

Diversity
1. The National FFA Organization continue to promote FFA by teaching state staff about programs and initiatives and encouraging state staff to pass the information on to local levels; including school administration and chapter officers.
2. The National FFA staff provide a session for state officers during BLAST Off training them how to better inform their state on how to relate to school administrations and the public about the opportunities and diversity available in the FFA.
3. The National FFA staff provides updated information in the form of fliers, pamphlets, CD-ROMs, videos, etc., in order to have information available to each state to carry the information down to each chapter, as desired.

Respectfully Submitted:

LJ. Jones, KS (Chair)  Jeffer Pratt, AR (Vice Chair)  Omar Alvarez, PR
Emily Britton, TX  April Campbell, GA  Brittn Carter, NM
Christine Chin, NJ  Jake Davis, MO  Alicia Dickerhood, OH
Brian Dunn, NS  Lacey Durham, TX  Josh Elliott, AL
Gregory Ellis, GA  Joel Farkell, MT  Josh Garner, AR
Amanda Gipe, CA  Zachery Hall, ND  Jonathon Heishman, VA
Ginger Janieck, ID  Ann Jarek, WI  Alyson Johnson, AL
Curtis Jones, NY  Kellie King, OR  Kyle Kohlhagen, IN
Kellie Laddie, MN  Patrick Lefils, FL  TJ Lewis, TX
Beth May, TN  Lisa Nelson, NY  Douglas Paasch, CA
Julie Ppool, KY  Shannan Redwine, TX  Stacy Robinson, CA
Cole Sanford, OH  Brady Sidwell, OK  Case Smith, OK
Heidi Stearns, CT  Jared Stewart, IA  Sarah Swenson, IL
Keven Taylor, VT  Chrissy Thomas, CO  K.C. Toups, LA
Dustin Warren, TX  Ashley Waters, CA  Adam Weling, WI
Julie Wilkins, WV  Erin Worley, NC

committee reports
We recommend:

Customer Relations
1. Sell jackets with minor imperfections for a discounted price.
3. Publicize incentives for ordering from catalog (e.g. free shipping for a certain unit, coupons in catalog).
4. Have an answering machine for after-hours ordering.
5. Offer a poster for advertising catalog in agricultural classrooms.
6. Insert official dress page in both catalogs.

Marketing Strategies
1. Increase awareness of merchandise by utilizing the FFA New Horizons magazine featuring new items and sale items that can be ordered out of the catalog and the online store.
2. Send out promotions via postal mail and electronic mail highlighting items of seasonal interest.
3. Increase case of ordering by promoting the 1-800 number for orders and catalog requests and making available printable order forms from the online store.
4. Hold fashion show to enhance visual promotions of FFA merchandise at national convention.
5. Send promotional information highlighting special items in all outgoing orders.

Internet Store Evaluation
1. Develop a new layout that is more visually appealing by including new and more colors, more animation and showing products with thumbnails. Include FFA facts and trivia on webpages as a scavenger hunt through the store to find the answers to trivia questions.
2. Upgrade security on restricted items such as FFA degree pins, retiring plaques, proficiency award pins, CDE pins, etc.
3. Include a measurementchart for apparel.
4. Include quantities for banquet supplies.
5. Accept payments for orders by personal checks.
6. Include a printable order form.
7. Have more promotion of sales via posters and announcements on websites.
8. More promotions and updates on sales through e-mail.

Product Development
1. Possibly send catalog in early spring to enable chapters and advisors to see and purchase the newest products for banquets, new officer teams and the upcoming school year.
2. Send Graduation/Christmas gift flyer in late fall with:
   a. More Color Selection for Graduation Sashes with Emblems
   b. Thank You Cards/Announcements (Can Be Personalized)
   c. Emblem for Top of Graduation Caps
   d. FFA Class Rings
   e. Gift Items
      1. Watches
      2. Gift Certificates
      3. Dorm Items (Bedding, Towels, Etc.)
   f. Director's Chairs
3. Send separate flyer directly to state associations targeting specifically state officers. This will include:
   a. Full Official Dress
   b. Novelties Items (Inexpensive & Fun Giveaways)
   c. Easels
   d. Flip Charts
   e. Casual Business Wear w/Personalization Available
   f. Posters
   g. Stickers
   h. Thank You Cards w/Personalization Available
   i. Business Cards w/Personalization Available
   k. Arsenal Books w/questions, mixers, workshop ideas, etc.
   l. Planners/Notebooks/Organizers

Respectfully submitted:

A. J. Beller, OK (Chair)
Lisa Alexander, KS
Jeff Billings, DE
A. J. Davis, GA
John Garschwant, ID
Thomas Hall, AL
Evan Herbst, WI
Kathleen Houston, NC
Matthew Kempton, PA
Mac Lass, TX
Ryan McBride, MS
Derek Mitchell, OK
Michael Moore, WV
Ashley Parker, CA
Jeff Stone, MO
Valerie Walker, CA

Jesse Ulrich, IA (Vice Chair)
Kyle Argiby, NE
Kristina Jaramillo, MA
Brent Fields, KY
Dotta Gates, LA
Kiley Harper, AL
Tim Hills, LA
Andrea Klein, SD
Fred Mabry, TX
Tate Mikkel, FL
Shari Moffett, OH
Christopher Naudit, NJ
Josh Perry, IN
Sedric Trutzbach, ID
Danny Young, TX

Mike Albert, OK
Joy Becker, WI
Kimberly Coggins, SC
Leslie Funkhouser, WA
Maria Giacomini, CA
Rick Hemmingsfeld, WI
Jason Huntley, NY
Cody Kalon, CO
Trevor Knapp, IL
Ida Matthus, MN
Jay Minas, AR
Jonathan Moon, CA
Rocky Oliver, AL
Megan Schoeller, MI
Jody Underwood, GA

m. Pens/Pencils
n. Bulk Candy
o. Briefcases
p. Memorable Thank You Gifts
q. Luggage
r. Compact Discs Including Songs Associated With FFA for Workshops, Camps, etc.

4. Products available to be viewed and purchased at state and national conventions and conferences.
   a. Fan Items (Big Foam Fingers, Clappers, etc.)
   b. Shirts w/Motivational & Leadership Quotes
   c. Spare Official Dress Items
   d. FFA Playing Cards
   e. Caps
   f. FFA Foam Antenna Toppers
   g. FFA Air Fresheners
   h. Picture Frames
   i. Photo Albums
   j. Cell Phone Covers
   k. FFA Beanie Babies
   l. Commemorative Christmas Ornaments (Convention, Year, etc.)
   m. FFA Hacky Sacks
   n. Pre-paid FFA Phone Cards
   o. Rearview Mirror Decorations
   p. Stick Shift Covers
   q. Pedal Decals
   r. FFA Golf Balls
   s. FFA Sunglasses
   t. Posters/Signs

5. New Catalog Products
   a. More Long-Sleeve T-shirts
   b. Shirts w/Motivational & Leadership Quotes
   c. Expand Windpant Selection
   d. Bedding and Window Dressing
   e. FFA Collector Tins (Filled with Candy, Popcorn, etc.)
   f. Travel Coffee Mugs
   g. Tailored Skirts
   h. Name-Brand Sponsored Clothing (Chevy, Ford, Dodge, Columbia, Levi, Wrangler, Carhartt, Quicksilver, Roxy, Cinch, Cruel Girl, Coke, Pepsi, Nike, Adidas, etc.)
   i. Area/District/Region/Federation Pins to Recognize Those Officers. There Isn't a Pin Between Chapter Degree/Office and State Degree.
   j. FFA Playing Cards
   k. Customized Picture Calendars w/Important FFA Dates and Deadlines
   l. Jogging Pants
   m. FFA Bean Bag Chairs
   n. Large Duffel/Laundry Bags
   o. Logo Golf Balls
   p. Pop Tarts in Shape of FFA Emblem
   q. More Silver Jewelry
   r. Tote Bags
   s. Picture Frames (Formal and Inexpensive
   t. Work Wear, Gloves
   u. Christmas Ornaments
   v. Bungee/Parachute/Cargo Pants
   w. Flip-flop Sandals
   x. Stocking Caps
   y. Camouflage Clothing (Blue & Gold, Regular)
   z. Directors Chairs w/Embroidered Logo
aa. Spotlight Covers w/Emblem Shapes, Letters, etc. for Banquets, Conventions
bb. Floor Mats
c. Outdoor Equipment
dd. Fishing Tackle
e. Walkman
ff. Animal Print Clothing
gg. Taxidermy Mounting Plaques
hh. FFA Beanie Babies/Dolls
ii. Playmate Coolers

72
Respectfully submitted:

Brad Hames, IA (Chair)
Josh Davenport, NC (Vice Chair)
Kasey Bowman, TX
Dusty Burchfield, OK
Bill Callahan, MD
Jack Chandler, FL
Sarah Clemenson, MN
Kyle Conley, CA
Kim Cooper, AL
Amanda Courtney, CA
Anthony Cronk, NY
Sarah Dowdy, TX
Mindy Dye, OH
Clay Edwards, SD
Kinya Efurd, OK
Andrew Flinchbaugh, PA
Jenny Fritzche, IL
Charles Gay Jr., GA
Michael Holcomb, AL
Molly Kaimann, MO
Emily Kilpatrick, MS
Julie Kondoff, CA
Glen LaFollette, TN
Beth Latuch, NH
Remington Loose, OH
Amanda McClure, MT
Michelle Meier, WI
Jackie Milander, TX
Lindsay Milligan, TX
Betsy Ratashak, IA
Julie Rice, TX
Nikki Roach, LA
Rajean Robertson, IN
Craig Shinoler, WA
Brandon Sowder, KY
Shawn Sparks, OK
Taya Spelhaug, ND
Terry Sturgeon, CA
Jessica Unruh, CO
Robin Wager, MA
Andy Wakeman, VA
Leanne York, FL

We recommend:

After Commencement
*1. Form a task force to investigate the value of Collegiate FFA and possible partnerships with other post-secondary organizations.
2. Modify the official procedure for chartering a chapter to include Collegiate FFA
3. Publish an official Collegiate FFA manual that will outline the structure of the organization.

Agriculture Teacher Supply
*1. Evaluate the use, awareness and distribution of the Local Program Success system.
2. Encourage each state to send in audios and visuals of two outstanding agriculture teachers to be shown prior to the sessions at national convention.
3. Send informational brochures to high school administrators and counselors to inform them of the opportunities available in the agricultural industry and the FFA
4. Include local media information in all applications so that news releases can be sent directly to newspapers.

Benefits for Members
*1. Develop personal experience packages for first year members that show the diversity of member's experiences and list all CDEs, programs and career choices.
2. Send promotional videos to each FFA chapter emphasizing real-life, hands-on experiences afforded through FFA activities.
3. Create career development events (CDEs) that expand the opportunities for participation of a more diverse FFA membership.

Leadership Pin
*1. Explore the rationale for having a leadership activity pin.
2. Explore the possibility of having a Washington Leadership Conference (WLC) pin through surveys of WLC and State Presidents' Conference (SPC) participants.

The National Association of Farm Broadcasters (NAFB) set up shop in the career show and interviewed hundreds of FFA students who shared their convention experiences with parents and friends back home. This year, over 50 farm broadcasters attended the national convention.
national FFA convention

We recommend:

Expanding The Influence
1. a) Produce an air broadcasted clip of national FFA convention on Channel One, which given the rapid advancement of technology, many schools would be able to show as a series in the classroom.
b) Through use of the Internet, have pre-approved FFA members contribute their personal accounts of national FFA convention on live web camera (audo and visual).
2. Submit informative advertisements and articles to magazines that are nationally publicized other than general agriculture magazines (Time, ESPN, Seventeen).
   a) Address news stations in the Louisville area prior to national convention informing them about competitions, events and other highlights that would inform the public on leadership and the FFA versus solely entertainment at the convention.
3. After surveying students and members across the grounds of KFEC at the 73rd National FFA Convention, it was found that the following resources need more utilization to widen the impact of convention: newspapers, radios, videotaped highlights and website information for chapters.
4. Allow national winners to use scholarship winnings to travel abroad as ambassadors for our organization.

Attendance And Participation
1. Use a lower stage to enable delegates to observe the activities on the stage, as well as see the other delegates.
2. Provide more "upbeat" music prior to session in order to set the mood for the session.

committee reports

3. Make members aware of workshops and tours available through articles in the FFA New Horizons magazine. Include biographical and other information on presenters and workshops, as well as tour details.
4. To make workshop information more visible to members, use different colored paper for the workshop sessions in the guidebook.
5. Advertise workshops throughout the convention using posters, flyers and walking advertisements (sandwich boards).
6. Have national officers/workshop presenters mention workshops during all sessions and encourage all members to attend, or show video clips of the workshops to give the members an idea of the excitement of the workshops.

Attendee Conduct
1. Create a more detailed conduct agreement detailing the rules for tobacco use, proper official dress and the FFA code of ethics that will be mandatory for all convention participants.
2. Install closed circuit television cameras around the FFA shopping mall and career show in order to prevent theft and vandalism.
3. Explore new ways to ensure that everyone wear proper official dress to convention sessions and required career development events (e.g. courtesy corp checks, advisor memos, posters with pictures, etcetera).
4. Have more security guards and volunteers to patrol the fair grounds to monitor and prevent tobacco use, theft and vandalism.
5. Send a flyer to states and advisors when they register for convention. The flyer should explain the FFA code of ethics and the proper official dress as outlined in the FFA manual and notify advisors of their responsibility to monitor the conduct of students at convention.
6. Place more trash cans around the fairgrounds and have fountains [in front of building] running to prevent litter.
7. Have staff empty trash cans more frequently.

The Educational Experience
1. Provide for more workshops to be available at the national convention, especially on Wednesday and Saturday.
2. Currently, only 33% of the members in attendance have the opportunity to attend the workshops due to the capacity limitations.
3. Provide more publicity regarding workshops including, making announcements during convention sessions, making announcements at the career show and providing personal assistance to members for finding workshops.
4. Encourage teachers to require students to attend at least one workshop during their visit to the national convention.
5. Offer a separate prize drawing for members who attend workshops and participate in completing the career development event (CDE) passport booklet.
Members interacted with industry representatives during a dinner function. The relationship of members to partners, such as business and industry, are vital to the success of the chapter.

committee reports

partner development

We recommend:

Awareness
1. Implement a required partner development component for the National Chapter Award.
2. Develop a nationwide partner network encompassing local, state and national support groups.
3. Create a promotional booklet to describe partner development that is similar to the Chapter Innovators Guide.
4. Develop presentation materials to be distributed among agricultural education instructors for the purpose of presenting partner development to students as well as partners.

Benefiting Partners
1. Prepare a workbook for school counselors and administrators to show the importance of the FFA and their partnership with the organization.
2. Do an intensive study that highlights the careers that FFA members choose to pursue and publish this information in a brochure to be sent to all prospective partners.
3. Declare a National FFA Partner appreciation day and send an informative packet of suggestions sharing ideas for showing appreciation.
4. Create a chapter presentation packet including a PowerPoint program, promotional brochures, national information and suggestions for personalizing the presentation to promote the FFA and its partners.

Community Involvement
1. Create a commercial promoting the FFA and its partners by focusing on the organization’s leadership and community service.
2. Develop an exciting, vibrant publication that highlights all levels of activity for current and potential partners. Work with state staff to include a state insert in this publication.
3. Add a Partner Development Award similar to the National Chapter Award for national recognition of partners.
4. Develop a partner start-up packet for chapters, including information about starting, maintaining and strengthening partnerships. Also provide ideas for showing appreciation to current partners from business and industry, civic organizations, churches, youth organizations and leadership organizations.

Teacher Support
1. To develop an award for new teachers with criteria based on impact, improvement and growth. Students complete the application and winners are recognized at national convention.
2. To develop an informational CD-ROM to be sent to school guidance counselors about the career opportunities in agriculture for students involved in the FFA.
3. To provide more agricultural education scholarships for FFA members as well as encourage business partners to award internships to these individuals.
4. To provide information and guidelines for an agricultural educator mentoring program to be conducted by an agricultural education affiliate.

Respectfully submitted:

Julie Tyson, OH (Chair)
Dan Kiedling, MI (Vice Chair)
Charles Abee, CA
Amy Altvater, IL
Sarah Anderson, SD
Emily Bergkamp, KS
J.D. Bowns, OR
Cody Bullock, TX
Cody Chaloner, OK
John Compton, LA
Caci Cook, GA
Travis Cotton, TX
Franklin Davis, SC
Renee Durham, AR
Patty Fanella, NJ
Jacqueline Farst, OH
Daniel Ganus, AL
Onica Garza, TX
Kristan Jo Gibbs, UT
Autumn Glock, CA
Travis Hartley, AR
Melvin Jadulang, HI
Kendall Jenkins, TX
Tony Jensen, NE
Ben Kennedy, GA
Carrie Knell, ND
Stefan Knudsen, IA
Johanna Kocsis, VA
Becky Kyles, WI
Adam Lohrey, OH
Josh Long, KY
Mike Martin, IL
Justin Moneyheffer, IN
Bobbi Nordan, NC
Kris Poirier, MN
Sammy Ramirez, CA
Crystal Reynolds, TN
Jennifer Richardson, NC
Ryan Rimmer, FL
Rebecca Roland, CA
James Roller, OK
Britney Schmidt, AZ
Dana Staley, MO
Justin Sullivan, MI
Kurtis Thomas, TX
Jennifer Whitman, PA
Steve Woodrum, IL
Chad Yarnall, MO
Jeff Zweifel, WI
program of activities

We recommend:
*1. Scheduling time for committee meeting room preparation and meetings between the chair, vice-chair and co-chairs.
2. E-mail notification from the national staff about the supplies available for the preparation of the rooms.
3. Have a meeting for the chairs at state State Presidents' Conference (SPC) to inform them of the supplies that will be provided by the national staff.
4. Insert a pad of notepaper in the back of the chairman's notebook for note taking.
5. Have the last regular scheduled meeting right after lunch instead of a break between the two events.
6. Inform the delegates of some of the reasoning behind the questions they will be discussing in their sub-committee.

Respectfully Submitted:

Chad Aull, KY (Chair)
Julie Tyson, OH (Vice Chair)
A.J. Butler, OK
Dustin Clark, TX
Brian Cooper, SD
Brad Hammes, IA
J.J. Jones, KS
Dustin Kinder, TX
Sarah Myers, OH
Kody Tacke, MT
committee reports

Students never forget how FFA touched their lives as evident by this sign posted on a van window.

The nominating committee took a break from their tough job of determining the new national officer team to have some fun.

auditing

Auditing:

We recommend:
1. Accepting the audit as a clean audit and as presented.
2. Keeping the National FFA dues at the current amount of $5 for the 2001-2002 year.

Respectfully submitted:

Jesse Ulrich, IA (Chair)
Jeff Pratt, AR (Secretary)
Teresa Blanco, WA
Joshua Davenport, NC
Brian Faw, WA
Dan Kiesling, MI
Lorin Price, MO
Matthew Reinders, WI
Lybbi Stiefel, AL
Pam Swihart, MI

nominating

We, the Nominating Committee, have given careful and deliberate consideration to all applicants running for a national office. The committee nominates the following slate of candidates to the delegates at the 73rd National FFA Convention to serve as national officers for the year 2000-2001.

Vice President Central Region: Doug Kueker, Sweet Springs, Missouri
Vice President Eastern Region: Katy Poth, Pickerington, Ohio
Vice President Southern Region: Ronnie Simmons, Webster, Florida
Vice President Western Region: Angela Browning, Grass Valley, California
National Secretary: Jennifer Edwards, Gadsden, Alabama
National President: Trent McKnight, Throckmorton, Texas

Respectfully submitted:

Tim Hammerich, CA (Chair)
Mark Jewell, MN (Vice Chair)
Dane Dugan, MT
Laura Grove, VA
Lindsey Land, FL
Joel McKie, GA
Marty Tatman, WY
Brittany Whitmire, NC
Robyn Yule, NE
2000-2001 national FFA officer team

Trent McKnight  
President  
301 Martin Street  
Throckmorton, TX 76483  
Age: 21  
Chapter: Throckmorton FFA Chapter  
Enterprise: beef and sheep production  
FFA Awards: star chapter farmer, grand champion lamb at the Houston and San Antonio Livestock Show & Rodeos  
College and Major: Oklahoma State University, junior, majoring in agricultural economics  
Career Goal: ranching and rural banking

Jennifer Edwards  
Secretary  
51 Boatfield Lane  
Gadsden, AL 35901  
Age: 20  
Chapter: Gaston FFA Chapter  
Enterprise: market lamb and fruit and vegetable production  
FFA Awards: national FFA scholarship recipient, state livestock evaluation career development event winner, area public speaking career development event winner  
College and Major: Auburn University, junior, agricultural economics and German  
Career Goal: agricultural sales and marketing with an international agribusiness

Katy Poth  
Eastern Region Vice President  
6385 Reynoldsburg-Baltimore Road  
Pickerington, OH 43147  
Age: 19  
Chapter: Liberty Union FFA Chapter  
Enterprise: fruit, vegetable and forage production  
FFA Awards: national extemporaneous public speaking fourth place winner, state poultry judging winner, gold-rated state reporter, state creed speaking fourth place winner  
College and Major: The Ohio State University, sophomore, agricultural communications  
Career Goal: agricultural journalism and public relations

Doug Kueker  
Central Region Vice President  
Rt. 2, Box 62  
Sweet Springs, MO 65351  
Age: 21  
Chapter: Sweet Springs FFA Chapter  
Enterprise: beef production placement  
FFA Awards: star chapter greenhand, area beef production placement proficiency award winner, national FFA scholarship recipient  
College and Major: University of Missouri-Columbia, junior, agricultural education  
Career Goal: middle school and high school agriculture teacher

Ronnie Simmons  
Southern Region Vice President  
7997 SR 50  
Webster, FL 33597  
Age: 21  
Chapter: South Sumter FFA Chapter  
Enterprise: swine production, nursery operations and agricultural sales and service  
FFA Awards: state prepared public speaking and parliamentary procedure runner-up, star chapter greenhand and farmer, outstanding tenth and eleventh grader  
College and Major: Lake-Sumter Community College, sophomore, agricultural education  
Career Goal: agriculture teacher or agribusiness

Angela Browning  
Western Region Vice President  
10082 Dana Court  
Grass Valley, CA 95949  
Age: 19  
Chapter: Bear River FFA Chapter  
Enterprise: swine production and horse management  
FFA Awards: national livestock judging fourth place winner, gold national parliamentary procedure chairman, state discussion meet champion  
College and Major: California Polytechnic State University, freshman, agricultural education and agricultural business and communications minor  
Career Goal: agriculture teacher
Looavull.  
Luhvul.  
Lewisville.  
Looaville.  
Looeyville.  

Greater  
Louisville  

Your Kind of Place  
Any Way You Say It

The 2000 National FFA Convention PROCEEDINGS was printed by

publisherspress

as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.
National FFA Convention Dates 2001-2005

October 24-27, 2001
October 30-November 2, 2002
October 29-November 1, 2003
October 27-30, 2004
October 26-29, 2005

The National FFA Organization affirms its belief in the value of all human beings and seeks diversity in its membership, leadership and staff. The Proceedings was prepared and published by the National FFA Organization in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education as a service to state and local agricultural education agencies.

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.

© 2001 National FFA Organization