

UPDATE

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DATES TO REMEMBER

January

5-21	International Leadership Seminar for State Officers
31	Risk Management Essay submissions due, FFA Center

February

5-8	National Agriculture Education Inservice, Indianapolis
15	Scholarship Applications due, FFA Center

March

10-13	National Postsecondary Agricultural Student Organization (PAS) Conference, Green Bay, Wis.
15	T-shirt design submissions due, FFA Center

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FFA

NLCSO dates and locations announced: Dates and locations for the 2004 round of National Leadership Conferences for State Officers are complete. The following are the confirmed dates and locations for this coming summer: Wyoming - June 20-23; Louisiana - June 20-24; Nebraska - June 22-25; Kentucky - June 28-July 1; New York - June 27-July 1; Washington - June 28-30; Arizona - July 4-9; North Carolina - July 6-9; Virginia - Aug. 2-6. More information on NLCSO will be available in coming months. For questions regarding location details please contact the state staff in the respective states listed above. For questions specific to program content, national FFA officers, or NLCSO contact Andy Armbruster, aarmbruster@ffa.org. National Leadership Conference for State Officers is sponsored by Ariat International, International Truck and Engine, Intervet, Wayne Farms LLC, Wrangler, KRAFT Inc., ADM Inc. and Monsanto as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

Membership update: Membership information received at the FFA Center through Dec. 15 totals more than 201,000 members, or 43% of the total membership last year. More rosters are coming in all the time. The Membership team wants to sincerely thank every state for the dedication and support that have helped put this process ahead of schedule.

The top states according to percent of membership submitted as compared to last year's state total (as of Dec. 15, 2003) are:

Online States

Illinois - 90%
Ohio - 84%

Excel Template States

South Dakota - 90%
Texas - 89%

FFA Week materials available online: 2004 FFA Week materials - including logos, ad slicks, official proclamations, public service announcements and fully customizable news releases - are available at <http://www.ffa.org/programs/ffaweek/index.html>.

Annual Maintenance on ffa.org: A little housekeeping is necessary to keep a large website running effectively. During the month of January, the FFA Web Team will be performing annual maintenance on ffa.org. As a visitor to the site, you should not encounter any problems, but you may experience a momentary page delay or be occasionally redirected to a page that has been moved. Please bear with us as we update the site and make the necessary behind-the-scenes adjustments to make sure it continues to serve your needs.

Dates for State Presidents' Conference announced: The dates for State Presidents' Conference in 2004 have been announced. SPC will be held on July 20-24 in Washington, D.C. Please contact Seth Derner, sderner@ffa.org, or Tiffany Sanderson, tsanderson@ffa.org, if you have any questions.

State FFA Officer Web pages to be released in February: Several web pages featuring articles, tools and resources to support and enrich a state FFA officer's year of service will soon be available at www.ffa.org. The pages will be organized into four sections - Speeches and Workshops; Team Effectiveness; Personal Effectiveness and Agriculture Information. Officers and state leaders can expect to find feature articles, updated monthly, along with downloadable documents for reference and planning purposes. Expect to learn more about what these pages will offer at the Ag Ed Inservice in February.

For questions regarding this program please contact Doug Kueker, dkueker@ffa.org. The State FFA Officer web pages are sponsored through generous support from Dow Agrosiences Inc. as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

Enter the 2004 Risk Management Writing Contest: FFA members can win an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., when they enter the 2004 Risk Management Writing Contest! Encourage your members to write a personal essay of no less than 1,000 words on the topic of risk management strategies used in a Supervised Agricultural Experience Program (SAE) and send it to the National FFA Center. Students should analyze the risks involved in their SAE, describe their risk management strategies and indicate which "tools" were used to minimize risk and how they were applied.

All entries must be postmarked by Jan. 31, 2004. Ten lucky winners and their advisors will receive an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., where they will meet with top U.S. Department of Agriculture officials and tour our nation's capital. A resource guide and contest rules was mailed to all chapters in December; contest information and last year's winning essays are posted at ffa.org. If you have questions, or would like a copy of the Risk Management Essay Contest materials sent to FFA advisors, contact the Risk Management Writing Contest Program Coordinator by e-mailing riskmanagement@ffa.org.

This contest is offered by the National FFA Organization in cooperation with the National Council for Agricultural Education and with funding from the Risk Management Agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

National officer training experience state named: The Georgia FFA Association has been selected to host the 2003-04 through 2005-06 National FFA Officer teams for the annual National Officer Training Experience. This year's event is scheduled for Jan. 5-9. The Georgia FFA Association has arranged for chapter visits, school assemblies, meetings with government officials and media interviews as an introduction for the officers to their year of service. Contact Tiffany Sanderson, tsanderson@ffa.org, for more information.

2004 National FFA Officer international experience program: On Jan. 27, the National FFA Officers will embark on a 10-day journey to Japan, where they hope to gain new perspectives on global agriculture and international relations. The officers will visit Japanese farms, tour food industry facilities and talk with top executives from Mitsui & Co. Ltd., a company that facilitates international trading of food products, textiles, and machinery. There will also be opportunities to look beyond the business side of Japanese agriculture, when the officers spend two nights with a host family and go to an agricultural high school to share ideas and experiences with members of FFAs sister organization, FFJ (Future Farmers of Japan). The trip is sponsored by Mitsui & Co. (U.S.A. Inc.) Look for updates about the officer's trip in upcoming FFA publications and on ffa.org.

Washington Leadership Conference: Start planning your trip to D.C.! The dates for this year's conference are: June 1-6, June 8-13, June 15-20, June 22-27, July 6-11 and July 13-18. Prices for the conference have increased and are as follows: Student package \$550, Advisor double \$585, Advisor single \$780, Advisor Guest \$975, Room-only package, \$475. This year's conference will consist of high levels of service learning, mentoring and volunteerism strategies, problem solving skills, relationship building skills and character development. The FFA premier leadership conference is shaping up to be the best yet! There will be a chapter mailing in late February complete with a registration form. For more information e-mail wlc@ffa.org or call 317-802-4312.

Summer internship opportunity at the National FFA Center this summer: The National FFA Organization will be offering an internship opportunity for an experienced teacher to work with SAE based awards and activities this summer. Please encourage interested teachers to check the job posting on the website or to review the advertisement in the February and March issues of "Advisors, Making A Difference". Applications for the position are due postmarked by April 1. Contact Rosalie Hunsinger, rhunsinger@ffa.org, 317-802-4255 with questions.

Outstanding interest in PALS: Our recent training and the creation of the PALS CD-ROM have generated a tremendous amount of interest in the program this year. We have received numerous e-mails and phone calls from chapters starting new PALS programs or requesting information to update their existing PALS programs. We would like everyone who is participating in PALS to remember that chapter PALS Program recognition is available in the form of a multi-year plaque with spurs that can be attached for participation years. Advisors can claim these plaques at anytime during the year using the attached form. If state staff representatives wish to award these to PALS chapters during a state convention or awards day, we ask that you complete the forms for your chapters and request the plaques at least four weeks in advance of the award date. This form can also be found at www.ffa.org or on the Local Program Resource Guide CD-ROM. We encourage advisors and state staff to take advantage of this opportunity for well-deserved recognition. For more information, contact pals@ffa.org or call 317-802-4262.

PROGRAMS AND AWARDS

Agriscience Student and Teacher of the Year: The Agriscience Student and Teacher of the Year are two of the more lucrative award programs that FFA has to offer. In recent years the participation in these two areas has been on the decline, while participation in the Agriscience Fair has continued to set new records. Please encourage students involved in agriscience at the state level to consider applying their project in the student of the year category. Every state winner receives a \$500 scholarship, and the top two from each state are considered for national participation. The national winner receives \$5,000 in scholarship money, the largest scholarship

opportunity in FFA award programs (riscience Fair, CDEs, etc.). In 2003 only eight states submitted applications.

Participation in the Agriscience Teacher of the Year program has also been on the decline. Every state winner is entitled to \$100, and the national finalists receive \$500 and a \$1,500 grant for their chapter. The National FFA Organization would love to see an application submitted from every state if possible. Please encourage teachers and students involved with agriscience to take advantage of these great opportunities. Applications for both the Agriscience Student and Teacher of the Year are due to the FFA Center postmarked by July 15th. For further assistance in this area please contact agriscience@ffa.org or call 317-802-4262.

A call for H.O. Sargent Diversity Award applications: During this time of year our hearts are opened and re-attuned to what it truly means to be a member of the human race. With genuine care and compassion we seek to meet one another's needs and desires in ways truly indicative of selfless brotherhood and sisterhood. This time of year is also the time for our youth and adults to begin plans and activities for the H.O. Sargent Diversity Award.

The H.O. Sargent Diversity Award is a special honor and recognition given by the National FFA Organization in celebration of the work and dedication of FFA members and non-FFA members advancing efforts to diversify FFA and/or agricultural education. The award program, initially established through the leadership and vision of Mr. G.W. Owens of New Farmers of America and Dr. H.O. Sargent of the U.S. Department of Education, was re-instituted in 1995 in commemoration of the contributions underrepresented groups and majority groups together have made to FFA and agricultural education.

Activities that qualify an individual for the award are as varied as the imagination and resources allow. This is in part because "diversity" is broadly defined to embrace any activity that has a goal of bringing balance between minority and majority groups within your community, school, chapter and more. Consequently, pen pal programs, community service activities, cultural awareness programs, membership recruitment campaigns, and a wide range of other projects make a nominee eligible for the award. It's all about accepting, being connecting, developing. Both FFA members and non-members can apply or be nominated. The application deadline is June 30 (postmark date). The application is attached below. For more details visit, <http://www.ffa.org/programs/hosargent/html/app.html#MEMBER.>>

For more information, contact Damon Spight, dspight@ffa.org, 317-802-4244. The H.O. Sargent Diversity Award program is sponsored by Monsanto as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

SCHOLARSHIPS

2004 National FFA Organization Scholarship Program: This year the National FFA Organization scholarship program will award approximately \$2 million to eligible FFA members and other agriculture students for their college education. Here are two examples of those awards:

- Cargill will award 350 scholarships at \$1,000 each to high school seniors who live in a community where Cargill operates facilities. The student must plan to pursue a two-to four-year degree in any major at an accredited post-secondary institution in the fall of 2004. Students are selected based on academic achievement and involvement in extracurricular activities. Applicants must visit their local Cargill facility or subsidiary to obtain a signature from a location manager on their application. Each scholarship recipient's high school may also be eligible for a \$200 library grant.

- Ford dealers across the country have partnered with Ford Trucks and Ford Motor Company to provide more than 600 scholarships at \$1,000 each to FFA members. Scholarship applicants must be planning to attend any accredited two- or four-year institution in any area of study. Their local dealer's signature is required for eligibility for these scholarships. One lucky chapter will be eligible to receive a two-year lease on a Ford F-Series truck based on the number of chapter applicants for the scholarships.

Last year approximately one out of every four students who applied for the program received a scholarship. In 2004, more than 6,000 students are expected to apply for approximately 1,600 available scholarships ranging in value from \$1,000 to full tuition for four years at the University of Louisville.

PLEASE NOTE: Last year in the Ford program alone, \$77,000 went unawarded due to a lack of applicants. Please make sure your students are aware of the great opportunities offered by the National FFA Scholarship Program. More details about these and other National FFA Organization scholarship opportunities, including a guidebook listing eligibility criteria, an application and a list of participating Ford dealers are available at <http://www.ffa.org/programs/scholarships/index.html>.

For any questions concerning the program, e-mail scholarships@ffa.org. The application deadline is Feb. 15.

CONVENTION NEWS

2003 National FFA Convention song: The 2003 National FFA Convention theme song is now available on the website. Visit <http://www.ffa.org>, and scroll down to "2003 National FFA Convention Theme Song." Right click, then choose "save target as." This will allow you to save the song to your computer as an mp3 file.

2003 National FFA Convention photography: Congratulations to each American FFA Degree recipient who walked across the stage during convention. Chappell Studios was hired to take photos of each individual who did so - one backstage and one onstage. Proofs were mailed directly to each recipient and included information on how to access, review and purchase the photos online via www.chappell.com. There is no obligation to purchase photos. If American FFA Degree recipients have not yet received their proofs, they can contact Chappell directly at 1-800-424-3686 for more information.

Looking for a great photo to commemorate national convention? You can still purchase a state group photo. Contact Chappell Studios directly at 1-800-424-3686 for more details or to order a print. Do you want another copy of that CDE team/award, proficiency, national chapter, agriscience or H.O. Sargent print for your chapter scrapbook, as a gift or for a memento? Visit www.orderyourphoto.com to purchase additional photos. You must have a password to view and order pictures. The password is: FFA at 75. Contact Sara Sanders, ssanders@ffa.org, for more information or if you have questions or to order a print.

MERCHANDISE

The third annual T-shirt design contest entries are due March 15. FFA is looking for some creative students to submit their designs. Winning designs will be featured on t-shirts and sold in the 2004-2005 National FFA Blue Catalog and online store. Encourage your FFA members to submit all those fabulous designs that have been produced at the local level. If selected, the winning chapter will earn 50 percent of the gross profits on the catalog sales for one year. As of the end of November, the five winning chapters from the '03-'04 contest had earned a total of \$10,146.88. And this year's winners are on a record-setting pace. The number one selling T-shirt,

03-WOAG, has already earned \$7,550. See the 2003-2004 winners in this year's blue catalog. (See p. 16-17) For questions, please contact Dawn Sharp, dsharp@ffa.org.

FFA Week is just around the corner. Shop early to make sure you have all of the necessary items to make it a huge success for your chapter. From giveaway pens to bumper stickers to billboards, FFA has the perfect products to promote FFA Week, which runs from February 21-28. Visit <http://www.ffaunlimited.org/gold-supplies-ffa-week.html> for more information.

COLLEGIATE

Calling all Collegiate FFA chapters! Planning is in process to start a monthly Collegiate FFA e-mail that will provide many valuable updates for your collegiate chapter. If you and your students are interested in joining this listserv, please submit your name, e-mail information and any content ideas that you may have to kmiller@ffa.org. You may also reach Kristy Miller, program coordinator of Collegiate Services, by calling 317-802-4220.

2004 PAS Conference set for March: Plant your "Pathway for Progress" at the 2004 National Postsecondary Agricultural Student Organization (PAS) Conference, March 10-13 in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Be part of the action, and make progress with PAS during four exciting days that feature:

- Agribusiness tours related to the PAS Career Program Areas
- National career program award competitions
- An opening session tailgate party at Lambeau Field
- State officer rally
- National PAS business
- Election of the 2004-05 National Officer Team
- The PAS Associates meeting
- Entertainment and plenty of informal fun

Don't miss the excitement of the 2004 National PAS Conference, hosted by Wisconsin PAS. Discover sporting Green Bay, home of football's Green Bay Packers, the Green Bay Gamblers hockey team and NCAA Division I basketball by the UW-Green Bay Fighting Phoenix. Learn about Wisconsin agriculture, and enjoy shopping and entertainment just steps from the hotel's door. And - of course - learn, make new friends and prove (and improve) your skills at conference sessions, tours and competitions. Start planning your conference trip now. To find out more information about joining the National PAS or to view further information about the upcoming conference, visit the PAS website at www.nationalpas.org. You may also request additional information by contacting Kristy Miller, kmiller@nationalpas.org, or 317-802-4220.

EDUCATOR NEWS

Making Science Come Alive Conference: Using Hydroponics to "make science come alive" is what the Science Alive conference has been doing for the past three years. Once again the Flowing Wells FFA Chapter, University of Arizona, Yavapai Community College, Cropping Inc, American Hydroponics and the Aquaponics Journal have teamed up to bring another exciting edition of this hands on conference. The conference mission is to equip teachers to do amazing, inexpensive and meaningful things with their students. The conference topics include hydroponics, aquaculture, tissue culture, biotechnology and program management. The conference will be held in Tucson, Arizona, May 19-22, 2004. Teacher registration is \$375 dollars before Feb. 20 and \$420 thereafter. Special student rates are available too. The registration fee covers several meals, tours, classroom curriculum, samples and catalogs. Please visit the website www.ag.arizona.edu/science_alive for more details and registration forms. You can also

contact Aaron Ball, ballaa@flowingwells.k12.az.us, 520-690-2332, for more information.

STATE STAFF NEWS

National Agriculture Education Inservice: The National Agricultural Education Inservice will be held Feb. 5-8 at the downtown Adams Mark Hotel in Indianapolis. The same registration format used last year will be followed. Please read all the attached information and make plans to attend the upcoming Inservice.

In addition, the National New State Staff Inservice (NSSI) will be conducted on Feb. 4-5, at the same location. This is a wonderful opportunity for new state staff to learn more about the programs and services provided by the National FFA as well as connect with the individuals who facilitate them. Those who would greatly benefit from the NSSI are new state FFA advisors, executive secretaries, directors, and other new state staff who work closely with the National FFA Organization. NSSI will run from noon on Wednesday, Feb. 4, until noon Thursday, Feb. 5. At the conclusion of NSSI, new state staff will also have the opportunity to attend the National Agricultural Education Inservice. Those who wish to attend NSSI prior to the National Ag Ed Inservice are asked to check the appropriate box on the attached registration form (*AEIS 2004 Registration Form*).

For questions on registration, please contact Michele Gilbert, Local Program Success assistant, mgilbert@ffa.org, 317-802-4301.

For questions on the National Ag Ed Inservice or NSSI, please contact Tony Small, Local Program Success manager, tsmall@ffa.org, 317-802-4300.

Future National Ag Ed Inservice Dates: February 3-6, 2005; February 2-5, 2006.

Future NSSI Dates: February 2-3, 2005; February 1-2, 2006.

INTERNATIONAL HAPPENINGS

Teacher resources: The FFA Global website has numerous resources available for teachers to utilize in their classrooms. Choose from a wide range of lesson plans and interactive global projects. Bring global agriculture into your classroom by visiting: www.ffa.org/programs/global/ online resources or call 317-802-4309.

International teacher opportunities: Competitive scholarships are available for agriculture teachers to participate in an international experience through EARTHWATCH. The scholarships are available for use in 2004. EARTHWATCH institute promotes sustainable conservation of our natural environments and cultural heritage by creating partnerships among scientists, the general public, educators and businesses. Expeditions take place year round throughout the world. Participants can receive up to \$1500 scholarships to cover a portion of the expedition costs plus membership to EARTHWATCH. To learn more about the expeditions available, visit www.earthwatch.org <<http://www.earthwatch.org>> Scholarship applications are available online at www.ffa.org/programs/global/. Please call 317-802-4309 for more information.

UPDATE is also available at www.ffa.org/news/html/ffapubsindex.html#update each month. Attachments are available online.

The FFA Mission

FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for **premier leadership**, **personal growth** and **career success** through agricultural education.

The Agricultural Education Mission

Agricultural Education prepares students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in the global agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems.

The National FFA Organization is a resource and support organization that does not select, control or supervise state association, local chapter or individual member activities except as expressly provided for in the National FFA Organization Constitution and Bylaws.

The National FFA Organization affirms its belief in the value of all human beings and seeks diversity in its membership, leadership and staff as an equal opportunity employer.

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