



Blue & Gold

Spotlight

Nebraska FFA Alumni and Supporters

December 2022



**Kenesaw's 'new' chapter
takes on first normal year, pg. 40**



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Blue & Gold
Spotlight
 Nebraska FFA Alumni and Supporters
 December 2022



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*Cover photo:
 Madeline Pulver, Kenesaw FFA
 Chapter president, is pictured with
 her cattle. See story on page 40*

A note from your FFA Alumni Council

Over the past 5 years Agriculture has faced all of these challenges, a pandemic, inflation, drought, and labor shortages. The FFA has had their challenges too. That is where getting involved in the FFA Alumni and Supporters is important.

Fifty years ago the Nebraska FFA and Supporters took the steps to Charter with the National FFA Alumni to Promote, Support, and Enhance the improvement of Agricultural Education at Local, State, and National Levels.

I have seen many FFA members develop Leadership Qualities that they have used at Local- State and National Levels. Town Boards; Coop Boards of Directors; Commodity Organizations; and State Senators are a few examples of where I have seen former FFA Members use the leadership skills they developed by being in the FFA.

Being involved with the FFA Alumni and Supporters is very simple. Being a mentor or volunteering for FFA activities to help make the experience of

the FFA Members something for them to remember is as simple as it gets.

Being a FFA Alumni and Supporters Member has benefits that can last a lifetime. The FFA Alumni and Supporters Forever Blue Network allows you to; connect with fellow Alumni and Supporters; Give back as a Mentor; Coach or Volunteer; Expand your Professional Network; Reconnect with old Friends that you might of met at a Leadership Conference when you were in the FFA; and staying involved in the FFA Community.

I would like to invite you to our State Alumni and Supporters conference in Hastings January 21-22, 2023. Jeff Hornung and several Local FFA Chapters are planning a conference that we are looking forward to as we celebrate 50 years.

Thank you for everything you do to support the FFA.

Kevin Henrichson,
President, Nebraska FFA Alumni and Supporters

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FFA Alumni support Kimball

By *Brittney Palik*

The Kimball FFA Alumni Chapter, started by John Perry in 1972 as a way to help the high school's FFA group, has been supporting the students for 50 years.

"Well, it was up to me on a spur of the moment deal," Perry said. "Our instructor called me and wondered if I'd be willing to help with FFA and start an alumni chapter. I've been working with it ever since."

The Kimball FFA Alumni Chapter puts on auctions to raise money and a feed for the chapter, uses its alumni treasury to pay for the members to go to state conferences and offers scholarships for current FFA members, Perry said.

"Our goal at the Kimball chapter was not to wave a flag and show how good we are, our goal is to support FFA members themselves," Perry said. "We do not want to run their functions at all. We are there to support, and if they need extra support, we are there to help."

"I've seen alumni chapters become an organization of its own with contests of their own, and that isn't the goal of the alumni association," Perry said. "We don't want it to be an organization like FFA where we have all the contests. We are there for the kids, we aren't there for ourselves."

The president of the alumni chapter, Byron Wilke, also stressed the importance of the chapter supporting the FFA chapter, rather than boasting the accomplishments of the alumni chapter itself. Wilke has been an active member since 1985.

"I've been president for several years," Wilke said. "We've never been a big showing awards kind of chapter. We're kind of a grass roots production organized to help the local chapter." The alumni chapter has between 50-60 life members and 15-20 active members, according to Wilke.

"We're not a big award driven alumni chapter by any means. We try to support chapter and kids financially in any way we can or by coaching and judging," Wilke said. "Most of our members have been through the Kimball program. It is not in criteria to be a Kimball alumnus."

Scholarships are a big way the Kimball FFA Alumni Chapter helps FFA members to continue their education after graduating. One scholarship they offer is the FFA Alumni Scholarship. The alumni chapter gives two of these scholarships out every year, up to \$1,000 each, to students who have been enrolled in FFA ag education for two years. In the application process for

this scholarship, students are asked what FFA leadership positions they have held, school and community leadership positions they have held and how their involvement in FFA has impacted them and their future aspirations. The Kimball FFA Alumni chapter has been giving out this scholarship for 20 years.

"We encourage members to apply for scholarships and we support some other local scholarships," Perry said.

Another scholarship the Kimball FFA Alumni Chapter offers is the Z&S Robins Family Scholarship. The Robins Family, who had all their children go through FFA, support this scholarship run by the FFA alumni. Altogether, the alumni chapter offers between \$3,000-\$4,000 in scholarships each year.

"My biggest thing with FFA, [is that] there is not a student in any school across Nebraska that can't walk through that door and get something out of it," Wilke said. "They don't have to be an ag student or ag major. There's something every student can get out of it. That's why I believe so much in the program, it has so many avenues involved."



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2022 Convention Spotlights

Straight Arrow Buffalo Ranch owners Karen and Marty Bredthauer, far left, receive a thank you from Council Member Lori Walla for providing a tour.



Right: Jeff Hornung, Nebraska FFA Alumni Past President, receives his plaque at the convention.



Far right: Marc Wittstruck, Crete, received the Al Sick Award.

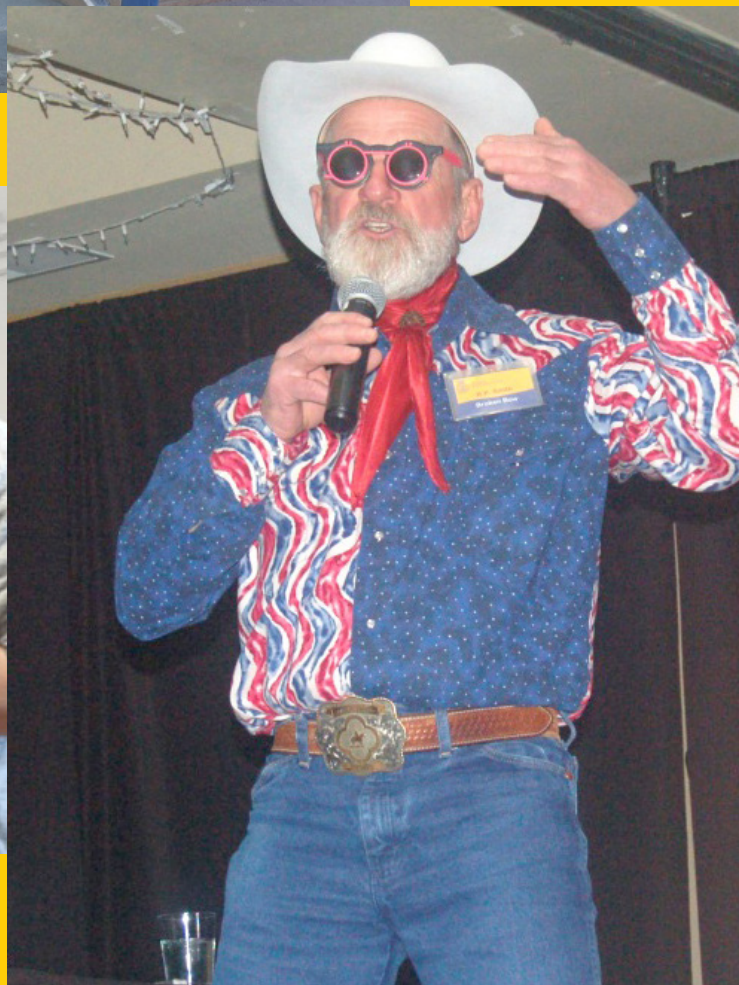


ARROW SEED®

FFA Alumni and Supporters also toured Arrow Seed during the January convention.



The Anderson Grain Elevator in Anslemo, Nebraska, also received a thank you plaque for providing a tour during the event.



Above, cowboy poet R.P. Smith of Broken Bow, Nebraska, performs during the 2022 convention last January.

2022 Alumni Awards

**Al Sick, Jr. Award - Marc Wittstruck,
Crete**

**Bob Clausen Award - Clint Lutjelusche,
Lakeview**

**Bob Clausen Award - JoAnn Brandt,
Lakeview**

**Past President Award - Jeff Hornung
2019-2021**

**In the Outstanding Chapter awards
Receiving Gold were Mead and Crete,
Receiving Silver was Lakeview.**

www.nebraskaffaalumni.org

State FFA website

Central location offers organization

We are pleased to share our new website with our membership, patrons, and supporters!

This tool will be useful in tracking updates, managing event details and providing valuable information for all chapters and members.

Please take a moment to visit www.nebraskaffaalumni.org to view all of our news, features and resources. In addition, all of our annual award information is now online as well!

Visit the awards page on the website to download award applications and view past-year's winners.

"This was a necessary step forward for our organization," Jeff Hornung, past state alumni president, said. "We now have one central place to share information and provide updates, instead of being spread across multiple platforms."

Hornung said the Nebraska FFA Alumni and Supporters Council will continue to use social media as effective means of communication, but the web-page will serve as the primary medium for information abroad.



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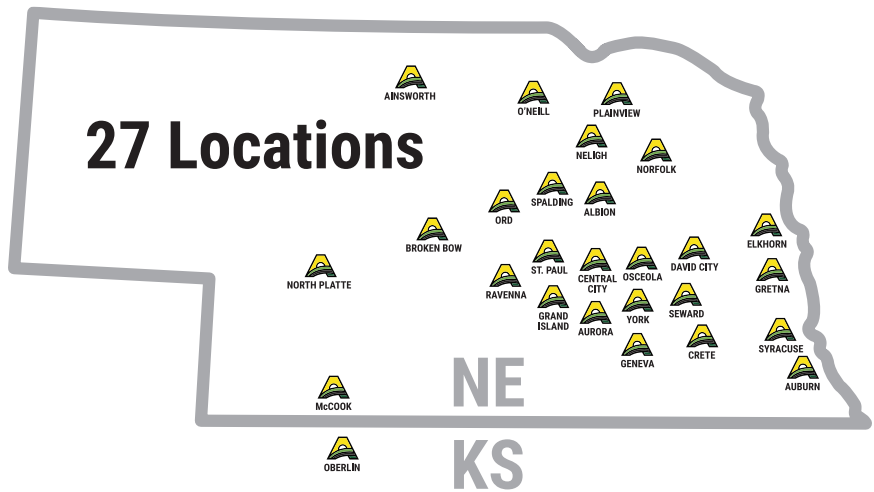
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27 Locations



Gone to the chickens



Cupp involves communities in agriculture through rental chicken coop service

By *Geovanni Ascencio*

Morayah Cupp grew up in a very rural community in which agriculture played a big role in everyone's lives. However, during her seventh-grade year at Chase County Schools in Imperial, Nebraska, Cupp looked around her and realized that children and teenagers her age were becoming disinterested in the field of agriculture. A young Cupp took it upon herself to change that.

Her big idea: chickens.

Cupp said she wanted to fill a void in her community by creating a business venture that could get people involved and reignite their interests in agriculture. Cupp, alongside her mother, brainstormed ideas that would eventually become her Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE), a part of her agricultural program studies. This was how Moe's Mobile Coops was born, she said.

Moe's Mobile Coops allows individuals to become producers on a smaller scale without the need for long-term commitment. The way this is done is by allowing people to rent chicken coops and providing them with the things they need in order to maintain them. After the rental period is done, customers can decide whether they would like to keep and buy the mobile coop or return it back to Cupp and Moe's Mobile Coops. Cupp said she decided on renting as the primary form of operation because renting is more doable for people

Left, Morayah Cupp lets it go to the birds with Moe's Mobile Coops.

Nebraska FFA Alumni & Supporters

She wanted **to fill a void in her community by creating a business venture that could get people involved and reignite their interests in agriculture.**

and allows them to be eased into that world. Cupp has been running Moe's Mobile Coops since 2017. Her company has eight mobile units to rent.

Cupp became involved with the Imperial FFA Chapter after gaining interest during junior high. Her mother coached the junior high quiz bowl event, one of the many FFA opportunities available to students. Cupp said she slowly became more involved as she participated in various events and contests.

"Morayah is enjoyable and a pleasure to work with, her knowledge and skills are a big asset," Jason Speck, advisor to the Imperial FFA Chapter, said. Speck continued by saying, "Morayah is always one to jump in and help out when and where she can."

Cupp's proficiency, which includes her SAE and her work on Moe's Mobile Coops, gained her recognition at the Nebraska State FFA Convention during the first



Cupp earned a finalist medal during the Nationals.



Morayah Cupp holds her American FFA Degree certificate.



Above, even Lainey Hughes gets a kick out of the feathered friends Cupp sports at home.

Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma, where she is studying agricultural education. She is currently a junior with the goal of graduating next year. Cupp said her goal is to eventually teach agriculture in a classroom and lead her own FFA chapter.

“With her knowledge, skills and drive to work with others, Morayah will make a great teacher in the near future,” Speck said.

As if she was not already busy enough with school and her contributions to the Imperial FFA Chapter, Cupp also serves as vice president of the American Junior Maine-Anjou Board of Directors. According to Cupp, every large cattle breed has their own breed association, Maine-Anjou being one of them. Each member serves a two-year term. Cupp said

Left, Nolan Hughes makes friends with one of Cupp’s chickens.





Cupp rents her mobile coops out, spreading agricultural knowledge in the community.

she plans on running for re-election in the summer of 2023 after her current term ends.

The American Junior Maine-Anjou Association is a group of junior members that gets the opportunity to travel all around the country and host leadership conferences, networking events and livestock shows. The organization’s goal is to act as both an education and charitable entity for the benefit of the youth participants and the Maine-Anjou breed.

Cupp said she will continue to rent chickens out through Moe’s Mobile Coops as well as travel and be a part of livestock shows. “Chickens are low maintenance, good starter animals to get you involved, and they have their own personalities, if you’re looking at it from a pet perspective,” she said.

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A snippet of history of the Nebraska FFA

FFA and Agriculture history: 1928 - World War II

**By Joe A. Baldassare,
Retired Agriculture Teacher
and Life Member of the FFA
Alumni and Supporters**

“The real start of the FFA in Nebraska was during the annual conference of Vocational Agriculture Instructors in July of 1928. Fifty-six Vocational Agriculture Departments existed at this time. The instructors decided to accept the National Constitution of the Future Farmers of America and to proceed with the State Organization” 1

After the First National Future Farmers of America (FFA) Convention in Kansas City in 1928, Beatrice FFA (Nebraska chapter #1) and Eagle FFA (Nebraska chapter #2) were chartered in December of 1928. During 1929, fifteen more chapters were chartered from Nebraska; Newman Grove (#3), Burwell (#4), Milligan (#5), Big Springs (#6), Waverly (#7), Hastings (#8), Columbus (#9), Stapleton (#10), Laurel (#11), Minden (#12), Imperial (#13), Pawnee City (#14), Ashland (#15), Nehawka (#16), and Ord (#17).

At the First Convention of the Nebraska Future Farmers of America, important items of business included: the setting of



**IUPUI University Library Special Collections and Archives
The Thirteenth National Future Farmers of America
Convention, Municipal Auditorium Music Hall, Kansas City
Missouri - November 1940. Delegates to the 1940 Convention
from Nebraska were Jerome Wirth – Nebraska City, Nebraska
and Willard Visek -Sargent, Nebraska. Alternate delegates from
Nebraska were Willard R. Miers - Seward, Nebraska and Frank
Munn - Waverly, Nebraska. Contests for Vocational Agriculture
students, held in conjunction with the FFA Convention were
National Public Speaking Contest, Livestock Judging Contest,
Dairy Judging Contest, Poultry Judging Contest, Meat Judging
Contest, and Milk Judging Contest. The convention report
showed that 7326 official delegates, exhibitors, railroad prize
winners and visitors were in attendance at the convention and
contests.**



***IUPUI University Library Special Collections and Archives
A Vocational Agriculture class, studying farm crops in the Agricultural Laboratory. Ainsworth, Nebraska 1935. The Agriculture Teacher (standing) was Henry A. Engel.***



***IUPUI University Library Special Collections and Archives
A class of Beatrice, Nebraska Vocational Agriculture students learned how to select livestock, judging the merits and faults of breeding animals, in this bull evaluation circa 1929.***

dues at fifteen cents, the designation of the newly elected President and Secretary as delegates to the National Convention, and the adoption of the constitution. Nine members were raised to the State Farmer Degree. They were Ronald Mudge - Beatrice, Alvin Reimer - Beatrice, Andrew Walberg - Eagle, Billy Donahue - Hastings, Glenn Butte - Kearney, Donald Vavra - Milligan, Mervin Peterson - Minden, Irving Walker - Waverly, and John C. Martin - Waverly.

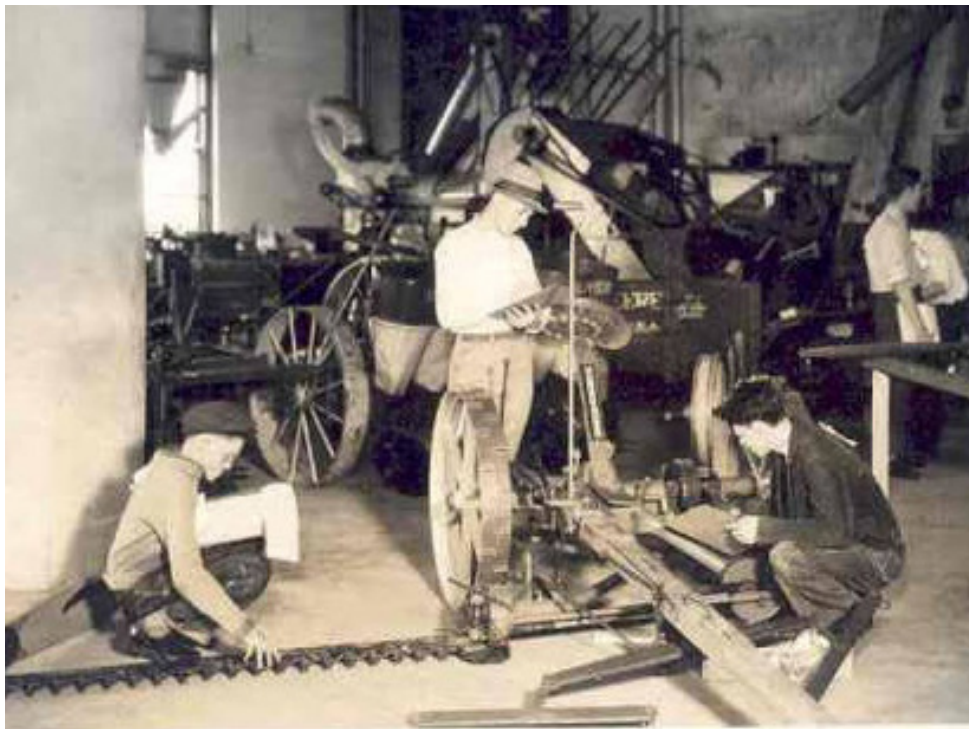
At the Second National FFA Convention in the Fall of 1929, the FFA Delegates established the colors of the FFA as National Blue and Corn Gold.

The Nebraska FFA Public Speaking Contest was started in 1930. Loyd Crisswell – Hastings, was the first state speech contest winner with a speech entitled “Power Farming and Its Effect on American Agriculture”. Later in the fall of 1930, the “FFA Creed” written by E. M. Tiffany, was adopted at the Third National FFA Convention, and FFA delegates voted to restrict membership to boys only. The first FFA official dress was adopted which was a dark blue shirt, blue or white trousers, blue cap and yellow tie.

Enrollment in the 65 Nebraska Vocational Agriculture programs was 1,031 students during the 1929-30 school year. Of these, 572 were FFA members. Before the end of December 1931, 49 Nebraska chapters had been chartered and the number of Agriculture Education Departments had also grown to 70.

The blue corduroy FFA jacket became part of the official dress in 1933 when FFA members of the Fredericktown, Ohio, members wore matching jackets to the convention.

Throughout the 1930s, Voca-



***IUPUI University Library Special Collections and Archives
Farm Machinery Study, one phase of the Farm Shop Contest.
Nebraska State Contests for Vocational Agriculture students,
Lincoln, Nebraska, April 1936. FFA members and vocational
agriculture students participated in a farm mechanics exercise,
acquiring valuable skills for eventual careers in farming or
agricultural mechanics.***



***IUPUI University Library Special Collections and Archives
American Farmer Degree recipients – Fall 1932, included
Nebraska FFA members Orie Sowards - Ashland FFA and
Charles Barnhart – Ord FFA***

tional Agriculture teachers continued to expand instructional programs and help develop the abilities and skills of agriculture students in spite of the great economic depression which gripped most of the nation.

By the 1941-42, the number of Nebraska FFA chapters had risen to 107, and Agriculture Education Departments had grown to 115. That year, there were 4,055 Vocational Agriculture students, of which 3,098 were FFA members.

When the Second World War began on Dec. 7, 1941, the patriotic fervor supporting the war effort encouraged many young American men to join the military or to work in defense industries. This, coupled with the military draft of recruits into the service, caused a shortage of younger agriculture teachers. This teacher shortage caused a rapid decline in the number of FFA chapters and Vocational Agriculture programs during the war.

In Nebraska during the 1945-46 school year, for instance, the number of Agriculture Education programs had declined to 69, and the number of FFA Chapters to 73. It was not until the 1949-50 school year that the number of Agriculture Education programs and FFA chapters rose again to over 100. At that time, FFA membership was at almost 100% of the number of students enrolled.

“Not long after the end of World War II, a na-

tional convention memorial service honored the 236,450 active and associate members of the FFA who served in the armed forces during the conflict. Of this number 7,188 paid the supreme sacrifice.” 2

Sources:

1 Quote - Nebraska FFA Record 39 Years 1928-1967, Nebraska Association of Future Farmers of America, 1967, Lincoln Nebraska

2 Quote - Blue Jackets Gold Standards, National FFA Organization, 2003, M. T. Publishing Company, Evansville, Indiana.

History of Vocational Agriculture Education in Nebraska by M. G. McCreight 1973, University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

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Nineteen-Forty Proceedings of the Fourteenth National Convention of Future Farmers of America – United States Office of Education



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Alexis Bodlak
Pender FFA
State President



Faith Miller
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Libby Wilkins
Ainsworth FFA
State VP

Hello! I'm Alexis Bodlak from the Pender FFA Chapter. I am enjoying my first semester as a Husker student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I am studying nutrition with a focus on community health and wellness with a minor in global leadership on the pre-law track. My biggest passion in agriculture includes learning about food systems and how they relate health disparities in developing countries. I plan to attend law school and bring my unique agricultural perspective into the creation of international public health policies.

For my Supervised Agricultural Experience, I had the opportunity to turn my placement SAE in nursery operations into an entrepreneurship project. I worked at Zee's Greenhouse in Thurston, Nebraska for three years. After my boss retired, I received a grant from the Nebraska Farm Bureau to start my own greenhouse. I dedicated my project to growing fresh produce for my local food bank.

I'm Faith Miller from Mullen. I'm attending the University of Nebraska-Lincoln majoring in Pre-Vet Animal Science. I grew up competing in rodeo, so that built a foundation for my interest for veterinary science and the animal industries. I also enjoy showing livestock and working with youth throughout my community and the state. FFA has provided me with so many opportunities to be able to learn more about animal science, including my SAE!

My Supervised Agricultural Experience is an entrepreneurship equine training and competition program with my four quarter horses. I trained them for specific events and competed with them at different rodeos and shows throughout the year. I look forward to applying what I've learned through my SAE in my future career as an equine veterinarian.

I'm Libby Wilkins from Ainsworth. I'm studying Ag Education at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with minors in Entrepreneurship and Global Agriculture. I'm passionate about food security and agricultural education in developing countries! My Supervised Agricultural Experiences include: fruit and vegetable production, swine placement, and crop entrepreneurship where I had the opportunity to rent 125 acres of irrigated farmland for corn and soybeans. The SAE I was most passionate about was based around developing curriculum for kindergarten through eighth grade students highlighting the sorghum industry.

State Officers



Dustin Andreasen
Boone Central FFA
State VP

I am Dustin Andreasen from Albion, and the Boone Central FFA chapter. I grew up on our family farm outside of St. Edward where we raise beef cattle, corn, and soybeans. My Supervised Agricultural Experience is diversified agriculture placement working on our family farm. My SAE experience is where my interest in agronomic crop production came from.

This year, I am attending the University of Nebraska-Lincoln studying agronomy. After college, I hope to return to our family farm and apply my knowledge to our production practices. I also plan to start an agronomic business in my community.



Emelia Rourke
Waverly FFA
State VP

I'm Emelia Rourke from Waverly. I'm a freshman at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, studying Animal Science. My interest in agriculture is learning more about plant and animal systems, and what I can do in the future to help producers with their operations.

My Supervised Agricultural Experiences are raising a flock of laying hens, selling the eggs and a placement opportunity working on a farm in Valparaiso, Nebraska. These hands-on experiences helped me develop a passion for agriculture and the people who work in it.



Jaylea Pope
Shelton FFA
State VP

I'm Jaylea Pope from Shelton. I'm studying Agricultural Education at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I grew up on my family's cow-calf operation north of Shelton. My Supervised Agricultural Experience was beef entrepreneurship, I have my own herd of beef cattle with production on a seed stock focus. My interest in the ag industry include leadership, the beef industry, and education. I look forward to be involved with the agriculture industry for years to come!

Grace Timm
Creek Valley FFA
State VP

Hi! I'm Grace Timm, from Chappell, and the Creek Valley FFA chapter. I am attending the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and studying Agribusiness alongside the pre-law track.

My biggest interests in agriculture include leadership development, commodity trading, and agriculture marketing. In my Supervised Agricultural Experience, I worked at Frenchman Valley Cooperative grain elevator. Looking into the future, I want to work with commodity marketing or in agricultural law.



2022 Convention Spotlights

This page: Broken Bow FFA advisor Caleb tenBensel and three Broken Bow Chapter members received a thank you for their help at the convention.



Page to the far right: Outstanding affiliate awards went to Mead, represented by Joe Baldassare; Lakeview, represented by Christie Dietrich; and Crete, represented by Matt Bohmont .

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WELL, DID YOU KNOW THIS?

Facts about Nebraska FFA history

By Joe Baldassare

The National Chorus for the FFA was started in 1948 at the National FFA Convention.

The following is a list of the Nebraska FFA members who participated in the first year National FFA Chorus 1948

- Herbert Spanel, Sargent
- Jay Frankhouser, Humbolt
- Norton Kinghorn, Lewiston
- Ernest Weidel, Hebron
- Jim Freeman, Sutherland
- Francis McArdle, Valley

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Howells-Dodge represents at Nationals

Howell competed in Ag Communication, Employment Skills during October Indianapolis event

By Gage Dawson

Jordan Howell of Howells-Dodge consolidated got the chance to represent her school at the National FFA Convention in both Ag Communication and Employment Skills.

For her Ag Communication project, Howell had worked with KTIC radio out of West Point, where she learned from her mentor, Chad Moyer, how to read markets, interview people, edit stories and put it on air.

Howell said she learned a lot from interning with Moyer, but also her parents and growing up on their farm taking care of all kinds of animals. "My parents played a big role in ag for me growing up. Cattle, horses, goats...If I wanted an animal, it took some weaseling, but I could convince them to get it for me and that definitely helped me see how everything played into a bigger system," Howell said.

Learning all of this and filling out the paperwork she needed for her project, while also marketing herself in a proficient way, led her to becoming the state champion in this category and landed her a place at nationals.

Howell's Employment Skills project came with a lot of hard work, as well. Howell worked at a dude ranch, where she worked with both children and animals. The job intrigued her when looking online, according to Hannah Groth, Howell's FFA advisor. "It really intrigued her because she loved working with children and some of her backgrounding was working at a daycare, and so that was with her employment skills that she landed that," Groth said.

Howell also worked with many local community members doing interviews and helping the community where she could. These practice interviews included people such as Howell's uncle, who owns TSL shipping company, as well as many local people in Howells. Using the feedback she received from her interviews, she made runner-up at state. This allowed her to make it to nationals, after the champion ended up backing out of the competition.

Howell was not the only success that Howells-Dodge had found throughout the year. Last year, the school's chapter had 36 members, including a state champion ag demo team and a member being

"If you want to do something, if you have a goal, set that goal for yourself, and work your butt off to get to it."

-Jordan Howell

named the Star Farmer of Nebraska, Blake Sindelar. They had nine State Degree recipients at state FFA.

The Howells-Dodge FFA chapter also works with and gives back to their community. Jordan Brabec, Howells-Dodge principal, who was also the FFA advisor in the past, said their chapter has helped organizations such as the American Legion, as well as coming up with community improvement projects throughout the year for both Howells and Dodge.

Howell, who has since graduated from Howells-Dodge, was in FFA all four years of her high school career, serving as vice president in her last year. Brabec, who was the FFA advisor for Howell's first three years, said he has watched Howell grow in her career, becoming more confident and blossoming into herself. He was not surprised with her placements at state FFA considering the time and effort she put into her work. Groth said Howell has really found herself in FFA and was able to put her all into it, because it was her major focus for extra-curriculars in school.

Howell currently attends Iowa State University, studying meteorology, but plans to stay closely connected with agriculture as a whole. "If you want to do something, if you have a goal, set that goal for yourself, and work your butt off to get to it," Howell said. "It's not going to come to you easily. There's a small chance that it's going to come to you at all, but if you don't work for it, you aren't going to get it."

WELL, DID YOU KNOW THIS?

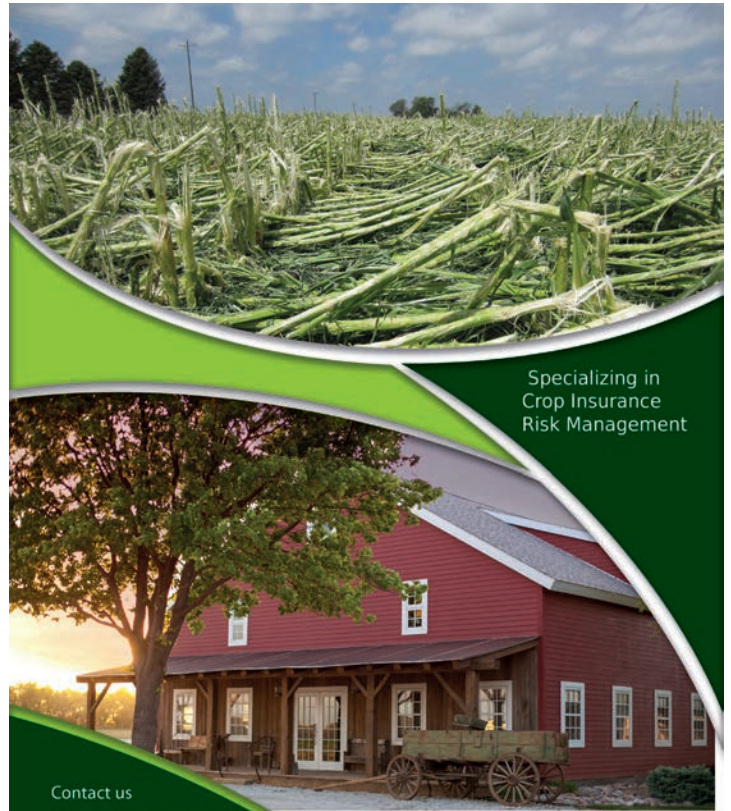
Facts about Nebraska FFA history

By Joe Baldassare

The National Band for the FFA was started in 1947 at the National FFA Convention.

The following is a list of the Nebraska FFA members who participated in the first year National FFA Band 1947

- Dale Childress, Lincoln Northeast
- Robert Corless, Hebron
- Melvin Johnson, Chappell
- John Kucera, David City
- Paul Frankhouser, Humbolt
- Charles Broughton, Bridgeport
- Kenneth Mohling, Hastings
- Willard Messenger, McCook



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Waverly chapter helps out alum



Benes is pictured with his new Waverly FFA jacket.

Gene Benes sports new 'old' FFA jacket

By Aubreanna Miller

Waverly High School's FFA chapter replaced the FFA jacket of former alumni, Gene Benes, after his jacket from 1950 deteriorated in storage.

Benes' son, Dan Benes, decided to reach out to Kristine Spath, teacher and FFA advisor at WHS, when his father expressed dismay after discovering the ruined jacket. They had tried to restore the article of clothing to its former glory but had no success.

Right before the State FFA Convention in the spring, a community member donated an old FFA jacket to the chapter. Spath said this jacket did not have any of the required patches and featured the old emblem, so the students could not wear it in competitions.

The advisor tried to make the jacket work for the

chapter but did not feel sure how to do so. When she met Benes' son at the State FFA Convention, she knew the jacket would be perfect to give back to Benes. Another alumni of the chapter took the jacket home, found old patches online to add to it and mailed the project back to Spath.

Then, as a finishing touch, Spath and the Waverly FFA chapter sent the jacket to the National FFA office to put Benes' name on it. The chapter funded this project, passing along a love for FFA with the donation.

"We have hope Benes enjoys the jacket because it was given to us," Spath said. "We were happy that we had the opportunity to pass along the love for the jacket."

With the vintage patches, lettering and emblem, the "new" jacket then moved to Benes' possession,

bringing the alumni back to his days in FFA.

Benes graduated from WHS in 1951. His four years in FFA jumpstarted his music career and allowed the young man to travel outside of his small town as an alternate to the National FFA Band during his junior year.

“[The jacket] brings back so many memories,” Benes said. “FFA taught me so much about discipline and respect. I hadn’t had the opportunity to travel a lot before going to Kansas City with the National FFA Band.”

In Kansas City, Benes remembered he and his group toured the city and walked through the Ford Factory. Seeing the process of car development became a core memory for the young musician.

Now, Benes travels all around the United States with his band, Bobby Layne. This swing style band has allowed Benes to transition his love for music in high school to an exciting career and lifestyle.

The Waverly FFA, chartered in 1929, has a long, rich history, Spath said. Since the school resides on the outskirts of Lincoln, the chapter has transitioned into a more urban curriculum rather than a traditional agricultural focus.

With its 42 members, the group keeps busy and involved in the community. During the fall semester, they held a Feed the Farmer partnership with the local Co-op where they provided meals and cookies to local farmers.

Also in fall, the chapter partners with the Camp Creek Threshers Association in Waverly to host its annual Thresher Show. Around Halloween, the students Trick or Treat for non-perishable items to donate to the local food pantry.

With the Waverly Kiwanis, the students pick over 300 dozen ears of sweet corn right before the start of the school year. Then, Kiwanis sells the corn for a fundraiser, helping them facilitate more events in the community.

“Our students are working arm in arm with community members, so volunteering gives our chapter a face,” Spath said. “When you say ‘Waverly FFA,’ somebody will have a connection with a member that they worked with at some community project. Plus, volunteering gives students an opportunity to learn how important it is to give back to the community and be a good citizen.”



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2022 Convention Spotlights

Kevin Henrichson, right,
FFA Alumni president,
awards a



WELL, DID YOU KNOW THIS?

Facts about Nebraska FFA history

By Joe Baldassare

The Nebraska FFA Creed speaking contest was established in 1949.

The first winner (1949) was Wesley Lubberstedt, Wakefield.

The next six annual winners were:

1950 Bob Beck, Fremont

1951 Ira Rockenback, Waverly

1952 David Bacon, Lexington

1953 Larry Nielson, Minden

1954 Paul Herman, Wilber

1955 Mylon Filkins, Creighton

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Nebraska FFA Alumni & Supporters 2023 State Convention & Awards Banquet

January 20- 21, 2023
Hastings, Nebraska
Itinerary Subject to Change

Friday

- 9:00 a.m. - State Alumni & Supporters Council Meeting
- 12:30 p.m. - Tour - Corteva AgriScience
- 3:00 p.m. - Tour - T&L Irrigation Co.
- 5:00 p.m. - Greetings from Hastings Chamber of Commerce; Adams Co. Fairgrounds
- 6:00 p.m. - Meal by Sutton FFA Alumni & Supporters
- 7:30 p.m. - Live Country Music by West Wind Band; Cash Bar; Social with Special Remarks from National FFA Alumni & Supporters

Convention Questions? Call or text Jeff Hornung (convention chairman) at 402-937-2290

Saturday

- 8:30 a.m. - Tour of Area Business, TBD
- 10:00 a.m. - Tour of Hastings Museum
- 12:30 p.m.. - Lunch by Adams Central FFA Chapter with Special Remarks from State Officers & Student Teacher Scholarship Recipients
- 2:00 p.m. - Annual Nebraska Alumni & Supporters Business Meeting; Ice Cream & Coffee provided; served by Doniphan Trumbull FFA Students
- 4:00 p.m. - Free Time in Hastings; Suggested attractions provided
- 6:00 p.m. - Annual Awards Banquet at Adams Co. Fairgrounds; Special Entertainment - Jeff Quinn, Magician and Comedian; Live Article Auction - Bruce McDowell, Auctioneer



West Wind Band



Jeff Quinn

Registration Form

Return by January 10, 2023

Name(s): Phone:

Address: City/State/Zip:

Email:

FFA Alumni & Supporters group:

Conference fee is \$30 and includes banquet ticket. Nebraska Agriculture Education Teachers are encouraged to attend FREE OF CHARGE!

How many people are planning on attending the following events:

Friday afternoon tours Friday evening supper

Saturday noon lunch Saturday afternoon tours

Saturday evening awards banquet

To register by mail, send this form, along with payment, to Brett Nunnenkamp, 1871 Hwy 6, Saronville, NE 68975

Questions: call Nunnenkamp at 402-469-0077 or email at bnunnenkamp@gmail.com

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Comfort Inn

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Adams Co Fairgrounds
947 S Baltimore Ave
Hastings, NE 68901
402-462-3247

Hastings Museum
1330 N Burlington
Hastings, NE 68901
402-461-2399

Other places to visit in and near Hastings

Birthplace of Kool-Aid Museum
516 W 1st St., Hastings

Nebraska Bigfoot Crossroads of America Museum
1205 E 42nd St., Hastings

Rivoli III Theatre
528 W 2nd, Hastings
402-463-6362

Jorn Olsen Gallery
726 W 2nd, Hastings
402-462-2811

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Founded in 2018

'New' Axtell FFA chapter hits the floor running, competes well

By Gabe Perez

The Axtell FFA chapter was chartered in 2018.

"Although our chapter is not very old, the members have had many successes. Some of the highlights include having students qualify for State FFA every year, having three students earn their State FFA degree and having one student earn the American FFA degree," Kate Grimes, advisor at Axtell, said. "Additionally the chapter has received several grants to help support hands-on learning, which led to the addition of a greenhouse which they use both for classroom and FFA purposes."

With school only being in session for a few months the Axtell Chapter has still been able to compete in several events and contests. One notable event was district land judging, where two students received blue ribbons, three students received red ribbons and six students received white ribbons. During this the team, consisting of Caleb Kindschuh, Jacob Halvorsen, Jerzee Smidt and Megan Kindschuh, qualified for state land judging.

The team competed Oct. 19 in Scottsbluff where Kindschuh and Smidt had received pink ribbons. The Axtell Chapter has also participated in FFA Career Day, Husker Harvest Days, Connecting Chapters Training, Farm Safety Day and CPI Harvest Meals. Eight members went to the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis in late October. "I am looking forward to every provided competition, but the

LDEs stand out to me. I tend to be a proficient speaker, and speaking events are mostly what the LDEs consist of," FFA member Joe Fickenscher said. "I will be participating in extemporaneous speaking as an individual and ag demo with a group. I feel confident in both events because my previous years have prepared me well. I am hoping to get a team of six for Ag Demo and we will be discussing the legal and physical processes of branding livestock."

FFA member Nora Sonnenfeld found a bright side to being involved with FFA and what it means to her. "Something like I mentioned that I find gratifying is knowing that I completed everything for the day. In FFA I find after a competition to find a sense of happiness also from seeing how I did and learning how to fix my mistakes," Sonnenfeld said. "It's important to me since it shows not only how to show leadership but also responsibilities, life skills, and patience it also brings people together to learn and expand their knowledge over agriculture."

"FFA is important to me because I am part of the future of agriculture," Fickenscher said. "FFA provides a safe environment for students to experiment with their interests, especially in agriculture. As members of Axtell FFA, we are given opportunities to manage two test plots, oversee a greenhouse, manage a garden, compete on the district, state and national levels, lead the organization as an officer and display servant-leadership skills in the local communi-

ties. Beyond that, the FFA Alumni & Supporters organization allows its members to carry their FFA experiences with them further into life, and with that, they continue to support their local FFA and communities."

Alumni Tricia Danburg, the mother of a founding member of Axtell FFA Chapter, has been assisting with events and contests since 2018. "Ag education and FFA was something I had been hoping would get started at Axtell Community School for many years. When it was announced that it would be added to the curriculum and activities, I jumped at the chance to assist any way I could," Danbrug said.

Danbrug said she encourages students to get involved "because of the leadership opportunities provided and skills they will learn through ag education and FFA, which will help them not only in high school but also throughout their lives. And they will have a lot of fun!"

For the first time, one of Axtell's alumni, Kaleb Senff, received his American FFA Degree during the National FFA Convention. The 95th National FFA Convention & Expo took place Oct. 26 - 29 in Indianapolis.

"We are very thankful for all the support that our program has received from the school staff and from the community. FFA provides so many exceptional opportunities for students to learn and grow but none of it would be possible without support from our school and community," Grimes said.

Blast from the past!



During the Fourth Annual Meeting, Arthur Kurtz, National FFA Alumni Council Member, gives a committee report to the 125 official delegates.



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Nebraska FFA Alumni & Supporters Scholarship Applications due December 31, 2022

Washington Leadership Conference Scholarship

This process provides financial assistance to FFA chapters that send members to WLC. We are able to award three scholarships to such chapters each year and provide an opportunity for those members who participate to speak about their experiences at our annual convention.

Outstanding State Affiliate (New Application Format)

Our revised application allows local alumni affiliates to showcase their year's achievements. These applications are ranked GOLD, SILVER, and BRONZE, with the top two GOLD rated chapters being forwarded on to our National FFA Convention to represent the state of Nebraska.

Robert "Bob" Clausen Outstanding Achievement

Nominees must be active in their local or state alumni affiliate, demonstrate effective leadership skills, and mirror the passion for excellence that warrants recognition. This honor is given to a select number of individuals each year who have provided their time talent, and treasure to ensure the growth of agricultural education.

Al Sick, Jr. Distinguished Service Award

Being our most prestigious award, the Nebraska FFA Alumni selects one person each year to recognize for their service. Individuals who have made significant contributions to Nebraska agriculture, agriculture education, Nebraska FFA and/or FFA Alumni are eligible for this award. Nominations are not limited



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WELL, DID YOU KNOW THIS? Facts about Nebraska FFA history

By Joe Baldassare

The first winner of the National FFA's Honorary American Farmer Degree from Nebraska, was Nebraska Agriculture Teacher, Raleigh A. Pilster in 1945. He taught in 1937-38 at Filley, 1938-40 at Verdigrée, 1940-47 at Neligh, 1947-49 at Seward, 1949-50 at Chadron, and 1968-92, at Omaha (Burke) when he retired.

to current Nebraska FFA Alumni members, but may be individuals outside of the Alumni Association.

Please visit <https://nebraskaffaalumni.org/awards/award-application.html> for all awards applications, as well as a listing of all past Al Sick, Jr. recipients.

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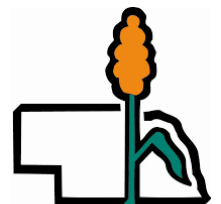
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National FFA Convention Results

Agriscience:

Adams Central, Jenna Cercle, Animal Systems-Division 5, 4th Place Individual; Adams Central, Lynsie Lancaster, Jack Trausch, Plant Systems-Division 4, 6th Place Team; Elgin, Kyndal Busted, Kayton Zwingman, Social Science-Division 2, 9th Place Team; Lyons-Decatur NE, Alexander Timm, Braxton Watson, Power, Structural, and Technical Systems-Division 4, 5th Place Team; Norfolk, Miranda Hansen, Kali Mangelsen, Animal Systems-Division 4, 7th Place Team; Norfolk, Claire Steskal, Power, Structural, and Technical Systems-Division 5, 9th Place Individual; Norfolk, Brianna Buresh, Jenna Fisher, Power, Structural, and Technical Systems-Division 6, 9th Place Team; Pawnee City, Luke Hunziker, Aidan Petersen, Power, Structural, and Technical Systems-Division 2, 10th Place Team.

Career Development/ Leadership Development:

Alliance, Cord McBride, Wade Sanders, Logan Thompon, Wyatt Walker, Farm and Agribusiness Management, Silver Team; Ansley, Chancey Hoblyn-Bittner, Cody Nelson, Chase Racicky, Halie Racicky, Dairy Cattle Evaluation and Management, Bronze Team; BerMis, Drake Hermanson, Johanna Ford, Lane Schoff, Leah Schutz, Environmental and Natural Resources, Silver Team; Boone Central, Braden Benes, Brant Benes, Brooke Brengelman, Cassidy Maricle, Horse Evaluation, Silver Team; Cambridge, Bailee Ahlemeyer, Brenna Deterding, Jalen Kent, Megan TenBensel, Floriculture, Silver Team; Chadron, Parker Fisher, Jace Lien, Gabe Tidyman, Duane Trent, Agricultural Technology and Mechanical Systems, Gold, 4th Place Team; Chadron, Parker Fisher, Agricultural Technology and Mechanical Systems, Gold, 10th Place Individual; Deshler, Colton Isernhagen, Jayden Isernhagen, Ava Kniep, Bryn Kniep, Poultry Evaluation, Bronze Team; Eustis-Farnam, Finn Kerzner, Grace Schimmels, Madison Woehrle, Dallas Weitzel, Food Science and Technology, Bronze Team; Eustis-Farnam, Broden Dean,

Genesee Knackstedt, Skyler Oberg, Colton Stubbs, Meats Evaluation and Technology, Gold, 5th Place Team; Eustis-Farnam, Broden Dean, Meats Evaluation and Technology, Gold, 5th Place Individual; Gothenburg, Taylor Burge, Madison Cornwell, Logan Feather, Abigail Negley, Jacie Naprstek, Kalli Strauser, Maxwell Wyatt, Conduct of Chapter Meetings, Silver Team; Hayes Center, Kyler Cox, Karlie Erickson, Ellie Shepperd-Broz, Victoriah Deaver, Agricultural Sales, Gold, 5th Place Team; Hayes Center, Ellie Shepperd-Broz, Agricultural Sales, Gold, 9th Place Individual; Howells-Dodge, Jordan Howell, Employment Skills, Bronze Individual; Imperial, Jaiden Hill, Markenna Terryberry, Remington Yaw, Marketing Plan, Silver Team; Imperial, Kathya Aragon, Brayan Cazares, Walker Mollendor, Brooke Schilke, Mason Tyerman, Kylee Wiest, Parliamentary Procedure, Silver Team; McCook, Anna Hock, Sammy Rodewald, Jarett Walter, Kaedin Waugh, Veterinary Science, Bronze Team; McCool Junction, Bailey Hall, Garrett Hansen, Zarina Flaherty, Jen-

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na Fuehrer, Bryan Schwartz, Caleb Weisheit, Agricultural Issues Forum, Bronze Team; Mead, Kaitlyn Hanson, Dairy Handlers Activity, Silver Individual; Milford, Conner Kohout, Nolan, Eickhoff, Sophia Pierce, Autumn Wissenburg Forestry, Bronze Team; Pawnee City, Sierra DeKoning, Ashlynn Hartman, Gavin McHenry, William Vlcek, Agronomy, Gold, 4th Place Team; Pawnee City, Ashlynn Hartman, Agronomy, Gold, 10th Place Individual; Stuart, Benjamin Paxton, Creed Speaking, Silver Individual; Stuart, William Paxton, Extemporaneous Speaking, Gold, 4th Place Individual; Sutherland, Matt Bruns, Mason Roberts, Cole Kerner, Tayton Lucas, Livestock Evaluation, Silver Team; Tri County, Harley Dike, Rylee McCune, Alex Paxton, Macoy Wollenburg, Milk Quality and Products, Bronze Team; West Holt, Samantha Coffin, Madison Davis, Marybelle Hamilton, Abigail Thiele, Agricultural Communications, Silver Team; West Holt, Sadie Jarecke, Tyler Jelinek, Ian Laetsch, Isaac Pistulka, Nursery/Landscape, Gold Team; West Point, Levi Schiller, Prepared Public Speaking, Bronze Individual.

Proficiency Awards

Howells-Dodge, Jordan Howell, Ag Communications, Gold, Finalist; Imperial, Morayah Cupp, Ag Services, Gold, Finalist; St. Paul, Madison Hirschman, Diversified Livestock Production, Gold, Finalist.

National Chapter Awards

3-Star Chapters

Gothenburg, Holdrege, Humphrey, Lakeview, Mead, Norfolk, Waverly.

2-Star Chapters


Franklin, O'Neill, Rock County, Tri County, Wallace, Wayne

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ie Ference, Ord; Alex Flessner, Ord; Adilynn Friesen, Sutton; Olivia Gottula, Pawnee City; Neeley Greger, Riverside; Logan Hafer, Ainsworth; Makennen Havlat, Milford; Shelby Hein, David City; Keyan Helgoth, David City; Kristen Herrick, Franklin; Elizabeth Hodges, Johnson-Brock; Katherine Holcomb, Broken Bow; Alyson Holt, Leyton; Devin Homolka, Wilber-Clatonia; Kylee Horst, Wisner-Pilger; Ellie Jarecke, McCook; Caden Kapke, Tri County; Emily Kerbs, Norris; Julisa Kinzer, Norfolk; Riley Krause, York; Kirsten Krebs, Elgin; Ethan Kreikemeier, West Point; Jordyn Laible, West Holt; Logan Michael Larson, Tri County; Taylor Lautenschlager, Doniphan-Trumbull; Greta Lindberg, Tekamah-Herman; Cade Loomis, Bridgeport; Abigail Lutjulusche, Lakeview; Melody MacDonald, St. Edward; Kaci Mashino, Boyd County; Ella McFarland, Bloomfield; Haley Meduna, Bishop Newmann; Marissa Meduna, Bishop Newmann; Ella Meyer, Lakeview; Ally Micheel, Sargent; Kiki Mikkelsen, Superior; Layne Miller, Lyons-Decatur Northeast; Taryn Miller, Amberst; Tan-

ner Mrkvicka, St. Paul; Kalli Naber, Boone Central; Paige Nelson, Boone Central; Zane Niemann, Boone Central; Evan Niemeier, Elwood; Anthony Niemeyer, Silver Lake; Nolan O'Brien, Shickley; Jacob O'Dea, Southwest; Samantha Oborny, Seward; Gwen Olberding, Falls City; Karson Paitz, Ravenna; Wade Paxton, Stuart; Joseph Preister, Boone Central; Morgan Ramsey, Wheeler Central; Josh Reed, Holdrege; Hannah Robertson, Wallace; Ashley Sanne, Norfolk; Treaven Scheideler, Ord; Samantha Schemper, BerMis; Evie Schlickbernd, West Point; Charles Schmedding, Pender; Jonathon Schmedding, Pender; Austen Schmidt, Humphrey; Connor Scholz, Northwest; Dean Schroder, Loup County-Taylor; Allyson Selting, Elgin; Kaleb Senff, Axtell; Riley Setlik, Ord; Kamren Sitzman, McCook; Wyatt Smith, Silber-Clatonia; Jacob Snyder, Shelton; Emilee Spitz, Twin River; Amber Staab, Ord; Elizabeth Stephens, Elm Creek; Mackenzie Sudbeck, Hartington Newcastle; Grant Turner, Doniphan-Trumbull; Colby Van Winkle, Ravenna; Sarah Von Seggern, Wisner-Pilg-



er; Megan Vrbka, Seward; Aleena Wagner, Bridgeport; Ellie Wanek, Aurora; Lane Wasielewski, Kimball; Leighton Webb, Northwest; Samantha Weeder, Boone Central;

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Brandl earns inaugural Bell Scholarship

By Karlie Gerlach

University of Nebraska—Lincoln Agricultural Education student Danie Brandl of Humphrey has been named the inaugural recipient of the Lloyd Bell Scholarship for Teaching Excellence in Nebraska Agricultural Education.

“I feel very honored to receive this scholarship,” Brandl said. “It’s special to know that the faculty and the other supporters of the scholarship are helping fund my education and believe in me to receive a scholarship that is so prestigious.”

Brandl is a senior in the Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication Department and will graduate in 2023. Following graduation, she will begin teaching at Elm Creek Public Schools as an agricultural educator and FFA supervisor. Brandl was able to secure the position 18 months in advance of her anticipated graduation.

Brandl said it was the preparation and experience that the ALEC Department gave her that allowed her

to secure a position so far in advance. She said the program gave her the baseline knowledge of how to be a teacher and helped her build connections with current ag educators and industry professionals.

The new scholarship honors the legacy of Dr. Lloyd Bell, UNL Emeritus Professor, who shaped future agricultural educators in ALEC for more than 40 years.

“Over his tenure, he has been a steady force for good when it comes to agriculture education in the state of Nebraska,” said Matt Kreifels, UNL associate professor of practice.

After Bell’s retirement in 2020, donors including his former students and colleagues celebrated his service by contributing to endow a scholarship in his name at the University of Nebraska Foundation.

“His legacy is played out every single day in the 210 programs around the state,” said Dr. Mark Baltschweid, ALEC Department Head.

The scholarship will help recruit and support talented future educators, who are in high demand

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Danie Brandl

With Larsen based in northeast Nebraska and White located in the Panhandle, the ALEC department aims to attract potential ag educators to the program from around the state.

Additional gifts to the Lloyd Bell Scholarship fund are welcome and will help the ALEC Department support more agricultural education students in the future. Donors can contribute online at nufoundation.org or by contacting Barbara Soderlin at (402) 670-0095 or barbara.soderlin@nufoundation.org.

Karlie Gerlach is a junior agricultural and environmental sciences communication major from Wellfleet, Nebraska.



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Also this year, the department welcomed three new agricultural education faculty: Monty Larsen, Troy White, and Becky Haddad.

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2022-2023 Kenesaw members, left to right, Katelyn Edwards, Madeline Pulver, CoriAnn Rostvet, Kassie Kimle, Shelbi Goldenstein, advisor Siera Meyer

Kenesaw gears up for more normal post-pandemic FFA competitions

By Erin Pfeifer

Nebraska FFA chapters have big dreams for their first full year free from the COVID-19 pandemic and that's certainly true for the Kenesaw FFA chapter members in their first "normal" year of the program.

Siera Meyer, current Kenesaw chapter advisor, established the program in the fall of 2019. With a virtual State Convention in 2020 and limitation-filled beginning to the 2020-2021 school year, Kenesaw is beginning to experience FFA in its entirety. "Last year was our first, normal, full-fledged FFA

convention even though it was our third year being established," Meyer said. "Between last year and this year, we're getting more of a normal feel for what FFA is."

Meyer said she has had the opportunity to take her students to conferences and workshops that they had missed out on in prior years due to the pandemic, which has increased membership and participation across the chapter.

Meyer said the passion and enthusiasm she sees in her students is her favorite part about being an FFA advisor. "Their passion and enthusiasm make my job easy because I can feed off of

that," Meyer said. "I also love the 'aha' moments and getting to connect them with what we are learning in the classroom to those real-world experiences."

Meyer said in the next couple of years, she would like to see the chapter begin community service projects. "We connect with the community, but we'd like to do a community service project to give back," Meyer said. A long-term goal of the chapter is to build a greenhouse for learning opportunities.

The growth of Kenesaw FFA is evident in its career development activities. Madeline Pulver,

Kenesaw FFA Chapter president, said involvement with area agricultural businesses and producers makes their chapter stand out from others. “It gives us a feel of what ag outside of the classroom truly is and how it relates to our life after we leave high school,” Pulver said.

Their current career development and service opportunities include offering a pancake feed through the local farm bureau for the community, serving harvest lunch to the farmers through the CPI grain elevator and building outdoor play spaces for the child-care center in the area. However, she said one of their proudest involvements is through a local animal producer, in which students from their animal science class perform ultrasounds for the cattle. “It’s super fun because we get to see what we’re learning about in class,” Pulver said.

Pulver is a senior at Kenesaw High School and has been a member of Kenesaw FFA since 2020. In FFA, she competes in Land Judging and the Bio-technology Career Development events. As president, Pulver works with the other officers to bring their past experiences to the new members. “Even though our chapter is pretty large, we are very young,” Pulver said. “So even the little experience that myself, as well as my other officers, have, we work together to lead everyone else and talk them through what’s going to happen because no one really knows what to expect.”

She said her favorite part is learning about how expansive the impacts of agriculture truly are. “Things you wouldn’t even think that ag has any relation with, when it comes down to it, really does,” Pulver said. She also really enjoys spending time with Meyer.

Meyer said Kenesaw FFA’s



McKinnley Kroos shows her breeding heifer.



Pictured at Kenesaw’s first time at the state FFA Convention in April 2022, left to right, Rylee Legg, Halle Nienhueser, Madeline Pulver, Gracie Coffey.

partnership with community organizations for learning opportunities is one of their strongest suits. Besides the cattle ultrasounds, students visit the local flower shop where they see demonstrations for the plant science class and local agriculture personnel are always open to being guest speakers for class. “We try to get the kids connected to the real world of agriculture,” Meyer said.

McKinnley Kroos, a freshman member of Kenesaw’s FFA Chapter, has already taken strides in connecting agricultural education to her life and future career path. Kroos does not come from an agriculture family, but still finds herself jumping into the world of agriculture. Through connecting with family friends who raise cattle, Kroos began showing their livestock and ultimately bought one heifer of her own. “I bought my own breeding heifer, and now she’s calving out, so I’m starting my own herd,” Kroos said. “When I graduate high school and college, I’ll have my own herd to continue on.” Kroos said she hopes to build her herd to a point where she can use her cattle as a proficiency project.

Kroos said her personal goals this year include

being as involved as possible in FFA activities and becoming an elected officer for the following school year. Like Pulver, Kroos is on the land judging and bio-technology teams, along with agriscience in the spring. Although just a freshman, Kroos has experienced some favorites in the FFA world. “I like all the opportunities in FFA and how many new people you meet, just from showing and all the events you go to,” Kroos said. “I also enjoy hanging out with Mrs. Meyer.”

Meyer said the chapter’s goals for this year’s state convention is to have as many students participate as possible, through qualifying teams for state and getting the younger students involved in FFA activities at the state level. “Kenesaw has a strong FFA chapter and passionate, active students,” Meyer said. “They are going to propel us forward and make us better than we already are.”




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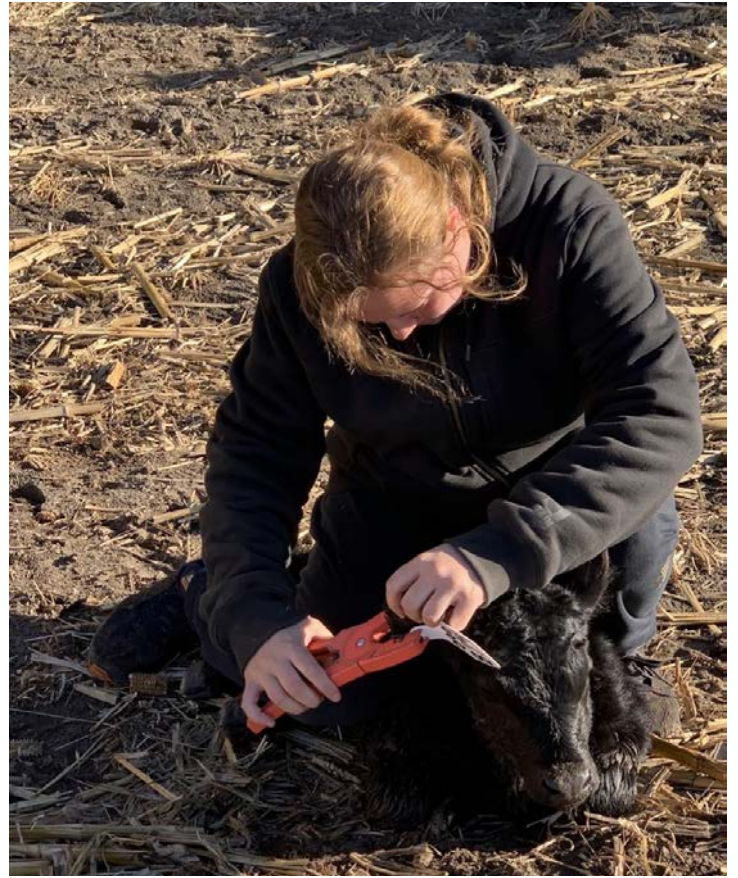
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Madison Hirschman, left, introduces better genetics into her herd with artificial insemination; right, Hirschman tags her calves and also provides them with a shot of Alpha 7 during the procedure.

Making it in Diversified Livestock

First bottle calf leads Hirschman to national finals

By Logan Bakula

When Madison Hirschman first found out she was a national finalist for the Diversified Livestock category for the National FFA Convention for 2022, she was shocked. She never imagined that the black heifer bottle calf her dad brought home would lead to a national finalist placement. Her business was only a concept when she first began at only 6 years old and, with the help of her dad and sister who gave her encouragement along the way, it has grown into so much more.

Hirschman, from the St. Paul FFA Chapter, is a national finalist in the Diversified Livestock category and she has expanded her business from its humble beginnings of one black heifer bottle calf to around 25 cows and 12 ewes, and much more.

“I grew up on a family farm, just outside of St. Paul, and my dad has been raising Red Angus cattle and Charolais cattle, and my sister raised Red Angus cattle as

well,” Hirschman said. “So, I decided I wanted to start showing cattle, and so my dad brought home a little black bottle calf, it was a heifer. So, that year I showed her at the county fair, and then kept her as a breeding heifer to start my own herd.” Since that moment, she has been showing two breeding heifers a year and has been working on expanding her herd since.

“Ever since I got that little bucket calf, I decided I wanted to start taking care of my own heifers throughout the years, and just growing up on a family farm and generations of cattle producers in my family, I kind of have the blood for it,” Hirschman said.

According to her proficiency application, her beef livestock production has expanded from just the black heifer calf to around 20 cows, two breeding heifers and two market calves.

In addition to beef livestock production, she also

[See Diversified, pg 46](#)

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DIVERSIFIED
Continued from pg. 44

has her own sheep production. While growing up on the farm, her mom has always had sheep around, but they were getting old and Hirschman still wanted to show sheep at the county fair. She bought eight ewe lambs in 2014 at the Hamilton Show Lambs. She said her main goal with the sheep was to have good lambs to show at the fair and sell the lamb's offspring except some for replacement of others in the future.

With both of these livestock productions, Hirschman said she has to assume different roles and responsibilities within her business, according to her application. Though, she does have a lot of help along the way. She tags them when they are born and gives them shots. She also brands them and bands the bulls. Hirschman also moves the cows in the spring and makes sure they are all healthy. She feeds them every night and day during the show season. For her sheep production, she makes sure they are breathing and nursing when they are born. She also tags the sheep and vaccinates them.

See Diversified, pg 48



Hirschman works with Ivermectin insecticide pour-on to help control parasites.

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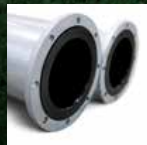
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Jon Zoucha

DIVERSIFIED
Continued from pg. 46

She also begins to feed them when they are about three months old.

“My parents have been really big supporters of me starting my own business as they have helped me find out different processes of embryo transfer,” Hirschman said. “My sister also, she was my ag advisor, had a big part with this project as well. She helped me put in the embryos, she helped me AI my cows. I also had DJC Genetics, they AI’d my cows for me.”

Hirschman acknowledges a lot of people have helped her out along the years, but puts great emphasis on her parents and her sister as the biggest help.

Hirschman is a finalist in the category of Diversified Livestock. To compete within this category, participants have to produce more than one species. She described this category as being pretty tough to qualify for nationals because so many people across the country can produce more than one species. It is a pretty broad category to place in. Hirschman said she was very surprised to have placed in nationals within this category. “Last year, I received second place in Diversified Livestock at State. This year I knew I had a pretty good chance of winning state, but being a national qualifier, a national finalist even, was very shocking because it’s so many people and just four of them get it,” Hirschman said.

This is Hirschman’s first time making it to nationals and she said she was pretty nervous to find out what place she got, but also excited to be a national finalist.

Hirschman has been a member of FFA since the summer before her seventh grade year in 2017. During that time, she has had the opportunity to work with two advisors for FFA. Boyd Bowder is currently the FFA advisor at St. Paul and Makayla Coufal, Hirschman’s sister, was another one of the advisors while Hirschman was in school. Coufal recently left to go to industry.

Bowder and Coufal co-advised Hirschman since she was in seventh grade. Bowder has had a lot of experience of working with Hirschman throughout the years, and is proud of all her accomplishments and seeing what she has done with her business throughout the years. “The whole chapter and our community is very proud of what she has accomplished as an FFA member, and we are excited to see how she does when we get to Indianapolis, and a lot of people will be down there cheering for her and watching on the streams as well,” Bowder said.

Hirschman is currently a freshman at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, and she is majoring in ag economics and farm and ranch management options. She is minoring in the Engler program and the beef scholars’ program. “With that minor, it will help me with the marketing side of my business and the beef scholars and angler program will help with the entrepreneurship side of things and help me develop better genetics within my herd,” Hirschman said.

Hirschman still plans to continue breeding her herd for better genetics and heritability within the next two years. “I plan to produce breeding livestock as well as my own show cattle to sell to local 4-Hers around my area. I plan to keep that in my future,” Hirschman said. And it all began with a little black heifer bottle calf when she was 6 years old.



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FFA Alumni Student Teacher



Clayton Thomas

My name is Clayton Thomas, and I am originally from Bloomington, Illinois. I am currently student teaching at Omaha Bryan High School and will graduate from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in December 2022. Throughout college I was active across campus in activities such as UNL Block and Bridle, Ag Ed Club, NHRI Leadership Mentoring, and served as an Ambassador for the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. I also served as a member of the Nebraska Agricultural Youth Council for three years. My favorite part of student teaching so far has been creating relationships with my students and witnessing the impact that it has on their learning.



Danie Brandl

I am Danie Brandl from Humphrey, Nebraska. I am an agricultural education with biology endorsement and applied science double major, and will be student teaching in Pawnee City. After graduation, I will be teaching in Elm Creek.



Nickolas Birdsley

Student teaching has been a long-awaited experience for me. It feels good to be back in the classroom, and strange at the same time to take on the opposite role. I definitely have had challenging days and students, but the good moments really make up for it. I enjoy the challenges because they offer me an opportunity to try different ideas and methods that I never have before. My favorite part of student teaching hands down has to be connecting with students. Especially English Learners (students). Seeing their eyes light up when they found that I could communicate with them and teach them felt really good. I hope to continue to grow throughout this semester and reflect on my journey to come in my teaching career.

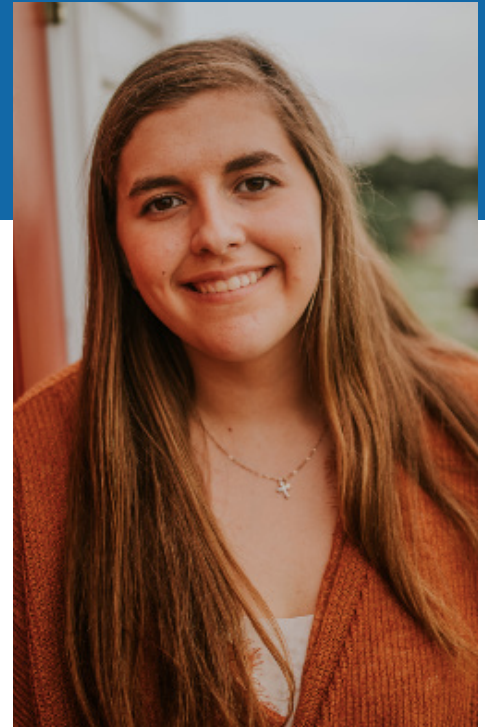
Scholarship recipients



Jocelyn Pohl

My name is Jocelyn Pohl, and I am from Bridgeport, Nebraska. I grew up on my family's farm and ranch where I first developed my passion for agriculture through being directly involved in the production side of agriculture. I later realized my love of learning through being in school and other activities. Teaching agriculture is a perfect combination of my passion for both ag and learning because I get to teach students the importance of agriculture every day and allow them to learn more than they ever thought they could.

I am currently student-teaching at Alliance High School with Ashlyn Vivion and have really enjoyed my experience so far. Some of my favorite parts so far include developing relationships with the students, creating hands-on activities that excite and engage students, and being in a collaborative environment where Ashtyn and I can bounce ideas off of each other and try new things. I'm super excited to finish up the semester and can't wait to have a classroom of my own next year!



Regan Alfs

I grew up in Shickley, Nebraska, where my family has owned and operated an irrigation well drilling business since 1940. My passion for agriculture began at an early stage of life traveling the country showing livestock across the Midwest competing at the county, state and national levels. Growing up in an agricultural-based community, I knew I wanted to stay involved and give back to the industry that made me who I am today. Nothing satisfies me more in life than serving others. With the shortage of teachers across all subject areas, education seemed like a major that was my calling. Agriculture education was a simple decision for me as I wanted the opportunity to serve youth and allow them to have the chance to be in the classroom where I found my home and be a part of an organization that prepared me for life beyond high school with the skills I developed in FFA. In January, I will begin my student teaching experience at Boone Central, and excited is an understatement!

Holdrege encourages student growth with community, leadership events

By Zarke Yates

The Holdrege FFA Chapter is continuing to encourage student growth with community and leadership events.

Jeff Moore, the advisor of the FFA chapter in Holdrege, is very proud of the chapter members. Moore's goal as the Holdrege advisor is to develop students' awareness of agriculture and issues. In 2021 Holdrege's Grady Johnson was selected as the FFA American Star Farmer. Josh Reed, a 2021 graduate and member of the FFA chapter in Holdrege will receive his American FFA degree in 2022. Last spring Reed applied and completed the review process.

Moore said he encourages his students to participate in community leadership events and compete in contests based on what activity the student participates in. This gives the students the opportunity to develop leadership skills and agricultural knowl-

edge. "Leadership development is achieved through various contests that the students can participate in," Moore said. "These events include speaking events on ag topics, demonstration on ag skills and parliamentary procedure is a big contest area that our students do also."

Moore works with the state FFA Association on its Board of Directors and the state FFA Foundation Board.

Providing for the community is a big part of the Holdrege FFA chapter. "We're providing meals for harvest crews in the area," Moore said. "Right now we're going to serve about 200 different meals to harvest crews and local grain elevators."

"This event is a way to give back to agriculture producers and the community for their continued support," he said. "Another activity we help with is Ribfest, the students do a food drive in February and collect about 400 different items that go to the food



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pantry,” Moore said.

The Holdrege Chapter received a three-star ranking at the national level this year. This was achieved through its community service leadership and development strength in agriculture. The chapter must send an application detailing its performance and have it evaluated at the state level. “It’s only for the top 10% of the chapters in the United States that get evaluated at the national level,” Moore said.

Holdrege FFA chapter has 36 members this year.

Chyen Tidyman, the president of the Holdrege FFA Chapter, plans to attend either the University of Nebraska-Lincoln or Hastings College for wild-life biology.

Emily Heowick, treasurer of the Holdrege FFA chapter, plans to attend Milford Southeast Community College for agricultural teaching.

The students involved in the FFA chapter attend an SAE class to work on getting their FFA degrees. During this time the students will also plan for upcoming events. Events like the Holdrege FFA Fruit Sales, where either the students or the students’ parents go out in the community to sell fruit, meats and poinsettias. These events help with fundraising for the FFA chapter. The freshman with the highest

amount is able to receive his/her FFA jacket for free. The three top earners receive gift cards.



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WELL, DID YOU KNOW THIS? Facts about Nebraska FFA history

By Joe Baldassare

The Nebraska Star Farmer Award was first awarded to the Nebraska FFA who had achieved the most at the time the State Farmer Degrees were conferred during the State Convention.

The first winner (1946) was Loran Schmit, Columbus. The next six annual winners of the Nebraska Star Farmer Award were:

1947 Howard Classen, Beatrice

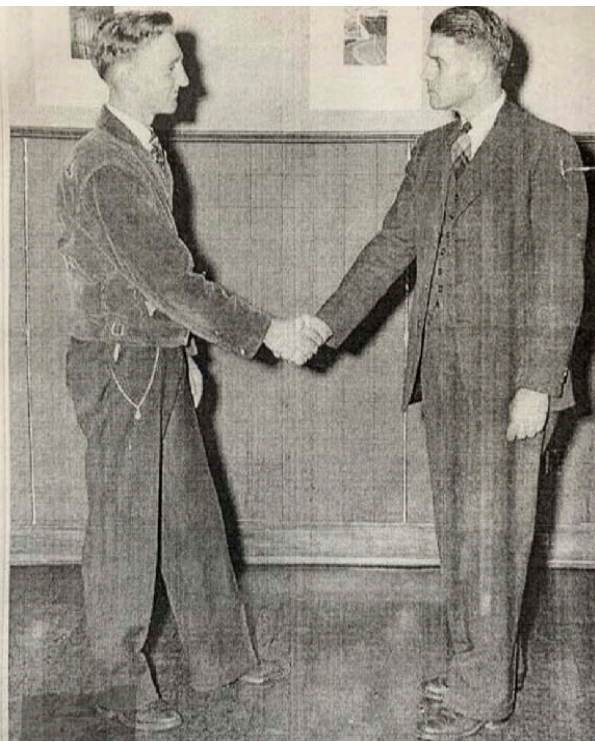
1948 Lawrence Collins, St. Edward

1949 Roger Stukenholtz, Nebraska City

1950 Gordon Muller, Kearney

1951 Stanley Schellpepper, Stanton

1952 George Gaswick, Hay Springs



Loran Schmit (left), first winner of the Nebraska FFA Foundation Award for the State Star Farmer, with Howard W. Deems (right), State Supervisor of Agriculture Education in Nebraska. Presentation was made at the 1946 FFA Convention in Lincoln. (Photo, courtesy of Steve Schmit, David City, Nebraska)

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