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Spotlight

Nebraska FFA Alumni and Supporters
December 2021



Grady Johnson named
American Star Farmer, pg. 5



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Cover photo:

Grady Johnson of Holdrege FFA earned the American Star Farmer award at the National FFA Convention in October. See story on page 5

A note from your FFA Alumni Council

Greetings from the Nebraska FFA Alumni and Supporters State Council. I hope you are all healthy and doing well. Covid -19 has defiantly been a life changing pandemic that I hope we never have to go through again.

The last 2 years FFA members have continued to work around barriers that have stripped them of many experiences that FFA members before them got to be involved in. As activities go back to in person attendance and participation, do all you can to help support the FFA members, so that they can enjoy the true feeling that the FFA provides to it's students. The Nebraska FFA Association is always looking for Volunteers and Evaluators at District Leadership Events and the State FFA Convention in April.

The FFA in Nebraska continues to grow. There are now 202 Chapters and over 10,000 members in

the State. As the FFA grows the Alumni and Supporters looks forward to searching for way's to help them have a positive experience, and help them grow as potential future leaders in our Communities, State, and Nation.

I would like to invite you all to come experience our State Alumni and Supporters Conference to be held in Broken Bow Nebraska on January 21-22. If you have never been to the conference, plans are being made to tour some very interesting businesses on both days and recognize some outstanding supporters of the FFA in Nebraska at our banquet on Saturday night.

Thank you for all that you do.

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Johnson looks at an equipment manual. The Holdrege FFA member was named American Star Farmer in October.

Grady Johnson named American Star Farmer

By Savannah Ameen

Grady Johnson's journey toward Star Farmer was a long time coming.

Johnson was named American Star Farmer Oct. 29, at the Future Farmers of America National Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Johnson has been working for this moment since he stepped foot into the FFA world his freshman year of high school in the Holdrege Public Schools District of Holdrege, Nebraska.

In high school, Johnson was involved with FFA, ***Nebraska FFA Alumni & Supporters***

the tennis team and working on the family farm. He said he knew before entering high school that he would be involved with the FFA program as his family high encouraged the involvement. His father was a state officer back in 1988 and winner of the American Star Farmer award in 1991. Johnson will also be the sixth generation to take leadership on the family farm west of Holdrege.

His freshmen year of high school, he proved he was all in when it came to his involvement with FFA. His chapter advisor, Jeff Moore, described Johnson as a "self-motivated" student, leader and worker on

Johnson is currently attending UNL, majoring in agricultural economics.



the family farm.

Johnson's sophomore year he held the position of chapter secretary. As a junior, he held the position of president. During his senior year he was named vice president. After graduating high school, Johnson is now attending the University of Nebraska at Lincoln in pursuit of a degree in agricultural economics. During his time at UNL he has become a member of Alpha Gamma Sigma Fraternity as the standards chairperson and risk management chairman, the Farm Bureau Club, Commodity Marketing Club and Fight Club. He also is enjoying the academics, the grain marketing classes being one of his current favorites. Outside of school, he has been working on earning his private pilot's license since he was 16. After graduating from UNL, he said he plans to return to the family farm, where he will begin his work and operations full time.

Out on the family farm, Johnson helps manage the day-to-day operations, oversees the H2A (seasonal employees from South Africa), oversees general paperwork, helps his father put together crop plans, combines and manages the pivot irrigation systems. During high school he began to start his own business within the farm.

As a sophomore, he began a lamb breeding operation as his FFA Supervised Agriculture Experience (SAE). He raised and bred a flock of lambs. He also fattened feeder lambs and sent them to packers across the United States and started a cornstalk bail-

“(FFA) gave me the opportunity to get outside of my comfort zone and try new things....”

-Grady Johnson

ing operation, selling them to local feed lots.

Johnson really enjoyed his time in FFA. “It gave me the opportunity to get outside of my comfort zone and try new things: public speaking, competitions and making connections across the state,” he said. Being a part of FFA he was able to meet people who gave him many opportunities to grow and lead the expansion of his own operations and the family operations.

Through his work in the classroom, in the FFA chapter, on the family farm and his own business, Johnson has been able to build a strong framework for what his future will hold.

“He was a go-getter, taking his open periods to work on his own project or with his family on the family farm,” Moore said. The advisor said John-



The American Star Farmer award was presented at the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, IN, Oct. 29.

son’s hard work in and out of the classroom allowed him to run a proficient sheep and crop operation, for which he won awards at the state level. Not many get involved with sheep operations at a large scale, as Johnson did with his marketing and breeding project, according to Moore. “It’s been a lot of work, but fun work, to watch him grow over the last 6-8 years,” Moore said.

Johnson has been working toward the Star Farmer award for the past six to eight years by working closely with his family, putting together his own businesses and operations as well as collecting data. The data included growth and efficiency factors of the operations, transactions, pictures and other records. All was included in his portfolio application for Star Farmer.

The applications from across the United States are then read and discussed by a board of judges.

Johnson was interviewed via Zoom to answer questions regarding his application, clarifying his business operations and forms submitted for the judges.

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2021 Alumni Awards

Gold FFA Alumni & Supporters Chapters
– Lakeview and Crete

No silver or bronze chapters awards were made.

Al Sick Jr. Distinguished Service Award
– Jeff Schellpeper, Raymond Central

Robert “Bob” Clausen Outstanding Achievement Awards – Jaimie & Jenny Meyer, Lakeview and Drs. Ryan & June Loseke, Lakeview

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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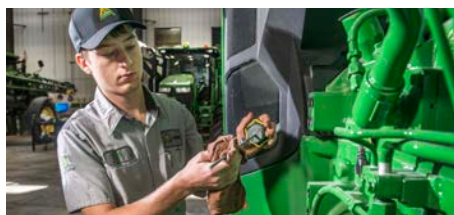
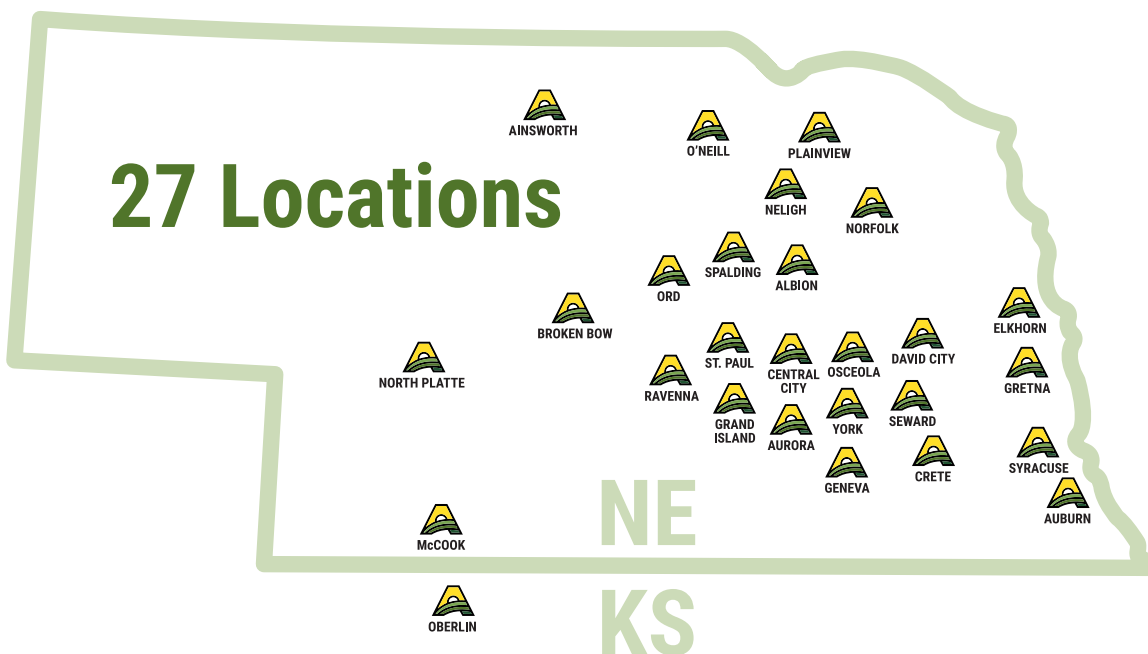
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Ethan Uhler - finalist Outdoor Recreation Proficiency

By Kortney Fethkenher

Ethan Uhler, a 2020 graduate of St. Paul High School and now a sophomore at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, was selected as an Outdoor Recreation Proficiency finalist for the National FFA Convention held in Indianapolis, Indiana in October.

Uhler was one of four finalists in the country, and the only FFA member from Nebraska to make the final four in that category.

What started as a family business is what led Uhler to this accomplishment. Located in O'Neill, Nebraska, Uhler's family owns and operates Oak View Ranch where they host and guide hunters from all over the country. They guide hunters for archery deer, rifle deer and turkey hunts. They host guests at the lodge as well as prepare home cooked meals.

In addition to the lodge, they also have a cabin that they lease. The lodge and cabin combined can hold about 27 people.

Uhler's SAE (Supervised Agricultural Experience) qualifies for three different categories: Hospitality and Tourism Management, Outdoor Recreation and Wildlife Conservation. Uhler chose Outdoor Recreation to represent him at nationals because he said it best encompasses all aspects of what his SAE entails.

The main lodge was once an old barn with a significant piece of history attached to it. In the early 1900s, the upper deck was made into a hardwood floor for barn dances. Next to the property was Oak View Park, which included an Olympic-sized swimming pool, a dance pavilion, a rodeo arena and a man-made lake with boats. Uhler said this was a focal point in the area at the time and similar to "Disney World" before there even was a Disney World.

Uhler said what makes hunting in Nebraska, and more specifically the area around O'Neill, so special is that three of the four main turkey species in the United States can be found there.

"As it is a family-run business, being really young I didn't start out doing many important activities," Uhler said. "My roles involved throwing firewood, carrying groceries in for mom to cook, and - when

clients got in - just being around and absorbing as much information as I could and kind of being more of a task man. Compared to now I'm responsible for actually sitting with clients, helping them track and helping process the meat after they successfully get a bird or a deer," Uhler said.

Uhler is a pre-nursing major at UNK, and although his proposed career path doesn't necessarily align with his SAE, Uhler said he will always be tied to the outdoors.

"My career path isn't going to relate to my SAE, but I will never be apart from my SAE because it's a family business and I know I'm going to continue doing the guiding. So, while it won't be my main career path, I will for sure stick with it," Uhler said.



Uhler takes a chainsaw to downed branches.

Left: Ethan Uhler was named a finalist in Outdoor Recreation Proficiency.

Nebraska FFA Alumni & Supporters



Uhlir said FFA prepared him for challenges in life.

Uhlir said he wanted to thank his great-grandfather for instilling the principles of sportsmanship and having courtesy to the land to be able to maintain a healthy population of wildlife. If it's not properly maintained and well-kept in balance, an ecosystem can become unbalanced, Uhlir said.

He said Boyd Bowder, St. Paul's FFA advisor, has helped him hone his knowledge and expertise.

Bowder, now in his eighth year at St. Paul, has known Uhlir for quite some time, even teaching his older brothers and sisters in agriculture and FFA. In his eight years at St. Paul, Bowder said they've had a pretty good run of students come through, and Uhlir is no exception.

"He's a one-of-a-kind student," Bowder said. "He has always taken leadership roles and is always trying to do his best no matter what, and so to have him be a part of our chapter was great for us just because we were able to utilize some of his talents to help our chapter but to help him grow as a person as well."

While at St. Paul, Uhlir was president of their FFA chapter his senior year.

Bowder said it was "a bummer" that the 2020 Nebraska FFA State Convention could not be held in person due to COVID-19. For Uhlir, the pandemic in 2020 had some positive outcomes as he was able to spend more time outdoors at the ranch as school was shifted to online learning.

"FFA has prepared me in the aspect of understanding that there's challenges in life and to be able to know how to be prepared and know how you're going to react when those challenges are faced," Uhlir said.

Bowder said he and fellow agriculture instructor Makayla Coufal are proud of what Uhlir has accomplished. "It's not every day that you have somebody that's a national finalist, so we're excited for Ethan and we're excited to go down there and see what he does."

Uhlir said he is thankful for the opportunity FFA has given him to meet so many different people, whether it be fellow Nebraskans or members from other states.

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Arcadia works to perfect skills

By Ally Boyd

The Arcadia FFA chapter focuses on helping its community and gives students the ability to perfect skills and learn about careers.

Chrisinda Scheideler, the FFA advisor and ag educator at Arcadia, said the chapter has been doing a word working project where students create a design, cut angles and do related math calculations. She said other students are working on a welding project to re-furbish metal chairs. Students plan to sell the chairs when they are finished. Chapter members are also working on finishing a greenhouse and are restoring a tractor in the agriculture mechanic's class.

"I love doing floral arrangements with the students," Scheideler said, "I love teaching about the poultry industry, poultry contests specifically. That's one of my favorite contests to run."

Scheideler said the chapter recently hosted an FFA night and invited members of the community

to watch a movie and have a bonfire with them. She said one of the chapter's goals is to do more volunteer work for the community.

The advisor said the pandemic had a negative effect on Arcadia's FFA program because students were unable to interact how they normally would. "We couldn't do some of the events that we wanted to do. As far as state contests they were virtual two years in a row. We did not go to the national FFA convention last year, but we will be able to go this year," Scheideler said.

She said one chapter challenge is that they do not have enough space in their classrooms.

"I am currently teaching my ag classroom in the shop and so I'm just—trying to work around my classroom and we still do shop activities," Scheideler said.

Arcadia members are looking forward to the State FFA convention in April and are studying for the contests and crafting their skills. Arcadia FFA has 41 students in seventh through 12th grade.



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A snippet of history of the Nebraska FFA

Nebraska agriculture ed Statehood to late 1920s

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

During the last third of the 1900s and into the beginning of the 20th century, a thirst for knowledge and for vocational education in agriculture was growing in Nebraska and rural America.

Within the span of these years, organizations like the Grange and publications like Nebraska Farmer Magazine, attempted to educate and advocate for farmers, ranchers and other and rural residents in Nebraska. Several publishing companies printed books and leaflets with information about modern techniques for farming; however, they were relatively expensive and were often written in an effort to sell a product. Some of these books were translated into other languages including German, Czech, Norwegian and others, for the benefit of emigrant farmers and homesteaders. Elementary schools, particularly rural schools, had an agriculture component within their curriculum, often limited by the knowledge of the teacher.

Prior to the early 20th century, agricultural knowledge was passed from father to son or neighbor to neighbor. There were not yet any efforts to fund and establish vocational or career education in the secondary schools. It wasn't until five years after Nebraska became a state, the University of Nebraska College of Agriculture was established (1872). Many late 19th century and early 20th century students in Nebraska, and states like it, with a largely rural population, found that secondary and post-secondary schools were boring. This was a time when about 70 percent of the U.S. population lived in rural areas and a typical farmer was able to feed only four other people. (In 1960, a farmer fed just 26 people,

and today the average U.S. farmer feeds 166 people in the U.S. and abroad).

Secondary schools taught Ancient History, Greek, Latin, and other things that many students couldn't apply to their rural lifestyles. Many students dropped out after elementary school because they didn't see the value of higher education. Too few rural Nebraskans completed a high school education and even fewer went on to a higher education.

In 1895, a School of Agriculture was established for secondary school students on the University Farm Campus in Lincoln. Both boys and girls were welcomed to this program, but most girls were expected to take the Domestic Science program. There was a three-year course of six-month duration. A fourth-year course was added in 1910. This and other length classes continued until 1930.



UNIVERSITY FARM CAMPUS

Students very often remember the beautiful campus, the trees, the flowers and the buildings long after the names of their instructors have faded from memory. The campus of the College of Agriculture is one of the beauty spots of Nebraska. Its spreading trees, broad expanses of green sward and beautiful flower beds make it an attractive place indeed. The picture on this page shows the long court between the rows of buildings. The beauty of this scene never fails to bring forth an expression of delight from the passing visitor.

The University of Nebraska Farm Campus in 1913 (Now East Campus). There have been many changes since then. The trees have grown; more traffic; more people; fewer horse drawn and more motorized vehicles.



Beef cattle shown at the American Royal Livestock show 1929.

A second State School of Agriculture was established in 1913 at Curtis, Nebraska and continued to operate until 1968 when it was closed as a secondary school. It had a similar program to the School of Agriculture in Lincoln. The University of Nebraska School of Technical Agriculture still operates there as a post-secondary school.

The Nebraska Legislature tried to establish a more relevant education programs in all schools and in 1912 the Nebraska Legislature passed the Shumway Act to provide schools the funding for teaching agriculture, manual training and home economics. The program was not successful, and appropriations were cut off by the 1914 and 1916 legislatures.

The U. S. Congress also passed the Smith-Lever Act in 1914, which established a national Cooperative Extension Service. This act extended outreach programs under the management of land-grant univer-

sities to educate rural Americans about advances in agricultural practices and technology. Out of school youth education was provided by this act through the creation of the 4-H clubs program.

A second attempt was made in 1915 (Mallery Act) to encourage schools to include vocational agriculture. Small sums of money were paid to schools for participation. This also had limited success.

U.S. Sen. Hoke Smith and Rep. Dudley Hughes, both from Georgia, and others worked together to put a bill before Congress to federally fund and nationally organize vocational education. The act was officially signed into law Feb. 23, 1917. Only two Nebraska schools were able to get a Smith Hughes agriculture program started in 1917, Scottsbluff and Hastings. By 1919, 30 Nebraska schools had started Smith Hughes agriculture programs, and by 1928 Nebraska schools with Smith Hughes agriculture



Hotel Baltimore in Kansas City, Missouri was the site of the first few National FFA Conventions until it was demolished. The Municipal Auditorium in Kansas City was built 1936, and the National Convention was held there until 1998 when it moved to Louisville, Kentucky.

programs had increased to 56.

During the National Livestock Judging Contests at the American Royal in Kansas City, Missouri in October of 1928, 33 students from 18 states established the Future Farmers of America. The FFA was chartered to provide leadership training as an integral part of vocational agriculture education programs. During this first annual convention held at the Hotel Baltimore, Leslie Applegate of Freehold, New Jersey was elected president, and Alvin Reimer of Beatrice, Nebraska was elected Vice President. Dues were set at 10 cents annually. Agriculture Education programs in most states were only for farm boys.

These early years of agriculture education established a foundation for the modern successful secondary and post-secondary agriculture programs we now enjoy in our state. Hopefully, in future articles we can continue the saga of how these programs evolved.

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Ansley FFA powers through pandemic, hopes to interest more non-rural students

By John Campbell

After the COVID-19 pandemic restricted their last two years, Ansley FFA is sending seven students to nationals, with three senior students who had not attended since their freshman year.

Since not going to state FFA since 2018 Ansley FFA chapter president Sam Loy and vice president Chancey Hoblyn-Bitner have been working very hard to get back to where they want to be. "They have really been phenomenal with their organization and knowledge of activities and goals that the chapter has," Katie Meyer, a former Randolph FFA member and American Degree recipient, said. Meyer is the chapter's advisor.

Being able to have in-person contests again is important. "I am excited to take the kids and experience things they haven't – Nationals - but really just in-person contests and state," Meyer said.

Meyer said the chapter has not had the experiences she would have liked since the pandemic canceled so many activities. After Meyer came down with COVID before the state dairy evaluation and management contest, members had to communi-

"They had to practice and study all on their own. ...[T]hree seniors and one sophomore - and all four of them placed individually."

-Katie Meyer

cate and study with her virtually.

The chapter did win the contest at the Nebraska State Fair just a few days after her quarantine had ended. "They had to practice and study all on their own," Meyer said. "The three seniors and one sophomore and all four of them placed individually."

She said the goal for this year is to increase the active enrollment in the chapter and get more students involved FFA. "It has been a struggle to get our non-rural students involved, so that's a goal that I have," Meyer said.

Meyer said the program is lucky to have a supportive school administration. "I can't brag about them enough for their support of FFA and the ag program," she said.



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Ellie Wanek
Aurora FFA
State President

Hi, my name is Ellie Wanek and I'm from Aurora. As a freshman, FFA was the one thing I was set on joining. My advisors encouraged me right away to get involved in LDEs, which led to my participation in some of my favorite events: Prepared Public Speaking, Extemporaneous Speaking, and Employment Skills and Veterinary Science.

For my SAE I started with Ellie's Llamas, worked at our local veterinary clinic, and conducted research at the United States Meat Animal Research Center.

My advisors were always my biggest supporters in FFA and planted the seed of state office early on. During state convention my freshman year, my advisor and I were watching the installation of the new officers. He told me that he hoped to see me run for state office someday, which started my journey. I kept the idea in the back of my mind throughout high school and when it came time to apply, I knew that I wanted to invest myself and my time into being a state officer. I am eager to continue serving Nebraska FFA!



Bailey Robinson
York FFA
State VP

My name is Bailey Robinson. I am from York High School and currently attending the University of Nebraska-Lincoln majoring in Clifton Builders Management and Agribusiness. My high school FFA career started freshman year. I participated in multiple CDEs and LDEs in my career including Agriscience, Extemporaneous Speaking, Nursery Landscape, Parliamentary Procedure, and Floriculture.

My SAE is in Crop Scouting through Mittman Agronomics in York. I check fields in four different counties. This has helped me diversify my agriculture knowledge and help me become a better State Officer. I have always had a deep respect for previous State Officers. I admired how they made such a difference in the lives of FFA members across the state. This ultimately, is what influenced me to apply to be an officer. Now, I will have the opportunity to provide the same experiences to FFA members, and to become a more well-rounded leader.



Emily Martindale
Sandhills FFA
State VP

Hi, I'm Emily Martindale from Brewster, Nebraska. In high school, I was a very active FFA member, and my favorite classes were Intro to Agriculture, and Leadership and Ethics. In my SAE I worked on a cow/calf and custom feeding cattle operation, working alongside my grandparents, parents, and siblings. Some of my favorite FFA events include Livestock Judging, Veterinary Science, Livestock Management, and Meats Judging.

I first got the idea of becoming a State Officer in 2018 when she first went to the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis. The idea was further solidified when I met the 2018-19 and 2019-20 State Officer teams. They inspired me to become a leader in my community and showed me how to become an agricultural advocate. My passion for agricultural advocacy grew and I wanted to show members that it doesn't matter where they come from; you can be the next agricultural leaders by being passionate about the agriculture industry.

State Officers



Victoria Ference
Ord FFA
State VP

I'm Victoria Ference, I grew up on a small farm outside of Ord where we raised chickens, pigs, horses and cattle. Agriculture has been around me my whole life. My dad is an agricultural education teacher, so I have gotten to see FFA and agriculture firsthand. I realized I wanted to be a State FFA Officer when my brother Johnny became the State FFA Secretary. Watching him be a role model for other FFA members was so exciting to me. That is when I told my dad that I want to be an officer too. My favorite competition I participated in was ag demo. My favorite ag class was Introduction to Agriculture- you got a taste of everything in FFA!

My SAE started with the love of pigs. I started my swine SAE by saving my money and purchasing some very high-quality show pigs to breed. I love working with my hands and working with livestock gave me that opportunity. Skills I gained through this endeavor are farrowing, feeding, breeding, artificial insemination, castrating, vaccinating, nutrition, feed rations, marketing, and evaluation of the animals. This has been such an



Jaya Nelson
Rock County FFA
State VP

Hi, my name is Jaya Nelson from the Rock County FFA chapter. In high school, my SAE project was a school-based business called "On The Go Gelato". In this project, I made and sold gelato out of our school's kitchen and learned about how to run a business. My favorite events in FFA were Employment Skills and Ag Sales.

I wanted to be a state officer because FFA helped me find my place. Growing up, I had a few injuries that kept me from playing sports and some outside factors that had me lost. When my ag teacher encouraged me to step outside of my comfort zone and join FFA, I finally found my place and what I want to do for the rest of my life. Now as a state officer, I want to give back and show how you can find your place through FFA.

Ference continued
amazing experience. I am hoping to move back to Ord one day and have Vickie's Swine Operation even bigger and selling to customers all over the world!



Gracie Schneider
Cozad FFA
State VP

I'm Gracie Schneider from the Cozad FFA Chapter. After growing up around agriculture, my years in FFA allowed me to grow my passion and find my place in the industry. My supervised agriculture experience is working on my family's cow-calf operation. It not only helped me learn about every aspect of agriculture, but taught me hard work, dedication and so much more.

This was true for all of my FFA activities as well. Through participating in many activities, from livestock evaluation to public speaking, I was able to grow as an individual and leader.

As my years in FFA were coming to an end, I knew I wasn't done quite yet. This is when I decided to run for state office. Through the process, I had so much support from my chapter, family and community. I pushed myself to a whole new level so I could make them proud. I am so humbled and excited to be able to represent Nebraska FFA and the agriculture industry.

2021-22 Nebraska State Officers



Emma Kuss
Seward FFA
State Secretary

I'm Emma Kuss from the Seward FFA Chapter.. When I took my first agriscience class and joined FFA, I saw the role that agriculture plays in my community. Throughout my high school career, I enjoyed taking plant science classes and competing in both Leadership and Career Development Events. With the support of my agriculture teachers, I realized that there are countless opportunities in agriculture. They helped me find my place by helping me develop my SAE in greenhouse production. When my SAE first started, I watered, pulled weeds, propagated plants, and kept the school greenhouse and garden beds organized. By my senior year, I was able to research and create a hydroponic system as well as prepare and organize the annual greenhouse sale my FFA chapter puts on.

FFA introduced me to the agricultural field and has opened my eyes to numerous opportunities.

Without FFA, I may have never found a passion for agriculture and I wouldn't be heading to college to study Horticulture. FFA has impacted my life in more ways than I can recall and that is why I wanted to be a State FFA Officer. I wanted to inspire others to see their potential in the agricultural field and I wanted to help them find their place just like I did.

COMMITTED TO THE FUTURE OF AG

A group of six young people, five men and one woman, are standing in a field of tall green corn. They are all wearing dark blue FFA polo shirts. The shirts have names and titles printed on them: Logan Duerr (Treasurer 2021), Emma Kuss (State Secretary), Kaitie Kuhlman (President 2021), and others. They are also wearing various FFA hats. A man in a black shirt and a green baseball cap is talking to them. The background is a field of corn under a clear sky.

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Arthur Co. involved in community service

By MJ Waterhouse

The FFA chapter at Arthur County High School is led by Kris Rut, chapter advisor and agricultural educator.

The chapter has 27 members in ninth through 12th grade. Throughout last year the chapter has been actively involved in community service, the Nebraska Farm Bureau Connecting Chapters and Ag Pen Pal programs, Rut said.

Members are also involved in leadership and career development events.

In addition, Arthur County High School received a grant to get its plans for a greenhouse off the ground.

The chapter also met with the local Farm Bureau to begin work to increase agricultural literacy efforts.

Rut said the chapter is involved in competitive events each year. "We are very fortunate to have dedicated members, who take the competitive events very seriously and work extremely hard at preparing for them," Rut said. "We had quite a few first-place finishers at our district LDE competitions, including Ag Demo, Natural Resources Public Speaking, Cooperative Speaking and Employment Skills (first and second place). In the CDE's our Livestock Management team, Agronomy team, Agronomy, Envirothon, and Range Judging teams all received top honors."

This year the chapter has a Halloween event planned. Last Halloween members set up a Haunted Forest at the local tree farm. It was free to the community and a huge success.

"Our chapter focus this year will be working to increase agriculture literacy and visiting with local businesses to take an inside look at what their day-to-day jobs are like and appreciate the effort that goes into sustaining our small rural community," Rut said.

He said the chapter is also busy getting ready for the district livestock evaluation and Agronomy CDEs coming up in November. The district LDEs are held Dec. 1.

Currently, there is no chapter business at Arthur County, but there are members that are working to start a businesses.

The students are looking forward to attending the state convention in person next April, Rut said. They also hope to visit their Ag Pen Pal classroom students in North Platte and Lincoln this year.

"In March of 2022, our chapter will start our service-learning project," Rut said. "We will be provid-

"We're very fortunate to have dedicated members, who take the competitive events very seriously and work extremely hard at preparing for them."

-Kris Rut

ing complete grounds-keeping services for our local community building site. Members will be responsible for this, year-round."

FFA is known for preparing students for the future. Rut said one of his goals is to expose students to as many different areas of agriculture as possible.

"I encourage them to take advantage of opportunities that allow them to get out and meet new people," he said. "I believe that by increasing their awareness of what the future of agriculture looks like and opening their minds to the diversity of the ag industry is one way that I can cultivate the idea that there is something for everyone in the world of agriculture. I like to make them think!"

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Hyannis focuses on FFA growth

In-person events should draw more students to the group

By Clare Hornung

The Hyannis FFA Chapter is looking to grow its membership and involvement in the upcoming years.

Advisor Tim Davis wants to see more participation from members. They have the numbers, but Davis said he's like quality over quantity. "When I first came here, they hadn't had a chapter for several years and they kind of got it revived again, but they were going through teachers every year so that made it difficult to get much going I think," Davis said.

Chapter President Gavin Anderson said, on the whole, the Hyannis chapter is young and inexperienced. He said as time progresses, members will overcome that obstacle.

"Because we are a young chapter, we have a lot of potential ahead of us," Anderson said. "We have

a lot of room to grow and develop."

The pandemic was also a setback for the chapter. Davis said all the events being virtual hurt the FFA and participation.

"Even our numbers dropped because no one wanted to do virtual stuff," Ashton Werth, chapter vice president, said.

Cash Davis, chapter reporter, runs the chapter Facebook page. He said he wants to get more members who want to participate. Because Hyannis is a smaller school, he said, with fewer members, it can't do as much as larger schools.

"I get to recruit new members by getting the FFA's name out there and it's a really awesome experience," Cash said. "As long as people need food and shelter and stuff, agriculture is going to be a huge part. I think FFA really helps people learn about it



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and appreciate it.”

Werth said students join FFA because they want to be able to learn more about agriculture.

“Personally, I think FFA is teaching more of the new generation how to be in agriculture and work in it and be a part of it,” Werth said. “And it’s one of the things that I feel keeps the agricultural world running because without it there would be a lot of people who don’t even know about it.”

Davis said FFA helps students with leadership, communication skills and career development skills.

“FFA is a great resource,” Anderson said. “You can learn so much about so many aspects of the real world from hands-on learning to different scientific aspects.”

Cash said students should join FFA to learn about leadership traits and what makes a good leader.

“We are good at working as a team,” Werth said. “We all know each other and can bounce ideas off.”

Cash said the chapter’s members are hard working. The members work for what they have, they are great leaders and help the less experienced underclassmen.

“I love all the people that I’m around all the time,”

Anderson said. “They are a lot of fun to be around.”

Davis said the Hyannis chapter is also close to the community and has a handful of alumni that support them and help out.

This year, the students are looking forward to competition. They said that they hope to do well in livestock judging, meats judging and ag sales.




The Eustis-Farnam Agronomy team took 6th place at Nationals. Members include Grace Schimmels, Maggie Walker, Dallas Weitzel and Madison Woehrle.




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Broken Bow FFA Members participate in the State Range Evaluation competition in Valentine, NE. Competitors must identify species of range plants, evaluate ecological sites based on a set of characteristics and calculate animal stocking rates for a predetermined ranching scenario.

Broken Bow FFA looks forward to hosting alumni, supporters convention in 2022

By Callie Hurley

The Broken Bow FFA chapter is leaving the challenges of COVID behind as it looks forward to hosting the state's alumni convention in early 2022.

The Broken Bow FFA chapter sports 60 members and 110 students in the agricultural education program. Many students who are in this program tend to also join the FFA chapter.

"Agriculture was always a part of my life," Caleb Tenbensen, the advisor of the Broken Bow FFA advisor and agricultural education instructor, said.

At Broken Bow, the FFA chapter works closely with its agricultural education program. This program is comprised of the classroom, supervised agricultural experience and the FFA chapter.

Students are encouraged to join FFA through these classes. The classroom experience and the FFA chapter both have similar goals.

"A place for me to be me," Kenna McCaslin, the Broken Bow chapter president, said. "It is great to

have that fun atmosphere." McCaslin said she enjoyed being in the program and growing close to people similar to her.

Tenbensen said recent challenges included students not being as interested in online chapter events and low productivity in the agricultural education program – both because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Come April this year we do plan on having in-person events in Lincoln," Tenbensen said. "Essentially, I'm going to be taking three years of freshman with me, because none of these students have done this before. I see that as a major issue that has come with... COVID."

"Our (former) advisor, Maggie Louthen, was really good about letting us know about events during COVID - letting us know they were virtual," McCaslin said.

McCaslin said communication was key during the pandemic. All her fellow chapter members were motivated to keep working.

McCaslin said one of her favorite things about the chapter is how dedicated the members are. She said

you could catch 20 members working on the Career Development (CDEs) and Leadership Development (LDEs) events. These help students develop their communication skills.

“With dedication, comes success,” she said. Chapter members go through many competitions to gain expertise on life skills needed in and out of the field.

One of these programs includes the EDGE Conference, a time that freshman in FFA were able to get together and explore careers, networking and understanding their interests.

The Nebraska FFA Alumni and Supporters State Convention will be hosted by the Broken Bow FFA chapter, but organized by the alumni, in January. Students will serve the meal and communicate with the alumni members about FFA.

Tenbensen said FFA members are also excited about the possibility of a \$29.9 million bond to build a new agricultural education building. “Our current building does the job, but it would be really nice to have a new building,” Tenbensen said.

If the bond is passed, the current building will be demolished. Plans for a new building may include a new greenhouse.



Students take a look at farming equipment.



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Valentine chapter excited for a 'normal' year

By Luke Stara

With new facilities being built, the Valentine FFA chapter navigated the past year dealing with COVID-19, thanks to the determination of students and a supportive community.

Brent Nollette, advisor of the FFA chapter in Valentine, looked back at 2020 and is excited to go back to normal this year. "We couldn't do our range judging competitions, so we had to do something locally so that our kids could still get out and do a piece of that," Nollette said.

Nollette said the district competitions were normal with some restrictions placed on the competitions. The toughest challenge was dealing with the state competition being done virtually. "A lot of the kids really worked towards these competitions," he said. "So we asked, 'What could we do to allow them to still compete at the district level?' My main thing was making sure the kids had that reward at the end of the year with two years of no state conventions."

Valentine's chapter had Star Finalists, two moving on to nationals, and a Natural Resources team do well at the state level.

Nollette said Valentine's FFA chapter has one of the biggest groups in recent memory. In total, including eighth graders, the chapter has about 95 members.

Valentine is an agricultural-based community with a population of more than 2,800. The Sandhills State Bank holds a contest every year where communities help FFA chapters win money through votes, and Valentine has been at the top of the contest, including winning it this year. The award is \$1,000 granted to the winning FFA chapter.

"We try to do a lot of things in the community and we get a lot of support from the community," Nollette said.

One member who has stood out to Nollette was the president of the Valentine chapter, Holden Mundorf. Mundorf organized a community movie night for Valentine.

"Our local movie theatre closed down and he took it upon himself to show a movie on the football field for the students and the community," Nollette said. "It was a fun evening for all the kids."

Nollette said Valentine started a new animal lab. Valentine purchased a couple of bred heifers in the spring and the students care for them every day. Nollette said, "We put responsibility on the kids to

"It doesn't matter what class you're in, you are going to get a hands-on experience instead of sitting in the classroom."

-Brent Nollette

take care of stuff on weekends whether that's feeding or checking water," he said.

Valentine's FFA built a new food lab alongside the animal lab this past year. Nollette said the reason they are building different labs is to try and get hands-on experience for the students. "It doesn't matter what class you're in," he said, "you are going to get a hands-on experience instead of just sitting in the classroom."

Nollette said the chapter is fortunate to have a community that supports it. "The kids get on board to do anything in the community and doing it in a year where we didn't get to do everything we wanted was a fun finish towards the end of the year."



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Nebraska FFA Alumni & Supporters 2022 State Convention & Awards Banquet

January 21- 22, 2022

Broken Bow, Nebraska

Co-hosted By Broken Bow, Ansley, Litchfield, and Anselmo-Merna FFA Chapters

Itinerary Subject to Change

Friday

- 8:30 a.m. - Council Meeting at College Mid Plains (just east of motel)
- 12:15 p.m. - Straight Arrow Bison Ranch, 79330 Sumner Rd, Broken Bow, NE 68822 (south of Broken Bow)
- 1:15 p.m. - BD Vacutainer-Preanalytical Systems - a 560-employee medical device manufacturer in Broken Bow
- 2:15 p.m. - Sargent Pipe-manufacturer of irrigation equipment and well-drilling rigs
- 3:15 p.m. - Kinkaider Brewing Co-the state's fastest growing craft brewery North of Broken Bow about 2 miles
- 5:30 p.m. - Supper Hosted by Ansley FFA - 15 miles south of Broken Bow

Saturday

- 8:30 a.m. - Nebraska FFA & Alumni Annual Business Meeting
- 10:30 a.m. - Visitors Center on East edge of Broken Bow (refurbished Barn)
- 11 a.m. - Arrow Seed, more than 70 years in the seed business, a one-stop shop for forage, turf, and food plot seed, located in Broken Bow
- Noon - Lunch Broken Bow High School - board a bus to transport us for the Adams Land & Cattle tour
- 1:30 p.m. - Adams Land & Cattle, recognized as one of the premier cattle feeding operations in the world, is a distinguished and innovative leader in agribusiness - biosecurity form needs to be completed prior to attending Adams tour
- 3 p.m. - The Andersons Grain facility, located in Anselmo, 19 miles north of Broken Bow
- 6 p.m. - Social/Open bar - Nebraska One Box Convention Center, 2750 S 27th Ave., Broken Bow, NE (located at Cobblestone Inn & Suites)
- Silent Auction
- 6:30 p.m. - Banquet, Meal \$30
- Speaker - R.P. Smith, rancher, humorist and cowboy poet
- Awards
- Live Auction - auctioneer Jim Eberle



R.P. Smith

R.P. Smith is a fourth generation rancher from Broken Bow, Nebraska. He comes from a waste-not, want-not culture, and cowboy poetry has given him a way to recycle some of the wrecks on the ranch into user friendly products, bringing smiles to the faces of listeners in 18 states and Canada. His love of the Lord and land come through in his performances. He enjoys connecting with listeners and working the ground we all have in common.

Registration Form

Return by January 10, 2022

Name(s): Phone:

Address: City/State/Zip:

Email:

FFA Alumni & Supporters group:

Conference fee \$25 per person/Banquet fee \$30 per person

How many people are planning on attending the following events:

Friday afternoon tours	<input type="text"/>	Friday evening supper	<input type="text"/>
Saturday noon lunch	<input type="text"/>	Saturday afternoon tours	<input type="text"/>
Saturday evening awards banquet	<input type="text"/>		

Note: a biosecurity form will need to be completed for those attending Adams Land & Cattle tour- please indicate email address for emailing the form

To register by mail, send this form, along with payment,
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113 W 1st St · (580) 236-9026
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933 S E St
Tumbleweed Café ·850 East S East St
City Cafe · 423 S 9th Ave
Ortello Dale · Coffee shop 421 S 9th Ave

TY NY STORE · Coffee shop · 142 S 10th Ave
Evans Feed Co. ·agricultural ·142 S 10th Ave.
The Quilting Shack · 518 East S East St · (308)
872-6221
Custer Co. Museum · 445 South 9th Ave., Broken
Bow ·(308) 872-2203
Boneyard Creation Museum · 1709 S E St,
Broken Bow · (308) 880-0407
Seven Valleys Historical Museum · 105 N Grand
Ave, Callaway, NE · (308 870-2107)



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Callaway focuses on competitions and bonding with the community

By Adam Lundeen

Last year the world seemed to grind to a halt with the arrival of COVID-19, but Callaway's FFA chapter found a way to continue to be active.

Amanda Chytka is in charge of the agriculture education program at Callaway Public Schools and runs the FFA program. She said the chapter competed in land judging but were unable to do range judging.

"We had a team compete in land judging. We also have kids studying and preparing for livestock judging and LDEs," Heidi Donegan, Callaway's chapter vice president, said.

The group has been able to be active in other ways besides competitions.

The students came up with an idea to show teacher appreciation. "Students at one of our monthly meetings got together, and everybody made caramel apples for teachers and themselves," Chytka said.

"It was a great time to really bond and communicate with everyone," Donegan said.

Callaway's FFA chapter has not done as much as in previous years.

"We haven't been planning very many events due to COVID - just out of respect for trying to help the spread - but when we do we haven't had any problems," Donegan said.

The chapter was able to go to a conference and took about half of its 30 members.

"We also went to a leadership conference called EDGE, and it was put on by the state officers," Chytka said. "I took a bunch of freshman and sophomores students and they really enjoyed that conference.

"They really learned a lot about character and different leadership skills."

Donegan has embraced her role as a leader in the chapter.

"So I am actually in the classroom with our freshmen every day as a teacher's assistant," she said. "Our freshmen who are in our Intro to Ag class learn a lot about FFA, so I get to answer a lot of questions and help teach them about FFA. I also help my advisor whenever our members are studying or preparing for events outside of classroom time. I help edit a lot of speeches and help the kids memorize them. I have quite a bit of experience with the different events and speeches, as I have participated in quite a few."

Donegan said she thinks the chapter will continue to grow and be successful in the future, and that the leadership provided by the older members will contribute to that.

"I believe in leading by example and our upper classmen have done a great job in representing our chapter," she said.

Chytka believes that Callaway's FFA program greatly benefits the students.

"With FFA, they are learning leadership skills. They're learning the interview process and what it takes to be a responsible individual," Chytka said.

Dunning FFA raises funds in community

By Nathan Reiland-Smith

High school FFA students in Dunning, Nebraska, are working hard as part of the community and bringing excellence to their town through fundraisers, special events and the advancement of rural education in and out of school.

The Sandhills Public Schools FFA chapter held a traditional event Oct. 8 known as the labor auction, where community members bid for eight hours of labor performed by a FFA member. The money raised went to the FFA student program.

Michelle Valdez is the advisor of the chapter and is in her first year of teaching in the Sandhills Public Schools. She previously taught in California.

Valdez said the FFA program is very active in Dunning. From the labor auction to new events like a nature hike partnered with the local museum to explore flora natural to the area, she said FFA students are involved.

The advisor said the tight-knit community reaches out to help students with their FFA projects - such as the labor auction.

[Continued on page 31](#)

In turn, the FFA program helps with branding, and the education of branding in business. This, she said, can be essential to a business and having the opportunity to learn it in high school is very beneficial.

Valdez said students are excited about livestock judging this year and will also participate in a district speaking team. Both will act as fundraisers for the FFA team.

One popular project for FFA members is organizing activities for elementary-age children in Dunning. Some of the activities have been lessons in making ice cream or reading.

Valdez said she is focused on doing more community emphasis on the younger generation and agriculture. The students have cleaned a stretch of highway, designed a nature walk with the local museum showing native plants in the area and interested middle school students in joining FFA when they get to high school.

Reece Zutavern, who joined FFA in the seventh grade, spends some of his spare time working on his family ranch. The FFA program has helped Zutavern meet new people and develop his people skills. He said FFA furthers agriculture's good name.

"I really enjoy it," Zutavern said. "I come from an agriculture background. It's nice to be with something I'm familiar with."

Emily Leach, another long-time Dunning FFA student, enjoys the community outreach involved with their class. Leach said recently the class had the opportunity to fix a local trailer. She said she especially enjoys teaching the younger students about agriculture through the FFA classes elementary school project.

FFA Alumni Scholarship recipient

Hi there! My name is Miranda Hornung and I grew up in Davey, Nebraska and was a member of the Raymond Central FFA Chapter.

It sounds cliché but I knew from day one of my first agriculture class in 7th grade that Agriculture Education was a pathway that suit me. Teaching was always the frontrunner career for me, and as soon as I experienced the uniqueness that Ag programs offered, I was hooked on this as my subject focus.

I am looking forward to serving a school and community through guiding students in pursuit of their passions, and hopefully impacting their lives and future goals. One area of Ag programs that I have high interest in promoting is the newer SAE category of School-Based Enterprises because of the emphasis on experiential learning.

I will be student teaching at Fillmore Central High School with Kurt VanDeWalle starting in January. While in college, I was an active community member with the Engler Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Program as well as FFA Alumni Club, Ag Ed Club, Collegiate Farm Bureau, and the Teach Ag Ambassador program.



Miranda Hornung

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Agronomy

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Food Science

4th Place - Nebraska: Karissa Hodge, Natalie Malcom, Creight Hecox, and Skyler Oberg, all of Eustis-Farnam FFA; 6th Place individual - Natalie Malcom, Eustis-Farnam; Gold Emblem Team - Eustis-Farnam; Gold Emblem individual - Krissa Hodge, Natalie Malcom, Eustis-Farnam; Silver Emblem individual - Creight Hecox and Skyler Oberg, Eustis-Farnam.

Livestock Judging

7th Place - Nebraska: Jayce Meyring, Shelby Carr, Wade Sanders, and Jayda Meyring, all of Alliance FFA; Gold Emblem Team - Alliance FFA; Gold Em-

blem Individual - Shelby Caarr, Jayda Meyring, Jayce Meyring, Wade Sanders, all Alliance.

Meats Evaluation and Technology

6th Place - Nebraska: Audrey Reiter, Mattison Beattie, Spncer Walahoski, and Jacie Wolfinger, all of Sumner-Eddyville-Miller FFA; Individual - 7th Place - Spencer Walahoski, Sumner-Eddyville-Miller; Gold Emblem Team - Sumner-Eddyville-Miller FFA; Gold Emblem individuals-Spencer Wahahoski, Jacie Wolfinger, Mattison Beattie; Silver Emblem - Audrey Reiter.

Agriscience

Plant Systems: Division 2 Tyler Tegtmeier and Hayden Binder of the Pawnee City FFA.

Parliamentary Procedure

2nd Place - Imperial FFA - Kade Anderson, Colin O'Neil, Madelynn Hanes, Elizabeth Reeves, Morel Torres, and Carter Leibbrandt, Imperial FFA; Gold Emblem Team - Imperial FFA.



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Burwell FFA excels in competitions

By Kathryn Vlaanderen

2020 and 2021 have been remarkable years for the FFA Burwell Chapter. Chapter members have excelled in both local and virtual state competitions while being motivated to maintain their commitment to the community by hosting exciting events.

In the past year, the chapter participated in local livestock evaluations as well as holding a petting zoo day in the Burwell area. . Members also participated in a virtual state welding competition held at the University of Nebraska by mailing photos of their completed projects made in the Burwell Public Schools welding shop.

The chapter held watch parties to watch the State Convention, held online because of COVID-19. Advisor Phillip Simpson said the students missed attending in person.

During the virtual convention, the chapter cheered on 12 of their fellow FFA members who received State FFA degrees which is the largest group of state degrees in the history of the Burwell Public Schools. This year, the Burwell Chapter supported Burwell alumni Weston Svoboda who became a finalist in the selection process for National FFA office.

Between bake sales and pancake feeds, the Burwell Chapter received numerous awards, including: the Honorary Chapter Degree (Cory Johnson); Star Greenhand (Dillion Simpson); and awards in Top Range Judger (Cooper Phillips); and Top Livestock Judger (awarded to Gracie Pinckney). Other awards include the DeKalb Award (Chloe Marshall) and the Workhorse Award (Ethan Joy).

The Burwell Chapter had also received stars in their chapter this past year: Devin Konicek received the Star in Agribusiness, Levi Bode received the Star in Production and Jaci Larsen received the Star in Placement.

"I think Burwell is very special because we have an amazing instructor, everyone works so hard to do well," Larsen, chapter president, said.

Simpson said he is very proud of the chapter members for their motivation, hard work and eagerness to compete and become more involved.

The chapter competed in the State Range Judging Competition on Oct. 1, where its senior competition team, consisting of Cooper Philips, Ethan Joy, Devin Konicek and Hayes Jenson, finished third in the state competition.

Meanwhile, the junior team, consisting of Jaxon

Thoene, Dillion Simpson, Wyatt Larsen and Cody Burson, had finished fifth overall in the competition. Sophomore Cody Burson also won the title of State Champion in the Junior Division.

Burwell received a Farm to School Grant - as well as a Cargill grant - and is working to encourage the use of more local foods in school lunch programs. The chapter partnered with Trotters Green House to harvest produce for the school and the area. They hope to build a greenhouse on school grounds.



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Thedford FFA members participate in clean up in the community.

Thedford FFA members keep busy helping their community

By Erin Schwager

A day in the life of Thedford FFA members is usually quite the long one. It typically consists of an early morning bus ride, an agriculture education course, sports practice, a long ride home, chores to help the family, time spent doing supervised agricultural experience and homework.

The cycle continues to repeat itself each day. While the process varies a little every day for the students, Thedford FFA advisor Bridger Chytka said he always starts his day with hot coffee. Even though the day can be exhausting, the students are excited to be a part of the FFA chapter.

"I love ag, and everything that comes with it," the Thedford chapter president, Seth Scranton, said. "It is a great learning experience, and where we live, it is good to know cattle and native grasses. Plus, it is also good to know how to weld and work with woods."

Thedford Public Schools offers several classes like Small Engines, Welding, CNC Design, Fabrications, Plant and Animal Science and Natural Resource Management for students to partake in. All of these classes are diverse, but some classes like CNC Design allows students the opportunity to run a small business by using the plasma cutter to create signs and parts for local ranchers and commu-

nity members.

"I think FFA offers so many different opportunities for students to engage with course content, careers, and competitions that it offers value and interest to everyone," Chytka said.

The chapter also hosts an activity called Senior Citizen Action Day, SCAD.

"During SCAD, the entire school takes a day to go around the community and help the senior citizens," Chytka said. "We do tasks ranging from raking leaves, painting, and cleaning gutters. This is a great way to give back and help our community look more clean."

The chapter took over the event from a former FCS teacher when she retired.

Many students look forward to attending state FFA to meet new people, participate in competitions and win state titles. Last year students were unable to attend state FFA in person because of COVID. "That was kind of a letdown for the kids because it is a nice opportunity to see the big city and experience some culture that we do not have around here," Chytka said.

While the past couple of years have been challenging, the Thedford FFA chapter is thankful for its rural location and students' perseverance to have yet another successful year.



Alliance members Jayce Meyring, Shelby Carr, Wade Sanders, and Jayda Meyring took home 7th place and a Gold Emblem for the chapter in Livestock Judging at the FFA National Convention.

Thedford FFA continued

"The last year was fairly hectic with so much uncertainty of events and schedules," Chytka said. "There was a lot of stress on teachers, families, and students to cope with factors out of their control that majorly affected their communities and peer groups. Throughout all of that though, students persevered in the classroom and competitions."

Scranton is a senior and has plans on attending college to study agriculture.

"I would just like to thank everyone for all the support, all the way from the community to the moms and dads that allow us to participate in FFA," Scranton said.

The Thedford chapter currently has 26 members and eight officers. These members are looking forward to learning more, contributing to the community, and attending the State FFA Convention this year. "We are really blessed to live where we do. Our community support is tremendous, the kids are really good and the staff at our school always has their best interests in mind," Chytka said.

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2020-21 Nebraska State officers



Madison Stracke **State President** **Stuart FFA Chapter**

Our state officer year was one like no other. When we were elected in May of 2020, we had no idea what the upcoming year had in store for us. The challenges we were faced with in order to protect the Nebraska community were not easy, but I can confidently say we fulfilled our role in providing FFA members with the necessary tools and resources to succeed in any leadership role and the agriculture industry as a whole. We held numerous virtual conferences and continued the incredible tradition of holding the 93rd Nebraska FFA State Convention! It truly filled me with happiness knowing students were still able to compete at the state level and receive the recognition they deserve. Serving as a Nebraska State Officer was truly an opportunity of a lifetime. I could

not be more grateful for the time I had serving this great organization. I was able to learn, grow and gain more knowledge about Nebraska's agriculture industry. I will always remember these experiences and the outstanding year I had serving Nebraska FFA.

Heath Keiser **State Vice President** **Gothenburg FFA Chapter**

This last year as an FFA state officer will go down in history as one of the most unique years. We were sent home from high school mid-March and experienced a virtual year from there on. Throughout this year I was able to be a role model for students through a difficult time. It meant being positive and trying to make the most of the work we did.

The most impactful experience for me was those interactions with students and stakeholders. We were



able to meet with them “face to face” and get to hear what they have been doing in their home chapters and listen to stakeholders interest in FFA and what their goals for the future are. These meant a lot to me to get to simply listen to what others are doing to overcome the unique challenges they are facing and helped me know that we were not alone.

Jakob Anderjaska
State Vice President
Hayes Center FFA Chapter

When I began my time as a state officer I could have never imagined the impact it would have on my life or all of the experiences and skills I would gain from it. As a State Officer I was given the opportunity to step up to a higher level of leadership with more chances to grow. The year gave me chances to make new connections, further my understanding of the full encompassment of leadership, and build a new family. COVID impacted our year of service more than we had ever expected, but it wasn't all negative. COVID forced us to be strong and forge forward with new styles and the amount of resilience Nebraska FFA had showed me that you can always make it through

whatever the obstacle may be. Through this past year I made more memories than I can count that have heavily expanded my experience, from many late nights with the team showing me what true camaraderie is, to meeting business executives that had a plethora of wisdom, and our coaches strengthening us through their guidance. I will always be thankful for what I have gained through the year as an officer and for those I have shared with it.

Jozie Schilke
State Vice President
Imperial FFA Chapter

Serving as a FFA state officer is a memory that I'll never forget. Even though our year was full of unexpected challenges, it still was a very enjoyable year. I met students, other state officers, National officers, and many people in the agriculture industry. Not only did I grow my communication skills by meeting all these people but I also grew in my adaptability. With all the challenges we had, my team as well as myself had to think outside of the box to create workshops, have National FFA Week, as well as our State Convention all virtual. It may have been a



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different year but I wouldn't trade it for anything. I now have a family that I can turn to because of my state officer team, a mentor who is always there for me, many connections to the agricultural world, and many new lessons and skills thanks to my year in service. Serving Nebraska FFA is a year that will always be close to my heart.

Rebecca Wulf
State Vice President,
Logan View FFA Chapter

Although this year was not what I expected, it was still everything I had hoped for. It was a year full of learning, friendships, opportunities, and new experiences. My goal for the year was to impact students to the best of my ability. Looking back at this past year, I believe I accomplished this. At state convention that I really felt like I was making a difference and I put the past year into perspective, I realized that I had been achieving this goal all along. From the multiple business and industry visits we conducted, to the online Pathways to Careers program, students were benefiting. In an indirect way, the time and work we put in as state officers impacted students.

I am grateful for the many life lessons I learned throughout this journey. Instant gratification has become a new expectation among the younger generation. With little interaction with students, any gratification or motivation was scarce. I had to be more patient and learn to be thankful for the small things. This year was a very humbling experience with memories I will cherish forever.

Hannah Moseman
State Secretary
Oakland-Craig FFA Chapter

Last year, I served as the 2020-2021 Nebraska FFA State Secretary. During the pandemic, our year was anything but ordinary. However, it was still amazing to see the grit from our officer team and association. Before my year of service, I was not comfortable with change. After cancellations, moving virtually, and diving into the unknown, I began to embrace change.

Our team had the opportunity to create a path like no other team. We created a website for a virtual Pathway to Careers Conference. We reached out

to business and industry partners to introduce students to careers in the agricultural industry. Students learned various skills on making a resume, entrepreneurship, personal strengths, and post-secondary planning. Our technology skills increased tremendously from video editing, creating, and social media posting. One of the most impactful experiences as a state officer was to see our organization continuously taking leadership to the next level even through uncertainty. Members remained engaged through virtual competitions, conferences, and events. This was encouraging for our team because it reminded us that we will persevere. The future of agriculture is in excellent hands with the upcoming leaders we grew to know throughout our year of service.



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Alliance prioritizes community outreach

By Zachary Chromy

The Alliance FFA chapter, which boasts a roster of over 60 students, prioritizes community outreach, inclusiveness and preparation for its members' futures.

Ashtyn Vivion is in her fourth year as FFA director and agriculture teacher at Alliance Public Schools. She emphasizes that her chapter focuses on making sure there is a place for everyone in FFA. The Alliance chapter tries to create experiences that are beneficial to each member of the chapter as well as the community that supports them.

"It is important to find out what my students' interests are and align their passions with what we have available," Vivion said. "I want them to know we have a place for them regardless of their backgrounds or interests."

The Alliance chapter hosts a plethora of events that benefit the community, including an FFA Ag Fair and Nebraska Farm Bureau's connecting chapters program. Wade Sanders, the president of the Alliance FFA chapter, explained that the FFA Ag Fair is his favorite event. The event brings over 500 local elementary school students to Alliance to participate in student led microlessons based on safety and a love for agriculture.

"Our FFA Ag Fair is awesome, all of the elementary schools from the area come and we get to talk to them and advocate for agriculture and FFA," Sanders said. "It is really cool to have the younger generation ask you questions and understand what you do and what you love."

Sanders is a senior and has been active with FFA since he was young. He has been an officer since his sophomore year, and he is on the state-champion livestock judging team.

Vivion's chapter has seen a lot of recent success in competitions, but those trophies are not the focus of her FFA chapter. Vivion defines success as student growth and preparation for the future. Her chapter concentrates on helping students find their strengths and passions.

"Seeing students who are ready to go on and take the next step, whether that's college or career, knowing that the experience we provided here is valuable and helps get them there is what makes me proud," Vivion said.

The Alliance FFA chapter works closely with its *Nebraska FFA Alumni & Supporters*

FFA Alumni chapter. Wade Sanders' mother, Teresa Sanders, is the president of the alumni chapter. Sanders said his mother was a big inspiration for his desire to be a part of FFA. The alumni chapter offers scholarships to the students who decide to pursue a college education and helps to fund the events run by the chapter.

Vivion is an Alliance Public School graduate and returned to the school to teach after receiving a degree in animal science at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln and a master's degree in education. Vivion was a FFA member and officer during her high school years and became a Nebraska State FFA officer after graduating.

"Mrs. Vivion came to Alliance and became the advisor during my freshman year. I've known Mrs. Vivion since I was really little, and we're kind of alike - we're both go getters and over achievers," Sanders said. "We both like to help people achieve their goals and find what they love."

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Beyond the pandemic

Chambers gears up for in-person FFA events

By Alondra Castillo

The Chambers FFA chapter entered this year on a high note. “We started off the year with COLT, which is our Chapter Officer Leadership Training. That really just set our chapter leaders, all of our officers, into a great mindset to start off this summer and school year,” Chambers FFA advisor Karlee Johnson said.

Claire Woeppel, is a first-year FFA officer who serves as vice president, said it’s a fun experience. “I went to COLT in May, and I had a lot of fun getting to know my fellow officers,” Woeppel said.

This year brought many firsts to the Chambers chapter. “It was our first time competing at range judging,” Johnson said. “We did not go to that last year. We took quite a few kids this year. And in our district especially, range judging is kind of a favorite among the district chapters, so it’s really hard to do well in. All of our kids competed and we were about in the middle of the pack, so we were happy to see our hard work pay off with that. I’m actually taking a van full of kids to nationals next week, and that’s something that is new to our chapter, as well, that we are all very excited for,” Johnson said.

The range judging results made Woeppel extremely proud of her chapter. “When we went to Range Judging, this is all of our first times doing it. So when we placed well... we we’re all really proud of each other,” Woeppel said.

Johnson said she finds her chapter’s schedule is very busy compared to the COVID crazy previous year. “It kind of surprised our members as well as myself and our school, how often we are gone out of the building this year,” Johnson said. “Seems like we’re always going somewhere. Whereas last year, you know, we attended nationals on our TV screen. Without being able to go in person, a lot of our state events were also over the computer screen and we didn’t get out of our classroom to enjoy the many opportunities that a regular school year would have FFA-wise.

“And this year with everything back in person, for us anyway, the kids are just really taking in every opportunity that we can. And like I said, we’re out of the school building, we weren’t here this morning and we’re going to Indianapolis next week, and the week after that we have livestock judging,” the

We might be a small chapter compared to other schools, but percentage-wise, how many kids are in the ag classroom and in FFA is outstanding.”

-Karen Johnson

advisor said.

Chambers is a small town with a population of 348. Although the town is small, the youth has a strong passion for agriculture. Johnson said coming from a small school is a strength. Chambers has about 47 students in grades seventh - 12th, 40 of them are in FFA “But when you look at those numbers, we might be a small chapter compared to other schools, but percentage-wise, how many kids are in the ag classroom and in FFA is outstanding,” Johnson said.

Woeppel said chapter members put their all into contests “They just try to do their best in whatever they are in,” she said. “They compete very well.”

Chambers FFA will compete in livestock judging in November. “A majority of my kids have been working very hard in and out of the classroom to get ready for district livestock judging, to hopefully send a team to Lincoln next semester for State if we qualify,” Johnson said. “And then looking into the future a little bit more, our leadership development events are in January. And that’s more like your Ag Demo and Parliamentary Procedure and your speeches.”

Woeppel said she hopes the chapter makes it to state in most of its competitions. “I am looking forward to national convention next week and livestock judging, and then hopefully state convention in April,” she said.

Johnson is in her second year of advising the Chambers FFA. “They have historically had a new ag teacher every year, so this being my second year in Chambers, there’s a little more consistency,” she said. She said she hopes to continue that.

Boyd Co. FFA keeps busy in community

By Aubreanna Miller

The members of the Boyd County FFA truly embody the organization's motto "Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live, Living to Serve," through their dedication to service, leadership and bringing the community together in incredible ways.

The Boyd County chapter has 63 members, with Katie Nolles acting as its advisor for her second year.

Nolles said the group has remained active in the community even through the roadblocks of the pandemic. Over the summer, members hosted an event they call New Found Leaders or NFL in South Dakota where they had a recruitment day. It included boats on the water, grilled burgers and a sense of togetherness.

The chapter also participated, Nolles said, in range and livestock judging and leadership development, including public speaking, parliamentary procedure demonstrations and employment skills. Later this school year, the members will organize career development events, a petting zoo and teach farm safety to the other Boyd County schools.

Chapter President Jake Froman said his favorite part of his involvement in FFA comes from helping the young people in the community step into their role as leaders.

"Ever since becoming an officer, that's been my goal," Froman said. "I like to focus on bonding with the younger students and getting them excited about being a part of the actual FFA chapter."

Last year, the members coordinated a fundraiser, raising \$5,000 to donate to their local fairgrounds as well as a suicide awareness organization. Heartbreakingly, the Boyd County FFA lost a member to suicide just last year.

The project was a labor/charity auction. Since the small and close-knit community suffered greatly from the loss, support poured in from all over the county.

"It was just very touching to have people spending \$500 on a pie for example," Nolles said. "And if they didn't win the bid, they still came up and donated money or donated things so they could be sold again. That spoke to us that they really believed in raising awareness for mental health."

In competitions, the club has seen a lot of success. A member received the state championship in Farm and Agribusiness Management. They also had two state runner-ups in Proficiencies, one in Specialty Animal Production and one in Diversified Crop Production. In Farm Business Management

and Food Science, teams placed in the top 15 at the state competitions.

Recently, the Nebraska State Foundation gave the chapter a grant to rejuvenate its aquaponic system. Nolles said this is a perfect opportunity to open doors to hands-on learning and entrepreneurship for the students. The Foundation also accepted Boyd's FFA Chapter into its Launch Program, which collaborates with the Engler Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Program at UNL. A team of students has developed a school-based enterprise, creating a business that will make products out of local cedar trees. Members will manufacture and distribute the products. To support this venture, visit the chapter's Facebook page at Boyd County FFA Chapter.

"I'm a big believer in giving responsibility to people and delegating so they can actually learn how to be a leader," Nolles said. "And I'm just setting the tone for expectations to see them in classes or even at a sporting event with their peers. They might call somebody out and say 'We're better than that. Let's step up and act like we're from Boyd County.' And we're proud of that."



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After COVID-19

Like other chapters, Rock County turns its focus to competition, projects

By Collin Hain

Rock County FFA is back to normal after being derailed in 2020 ahead of promising upcoming FFA competitions and projects.

Hailey Walmsley is a first-year teacher at Rock County public schools where FFA is a major part of the high school. Walmsley said that just about everyone at the school knows about FFA and a substantial portion of them are active members, about 90 members on the team to be exact.

"It is a very FFA based school," Hailey Walmsley, the Rock County FFA chapter advisor, said. "Everyone wants to be in FFA, we have seven different agriculture classes."

Walmsley, a first year teacher at Rock County Public Schools, 90 students are members of the chapter.

She said the seventh, eighth and ninth graders take an agriculture class and if they are in an agriculture class then they are automatically in FFA. Students can get involved in diverse areas such as range judging and livestock.

Hannah Keller, a senior and the Rock County FFA secretary, said chapter members are looking forward to competitions like the National FFA convention, for which the agriculture sales team qualified – one of their most prestigious accomplishments.

Walmsley said the chapter uses fruit sales to fund the national and state conventions trips, which are once again in person. Livestock judging will begin soon, as well as the speaking competitions called Leadership Development Events that start in January.

"The juniors haven't got to go since eighth grade so when they can actually go to state and national conventions it will be a shock for them," Walmsley said.

Members are busy now, having hosted a blood drive Nov. 1, Walmsley said. They also run two businesses, she said.

"There is a gelato business that is run by the students throughout the community, the newest busi-



Rock County members take a look at seeds.

ness is selling beef jerky," Walmsley said. She said both businesses have taught the students about organizing and maintaining an enterprise.

"Eventually we will have a Clue Caper - it's a big scavenger hunt and community members get involved," Keller said.

Walmsley said the entrepreneurial side is important. "There are only so many things that can be taught in the classroom, so we are trying to get more hands-on out of classroom experience," Walmsley said.

An alumni chapter can be crucial in any FFA chapter, but in Rock County the alumni chapter is especially important. The biggest thing that the alumni chapter does is to promote the high school chapter.

Left: Rock County FFA member Hannah Keller, a senior, gets ready for feeding time.

Nebraska FFA Alumni & Supporters

Continued on pg. 45

FFA Alumni Scholarship recipient

I grew up in the small, rural town of Staunton, Virginia. Originally, I did not have an agricultural background but ever since I enrolled in my first agriculture class in middle school I was hooked.

Being enrolled in these courses allowed me to find my passion for agriculture and grow my leadership skills. I always knew I wanted to be involved in an agricultural career but it took me a while to pinpoint exactly what I wanted to do. Through FFA and my SAE, I was able to develop a Boer goat operation where my family and I raise goats to sell to 4-H and FFA members in our community to show.

Currently, my parents run the

operation while I am at school, but I hope to return home after graduation to help grow and expand our business.

Being an Agricultural Education teacher allows me to explore many different subject areas within the industry. I want to be a teacher to share my passion with future generations. The agricultural industry is always changing and advancing, and I believe the future of this industry lies in the hands of today's youth. As an educator, I want to help inspire and shape the minds of these students.

This spring, I will be student teaching at Gothenburg High School with Tim Negley and AnnaLisa Mosel. Being original-



Carissa Cline

ly from Virginia, I am super excited to spend some time in the western part of the state and learn more about this community. I am most looking forward to interacting with the students and helping them grow and find their passions!

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Rock County

Continued from pg. 43

Most of the members work in the agriculture industry somewhere so they can educate the students on a variety of different topics, Walmsley said.

Just recently an alumni member who owns a seed business and works in agronomy spoke about her business and the plant science field, Walmsley said.

Keller said the alumni chapter is involved. Every year the high school chapter puts on a banquet for the alumni to just get together and discuss FFA with those who came before them, Keller said.

Covid-19 affected the chapter, whose members were not able to go to competitions in person. Some competitions were held virtually. Zoom allowed even those quarantined to compete, Walmsley said. While there weren't really any projects for the FFA members, they still had agriculture classes where they could do at-home experiments for plant science class, Walmsley said. They also used social media to assist the chapter.

"The chapter has an Instagram page that was just started a couple years ago. We would actively post on the page information about FFA and that

helped," Keller said. "We also would post information about the officers."

Keller said they learned it is important to try to find projects to keep members involved and, in the loop, instead of people falling behind.



Sumner-Eddyville Meats team took 6th Place at Nationals. Members include: Audrey Reiter, Mattison Beattie, Spencer Walahoski, and Jacie Wolfinger.

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Loup City FFA Members (left to right) Parker Slobaszewski, Caden Kowalski, Jaxson Kusek, Conner Slobaszewski, Mallory Tuma, Kylie Jerabek, Libby FERENCE, and Cami Fulton prepare for the state range judging contest near Valentine. The senior team placed 8th in the state.

Loup City FFA focuses on leadership

By Kristian Perez

DeLynn Day, a senior at Loup City Public schools in Loup City, is president of the Loup City FFA and a six-year member of the national organization.

"Some accomplishments I've done this past year are placing in livestock judging, second place in senior public speaking along with being the president of our chapter," Day said. "I was interested in becoming president of a chapter because I've seen officers before me run and wanted to get more involved in FFA," Day said.

FFA and leadership go hand-in-hand. "Leadership means bringing everyone on your level. You aren't just watching everyone from a higher level but you're building everyone up with you," Day said.

Day said honesty is important in leadership. "You need to be able to ask for help in tough times when you're struggling so your team can step up and help where needed," she said. "The greatest leadership experience I've seen was when we were going to nationals and the opposite team gave us two weeks' notice that they weren't coming so we had to compete against a team we never have before. We had to really step up and show great leadership. We ended

up placing as well."

Harrington said the students step up to lead. "I've seen great leadership in our chapter during livestock judging, along with planning and organizing activities and events for next year," he said.

Cale Harrington, the agriculture teacher at Loup City Public schools and the chapter advisor, said he is proud of how FFA members have navigated the past year.

"Some accomplishments I've seen in our FFA chapter over the past year is watching our members stay active with everything that has happened - with COVID. They still found ways to stay involved and go to events that didn't get canceled," Harrington said.

Harrington said, because of COVID, some of the juniors in the chapter hadn't really experienced in-person events. "Key points I remember this past year are members excited to get involved and catch opportunities any way they could," he said. "Watching members become excited to go to event was awesome."

Harrington said the Loup City members love to get involved and organized. "I see our chapter mem-

Continued on page 51

2021 Blue & Gold Spotlight

FFA Alumni Scholarship recipient

Like many pursuing a degree in Agriculture Education, my passion for agriculture and the FFA is immense, but my enthusiasm for educating youth runs deeper. Though raised on my family's commercial cattle operation in Belle, Missouri, I never had an interest in taking an Ag class until my freshmen year of high school, and my world rapidly changed after that.

Within no time, I was immersed into numerous leadership roles, community service opportunities, and career development events that would develop my knowledge and skill set. Since my instructor took the time to get to know me and advise me, I stepped outside my comfort zone and participated in opportunities

that challenged me, but allowed me to grow.

Because of this, I know that it is essential to invest in my students to make a difference. In short, creating a welcoming atmosphere where I can relay the importance of agriculture to students, those traditionally from an agriculture background and not, was the key factor in my decision in becoming an Agriculture Education teacher.

Immediately coming to UNL, I knew the Good Life would be a place I could call home as educators from across the state instantaneously welcomed me into the agriculture education community, which helped to create a unified



Payden Woodruff

[See Woodruff, pg. 48](#)

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The Eustis-Farnam Foods team of Karissa Hodge, Natalie Malcom, Creight Hecox, and Skylee Oberg placed 4th at Nationals.

Woodruff

Continued from pg.47

feeling of that I would be honored to become a part of post-graduation.

Prior to that occurring, next spring I will be student teaching at Mead Jr./Sr. High and I could not be more excited to embark on this journey! I want thank Mr. Blo-mendahl and the community sur-rounding Mead that is so willing to share their students and kids with me to enhance my passions and apply what I have learned through UNL's program.

Thank you to the Nebraska Ag-riculture Education Association and UNL's FFA Alumni Club for supporting me as I get ready to take the next steps in my educa-tion and career.

Stapleton FFA builds in year 4

By Ryan Herek

The FFA members of Staple-ton is doing its best to make use of a brand-new chapter started only four years ago.

The students in FFA compete in a variety of different events and competitions that are designed to help them reach their goal of being farmers someday. Some examples of competitions include identifying different breeds of livestock, identifying wildlife species and brand-ing cattle in the correct way.

The FFA allows seventh to 12th graders to compete in com-petitions, but the rules can vary by chapter. In Stapleton, only high schoolers in ninth to 12th grad participate. "We have community ser-vice days, fundraisers, concession stands, volunteer at the rodeo and the kids are wanting to make May Day baskets this year for local busi-nesses," Dasie Nichols, Stapleton FFA advisor, said.

During competitions leaders of the FFA group give speeches involv-

ing agriculture and present projects that demonstrate what the group has learned.

The new chap-ter boasts 30 students. Al-though it is a smaller chap-ter, it has grown every year.

"I started as a freshman in a brand new chapter as a student ad-visor. I assist the advisor by keeping ev-eryone on task and make sure everyone's get-ting their jobs done," Sadie Dimmitt, stu-dent advisor for the Staple-ton chapter, said.



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Sutherland members take part in “Limitless” training.

Sutherland FFA grows to 55 members

By Autumn McIntyre

Sutherland FFA has big plans for this upcoming year.

After facing recruitment problems due to the pandemic, Sutherland’s FFA has grown vastly from its 32 members last year. The chapter introduced the Discovery Degree program this year to allow eighth graders into the FFA program, and Sutherland now has about 55 members.

Advisor Ashley Parker said recruiting and the growth of the chapter has been her biggest accomplishment.

Recruitment wasn’t the only problem the chapter faced from the pandemic. The pandemic caused competitions to be moved online, and the students were burning out. “FFA became just kind of a computer screen,” Parker said.

Parker said she also had to prove herself to parents and students. The advisor position does not have a lot of turn over, and she was only a first-year teacher when she got the job. With the pandemic moving most things online, she did not have as much time to connect with them.

The Sutherland chapter is involved in its community, in competitions and events. The members will soon embark on their district competition.

“We try to do everything,” Parker said. In the last

year, the chapter has been involved in programs and events for livestock judging, range judging, farm and business management, horticulture, welding, science, animal management and employment skills leadership development event (LDE) among other things. Parker said she has more competitions and conferences planned for the rest of the year. Members hope to participate in many events, including the National Convention and competing in the district competition that could qualify students in contests for the State Convention in spring 2022.

Parker said the chapter loves to serve its community. The community donates money to the chapter, and in return, students want to make sure the community knows how much they appreciate the help and support. Beef in schools is one of the events the chapter hosts to show appreciation. Donors from around town donate beef to help feed students, and FFA has a steak dinner for the donors. They also host a service day where they clean up town. In addition, members hold a used glasses donation where they donate glasses to the local eye doctor who takes them to Kenya for children who cannot afford glasses. Parker said the chapter tries to do at least one event to service the community every month.

Through Sutherland FFA, Parker wants to prepare students for their future. She teaches the students practical information that prepares them to

successfully get into college or find a job after they graduate. Parker said she tries to be as “real world” as possible, teaching her students about budgeting, resumes to create steppingstones for the future.

Conner Hogan, Sutherland FFA chapter president, said he used to be a super shy and quiet person, but through FFA, he grew as a person and learned to speak to crowds. “I wasn’t afraid to step out and help more,” Hogan said.

Sonya Hogan, vice president of the Sutherland Alumni Chapter, said the completion of her FFA career – receiving her American Farmer Degree – taught her how to work and finish tasks.

“I still think fondly of the effort that it took to achieve this highest of levels,” she said. “Livestock judging, parli pro and public speaking prepared me for my future career and taught me how to achieve more in life.”

Sutherland’s alumni group is very involved in the FFA chapter. Alumni help with events and competitions, serve as judges, provide funding for the chapter and provide input and advice for the students.

“Through Sutherland FFA Alumni I am able to help the FFA members through fundraising and behind the scenes support,” Hogan said. “It’s an hon-

or to be an alumni member being able to help youth and promote agriculture.”

Parker encourages those who are interested in joining FFA to enroll in one of her classes or come to an FFA meeting.

Loup City

Continued from pg. 46

bers taking opportunities, which is always great to see,” he said. “A large percentage of our chapter wants to get involved and go to events.”

Day said the students persevere. “They have the ability to get things done when needed,” she said.

She said she would encourage inactive members by showing them what they can do, as well as how it might help their future with potential jobs or benefits for college. “A big thing that motivates me to do good in my chapter is so many younger officers that look up to me and learn from me just like I once did as a younger officer,” Day said.

Harrington said he hopes the members attend more conferences, so leadership skills grow even more.



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Scholarship campaign honors Dr. Bell

*By Barbara Soderlin
University of Nebraska Foundation*



Dr. Lloyd Bell

A new scholarship could be awarded as early as next fall in honor of Dr. Lloyd Bell, emeritus professor in the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Leaders in Nebraska's agriculture education community have given generously toward creating the scholarship fund, which will support future ag education teachers and honor Dr. Bell's more than 40-year career at UNL.

They have raised more than 85 percent of their \$30,000 goal, which would endow a fund through the University of Nebraska Foundation.

Now, an online campaign running Dec. 1 through Dec. 22 will allow donors statewide to contribute to the fund. When the goal is reached, the fund will provide an annual scholarship supporting outstanding UNL agriculture education students. These future teachers are in high demand across Nebraska as the number of ag programs grows.

To make a gift, visit: fundraise.nufoundation.org/lloydbellscholarshipfund

With questions, call or text NU Foundation Director of Development Barbara Soderlin at (402) 670-0095.

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Litchfield earned a third place spot in agriscience.

FFA is the place to be in Litchfield

Students stay active in the community during pandemic

By Hayley Ortmeier

Most of the 100 high school students in Litchfield participate in FFA.

Brian Johnson, the FFA advisor at Litchfield, said he has always had a love for agriculture. “I grew up on a farm and ranch, got an ag degree at the University of Nebraska,” he said. “I just always wanted to share that knowledge and information with other people.” He has been FFA advisor for six years at Litchfield High School and was named Farm Bureau Foundation Advisor of the Year for his efforts in spreading ag knowledge in his community.

Johnson said the COVID-19 pandemic greatly impacted events for FFA and made the year more challenging since the chapter was not able to do many in-person activities. It changed FFA competitions since most have a hands-on aspect. Johnson said that though students did not get to fully experience all events, Litchfield FFA members stayed positive and did what they could. The chapter qualified in state for the ag mechanics team and the agri science team placed third at the state competition this past year.

Gavin Cole, the Litchfield FFA vice president, said he grew up in a rural area and decided to try out FFA his freshmen year and enjoyed it. He said since FFA was popular, most students have been in FFA for four years.

Cole said it is considered more than normal for the whole class to participate in FFA. Cole, now a senior, said he sought out his position as vice president by applying for the officer-voting function held every year. He said he earned the office because he is a very active member in the organization. “I enjoy getting to do ag mechanics,” he said. “We have career development events and leadership development. I like doing both of those.”

This year the Litchfield chapter has participated in town clean-ups. Johnson said part of being in FFA is serving the community so the group tries to help out as much as it can. Since the pandemic cancelled many competitions, he said the Litchfield FFA has been doing more in the community.

Johnson said the students hope for an in-person state convention next year as they are all eager to see how future FFA students will succeed within the organization.

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