



# MISSOURI FFA TODAY

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## ON THE *calendar*

**JUNE 13-15** Youth Pork Institute,  
University of Missouri, Columbia

**JUNE 10-11** Area Officer Institute, Camp  
Rising Sun, Kaiser

**JUNE 17-19** HYMAX Academy, Camp  
Rising Sun, Kaiser

**JUNE 28-30** HYPE Academy, Jefferson  
City

**JULY 29-AUG 7** Ozark Empire Fair,  
Springfield

**AUG 11-20** Missouri State Fair, Sedalia

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## ARE YOU TAGGED *to teach ag?*

### EXPLORE WHY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER A CAREER IN AG EDUCATION

**C**areer Development Event teams, speaking contests, SAE visits and shop lessons. What do these four events have in common? They wouldn't be possible without our agricultural education teachers.

"Agriculture drives our nationwide economy, our world economy," explains Pam Rowland, teacher recruitment and retention coordinator, Missouri Agricultural Education. "We need well-trained people to fill jobs in agriculture and produce food and fiber. To do that, we need ag teachers."

In addition to training the next generation of agriculturalists, the job of an ag teacher is impactful and rewarding.

"As a past high school ag teacher, I know it's a very rewarding field to work with students in agriculture and help to inform the next generation of individuals in the industry," says Dr. Jon Simonsen, associate professor, director of graduate studies, and program chair for Agricultural Education and Leadership at the University of Missouri College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources. "This career path also provides the chance to work in all different types of communities. Most ag teachers play an integral role."

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 3**



Agricultural education's career path gives students an opportunity to work with a variety of segments within the industry including floriculture. Ag ed teachers are currently in high demand. Statewide, more than 100 vacancies were reported as of June 1.

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# PRESIDENT'S *Perspective*

**S**In the wise words of western author Louis L'Amour, "There will come a time when you believe everything is finished. That will be the beginning." For many of us this time of year can be full of endings. Whether this is ending your first year of high school, graduating high school, or for me, ending my year of service as a Missouri FFA officer, it is easy to see the ending as scary and unwanted. You think you have done the best you will ever do and nothing better is coming.

However, this could not be farther from the truth. Here in the FFA we have a saying, "I believe in the future of agriculture." You could shorten that even more into, "I believe in the future." These times are merely one chapter ending and a new one beginning. These endings mean you put in the work to build a foundation to set yourself up for a success. Sure, you just finished your first year of FFA and made countless memories, but now you have the experience and knowledge to pass to incoming members and help them find success as well. Maybe you just finished high school, but now you get to start your

life. This may be going to college, tech school, the military, or even starting a brand-new job. Endings are beautiful because they mean you have planted and nourished a seed in a season of your life and now get to watch it bloom with new beginnings.

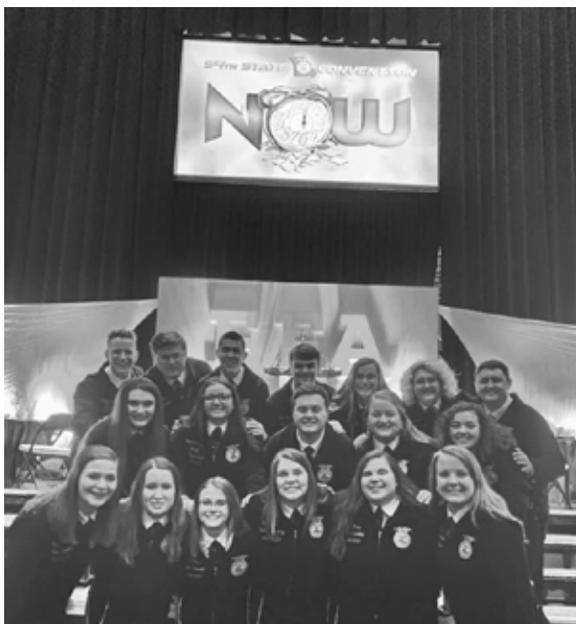
I will admit, after I retired at state convention, I felt lost, sad, and overwhelmed. I had just spent five years of my life devoted to an organization; I could not believe with just a tap of the gavel it was over. At that moment I did not realize how wrong I was. My FFA journey was not over; it was simply beginning in a new way. I may not be wearing the blue jacket any longer, but I am excited to be attending HYPE and HYMAX this summer as a group leader. Always remember the countless opportunities in those endings you fear. Celebrate endings, for they proceed new beginnings.

With Love,

Your 2021-22 State FFA President Signing Off,

*Kaitlin Kleiboeker*

#### Missouri's 2021-22 State FFA Officer Team



**AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION TEACHERS ARE IN HIGH DEMAND THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF MISSOURI. CHECK OUT THESE STATISTICS:**

- 15 Retirements
- 22 Teachers Changing Schools
- 14 Open Positions
- 105 Total Ag Educator Changes

Future agricultural education teacher and Missouri Teach Ag Ambassador Kenzie Shriver says the impact her ag teachers made led her to choose her major in agricultural education at the College of the Ozarks.

“I want to be an ag teacher based off the positive influences my ag teachers had in my life,” Shriver notes. “It’s the reoccurring phrase, ‘my ag teacher helped me accomplish this’ or ‘I wouldn’t be who I am today if it wasn’t for my ag teacher.’ I don’t want to teach ag for those significant recognitions or praises; however, I want to teach ag because it merges my two passions: being a positive, encouraging influence to youth while sharing my strong passion for agriculture. When students walk into my classroom, I want them to remember that a home is not four walls and a roof, it is the people in their life, including ag teachers, who make them feel loved, safe, accepted, and push them to be the best version of themselves.”

Passionate ag teachers are in high demand across Missouri and beyond.

“There currently is and will continue to be a true demand and need for quality teachers K-12 in all subject areas,” Simonsen explains. “This includes a demand for high school agricultural education teachers.”

This demand is matched by many benefits to a career in ag ed.

“The major benefit is positively impacting lives,” Rowland says. “You can’t put a price on that. Ag teachers also have the opportunity to build relationships with students and make a real difference. Ag teachers are also on the same schedule as their school-aged children and have the opportunity for retirement after about 30 years.”

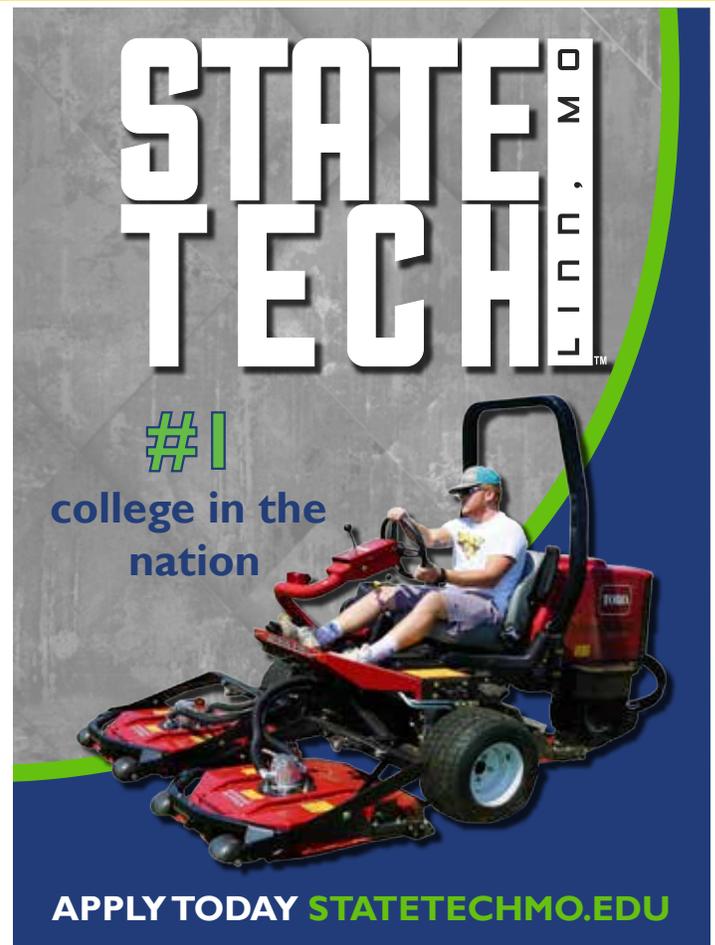
Shriver adds to the list, sharing what she is most looking forward to.

“As an ag teacher, you get to take students on many different trips,” she says. “What better way to explore the agricultural industry than to see firsthand the processes, systems and opportunities that agriculture holds? Even though there will be long nights and early mornings, nothing beats the smile on FFA members’ faces after doing their very best on something they are passionate about. Ultimately, that is why one becomes an ag teacher. Ag teachers are at the core of developing future leaders through various opportunities. The biggest perk might not be monetarily, but it’s in the students worth. Hard work pays off.”

Those who aren’t interested in pursuing a career in agricultural education still have a role to play.

“Support your ag teachers,” Rowland says. “Teachers go into education to impact lives. They need the support of their students, school administration, school board members, fellow teachers and community members around them to continue impacting those lives.”

Learn more at <https://www.moteachag.org/index.html>.



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Eligible high school seniors can apply for the scholarship online from December 1, 2021 through February 15, 2022.

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**MADE FOR AGRICULTURE®**



**MINDY WARD**

**HOME FFA CHAPTER:  
WARRENTON**

**WHAT MINDY DOES:**

Mindy is the senior content director at Farm Progress where she serves as editor of Missouri Ruralist and manages the company's Western Group of farm magazines.

**WHAT MINDY LEARNED IN FFA:** Through FFA leadership activities, Mindy learned how to set goals and achieve them. She says the skill is one she uses every day in both her personal life and career.

# LIVING A LIFE *with purpose*

**G**rowing up on a 7-acre hobby farm near Warrenton in the late 1980s, Mindy Ward's FFA experience seemed to blossom, thanks to careful nurturing and encouragement from her chapter advisor. Now a lifetime FFA member, Ward has built a career centered around the talents first cultivated in the organization and in her high school agriculture classes.

Ward's Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) included raising sheep, farrow-to-finish hogs, and a small cow/calf operation. And in FFA, she says her "go-to" were speaking contests.

That is until her chapter advisor, Leon Busdieker, spurred her into exploring career development events such as meats, farm management and soils. As a member of the Warrenton chapter, Ward went on to serve on the 1987-88 State FFA officer team.

"My sister and I were the first generation to be involved in the FFA," Ward explains. "For me, being in the FFA brought about a love of livestock, drive for competition and passion for agriculture. FFA taught me to work hard and give back. FFA, along with my faith, are at the very soul of who I am today."

As the senior content director at Farm Progress, Ward is editor of *Missouri Ruralist* magazine and manages the company's Western Group of farm magazines. She resides today in southern Warren County with husband, Stacy. Over the years, the Wards raised Oxford, Dorset and commercial sheep which her two daughters showed across the country. Both are married now and last year, the Wards welcomed their first grandson to the family.

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***Learn why lifetime FFA member Mindy Ward continues to give back and says FFA is a team sport.***

***By Joann Pipkin***

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After high school, Ward enrolled at the University of Missouri-Columbia to study veterinary medicine. But she says after one too many chemistry classes at Mizzou as a freshman, she shared her struggles with her FFA advisor who questioned her about agriculture journalism.

"He saw in me what I did not — my passion for writing, speaking and sharing the story of agriculture," Ward explains. "Through every FFA speech contest, I honed that craft. But it was the confidence of my FFA advisor that allowed me to believe that I could make the change and be successful. I would not have this career without his guidance."

According to Ward, her involvement in FFA taught her about setting goals and how to pursue them — but that wasn't as easy as it might sound. As a member, Ward

loathed the goal-setting sessions in leadership conferences. As an adult, however, she says goal setting is the one tool she uses every day in her career, on her farm and in her personal life.

"Do I achieve every goal," Ward asks. "No, but goal-setting helps me live my life with purpose."

As an FFA alumnus, Ward continues to give back to the organization that helped prepare her for her career. Missouri Ruralist hosts the annual Larry Harper Young Writers at the local level, helping FFA members practice for area and state FFA officer interviews.

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE**



FROM PAGE 9

“It is fun to be a part of their journey and offer encouragement and advice,” Ward says. “It is always important to take time and give back to an organization that offered me so much growing up.”

While today it’s so easy for members to get caught up in being their very best, Ward’s advice focuses on the opposite.

“Encourage others,” she says simply. “It is so easy to get wrapped up in achieving your own goals that you do not see those around you struggling. Instead of always walking in front, try walking beside other FFA members. You’ll never regret helping someone else achieve his or her goals.”

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***“FFA is a team sport. Thank those who are on your team be it advisor, siblings, parents or your friends like Teresa.”***

—Mindy Ward, Lifetime FFA Member

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In Ward’s mind, success in FFA comes from realizing it is not a single sport. She shares this encouraging story from her own past:

“Before every speaking contest my friend Teresa (Schulze) Lee would stand outside the door with her hand open. I had habit of twirling my rings when I answered questions, so I dropped it into her hand. Then, when she had the opportunity to run for state office, she stepped aside to allow me the opportunity to pursue my dream. She didn’t have to do any of this, but she did. Every chance I get, I tell people that my success in FFA came because I had people who cheered me on. FFA is a team sport. Thank those who are on your team be it advisor, siblings, parents, or your friends like Teresa.”

## Did you know?

**MINDY WARD (LEFT)** IS THE SENIOR CONTENT DIRECTOR FOR FARM PROGRESS AND EDITOR OF MISSOURI RURALIST. A FORMER STATE OFFICER, WARD'S TWO MARRIED DAUGHTERS ELISA (CENTER) AND CASSIDY (RIGHT) STILL HELP WITH THE FAMILY'S SHEEP OPERATION.

*“Instead of always walking in front, try walking beside other FFA members. You’ll never regret helping someone else achieve his or her goals.”*

—Mindy Ward, Lifetime FFA Member

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# BLUE JACKET *Brief*



## MORGAN WATKINS

FORT OSAGE FFA

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-COLUMBIA, AGRICULTURE EDUCATION

### MY SAE:

For my SAE, I own and manage my own website called Blooming Into Agriculture. I write blogs that range from how-to lessons to personal experiences. I also share student-featured stories from youth across the nation, connecting them under a common purpose through an easy to access, virtual platform.

### WHAT'S UNIQUE ABOUT ME:

I love to hunt! Over the years, I've harvested a lot of deer by rifle and bow.



## CODY GARVER

ST. JAMES FFA

STATE TECHNICAL INSTITUTE OF MISSOURI AGRIBUSINESS

### MY PLANS FOR THE FUTURE:

My plans for the future are to attend State Technical Institute of Missouri and obtain an associate degree in agribusiness. Then, I want to attend Missouri Welding Institute to earn welding certification. Once my education is complete, I plan to travel as a combo pipe welder and own a small ranch.

### MY ADVICE:

Never let someone else decide how big or small your dreams should be.

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# DISCIPLINE GETS YOU *where motivation can't take you*

**W**hen preparing for state officer interviews, one of the prep questions I was asked was, “What would you consider your motto or something that you live by?” I was slightly taken aback as I hadn’t really ever thought about the question and even more by the fact that I didn’t have a quick response. I stood there and I pondered. “What is something that I live by,” I asked myself. Eventually, a few things came to mind — one of them being, discipline gets you where motivation can’t take you.

We often hear a lot about motivation. It is everywhere in our culture. Motivational speakers, videos, and quotes, the list goes on and on. Many times these motivators are useful and will get us engaged in whatever we are trying to accomplish. We can all think of a time where motivation got us started, but there had to be something more to get us to keep going. Maybe we decided that we would start a regular workout routine or that we were going to get caught up on all of our homework. It quite possibly could be something bigger, like becoming a state winner in a contest or proficiency. These decisions likely were made by a motivating factor. At some point though, we will



**By Jodi Robinson**  
2022-23 State FFA Secretary

need to step beyond motivation and tap into something more, something bigger. This is where discipline comes into play.

Discipline is the ultimate factor in making sure we will achieve what we set out to achieve. This type of discipline is controlled behavior. We are not letting ourselves get distracted from the end goal and are taking all the steps we know are necessary to get there. We get a workout partner that makes us go to the gym, we have someone check on us to make sure our homework gets done, and we study long and hard so we know our contest inside and out. These are the actions that help us complete tasks and that get us where we set out to go.

Motivation is great, and gets us doing what we might never have tried otherwise. However, discipline is worth more. Discipline is hard, but it is what it takes to achieve everything we know we are capable of. Tapping into it or not can be the difference between finding what we are good at and never knowing our full potential.

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# LEARNING BY DOING

## FOUNDATION GRANT HELPS LOCKWOOD FFA BUILD BEEF QUALITY & YIELD GRADE MODULE

**B**rian Gillen, the agriculture education teacher at Lockwood R-I had a bit of a challenge when teaching his animal science classes. In southwest Missouri, feeder cattle are a main focus. His class curriculum centered on live cattle evaluation, learning what to look for when selecting replacement cattle, or identifying cattle that were ready to go on to the next market level. However, nationwide the beef cattle industry focuses more on yield and quality factors. At one time a local locker made it possible for students to look at slaughter carcasses but when that business model moved to processed meat products, that was no longer a possibility.

Gillen had an idea to upgrade his curriculum to provide students in the classroom, hands on activities that explore how the industry arrives at a yield and quality grade for beef cattle, but he didn't have the funding in his class budget to buy the necessary materials.

That's where the Missouri FFA Foundation came in.

In February, Gillen applied for and received a Learning by Doing Grant from the Missouri FFA Foundation to fund a Beef Quality & Yield Grade Module. Grant funds were used to purchase four sets of USDA marbling cards, 12 rib eye cards, a set of beef yield grading IDPIX cards, and a copy of the Meat Evaluation Handbook.

The marbling cards have high quality color photos exemplifying the differences between the nine levels of marbling from practically devoid to abundant. The rib eye cards allow students to measure not only the area of a rib eye but also the fat thickness at the 12th rib. The beef yield grading IDPIX cards provide 30 scenarios with an actual size rib eye that can be measured including back fat, along with all of the information needed to figure yield and quality grade. As there are three variations of the information, it demonstrates 90 rib eye options! Gillen is using the Meat Evaluation Handbook as his instructor reference book to ensure he is sharing fact-based, industry-backed information.

Recently, Gillen was even able to use the materials outside of regular class time. He held a workshop for any student who might be interested in participating in the Meats Evaluation and Technology Career Development Event. Using the rib eye grids and various scenarios from the beef yield grading IDPIX cards, they practiced grading rib eyes. Now that the project is underway, and once Lockwood students have become familiar with the process of using the grading tools and formulas, a local supporter



has offered to provide actual rib eye steaks to grade, providing these students with a real-world application of skills.

When asked what he wants people to know about why it's important to support the Missouri FFA Foundation, Gillen said, "In today's economic environment, grants like this give educators the opportunity to purchase items that go above and beyond necessary. This can be the difference in students' learning and understanding, the difference between them getting through a class and loving it."

If you would like to donate to the Missouri FFA Foundation to support programs such as Learning by Doing grants, please visit <https://donorbox.org/moffafoundation>.

—By Heather Dimitt-Fletcher



With the help of a Learning By Doing grant from the Missouri FFA Foundation, the Lockwood chapter was able to fund a Beef Quality and Yield Grade Module for students.



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