

LABOR OF LEARNING

For Ashland FFA member Amanda Belew, every decision made in her Supervised Agricultural Experience program came down to one word: knowledge.

Belew was recently named a finalist in the Wildlife Production and Management Proficiency award area.

“Learning to accept and ask for assistance enabled me to increase efficiency and profitability,” Belew explains. “Being open to new information made me an eager student in and out of the classroom, a skill benefiting my further education and employability.”

Belew’s wildlife production and management SAE consists of purchasing Bobwhite quail chicks to grow and sell for the training of bird dogs used in field trials and management release for pre-planned hunting activities.

“Quail are labor intensive, requiring controlled temperatures and cleanliness as they are highly susceptible to disease,” Belew says.

Thanks to advice from her support system, Belew says she was able to improve the management practices of her project, which had a positive effect on the overall health of the birds.

Interacting with customers through her SAE helped Belew strengthen her communication

skills, and she says she is now comfortable speaking with people she does not know, which helps to build relationships.

“I will carry this trait as I continue to develop in personal situations, college or work environments,” Belew says. “Being able to communicate clearly will assist my growth as a student, discussing with professors and

peers, and as an employee when building relationships within the company and with customers.”

Four national finalists are selected in each proficiency award area to compete for a national proficiency award with the winners announced during this year’s virtual National FFA Convention & Expo, Oct., 27-29.

—By Joann Pipkin



Amanda Belew, Ashland FFA member, is a national finalist in the Wildlife Production and Management Proficiency award area.

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