

# FFA TODAY

ISSUE 1 **FEBRUARY** 2025



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Ashland FFA member Ava Bullard gets her hands dirty to earn a National FFA Proficiency Award in Diversified Horticulture. Get the full story on page 13 of this issue.









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TTY 800-735-2966; email civilrights@dese.mo.gov.



TO: Erica Vaughn

FROM: Chadwick FFA Member

## My Ag Teacher is Great Because ...

She inspires me to do great things and to become an ag teacher. She always pushes me to do my best in any circumstance. I'm very grateful for my ag teacher and the many opportunities she provides for me and my classmates.

# Student Teaching Scholarship Recipients Announced

Congratulations to the 2024-25 Missouri Teach Ag Student Teaching Scholarship winners! They will each receive \$300 to help with expenses during their student teaching experience.

### College of the Ozarks

Haley Bakeberg, Danielle Walters

#### Missouri State University

Kacy Bone, Colin Boyd, Kameran Collier, Nathan Hensley, Bayleigh Hunzinger, Jessica Jones, Rachel Scrivener

#### **Northwest Missouri State University**

Abigail Dewert, Catherine Schreit, Jenna Stark

#### **University of Missouri**

Alivia Beanland, Emily Hoyt, Jaron VanHouden

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## **MISSOURI FFA IN ACTION**



### **Missouri FFA Swine Facility Management Contest**

In December, Missouri Pork Association, in cooperation with the National Pork Board and the University of Missouri, held the fourth annual FFA Swine Facility Management Contest in Columbia. Eighteen teams competed in the hands-on event that focuses on real-world jobs in the pork industry. The first place team hailed from North Shelby FFA with California FFA taking second place. The top five teams and top four individuals will be recognized in April at the Missouri FFA State Convention

in Columbia. Congratulations to all who took part in the contest!



### **CELEBRATE FFA WEEK**

Click at right to view how FFA members across the state like to celebrate.





## PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

xcitement, potential, positivity just a few of the words I would use to describe my trip to southwest and central Missouri for Greenhand Motivational Conferences (GMCs). I was lucky enough to meet, interact with and spend time with 878 incredible freshmen. It was truly special to witness the enthusiasm these young members felt about the exciting years ahead in their blue jackets. Members like Madison, Luke, Baylee, Sammie, Suzy, Kaden, Lillie, Kenzie and so many more still stick out in my mind because of their energy, their attitudes and the impact they had on me.

As the week went on, it was easy to see their eagerness to learn and

meet new people, but just as easily recognizable were their nerves and hesitations about talking in front of people, asking questions and being thrown into a room of complete strangers. Our time in my workshop room was spent identifying challenges freshmen face, coming up with creative solutions to overcome our obstacles, finding fun and unique opportunities for every student and setting goals for each member's next four years in our organization.

My favorite moment at each conference was at the end of the workshops when students were busy brainstorming goals, sharing their plans for getting involved and

outlining what they hoped to achieve over the next four years. As I looked around the room, I couldn't help but feel excited for these members. While they shared some similarities, each one stood out with the unique values they brought to the workshop and the incredible potential they have to make a meaningful impact within this organization. Some were passionate about welding, others dreamed of returning to the family farm. Some aspired to study animal science and become veterinarians, while others set their sights on becoming state officers.

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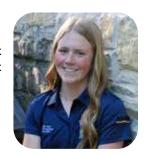
#### CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

A few were eager to explore dairy foods competitions and many simply hoped to make new friends along the way.

These members might not have known exactly what they wanted to do with their FFA journey, but they all shared one important thing: the drive to do something meaningful. Their eagerness to get involved and dive in headfirst was evident and will take them far both in our organization and in life. With this mindset, the possibilities are endless. While I hope each freshman who attended GMCs walked away with a message that hit home, I'm walking away with a renewed hope in the future of our organization and the excitement of possibility.



Andi Belt State President







## MFA supports you.

The MFA Foundation has awarded more than 15,500 scholarships to students from rural communities where MFA Incorporated and MFA Oil Company and their affiliates conduct business. The foundation also contributes to the Missouri 4-H Foundation, Missouri FFA Association, Missouri Young Farmers Association and other programs consistent with its mission to provide educational opportunity for youth.

#### Apply online

Eligible high school seniors can apply for the scholarship online from December 1, 2024 through February 15, 2025.

www.MFAFoundation.com





## **CHAPTER SPOTLIGHTS**

## Real-World Ag Issues

The national-winning Silex FFA Ag Issues team gained more than knowledge about solar issues during their journey to Indianapolis for the 97th National FFA Convention.

ave you ever thought about the contract details behind the solar farms across the state? What are the pros? What are the cons? What goes into the decision-making process? The national-winning Silex FFA Ag Issues team, coined the "Thompson family," knows the answers to each of those questions and more.

"The Ag Issues CDE is designed for a team to dive deeper into an issue that impacts the agricultural industry in your community," says Sean O'Brien, Silex agricultural education teacher and FFA advisor. "The team creates a 10-page portfolio and a 15-minute presentation covering both sides of their issue."

After much research, the team decided on a skit-like presentation that kept information and facts at the forefront. Each team member took on the role of a member of the Thompson family, deciding whether or not to pursue a solar contract for their family farm.

"With the implementation of utilityscale solar farms being a relevant issue in our local area, it was a no-brainer that this was the issue we wanted to base our presentation on," says McKenna Claborn, Silex FFA Ag Issues team member.

The ag issues forum provides the opportunity for students to research real-world issues facing agriculture today. The skills learned help shape future leaders in our industry.

"The issue we chose encompasses a multitude of others in the agricultural industry," Claborn says. "Not only did I learn about the effects of solar farms, but I also learned about the farm bill, natural disasters, solar panel recycling, eminent domain, soil fertility, the chemistry of solar panels, tax revenues and more. From a leadership perspective, I learned how to ask questions, speak extemporaneously and communicate with industry professionals."

Ag Issues teams are required to share their research and presentations with others ahead of both the state and national competition.

"We had to present forums to large groups of influential individuals who might be affected by our issue," Claborn says. "We were able to present and network with cooperatives, financial institutions, commodity groups, government officials and even agronomic scientists."

Two team members were offered internships through their forum presentations. These interactions provide growth opportunities and encourage even further research.

"The research is all-consuming, but makes all of the difference," O'Brien says. "I will never forget at one of our first forums, the people in attendance started asking questions our team was not prepared for. I could see the team members sink in their chairs as they got grilled with question after question. Once we were done, we went back to school and started divvying up areas to research. They never wanted to feel that defeating emotion again."

You can watch Silex FFA's award-winning presentation in the National FFA Finals Hall.



## **Moo-ving Through Dairy Foods**

Fair Play's national-winning Milk Quality and Products Career Development Event team shares what makes the contest an eye-opening event.

areer Development Events (CDEs) provide opportunities for real-world learning and experiences. Fair Play's Milk Quality and Products team won the national CDE in 2024 and can attest to its handson nature and educational impact.

"The Milk Quality and Products CDE involved the tasting of milk flavors, cheese identification and numerous other tasks that relate to the dairy industry," says Riley Bruce, a member of the CDE team.

The experience dives into the recognition, selection and management necessary for quality milk and dairy product production, says Randy Lightfoot, Fair Play agricultural education teacher and FFA advisor.

"A high level of knowledge regarding milk composition, defects found in milk and how to minimize them, animal health, milk marketing, government regulations and programs and the effects of the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance is necessary to be competitive and excel at the state and national levels," he explains.

The National CDE is comprised of written exams, product evaluation, mastitis tests and a team performance.

"My favorite part was the team event," says Lexi Bee, team member. "Unlike all the other individual parts of the contest, I was able to collaborate with my teammates. They reassured me, and if something was not right, they were there to point it out."

For all parts of the CDE, preparation was kev.

"I teach a unit on dairy production, milk quality and dairy foods evaluation," Lightfoot says. "I provide hands-on practicums for the different components. During contest season, I try to provide exposure several times per week on the sensory-based components in class, after school and at workshops and Saturday contests."

The team's dedication was worth the work.

"Together, my teammates and I were always pushing each other to be better than the last time, and I have to say that the hard work, along with some dedication from our advisor, Mr. Lightfoot, paid off in the end," says William Frye, another member of the team.

Dallas Hardt, team member, says more than a national title, he's taking away a newfound understanding of the dairy industry.

"Through all of the preparation and practice for this competition, I have realized just how much the dairy industry carries on its shoulders," he explains. "I have learned about the importance of dairy farming, as well as dairy's nutritional impact. This CDE changed my view of this sector of agriculture."

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## WHICH CAREER DEVELOPMENT EVENT ARE YOU?

## 1. Describe yourself in one word:

- a. Patient
- b. Technical
- c. Focused
- d. Professional

## 2. What is your favorite speaking contest?

- a. Ag Sales
- b. No speaking contests for me
- c. Prepared Public Speaking
- d. Extemporaneous

## 3. What is your favorite pizza topping?

- a. Sausage
- b. Pepperoni
- c. Bacon
- d. Cheese

#### 4. Pick a sport:

- a. Golf
- b. Baseball
- c. Soccer
- d. Football



## 5. What is your favorite subject in school?

- a. Math
- b. Science
- c. History
- d. English

## 6. Pick an FFA Week activity:

- a. Community Breakfast
- b. Drive Your Tractor to School Day
- c. Petting Zoo
- d. Dress Up Days

## 7. Pick a word to describe your contest season:

- a. Studious
- b. Dirty
- c. Busy
- d. Fun

## 8. How would your best friend describe you?

- a. Star Student
- b. Problem Solver
- c. Book Smart AND Street Smart
- d. Opinionated

### 9. Pick a spring FFA event:

- a. FFA Week
- b. Contest Season
- c. Chapter Banquet
- d. State Convention

#### 10. Pick an FFA color:

- a. National Blue
- b. Sky Blue
- c. Corn Gold
- d. I like them all for different reasons

#### **RESULTS:**

If you picked mostly A's: You're Farm & Agribusiness Management! You like to study and take contest season seriously. You're a planner and very patient. You enjoy digging into the details and are very business savvy. Encourage your team members to spend some extra time looking at old tests this contest season!

If you picked mostly B's: You're Ag Mechanics! You like to work with your hands and get very technical. You're a problem solver who is always curious. You enjoy learning how things work and picking up new skills. Encourage your team members to ask questions this contest season!

If you picked mostly C's: You're Agronomy! You like to dig deep into the task at hand and pay close attention to detail. You're book smart and take your studies seriously, but you're also street smart with a lot of common sense. Encourage your team members to use some of that common sense this contest season!

If you picked mostly D's: You're Livestock Judging! You like to become an expert on a topic and share your knowledge with others. You're a great public speaker who can be opinionated at times. You're always professional and strive for growth. Encourage your team members to stand up for their reasons this contest season!

## **ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT**



#### **NAME: JOSEPH FRUEH**

**HOMETOWN:** Maryville, MO

**FFA CHAPTER:** North Nodaway

**COLLEGE:** Northwest Missouri State University Agricultural Education

#### OCCUPATION:

Assistant Vice President, Commercial Crop Lending, FCS Financial

**FFA TODAY:** Tell us a little about vourself.

FRUEH: I'm a fourth generation farmer on both my mother and my father's sides of the family. I've always had a passion for agriculture, which is what led me to Northwest to get my agricultural education degree in agriculture. After graduation, I recruited for Northwest for over five years before moving to FCS Financial to become a loan officer. In my free time, I enjoy playing pitch and hanging out with friends.

**FFA TODAY:** Tell us about your involvement in agriculture.

FRUEH: I grew up on a cow-calf, corn and soybean farm, working alongside my father. That is where my passion for ag started – taking care of the land and the animals. It is also what drove me to join FFA. I was in 4-H until eighth grade when I started FFA. My SAE was showing pigs, and I farrowed out show pigs throughout my high school career. Currently, I am the president of the Nodaway County Cattlemens and Nodaway County

Farm Bureau. I sit as the ag representative on the Nodaway County Economic Development Board. I am a loyal knight of the Maryville Elk's Lodge 760 and currently sit on the committee for our county livestock show. I am also the incoming chair of the Missouri Farm Bureau State Young Farmers and Ranchers Board.

**FFA TODAY:** Can you share about your current occupation?

FRUEH: I connect with farmers and producers in Northwest Missouri who also have a passion for agriculture. FCS is a lending institute that helps farmers purchase farms and grow their operations. I'm able to meet with producers one-on-one to help them understand their financials and make progress in advancing their operations.

**FFA TODAY:** What was your favorite part of FFA?

**FRUEH:** My favorite part was FFA Week. We would put on events throughout the school showing support for FFA and agriculture. Some years, we would host a petting zoo and show elementary students about agriculture.

**FFA TODAY:** How did FFA impact where you are today?

**FRUEH:** By showing me there is a tight network of ag teachers, students and supporting organizations across the state. I can always find fellow FFA alumni to talk to and collaborate with. I always know there's someone I can find common ground with.

**FFA TODAY:** Who is your biggest influence?

**FRUEH:** My dad. He showed me that putting something into the ground and having faith would turn into something more. It would turn into the crop we harvest. He also taught me patience truly is a virtue. After you put forth the effort, it's time to wait.

**FFA TODAY:** What advice do you have for current FFA members?

**FRUEH:** Try something new. If you go through the list of opportunities FFA has to offer, whether it's WLC, FFA Camp, participating in an LDE or CDE, you may learn it becomes your passion.



## 

MAR 1 American Royal Spring Livestock Show & Judging Clinic. Kansas Citv

MAR 1 FCS Financial Scholarship Applications Due

MAR 1 Northwest Missouri State University School of Agricultural Sciences Alumni & Friends Barnwarming, Maryville

APR1 FCS Financial Shaping Rural Missouri Grant Deadline

APR 11-12 State FFA Officer Selection Finals, Columbia

APR 12 State Agriscience Fair, Columbia

APR 12 State Star Candidate Interviews, Columbia

APR 23-25 Missouri FFA State Convention, Columbia

MAY 3-10 Missouri Beef Days, Bolivai

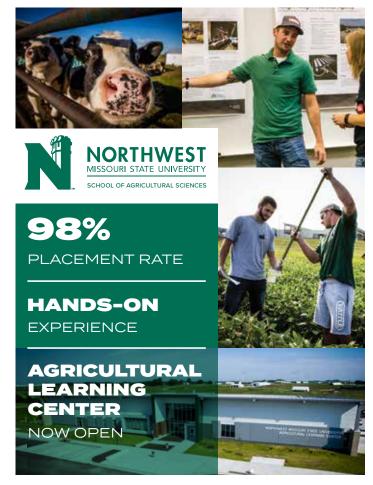
MAY 7 LEAD Conference Registration Due

MAY 7 Public Speaking Academy Registration Due

**VISIT** <u>www.missouriffa.org</u> for a complete list of CDE and LDE contests and workshops.







## Missouri Electric Cooperative Youth Events



## Free trips that you can take part in!

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YOUTH TOUR - JUNE 15-21,2025 HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS

During six days in June, the delegates have the opportunity to see monuments, memorials, and maybe even some famous people, in Washington D.C. There is also the opportunity to make new friends from Missouri, Hawaii, Florida, or....any state in the nation! You will also visit with your members of the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.



CYCLE - JULY 15-18,2025 HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORES OR JUNIORS

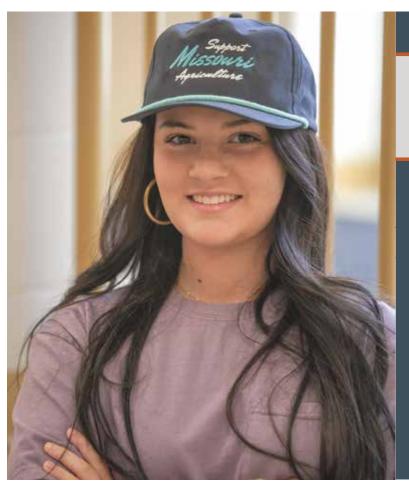
CYCLE is an action-filled four days, in Jefferson City, that provides high school students opportunities to learn first-hand what it is like to be involved in the legislative process, the cooperative form of business, and how to be a leader. The program includes nationally known speakers, a day at the Missouri State Capitol, a tour of the Missouri State Penitentiary, a day tour of St. Louis, and education about electric cooperatives. Students will also get the chance to sit in the chamber of the Missouri House of Representatives and debate a bill just like our elected officials would. They get to experience first-hand how laws are made to enhance the quality of life for all Missourians.



For more information visit: www.moyouthtour.com









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## **DIGGING IN FOR THE TOP PRIZE**

Ashland FFA member Ava Bullard earns national award in Diversified Horticulture Proficiency

va Bullard of Ashland won the National FFA Diversified Horticulture Proficiency Award at the 97th National FFA Convention and Expo. Bullard's Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) involves planting and harvesting cut florals.

What started as her mother's flower garden around their house turned into hobby bouquets, which turned into a profitable booth at the local farmers market and eventually a thriving floriculture business.

Today, her responsibilities include the planting, harvesting, arranging and selling of her florals to customers in surrounding areas. Through the help of National FFA SAE grants, Bullard has grown her operation to include floral coolers, a greenhouse, sophisticated irrigation systems and more.

As an FFA member, Bullard participated in the Floriculture Career Development Event, as well as floral arrangement competitions. This, paired with her hands-on SAE experience, opened Bullard's eyes to every step that goes into growing flowers from seeds. She also found a passion for the cut flowers that

make up beautiful bouquets and arrangements.

Time spent growing her SAE has sparked a path for her future career. Bullard plans to use what she has learned to pursue a degree related to floriculture and agribusiness with her sights set on flowers in her future.





## **SAVE THE DATE!**

For 24 hours on Feb. 20, let's support MissouriFFA on Give FFA Day. Visit <a href="FFA.org/GiveFFADay">FFA.org/GiveFFADay</a> to learn more and get involved!

To give, visit <a href="https://donorbox.org/mogiveffa">https://donorbox.org/mogiveffa</a>





## **Top 10 Reasons**

## to Support the Missouri FFA Foundation on Give FFA Day

he Missouri FFA Foundation plays a crucial role in supporting agricultural education across the state by raising funds and resources to help ensure the continued success of FFA members, chapters, teachers, and agriculture classes across the state. Give FFA Day is a one-day fundraising initiative held during National FFA Week that encourages individuals to come together and make a collaborative impact towards raising those necessary funds and resources. Here are 10 compelling reasons to donate to the Missouri FFA Foundation on Give FFA Day:

#### 1. Investing in Future Leaders

The Foundation provides the resources to help almost 27,000 Missouri FFA members participate in statewide leadership workshops and activities.

## 2. Supporting Teacher Recruitment and Retention

The Foundation provides funding for the Missouri Teach Ag teacher recruitment program, the New Teacher Induction Program, technical training institutes, and professional development workshops.

## 3. Advancing Agricultural Innovation

The Foundation fosters innovation in the agriculture industry by funding local classroom grants that help build the labs and purchase the equipment needed for teachers to provide instruction for in-demand and cutting-edge agriculture skills.

## 4. Creating Networking Opportunities

FFA offers students a network of peers, mentors, and professionals in agriculture and related fields.

### **GIVE TODAY!**

You can support tomorrow's agricultural leaders. Please consider making a donation to the Missouri FFA Foundation at <a href="https://donorbox.org/mogiveffa">https://donorbox.org/mogiveffa</a>

The Foundation supports the networking opportunities essential for career success.

#### 5. Recognizing Excellence

Missouri FFA Members and advisors work hard to master skills and achieve success. The Foundation supports awards and scholarships for students through Proficiency Awards and competitive Career & Leadership Development Events. We support multiple awards for teachers including the nationally recognized Golden Owl Award program.

#### 6. Strengthening Communities

Agriculture is fundamental to many of the local communities in our state. Local FFA Chapters are the heart of FFA and crucial to agriculture in many of our communities. In 2024, the Foundation allocated more than \$800,000 in grants and scholarships at the local level.

#### 7. Proven Quality

Year after year, Missouri has the most American Degree recipients of any state. This achievement is a testament to the promise for the future of Missouri's FFA members.

## 8. Growing Confidence through Experience

Missouri FFA provides training, support, and practical leadership experience to more than 2,000 local, area, and state officers. With almost 100 years of history providing leadership training and experience for FFA members, Missouri FFA grows the leaders our state and country need.

## 9. Investing in Student Entrepreneurship

The Foundation awards grants to students to start or expand their Supervised Agricultural Experience Projects. This is a worthy investment as in 2024 our students reported earnings of \$69.8 Million in SAE income.

## 10. Promoting Statewide Agriculture and Advocacy

The Foundation helps students receive hands-on experience in the industry and by backing programs such as HYMAX and HYPE, it also trains students to be better advocates for agriculture. When you make a contributing to the Missouri FFA Foundation, you are helping plant an environment that fosters learning, mastering, and demonstrating skills. This yields the next generation of agricultural leaders and ensures that Missouri's agricultural industry remains vibrant and strong.

Anytime during February, you can make a make a tax-deductible donation in support of Give FFA Day at <a href="https://donorbox.org/mogiveffa">https://donorbox.org/mogiveffa</a>. You can also mail a check to: Missouri FFA Foundation, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102. (If you mail a check, please include Give FFA Day on the memo.)

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