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Pennsylvania Educators Honored at National Agriculture Educators Convention

Members of the Pennsylvania Association of Agricultural Educators shone at the recent National Association of Agriculture Educators Convention.

A delegation of over 20 members, including nine pre-service educators from Penn State traveled to San Antonio to participate in professional development and conduct NAAE business. The Pennsylvania delegation joined more than 700 agricultural educators from across the nation.

A few garnered recognition for their efforts in the classroom and dedication to the profession.

Penn State was awarded as the outstanding post-secondary agriculture program for its tremendous contributions to the agriculture education family in Pennsylvania and across the nation.

Penn State continually produces high quality agriscience educators who work across the country to educate students about the importance of agriculture in today's society.

Meagan Slates, an agriscience educator at Penn Manor High School in Millersville, was selected as the outstanding early career teacher.

During her five years in the classroom, Slates has proved herself as an educator and made remarkable contributions to the profes-



Pennsylvania ag teachers attended the National Association of Agriculture Educators conference in San Antonio.

sion by serving on PAEE and NAAE committees.

Janae McMichael, an agriscience educator at Lampeter-Strasburg High School, was selected as the Teacher Turn the Key award recipient.

Teacher Turn the Key is a year-long program, sponsored by Ram Trucks, which focuses on early-career ag teachers and

provides them with the tools and support they need to grow and flourish in the classroom and beyond.

During the experience, McMichael was immersed in professional development activities that support her professional goals.

NAAE is the professional organization in the United States for agricultural educators.

It provides more than 8,000 members with professional networking and development opportunities, professional liability coverage and extensive awards and recognition programs.

The mission of NAAE is "professionals providing agricultural education for the global community through visionary leadership, advocacy and service."

Life Lessons Learned on the Farm FROM THE OFFICERS STATION

My name is Millena Bashore and I am honored to be serving as this year's State FFA Chaplain.



MILLENA BASHORE

I reside in Annville, Pennsylvania, on a dairy farm with my parents and four siblings, Royell, Ry, Ravyn and Maze.

I was actively involved in 4-H, dairy royalty programs and dairy judging, and was a member of all dairy cattle breed associations.

Before I was in FFA, I remember my siblings telling me about the unlimited experiences and opportunities that they had in the organization.

Once I was old enough to join, I saw first hand that the experiences were indeed unlimited.

Growing up on a dairy farm taught me early on to do everything in life with passion and purpose.

When I was younger, there were days I wished that I wasn't a farm girl. But looking back on what I learned from having the privilege of living on a dairy farm, I wouldn't trade it for anything.

Even though farming is one of the hardest jobs in the world, you gain so much from it.

The early mornings and the late nights, holiday and family dinners shortened, and having no sick days or days off really teach you how to prioritize, and show your dedication to the industry.

Everything you do in a day is for the betterment of your cows, from the minute you wake up to the minute you go to sleep.

Cows count on you to take full care of them by feeding and milk-

ing them at least twice a day and keeping them at their healthiest.

You work 15-plus hour days, in all types of weather, so that every need of your cows comes before your own.

Farming is a matter of pride, so no farmer will ever give anything less than 100 percent.

The dairy farm I live on has many breeds of cows and every one is different, from her hide color, to her personality, to different milk production.

Just as every farm/cow is different so is every person, but we never know just how fast life can change and what difference we can make.

Being around animals allows you to be extremely gentle and react from within. Oftentimes words hold little value and your actions and feelings have a lot.

Farming can be either a very independent job or extremely family-oriented, so as dairy farmers we try to never take anything for granted.

Being a farmer is a hard life and isn't for everyone, but it's my lifestyle. I hold an inborn fondness for the numerous dairy farm families that work day in and out.

I truly believe that myself and numerous others have benefited from growing up on a dairy farm.

Growing up on the farm instilled in my core the passion for the dairy industry. I strive to forever carry that passion and purpose with me, as it's a big part of who I am as a person.

Editor's note: Millena Bashore is the Pennsylvania FFA chaplain.

Local Farmers Help Tyrone Area School District Win Grant to Improve STEM Education

KAYLEE UPDIKE

Tyrone Area FFA Reporter

A \$10,000 grant from the America's Farmers Grow Rural Education Program, sponsored by the Monsanto Fund, provided enhanced learning opportunities for Tyrone Area High School students to develop important skills in shaping the future of agriculture.

The Tyrone Area High School agricultural education program will utilize funds for a new welding simulator for the agricultural education and career and technology departments.

To feed the world's rapidly growing population and tackle many other global challenges, our country's next generation of leaders will need to be highly skilled in the areas of science, technology, engineering and math.

"As the industry continues to diversify, we are struggling to meet the demands of students with the skills to enter the workforce. Welding is an area of our program which I hope to expand

upon and offer every student and opportunity to see the awe in welding. Through the simulators, the program is able to save costs, yet teach the basic skills of speed, angle and distance. Those that master these skills will then move into the welding booths," said Tiffany Hoy, Tyrone Area agricultural education teacher.

The guideWELD(r) VR welding simulator is a virtual reality welding simulator that enables students to rapidly refine basic welding skills and explore welding career paths in a safe environment without the need for consumables like metal and gas.

Earlier this year, farmers in Tyrone, Warriors Mark, Spruce Creek and Sinking Valley areas nominated the district for consideration.

After the nomination, the district developed its submission to enhance its STEM education offering through Venture, Interest and Challenge-Centered (VICC) Simulations at Tyrone Area agricultural education program.



With the grant, the Tyrone Area FFA will invest in welding and other STEM courses.

A group of science and math teachers reviewed each submission and selected the school district as a finalist.

Next, the program's Farmer Advisory Council, consisting of approximately 30 farmer leaders from across the country with an interest in agriculture and education, selected Tyrone Area School District for one of the Grow Rural Education grants.

Grant applications were judged based on the merit of the application, need and community support.

The America's Farmers Grow Rural Education program began in 2011. More than \$16 million has been awarded to over 750 rural school districts to enhance STEM education.

For a complete list of winners and to learn more about the America's Farmers Grow Rural Education program, visit www.GrowRuralEducation.com.



The Tyrone Area FFA chapter received a grant from America's Farmers Grow Rural Education Program.