



# BLUE AND GOLD

## Pennsylvania FFA Happenings

Telling Our Story

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### Mid-West Takes to the Field

LUKE KERSTETTER  
Pa. State FFA Sentinel

Have you ever wondered how to transform fresh-grown produce into school lunches as well as classroom materials? How about growing crops that can be sold for FFA chapter fundraisers and community service projects? The Mid-West FFA chapter is fulfilling the farm-to-fork idea with a unique chapter-run enterprise.

The chapter received approval from the school board to start a farm on 15 acres of land owned by Mid-West School District. With the help of their agricultural advisers David Bitmer and Greg Erb, Mid-West FFA alumni, and community volunteers, the Mid-West FFA members were able to start planting crops this summer to kick off the first year of production.

The students get to experience the different aspects of plant science outside the classroom setting. Students observed the differences between plants as they went through the different stages of growth to harvest.

The students decided to make the crop production benefit the students at Mid-West School District as well as the community. Each crop was planted for a specific use at harvest this fall.

The students planted a wide range of crops. The pink pumpkins will be sold and the profits will be donated for breast cancer awareness. The potatoes, sweet corn and the pie pumpkins will be used for school lunches as well as sold to the public. Lastly, the decorating pumpkins will be used for the art classes or sold. The chapter will use the profit from this year's crop to expand the project for its second year.

Since this is the first year of production, there is a lot of room to ex-



Submitted photos

Members of the Mid-West FFA chapter help to turn the soil.



This is the first year for the farm at the Mid-West school. The crops planted will be used in the school and for a fundraiser.

pand. The farm has an existing barn, and in the future, they would like to implement animals into the farm curriculum for classroom practicals and personal projects. For the woodland that is surrounding the

farmstead, Bitmer plans to incorporate that into his forestry class. The forestry students would learn how to properly identify trees, calculate how much board feet one tree will make, as well as how to properly fell a tree.

This project is a work in progress as the agricultural department continues to develop resources at the farm to augment the learning experience for the students. Harvest season

will soon begin on some of the farm's crops and then the students can decide what was successful and what enterprises they would like to incorporate for next year.



Volunteers work in the pumpkin patch. The pumpkins will be used as a fundraiser this fall.

## Stop by FFA Foundation Ag Progress Days Booth

On Aug. 18-20, the Pennsylvania FFA Foundation will be selling food to raise funds for the Pennsylvania FFA Association.

All FFA members volunteering at the booth receive scholarships for their labor. The booth is located on Main Street, between 8th and 9th streets.

Products for sale include pork barbecue, rib sandwiches, pizza, sausage grillers, hot dogs and breakfast sandwiches. Or try a platter, which include baked beans, applesauce and chips. Prices range from \$2 to \$7.

## Learning to Serve

FROM THE OFFICERS STATION

What does it mean to serve? Merriam Webster's provides us with a simple answer: to be a servant. During the past 50 days in office, our team has served, though our journey as state officers is still in its infancy.

With about 310 days left to inspire members, improve our communities and advocate for the agricultural industry, we have a unique and unforgettable challenge set before us. Blast Off, a conference centered on personal growth and development, was the first seminar we attended as a team. FFA officers had the opportunity to identify our individual strengths, build upon speech writing and delivery skills, as well as develop personal management plans.

The Pennsylvania Association of Agricultural Educators Summer Conference was the team's second stop. The team got to meet FFA chapter advisers from across the state while learning more about PFAE and its role in agricultural education. A visit to the Lancaster Farming facilities was next on the list for the team in July and we had the opportunity to tour the facility and press and learn the work involved in producing a weekly newspaper.

Although the team didn't get to take a swing at the Pennsylvania FFA Foundation Golf Outing, we became acquainted with many of our supporters and enjoyed a beautiful day at the golf course. After the



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outing, the team then packed up and headed to the West-om Pennsylvania Leadership Conference located in Somerset where we facilitated workshops, presented reflections and got to interact with the members while kayaking, rock climbing, zip lining and playing volleyball. We enjoyed this experience and look forward to making memories with the rest of the membership throughout the coming year as well.

While these activities were taking place back home, Tyler Watkins and I represented Pennsylvania at the State Presidents Conference hosted in Washington, D.C., from July 20-25. This five-day conference consisted of advocating for agricultural education, reviewing the delegate process and creating friendships with members of all 50 state associations in attendance. Tyler and I also met with congressmen and visited the Capitol's monuments and museums.

Once the team was reunited, we hosted the National Leadership Conference for State Officers in State College, Pa. Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey and Delaware joined us in learning about team functionality, presentation delivery strategies and communication. We visited the Penn State campus as part of the conference.

The team has had a summer full of service and we look forward to attending Ag Progress Days and the Washington County Fair in the upcoming weeks.

Editor's note: Lily Guthrie is the Pennsylvania FFA state president.