



BLUE AND GOLD

Pennsylvania FFA Happenings

Learnners Today — Leaders Tomorrow

www.paffa.state.pa.us

Passion for Ag Burns Bright at FFA Mid-Winter Convention

FROM THE OFFICERS STATION

For many Pennsylvania FFA Association members, agriculture has been a light during times of darkness, and recently those members demonstrated how much brighter their futures are at the Mid-Winter Convention.

After much hard work and perseverance, FFA members — accompanied with advisors and supporters — crowded into the large arena at the Pennsylvania Farm Show, Harrisburg, Pa., on Jan. 12 to either receive their Keystone FFA Degree or their first-ever official FFA jacket.

Of the members in attendance, 337 received awards and 550 received jackets.

Both groups are at a pass. The degree recipients are finishing their chapter FFA careers and looking to the future; running for state FFA



SHERISA NAILOR

office, going away to college, and possibly obtaining the American FFA Degree. The jacket recipients are just beginning the journey of a lifetime. Both are passionate about

agriculture and leadership, both have much to be proud of, and both give us all hope for the future.

That is the fuel that ignites members of the Pennsylvania FFA Alumni to work in support of the Pennsylvania FFA Association and its more than 14,000 members. The signature program of the alumni is the Freshman Jacket Campaign. In just 10 years, this program has provided official FFA jackets to more than 2,500 first-year FFA members, with 2015 being a record year.

The idea for the jacket campaign came from a brainstorming session of the Pennsylvania Alumni



Submitted photo

Recipients of the Alumni Jacket Campaign put on their jackets for the very first time.

Board. Year after year, individuals and companies who are passionate about agricultural education and the FFA rise to the challenge. Individually, each sponsorship is \$55, but collectively, their contribution is priceless as the jacket provides FFA members with the vehicle to engage in premier leadership, personal growth and career success. For their support, we are forever grateful. Recipients of the jackets are given a name and an address for the sponsor who will provide them a jacket so that they may write thank you letters.

During the presentation at this year's convention, members were challenged to take advantage of every opportunity and to use their jacket to reach for their dreams. The site of 550 members zipping up their jacket for the first time, joining the FFA family and taking a big step toward a successful future is a breathtaking view.

Krista Pontius, adviser of the Greenwood FFA chapter and chairman for the Jacket Campaign, said, "I got teary-eyed. The thought of all the freshmen sitting around the Keystone Degree winners thinking

and hoping they will be there too."

For some in the audience, it's their first experience with the organization that they will grow fond of. For others, the moment is a joyful reminder of when their child started their journey. Yet, for others, it is a family tradition, sometimes four or five generations deep.

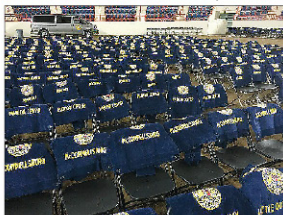
The Pennsylvania FFA Alumni Association is proud of the program, but more importantly, they are proud of each and every FFA member that wears the blue and gold jacket with passion and pride. FFA members are courteous and understanding, they practice brotherhood and work to develop themselves and each other for the better. FFA members provide hope for the future. FFA members are preparing to rise to the ultimate challenge, to lead the agricultural industry and develop the means to feed the world's quickly growing population. That is no small task. But, with the experience FFA provides to its members, there is no doubt they will succeed.

It takes a village — we are all in this battle, this struggle to right the wrongs of the world and to support

the future, together. We cannot go it alone. The same is true for every entity of the Pennsylvania agriculture education family. If you have been inspired by an FFA member, if you have benefited from the blue and gold, if you have been touched by the spirit of agriculture, give back. No contribution is too small. Donate your time, your inspiration, or your expertise to your local program and chapter. Join the FFA Alumni Association. Donate to a specific cause or just donate to help with the efforts of the association. Sponsor a Career Development Event or award. Endow a scholarship. Contribute to the Andy Rill Keystone Degree Memorial Fund. Sponsor a jacket. You didn't have to wear the blue corduroy jacket to be a part of the family.

The Pennsylvania FFA is honoring FFA members as "Learnners Today, Leaders Tomorrow." Allow the passion of those members to fuel your pride and give you hope for the future, because the future of agriculture is bright.

Editor's note: Sherisa Nailor is the Pennsylvania FFA Alumni board president.



A portion of the 550 jackets waiting to be put on.

Four Named Stars at Mid-Winter Convention

HARRISBURG, Pa. — During the Mid-Winter Convention of the Pennsylvania FFA Association, four members were awarded Star Awards. The presentation was made in the Large Arena, Tuesday, during the Pennsylvania Farm Show.

Receiving the Star in Agriculture is Nicolas Vosburg, of Adams FFA. Over the past few years, Vosburg has

become quite the young businessman. At an early age, he became involved with maple syrup production and began keeping records in order to understand the business aspect behind its production. Vosburg then began working with a friend to start their own firewood business. Not only has he gained a hard work ethic, he also gained the business skills that

allowed him to excel in his Supervised Agriculture Experience Area.

Brooke Baltmer, of the Manheim FFA, was awarded the Star in Agriculture Placement. Working on her family farm has allowed Baltmer to grow her enterprises within her SAE. By using her resources and income she has earned working. Baltmer's egg production has grown from six chickens to 36, and she has been able to raise and show two dairy beef steers. Her hard work has paid off as all three of her projects have found great levels of achievement.

The Agriculture Production Award was presented to Michael Long Jr. of Northern Lebanon FFA. Growing up on a swine and crop production farm, Long's experience in the industry started at an early age. Long took it upon himself to understand the principles of crop and animal production. He began renting fields from his father in order to start his own production of corn, soybeans, barely and wheat. Long also bought pigs from the family farm to raise and finish himself.

Finally, Jenna Deihl of Grass-



Luke Byers of the Shippensburg FFA sings the National Anthem at the 86th Pennsylvania FFA Mid-Winter Convention.



Christine Greig, wife of Secretary of Agriculture George Greig, assists in handing out the State Degree charms.



Submitted photo

Pictured are, from left, Nicolas Vosburg, Jenna Deihl, Secretary of Agriculture George Greig, Michael Long Jr., and Brooke Baltmer.

land FFA was awarded the Agriculture Award. With help from her father, Deihl has taken up the sport of falconry. She actively works with her red-tail hawk, training him to hunt and participate in

sporting events. With guidance from her sponsor, Deihl has had great success with her hawk. She plans on pursuing a career in wildlife because of her work through her SAE.