



# BLUE AND GOLD

## Pennsylvania FFA Happenings

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## Pennsylvania FFA Members Shine at Mid-Winter Convention

MARIS WILSON

Pa. State FFA Reporter

HARRISBURG, Pa. — On Monday, Jan. 7, at the Pennsylvania Farm Show, nearly 5,000 FFA members, advisers and guests arrived to enjoy all that the event offered, plus celebrate the achievements of many members at the Pennsylvania FFA's 84th Mid-Winter Convention.

Many members were awarded the highest degree that Pennsylvania can bestow upon a member, the Keystone Degree, while 302 first-year members were gifted their very own blue corduroy jacket to wear throughout the years, thanks to the Pennsylvania FFA Alumni Association.

Not only were all those members recognized for their hard work in the association, but four members were recognized for working above and beyond in their supervised agriculture experience (SAE) projects, which the students choose and take care of themselves. These four students are Pennsylvania's State Stars and are excellent examples of what an FFA member can accomplish. They will now move on to the Eastern States Exposition in September to compete against members from other states in the Eastern region.

Following are details on each winner and their project:

**Matt Bishop, ELCO FFA Chapter:** Matt worked on rabbit production, sheep breeding and al-



Photo by Hannah Wentworth

Pennsylvania's four State Stars, from left to right, Matt Bishop, Megan Campbell, Makayla Hawbaker and Michala Kuhlman.

paca fiber production. He sold rabbit meat and fiber, sheep fiber and alpaca fiber to local customers and several large distributors. He was selected as the State Star in the area of agribusiness. Matt plans to attend Lebanon Valley College to major in

biology, so he can further his education in equine science and medicine.

**Megan Campbell, Conrad Weiser FFA Chapter:** Megan was chosen as the 2013 State Star in agriscience. She works as a teaching laboratory assistant in her agri-

culture classroom. She assists her teacher with anything from copying papers to doing demonstrations on microbiology and DNA sequencing. Along with assisting her teacher during school, Megan also helps students with their projects after

school, and works on her own project in quorum sensing, where she discovered a positive correlation between cell population density and the rate of altered gene expression. Megan plans to attend Penn State in the fall to study biological engineering, molecular biology and plant genetics.

**Makayla Hawbaker, Southern Huntingdon FFA Chapter:** Makayla is this year's State Star in agriculture placement. She is employed on a 270-head dairy cow farm, where she assists with daily tasks, including milking and care of the animals. She has gained more experience in this field by competing in Career Development Events (CDE) that relate to dairy cow farming, including the dairy judging event and the dairy foods event. She plans to continue her education and become a large animal vet and hopes to one day own a business.

**Michala Kuhlman, Northeast Bradford FFA Chapter:** Michala was selected as this year's State Star in agriculture production. She owns and raises 14 Brown Swiss cattle, which she shows every year. She focuses on the genetics of the cattle in order to produce the best show cattle she can. Michala plans on attending Penn State University in the fall to major in agriculture business, and hopes to work in a farm bank cooperation after graduation.



Photo by Maris Wilson, Pa. FFA Reporter

Pictured from left are: Andrew Pennisi, Farm Family Insurance; Sean Jones, FFA state sentinel; Austin Albright, FFA state vice president; Casey Shawver, FFA state president; team member Trevor Clouser; Dave Scott, chief, health and safety, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture; team members Oliva Dietrich, Ashley Confer, Blair Digan; and Alexa Stoner, AgChoice Farm Credit.

## Mifflinburg FFA Tops Pennsylvania Farm Safety and Health Quiz Bowl

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Teens and safety rarely go hand in hand, but a group of Pennsylvania's youth is proving that safety is an important part of rural work and life. Eight teams of FFA and 4-H students displayed a wealth of knowledge during the Pennsylvania State University Farm Safety and Health Quiz Bowl, at the 2013 Pennsylvania Farm Show on Jan. 9.

The quiz bowl is designed to motivate youth to increase their awareness and knowledge of agricultural safety and health issues. During the competition, students are asked a sampling of more than

1,000 questions. Categories include machinery, equipment and tools, occupational health, environmental hazards, pesticides and other chemicals, confined spaces, farm shops, special populations, and animals and livestock management.

Four teams each from 4-H and FFA competed in the Quiz Bowl State Finals at the 2013 Pennsylvania Farm Show. The teams were winners from the semi-final contest held during Penn State's 2012 Agricultural Progress Days. The Agricultural Safety and Health Program at Penn State and the Pennsyl-

vania Department of Agriculture manage the quiz bowl. Westfield Insurance, CNH North America, Inc., AgChoice Farm Credit, Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit and Farm Family Insurance Company sponsored the safety quiz event. Awards include a team certificate and prize money of \$650 for first place; \$550 for second place; \$450 for third place and \$350 for fourth place.

Winners of the FFA Farm Safety and Health Quiz Bowl were: first place, Mifflinburg FFA; second place, Cumberland Valley FFA; third place, Mid-West FFA; and fourth place, Chambersburg FFA.

## A New Year, a Great Show

### FROM THE OFFICERS STATION

As the New Year came in, many of us spent time reflecting on 2012 and setting those often unresolved New Year's resolutions. However, many FFA members were focused on the 97th Annual Pennsylvania Farm Show instead of resolutions.

Walking through the halls of the largest agricultural show in America under one roof really opens the eyes of nearly half a million visitors each year. Whether they flock to the food court, gawk at the butter sculpture or watch youth prepare their animals for show, there is plenty of education for all ages.

Any person attending the farm show will gain an appreciation for Pennsylvania's beautiful agriculture. During these eight days, I have gained more appreciation for something viable to the success of our Pennsylvania agriculture — FFA members. FFA students were busy weeks prior to the show preparing agricultural education displays, landscape displays, agricultural career connection videos, agri-science fair projects and, of course, their livestock.

When you ask FFA member Lena Bioni from the McGuffey FFA chapter what her favorite thing of farm show is, she replies, "The Pennsylvania Farm Show is a great way to showcase our beautiful agriculture industry. It brings the



AUSTIN ALBRIGHT

rural agricultural community and the urban community together to learn about our No. 1 industry — agriculture."

Goals and dreams came true for many of our state's FFA members during our 84th Mid-

Winter Convention. For some of the members, all of their hard work over their high school careers finally paid off when they received the beloved Keystone Degree. Other members made some of their very first memories when they took the 20 seconds to put on and zip up their new crisp corduroy jackets. Anytime a member can grow, they should take those opportunities. I am often known for saying, "You get the most out of your opportunities by the amount of work you put into them."

Congratulations to our 302 Keystone Degree recipients, 302 first-year members receiving their very own FFA jackets, and our four State Stars.

As the theme for this farm show was to reflect the recent branding program of Pennsylvania products, our members fit that theme as well. Our members have some of the best agricultural instructors in the country. FFA members all over our commonwealth are becoming great leaders, and I believe FFA members make a difference.

**Austin Albright is the Pa. State FFA Vice President.**