



BLUE AND GOLD

Pennsylvania FFA Happenings

BUILDING THE FUTURE

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Building FFA Leaders in Altoona

MICHALA KUHLMAN

Pa. FFA State Chaplain

ALTOONA, Pa. — The leaves are changing colors and beginning to fall, and the Pennsylvania FFA continued to “Build the Future” with the Fall Leadership Conference recently held on October 1. Thirty chapters from across the state brought more than 300 students together. The Pennsylvania State FFA officers teamed up with agricultural education students from Penn State to make the Fall Leadership conference a success.

The conference is an annual, one-day event held in Altoona, Pa., that is open to all FFA members. It is unique among Pennsylvania FFA conferences because it draws both first-year members and chapter officers.

This conference’s main purpose is to en-

courage students to go out and be the best person they can possibly be for their community and as well as for themselves. During this time students share community service ideas and promise to use their passions to serve their community.

This year’s Fall Leadership Conference began literally with a “BANG.” After opening ceremonies the state officers started building their dream tree house and encouraged all the members in attendance to imagine theirs as well.

That tree house could have anything that they wanted it to have, much like the day students had ahead of them. The day could help them to complete anything that they want, as

long as kept their attitude positive and kept their minds open.

Chapter officers or first year members were then separated.

The chapter officers learned more about their offices from the TeachAg students, while first-year members spent the day with the state officers.

The new FFA members were able to attend four different workshops geared to important aspects of the FFA including FFA history, official dress, Supervised Agricultural Experience and team planning.

Following workshops and lunch the students took it to the next level with Matt Reutlinger, past Pennsylvania FFA vice presi-

dent. He encouraged the assembled students to work as a team and to be the best people they could be. Reutlinger conducted a workshop about the Washington Leadership Conference put on by the National FFA Organization each summer.

As the day came to a close, the students left smiling with a promise to use their passion to make a difference and with their minds filled with knowledge about the FFA. This event would have not have been possible without the support of New Holland Agriculture and the Pennsylvania FFA Alumni. Thanks to our sponsors and the teamwork between the Pennsylvania FFA and the Penn State agricultural education students, it was a successful day for the Pennsylvania FFA as we continue Building the Future.



The Places You’ll Go

FROM THE OFFICERS STATION

It was ninth grade when I first walked in to my agriculture teacher’s classroom for my animal and wildlife class. Only a freshman, all I knew was I had signed up for the class. I wanted no part in competitions, leadership, or anything else that caused me to step out of “my zone.” Never in my wildest dreams did I ever imagine that I would be going to the National FFA Convention to represent the Pennsylvania FFA Association as their national officer candidate. However, it is one of my most exciting experiences by far — minus the nerves. With the National Convention starting on Oct. 30, I have to say I am ready to be in Louisville, Ky., with more than 55,000 FFA members and guests.

People have asked me what a National FFA officer does. If I had to use one word to describe the responsibilities and purpose of a national officer, I would definitely choose “service.” Six individuals are chosen each year to represent our great organization. Their role includes everything from representing FFA members to teaching leadership workshops and conferences to giving motivational speeches and building relationships with business and industry leaders. At the 2013 national convention these six individuals have to be chosen from a group of 43 candidates. Every single one of those candidates has a passion for



MATTHEW DODSON

the members that they serve.

Another big question I have gotten is how am I preparing for the interview process. Much of my time is spent memorizing facts, practicing interview answers, and taking practice tests. However, not all of my preparation is strictly

“studying the books.” I’ve had the opportunity to travel to Green Bay, Wis., for the National FFA Alumni Development Conference. This trip was a blast not only because it was my first time flying on an airplane but because I got to meet many passionate FFA alumni members who are passionate about providing opportunities for FFA members across the nation. We are truly blessed to have such an amazing support group. I also spent a weekend in Stephenville, Texas, for a mock interview process.

So what is the big take away from all of this? Never think that anything is impossible for you. Always do the best you can and take advantage of the opportunities given to you in life. Personally I look at it this way: God gives us many blessings and opportunities in life so always be faithful and give it your all! Thanks for this amazing opportunity Pennsylvania FFA and I will see you in Louisville.

Editor’s note: Matthew Dodson is the Pennsylvania FFA’s National Officer candidate.

School Officials Pitch in to Help Derry Student Achieve Goal

GREG REINBOLD

Tribune-Review

DERRY, Pa. — Derry Area High School senior Nathan Pollard expressed interest in raising a market hog for the Westmoreland Fair last school year, but needed help funding the up-front costs associated with his project.

Fortunately for Pollard, his school district and its superintendent share a strong commitment to agricultural education.

Superintendent David Welling talked with agriculture and horticulture instructor and FFA adviser Roy Campbell and offered Pollard a solution: Welling would sponsor the project and Pollard would be able to house the pig in a pen in the FFA barn on the school campus.

“I had been wanting to do it for a while and I just never got to,” Pollard said. “Then Dr. Welling, it was after school and he came up with the opportunity for me to do it. About a week later, we went and got the hog.”

If the hog, which they nicknamed “Champ” qualified for the fair’s market sale, Pollard would repay the hog’s purchase price of \$100 and feed costs, donate 25 percent of the remaining profit to the school’s FFA program and keep the rest. If Champ didn’t make the minimum weight required for the market sale, Welling would pay Pollard for the time he spent on the project and keep the pig.

“I think Nathan realized it would be better if he could get it to go to sale than not, because he was going to make more money if it went to sale...” Welling said. “We did the numbers and I think he realized even paying

back me, paying back Mr. Campbell and donating to the FFA, he still comes out ahead.”

The arrangement worked out for all parties involved. Champ just reached the 230-pound minimum weight to qualify for the fair and sold for \$1.90 per pound, enough for Pollard to turn a profit on the project.

Pollard said he learned a lot from completing his first market livestock project.

“I didn’t know how to walk a pig or anything, really, about them,” Pollard said. “Mr. Campbell helped me out a lot, and then a couple of my friends that had shown hogs previously helped me learn how to walk them and stuff. Dr. Welling and I taught him to sit, too, so that was pretty cool.”

“I learned a lot,” Pollard said. “Everything from clipping the pig to walking it, feeding it, how to feed it, how much, keeping records. ... And it gives you something to be responsible for, too.”

Now, Pollard is working on plans to purchase a pig to compete at the Pennsylvania Farm Show in January, and the money originally earmarked to reimburse Welling for Champ will help fund part of Pollard’s new project.

“I said, ‘Rather than paying me back, I’ll donate that money towards your other pig and going down to states,’ because I think that’s a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for these kids,” Welling said.

“It’s more than just feeding an animal and taking it to the fair,” he added. “It’s really an opportunity for them to really learn some skills that are going to transfer across their lives, no matter what they get involved in.”



Photo by National FFA Organization

National FFA Organization Membership Explodes to 579,678 Students

INDIANAPOLIS — Analysts forecast that the world’s population will grow to 9 billion people by 2050. To feed these people, the agriculture industry needs educated, skilled and passionate people dedicated to sustainability.

Students are answering that call with an explosion in FFA membership throughout the U.S. this past year.

Membership in FFA today stands at 579,678 students in grades seven through 12. More than 22,300 new students joined

FFA during the 2012-13 school year. The number of FFA chapters throughout the country has grown to 7,570.

“FFA is preparing our youth to ensure the security of our country’s food, fiber and natural resources for years to come,” said National FFA Organization CEO Dwight Armstrong. “Through real-world experiences, the nation’s agriculture teachers are helping students develop the technical knowledge, skills and problem-solving capabilities to be the industry’s leaders of to-

morrow. FFA members will be tomorrow’s advocates for agriculture.”

The Texas FFA Association added more students and new chapters than any other state. With 8,533 new members, total FFA membership in the Lone Star state stands at 95,015 in 1,010 chapters. California, with 74,039 members, is the country’s second-largest FFA association, followed by Georgia with 35,398 members, Missouri with 25,073 members, and Oklahoma with 24,896 members.

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