



BLUE & GOLD

FFA Happenings From Around Pennsylvania

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PA FFA ASSOCIATION NORTH CENTRAL REGION



Mifflinburg FFA Plants Trees



Mifflinburg FFA members Marissa Ewing and Kasey Rishel are preparing to plant seedlings on Jacks Mountain.

MIFFLINBURG, Pa. — For the past two springs, members of the Mifflinburg FFA chapter have been planting tree seedlings as part of woodland habitat and reforestation project.

This month, chapter members worked with Bald Eagle State Forest Bureau of Forestry personnel. Chapter members used tree planting bars to plant the 3,000 seedling Eastern White Pine and White Spruce trees. The trees were planted on the side of Jacks Mountain on the Snyder/Union county line. The project is a continuation of the work started in 2006.

FFA Alumni — An Important Tool For Ag Teachers

KRISTINA L. WATSON
Pennsylvania FFA Alumni President

Recently, I spent time with a group of soon-to-be agriculture education teachers. Graduating in just a few weeks, they are excited about teaching, but also concerned about how they will handle all the demands of teaching. Like their seasoned colleagues, these new teachers will face the daunting challenge of juggling the three core areas of agriculture science: classroom and laboratory instruction, supervised agricultural experience

(SAE) programs and the FFA.

Ag teachers typically put in many more hours than the “traditional” teacher. Coaching six different judging teams, mentoring Creed speakers, chaperoning students at national convention, organizing fundraising activities and advocating for program funding are just a few of the projects that an ag teacher might face in just one month. Not surprisingly, one of the most common reasons for ag teachers leaving the profession is burn out. So, what is the solution?

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North Central Region Greetings

TYLER RICE
North Central Vice President

There seem to be but three ways for a nation to acquire wealth. The first is by war, as the Romans did, in plundering their conquered neighbors. This is robbery. The second by commerce, which is generally cheating. The third by agriculture, the only honest way, wherein man receives a real increase of the seed thrown into the ground, in a kind of continual miracle, wrought by the hand of God in his favor, as a reward for his innocent life and his virtuous industry.

—Benjamin Franklin

And that miracle is evident as the warm growing season is upon us and you can see everywhere across the state of Pennsylvania the planting and cultivation of the soil. Even though

we may have a little bit shorter growing season, North Central Region FFA members are also growing as they learn how to set-up a banquet, train for CDE's (Career Development Event) and prepare for the state FFA convention.

The Pennsylvania state FFA convention will be at Penn State University, State College, June 12-14. In the North Central Region and all across the state of Pennsylvania, FFA members are getting ready for this awesome time of meeting new friends, serving as state delegates, competing in contests that will prepare them for a career, running for a state FFA office and donning the official FFA jacket with approximately 1,500 of their fellow Pennsylvania members.

This will also be my final article for the Blue and Gold pages. so I would like to thank all of the

good folks at *Lancaster Farming* for an outstanding job of trying to uncover America's best kept secret — the FFA! I would also like to say thank you to all Pennsylvania FFA members that have helped my fellow teammates and I really “Discover the Difference” this year. It has been more than a privilege to serve you, the 8,000 Pennsylvania FFA members. The experience has changed my life forever! To the North Central Region — you hold a special place in my heart and I have enjoyed getting to know you over the past year. I would also like to thank our advisors, school administrators, our families, my teammates of the 2006-2007 state officer team, state staff and most of all God for giving us this priceless gift. Thank you! Here's hoping you “Discovered the Difference”.

Canton FFA Prepares for State Convention

HEATHER CASTLE
Canton FFA Chaplain

CANTON, Pa. — Greetings from the North Central Region! The Canton FFA has been very busy in the past couple of months with a lot of different events. In February, 14 members attended the Agricultural Cooperation Establishes Success Leadership Conference (ACES) at the Sheraton Hotel in Harrisburg. We learned many different leadership skills in the workshops that the state officers ran.

At the end of March, five students and our advisor, Thomas Hojnowski, headed back to Harrisburg for the 20th annual State Legislative Leadership Conference (SLLC) where members learned the legislative process, parliamentary procedure and debated legislative bills. Also, members toured parts of Wenger's Feed Mill, Milton Hershey School and Keystone Biofuels. The next day we got to eat breakfast with our legislators and tour the capitol.

On April 12, a few members of the Canton FFA chapter joined with other members from our region for the North Central Region SOCS (State Officer Candidate School). Tyler Rice and Abbie Kuhlman of the State FFA Association were present to lead our session on becoming a state officer.

On the next Friday, April 20, the Bradford County FFA held the first annual Bradford Coun-



Canton FFA members pose for a picture at the ACES Conference.

ty Leadership Day. The county FFA officer team and delegates lead the workshops. Also, Tyler Rice and Abbie Kuhlman lead a workshop of their own at this event.

The following Monday, April 23, the Canton FFA hosted the Dairy Judging Career Development (CDE) event which was attended by members of the Athens, Canton, Northeast Bradford and Troy FFA chapters. A big thank you goes out to the Albavale Farms and Mt. Glenn Farms for hosting this event.

Members of the Canton FFA had the opportunity to lead two different stations at the Conservation Day on April 27 at the

Canton Area Elementary School for the entire fourth grade class. One workshop was farm animals, members from the chapter brought in animals to teach the children about the different parts and uses of the animals. The second station was water quality and stream studies and in this station the kids had the chance to pull on a pair of boots and kick around in the water for macroinvertebrates to determine the water quality of Mill Creek, which is right behind the elementary school.

We are now getting ready for the 2007 FFA Activities Week and the Troy Fair. We are looking forward to participating in many other upcoming events.



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Alumni

Continued from A28

If you ask ag teachers across the nation, many would say that having an active FFA alumni affiliate is key to mitigating against potential burn out. An active FFA alumni affiliate can help to ease the outside commitments of teaching, bring more support to agricultural education programs and give teachers more freedom to do what they do best — teach.

Monte Ladner of Carthage, Miss. learned the value of the alumni long before he became the president of the National FFA Alumni Council. He started an alumni chapter when he was the FFA advisor to help support the chapter's FFA activities. Now, as a school administrator, he still sees the value of the alumni at his school.

"Our alumni affiliate has helped to relieve the local ag teacher of some stress," he said, adding that his alumni chapter helps with trips, fundraising and organizing the banquet. "With the help of the alumni, the ag teacher can focus on teaching, knowing that the FFA activities are in good hands."

Luckily, starting an alumni affiliate is neither difficult nor expensive. To obtain a national charter, affiliates must have at least 10 members, elect officers and file their constitution and bylaws (available on the FFA website) with the National FFA Alumni Organization. This can usually be completed within one or two meetings. There is no fee to charter, though members must pay state and national dues (see sidebar).

Contrary to popular belief, prior FFA membership is not required to join the Alumni. Anyone excited about the success of FFA and agricultural education in the community can become a member. Supporters of ag education and FFA chapters, parents and families of FFA members, former FFA members, teachers, administrators and school board officials are all great candidates for membership because they bring unique skills and interests to the alumni.

Penn State Student, Mark Lowery, joined the alumni to help others realize the same opportunities that he gained in the FFA.

"The alumni is the perfect way for me to pay back all of the great things I learned as a member, and to support local programs so that agricultural education will continue to be strong in Pennsylvania," said Lowery, a former state FFA officer and a current member of the Pennsylvania FFA Alumni Council.

Today's agricultural educators are teaching in a difficult environment. Tight curriculum requirements, even tighter budgets and a rapidly urbanizing rural society are creating even more challenges for agricultural education and FFA. In this situation, it is increasingly critical that agricultural educators have the support of the FFA alumni — as student mentors, judges, chaperones — and perhaps most importantly as advocates for agricultural education.

The FFA alumni is growing, both in Penn-

sylvania and across America. In Pennsylvania, we are doing our part. Over the last year, alumni membership has doubled and the number of local affiliates continues to increase. Let's keep growing until we have one alumni member for each FFA member and each FFA chapter paired with an alumni affiliate. This will help keep the long tradition of agricultural education thriving and give ag teachers one more tool to help transform the youth of today into the leaders of tomorrow.

Editor's Note: Kristina Watson is the President of the Pennsylvania FFA Alumni Association and a Member-At-Large on the National FFA Alumni Council. More information about joining the FFA Alumni and starting an alumni affiliate is available at <http://www.ffa.org/alumni>.

National Dues:

- Annual Member - \$10
 - Lifetime Member - \$150
- ### Pennsylvania Dues:
- Annual Member - \$5
 - Local Dues: Set by Affiliate

Editorial

Continued from A10

It's true that poultry has had a leg up in the past few decades because of a combination of some unfortunate beef publicity and the tendency to view chicken as lighter and healthier food.

And some advertising ideas that have come out of this beef campaign are good-natured enough and even humorous. A favorite of mine is a picture of a thick, juicy steak, just cut. "There's no such thing as a chicken knife," the ad says.

I commend the people working in beef promotion at the state level here in our region. They have plenty of challenges, including the erosion of funds. Part of this may be related to the decline of veal and dairy cattle numbers (dairy animals going for beef contribute to the fund) and because of the unlawful negligence of at least one major cattle dealer to turn the funds over as mandated by the Beef Act.

These beef promoters at the state level are hardworking and creative, and I honestly don't

think they wake up in the morning thinking of new ways to make chicken look bad. Almost certainly, these ideas are born in parts of the country where there's not a commercial chicken to be found for hundreds of miles around.

Some may argue that all promotions tend to step on competing products, at least by implication. But since when does "everybody does it" make it okay?

While we're talking about unity in agriculture, can't we at least find a way to promote our products without putting others down?

Egg Month

While we're on beef and poultry, it's only right to mention that beside being Beef Month, May is also Egg Month.

I love eggs, too, and here are some facts from the American Egg Board (www.aeb.org) to back it up as a good preference:

One egg has 13 essential nutrients in varying amounts — including the highest quality protein, choline, folate, iron and zinc — for only 75 calories.

Eggs play a role in weight management, muscle strength, healthy

pregnancy, brain function, eye health and more.

Eggs provide kids with the highest quality protein, which provides the building blocks they need to grow and the energy they need to stay focused throughout the day.

The protein in eggs helps adults build and preserve muscle strength and allows them to feel full longer and stay energized, which contributes to maintaining a healthy weight.

Eggs have varying amounts of four of the nutrients pregnant women need most: choline, protein, folate and iron. Choline, a recently recognized essential nutrient, contributes to fetal brain development and is important in nerve tissue development, which helps prevent birth defects.

Older adults are at risk for sarcopenia, the age-related loss of muscle mass. Eggs provide the highest quality protein, which can help them meet their protein needs in order to help maintain muscle function and slow the rate of muscle loss.

Eggs provide small amounts of lutein and zeaxanthin two nutrients which are part of the carotenoid family that contribute to eye health and help prevent common causes of age-related blindness.

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