



# BLUE & GOLD NEWS

## Pennsylvania FFA Happenings

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### Meet Brandon Bixler, Pennsylvania's National Officer Candidate

**ABBY O'NEILL**  
FFA State President

Brandon Bixler, an alumnus of Grassland FFA in New Holland, Pennsylvania, served as the 2019-2020 Pennsylvania FFA state vice president, and will be Pennsylvania's national officer candidate at the national convention on Oct. 27-30 in Indianapolis. The Pennsylvania FFA state officers had the honor of sitting down with Brandon to discuss his FFA journey.

**Q:** What events through state office made you want to run for national office? What truly inspired you?

**A:** The first time I really knew deep down that I wanted to run was when I attended the national convention. Our state's national officer candidate, Justin Kurtz, was an inspiration to me. It was a real privilege to attend the national convention as part of the state officer team and watch Kurtz go through the process.

A second defining moment was when my agriculture teacher Mrs.

Ranck asked me the question point blank: Are you going to run for national office?

I gave her the pretty typical answer at the time of "Oh, I don't know. We will just have to see."

But I will never forget her giving me that knowing look. At first, I was kind of taken aback. It was one of those instances of a time where sometimes those around us know us better than (we know) ourselves.

Mrs. Ranck knew that I was lying to myself at the time. She knew that I wanted to run and that this would be a great opportunity for me to pursue, and I would regret it if I didn't take the chance. It was really a moment when I knew.

**Q:** As a national officer, what are a few things that you would do to influence or change the lives of FFA members?

**A:** Many things are exciting about serving as a national officer, and one of those things that I would be really excited for is the ability to get back into some of those in-person interac-

tions and events that we have missed out on. Having the opportunity to be a part of a normal year like that would be an incredible privilege and true honor.

A big priority I have is making connections with all members regardless of the background that they come from. I think we have a broad spectrum of students who are coming from all different backgrounds, whether that be race, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and we all have a unique story. The goal would be to connect with members from all these backgrounds and show them that no matter where you fall or where you come from, there's a place for all of us within agriculture and FFA.

**Q:** Beyond FFA and the blue jacket, what are some of your life and career goals?

**A:** I'm in my second year of courses at Penn State University, and my career goal would be to become an agricultural educator. After graduating college, I anticipate teaching

at the high school level for at least a few years or maybe for my entire career.

I am excited about teaching at the high school level as well as being an agricultural teacher and an FFA adviser at a chapter.

I had incredible agriculture educators during my time in high school, and it would be a real privilege to give back those similar experiences to students.

**Q:** How are you feeling right now, knowing that interviews begin in a few short weeks? What are your emotions like?

**A:** I am feeling a bit of everything. There are certainly a lot of emotions leading up to the interviews. This has been a unique experience for me, and it's unlike anything that I have ever done before.

All my time in FFA in the last seven years has really led up to this moment. There is a bit of pressure, but it has been fun to get to know the other candidates and build friendships through this. And thank you



Brandon Bixler served as vice president of the Pennsylvania officer team last year. He is running for national FFA office, which will be decided during the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis.

to those who have poured so much support into my life that I am so grateful for.

**Q:** Do you have any advice for younger FFA members?

**A:** My biggest piece of advice would be to look for the places where you can make a difference in someone's life. When we take the time to make an impact on others, we are impacted as well. When we invest in others, we are truly changed for the better.

### Big Spring FFA Member Focuses on Alpacas

**TREVOR MAXWELL**  
FFA State Reporter

Jadyn Klinger of the Big Spring FFA chapter in Newville, Pennsylvania, has a lot of fun with her four-legged and fibrous supervised agricultural experience project.

Klinger raises alpacas for their fleece and for shows, and one day she would like to breed them. She took over the care of her family's alpacas after her brother stopped showing. She began showing with her brother's two stubborn older males.

"I fell in love with their personalities and the style of showing, and decided to expand my herd, along with the help from my parents," Klinger said.

Today, Klinger's little flock has grown to include one gelded male, two older females, one juvenile female, and one cria, or baby.

"In the future, I hope to switch my project to entrepreneurship when we start breeding them," she said.

All of Klinger's hard work definitely pays off in the end. One of her biggest accomplishments is winning overall senior champion showman during the last show of her first year.

"I had put in so much time and effort into training, and I was so proud of my alpacas and what they had



Photo provided by Jadyn Klinger

Jadyn Klinger of Big Spring FFA raises and shows alpacas for her supervised agricultural experience project.

accomplished," she said.

After graduation from Big Spring High School, Klinger plans to attend college to study marketing and advertising with the hope of working in the agriculture communications field.



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### Embrace the Present

This month, Pennsylvania's state officer team is excited to embrace the present. Being able to finally work closely with members and fellow agriculturists at different events is currently the highlight of our year. As members and officers, we are living in the now and taking everything in and living our lives one day at a time. We encourage all our members to do the same.



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