



# BLUE & GOLD NEWS

## Pennsylvania FFA Happenings

www.paffa.org



## National FFA Officer to Visit Pennsylvania

**TREVOR MAXWELL**  
State Reporter

The week of Feb. 19-26 is a special week for all FFA members and chapters across the nation because it's National FFA Week.

Every year, the national organization guides chapters, members and state associations on how to celebrate FFA throughout the week.

The themes for each day of the week are SAE Sunday, Service and Advocacy Monday, Alumni Tuesday, Ag Teacher Appreciation Wednesday, Give FFA Thursday, and Wear Blue Friday.

This year, Pennsylvania FFA is honored to be hosting Mallory White, national FFA Eastern Region vice president from Kentucky.

As White visits Pennsylvania, she will meet with members of the Pennsylvania House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, tour the Milton Hershey School and Hershey's Chocolate World, and meet with superintendents in local school districts to advocate agriculture, agricultural education and the FFA organization.

On Feb. 22, White will travel to Lampeter-Strasburg, Elizabethtown and Penn Manor high school

to conduct personal development workshops followed by a Lancaster County event at the Farm and Home Center.

Between events, White will also spend time with the Pennsylvania FFA officer team to teach them how to be better advocates for agricultural education and FFA, and give them tips they can use in the future for the betterment of their members and agricultural needs.



National FFA Organization photo  
Mallory White

## Tractor Supply Supports FFA Members

**TREVOR MAXWELL**  
State Reporter

Tractor Supply is supporting a fundraiser for the National FFA Association by selling paper FFA emblems, with all proceeds to benefit grants for members.

The organization describes this opportunity as Grants for Growing, a competitive grant program for middle and high school FFA chapters that are developing and improving project-based or experiential learning opportunities for students.

This includes classroom-based knowledge, development or expansion of FFA chapter leadership opportunities, and development or expansion of an agricultural literacy event or campaign. Chapters may apply for up to \$5,000 through the G4G program.

Customers who purchase an FFA paper emblem at any Tractor Supply store during checkout provide the grant's funding. Customers can purchase emblems in any denomination.

## In the Face of Hardship, Here's What I Have Learned

**FROM THE OFFICERS STATION**



**RAVYN BASHORE**  
STATE SENTINEL

In life we experience challenges every day. Many of us deal with them differently because it can affect some of us more personally.

The challenges that I have experienced in the past year are ones many can relate to. In the last few years, I've experienced virtual and hybrid learning, setbacks and losses, just to name a few.

Virtual and hybrid learning was an interesting experience, losing internet connections and wearing pajama pants while attending classes on Zoom.

People in the agriculture industry also have challenges they need to overcome. To me, some common struggles are crop growth, livestock health, a growing population and lack of knowledge.

Unfortunately, there are many more.

The weather is a key factor in crop growth. Crops depend on sunlight and a reasonable amount of water. When crops do not get the adequate water and nutrients they need, the quality of the crop decreases.

For many farmers, their livelihood is their livestock. They are counting on healthy animals to raise for production. Farmers care for their animals before they care for themselves.

Animals get fed, and clean bedding and milking, if needed, before the farmer eats his or her own breakfast. Farmers are constantly checking their livestock for any signs of distress.

One farmer feeds 166 people annually.

"The global population is expected to increase by 2.2 billion by 2050, which means the world's farmers will have to grow about 70% more food than what is now produced," according to the American Farm Bureau Federation.

People are reliant on farmers for food, shelter, clothing and so much more.

There are so many misconceptions about the agriculture industry that come from people not involved in production agriculture. This is a growing challenge

as these people become older and begin influencing others.

Farmers have a lot of work to do and are still trying to inform consumers about the truth of the agriculture industry. And we owe it to our farmers, who haven't given up when they face new challenges every day.

One of my more recent challenges was with my self-doubt when I ran for state office. Questions that ran through my head throughout the interview process were: Can I do this? Am I good enough? What will others think about me?

I remember my momma sitting down with me, and she reminded me it's not about what others think, it's about the impact I can make. She told me that if I tried my best, I would be as good as anybody else.

I thought she was just trying to play the "mom" card. And maybe she was, but she was being honest about it. If I tried my best, she would be proud of me.

As life goes on and we face unique challenges, respect others because you do not know what they are going through.

Also, be thankful for where you are and the surrounding people that helped get you where you are now. It's hard to ask for help, but many people will go the extra mile for you if you are ready to ask them.

## Embrace Your Story

This February, we decided on our theme. Embrace your story.

We believe that is exactly what everyone needs to be hearing now.

Each of us writes our own story every day, and each day comes with the opportunity to change our narrative. Every day is also the promise of a new page. Make sure you write it with purpose and kindness. We ask FFA members to consider how they want their story to read this month.



## Annual Winter FFA Conference Back, In Person

**TREVOR MAXWELL**  
State Reporter

For the first three weekends in February, Pennsylvania FFA members gather for the Agricultural Cooperation Establishes Success conference.

Over 1,000 FFA members, advisers and guests register to go through a series of workshops facilitated by the current and past state officer team members.

After not having this conference during 2021 because of the pandemic, FFA members are back flooding the hallways of the Sheraton in Harrisburg with their blue corduroy jackets.

The conference sessions are based on the theme "Embrace Your Story."

This year's state officer team is encouraging FFA members to share how they can write their own story in their own way.



Pennsylvania FFA photo

At the end of the 2019 ACES conference, a group of FFA members gather for a photo. For three weekends in February members gather to learn career building skills from current and past state officer team members.

The conference divides FFA members into two groups based on their grade level, which makes the workshops they are taking part in customized for them. The work-

shops include professionalism, conversation skills, networking and connections, resume and employment, and advocacy.

This conference would not be

possible without the generous support from our partners, the Pennsylvania FFA Foundation, Northeast Agricultural Education Foundation, Pennsylvania Department of Agri-

culture, AgChoice Farm Credit, and Rural King.

Thank you for allowing the learners of today to become leaders tomorrow.