



BLUE & GOLD NEWS

Pennsylvania FFA Happenings



Good Luck, State Officer Candidates

Dear 2024-25 state officer candidates:
The 2023-24 state officer team would like to send the following 25 candidates a “good luck” as they prepare to run for Pennsylvania FFA state office.
We dare you to be yourselves throughout this process. This is an incredible opportunity to grow as an individual.
We can’t wait to see how you all dare to be moving forward. Good luck!

2024-25 State Officer Candidates

- Sydney Albright — Garden Spot
Donald Bolt — Northeast Bradford
Chloe Bomgardner — Northern Lebanon
Kate Burkholder — Grassland
Wesley Doll — Eastern Lebanon County
Brianna Donat — Dover
Gracianna Elliott — Cumberland Valley
Evan Espenshade — Elizabethtown
Maverick Fleck — Tyrone
Rian Hill — Laurel
Carter Kennedy — Honesdale
Emily Kerstetter — East Juniata
Lindsey Kline — Grand Canyon
- Kennedy Laird — Red Lion Area
Sarah Lasko — Conneaut Area
Nathan Lesh — Greenwood
Jaclyn Martin — Garden Spot
Gavin Neff — West Perry
Olivia Ocker — Big Spring
Lenka Ohler — Derry
Drew Rutledge — Honesdale
Nathan Sauder — Manheim
Kaitlyn Stringer — Captain Jack
Hannah Vazquez — Chambersburg
Hayleigh Zechman — Midd-West

Awards Recognize Exceptional Ag Teachers

Agricultural education prepares students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in global agriculture, food, fiber, energy and natural resource systems.

The Pennsylvania Association of Agricultural Educators promotes outstanding teachers, programs and supporters of such education and shares success stories from the classroom.

In January, the association accepted nominations from agriculture teachers across the commonwealth. More than 65 different nominations were received and, after completing screening applications, state winners were named.

2024 PAEE Award Winners

- Teachers Turn the Key: Mikara Anderson, Southern Huntingdon County High School
Outstanding Early Career Teacher: Emily Bidlack, Harlan Rowe Middle School
Outstanding Agricultural Education Teacher: Robyn Bechtel, Williamsburg Community Junior/Senior High School
Teacher Mentor: Joanna McKelvey, Wilmington Area High School
Outstanding Middle/Secondary Program: Cumberland Valley School District, agricultural education program
Outstanding Service: Ronald Frederick, retired from Twin Valley High School
Lifetime Achievement: Martin Heyler, retired from Cowanesque Valley High School
Ideas Unlimited: Jenna Kibbe, Cumberland Valley High School

Winners will compete against state winners from throughout the Northeastern U.S. for the National Association of Agricultural Educators Region VI award.

Agricultural education is an integral segment of public education, preparing students for employment, further education and/or a lifetime of informed choices in the global agriculture and natural resources systems.

It’s a year-round, coherent sequence of instruction. The essential components are formal instruction, experiential education, and leadership and personal development.

Formal education denotes classroom and laboratory instruction, which is based on the principles of



Jenna Kibbe



Robyn Bechtel



Mikara Anderson



Joanna McKelvey



Emily Bidlack

teaching, learning and incorporating applied academic skills, problem solving, higher order cognitive skills, and psychomotor development for the attainment and application of competencies.

Experiential education involves individualized and practical applications of the formalized instructional competencies, which are integral and unique features of a complete program. Quality experiences are supervised by teachers of agriculture on a year-round basis.

Skills are developed, records are kept and a personal investment of time, energy and/or money is included.

The national FFA organization also

works to develop human relations skills, like leadership and personal development.

Chapter Educates About Poison Prevention

LILA KRETZING
Reporter, West Perry FFA

In 2021, the Poison Control Center reported 627 incidents of poison exposures per 100,000 people (including all ages) in the U.S.

The highest percentage of incidents occurred in 1- and 2-year-old children, with 6,439 and 5,997 exposures per 100,000 children in those age groups.

The primary cause of these incidents was found to be adults leaving chemicals/poisons unattended or stored improperly around children.

To combat this issue, on March 21, West Perry FFA members traveled to the first-grade classes of each West Perry School District elementary school to give their annual poison prevention presentations.

The group presented to eight classrooms, emphasizing the importance of avoiding household poisons without adult approval and supervision.

What exactly are household poisons?

By definition, a poison is a substance that is capable of causing illness or death to an organism when someone improperly interacts with it.

This includes cleaning supplies, such as bleach or Clorox; products used for pest control, like Roundup; common garage fluids, such as WD-40 or motor oil; and medications.

With the help of Mr. Yuk, first-graders were taught how to handle a situation where someone has been exposed to toxic chemicals.

Mr. Yuk was created by the Pittsburgh Poison Control Center in 1971 and became the first nationally recognized symbol for poison awareness.

Mr. Yuk is most commonly seen

in the form of bright green stickers, which can be stuck on chemicals as a warning.

This allows people of all ages to know a chemical is toxic without handling the bottle, which helps limit skin contact, toxic fume inhalation, and product ingestion.

Mr. Yuk stickers also contain the number for the national, toll-free poison help center: 800-222-1222.

The students were encouraged to share the information with their parents so families could create a safety plan, should an accident occur.

Another way to identify chemicals is by reading the labels and locating signal words.

The Hazardous Communication Standard mandates signal words — words that convey the dangers of a specific chemical — are located on the label of hazardous products.

Common signal words include caution, warning, danger and danger poison.

However, the best solution to prevent curious children from interacting with chemicals is to store products properly. The product should be in a container with the corresponding label and stored in high, locked, child-proof locations.

This prevents not only children but also other family members and pets from accidentally being harmed by chemicals.

Contact Poison Control right away if poisoning is suspected. Help is available online or by phone at 800-222-1222. Both options provide free, confidential, expert advice.

Call 911 right away if an individual collapses, has a seizure, has trouble breathing or can’t be awakened.



Submitted

West Perry FFA members, with the help of Mr. Yuk, helped educate first-graders on the dangers of household chemicals.

Officers on the Road



Submitted

The state officer team had the privilege of attending the Wenger Praise Dinner in Lebanon, Pa., on April 30. The officers are thankful for the continued support the Wenger Foundation provides to Pennsylvania FFA. Thank you to the foundation and Wenger family for the hospitality.