



BLUE & GOLD NEWS

Pennsylvania FFA Happenings



Pennsylvania FFA Members Earn Organization’s Highest Degree

EVAN ESPENSHADE
Pennsylvania FFA State Reporter

FFA members from around the nation gather at the Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis for the National FFA Convention and Expo every October.

Led by the national FFA officers, this four-day event is filled with national competitions, awards and recognition. Members also have the opportunity to network with agribusinesses and other FFA members.

And, the organization’s highest honor, the American Degree, is presented.

To qualify, students must have developed their own supervised agricultural experience project and meet all other requirements, including investing a specified amount of money or hours, completing 50 hours of community service, being involved with FFA for three years, receiving their state degree and graduating from high school at least 12 months prior to the national convention at which the degree is to be granted.

Pennsylvania FFA had 108 individuals who worked diligently and put countless hours and effort into projects to earn their American Degrees at this year’s convention.



Pennsylvania American Degree recipients at the National FFA Convention.

- Aubrey Anderson — Headwaters
Mindee Anderson — Southern Huntingdon County
Addison Arrowsmith — Oley Valley
Conner Baker — Grand Canyon
Alexis Banik — Grand Canyon
Emma Bartel — Tyrone Area
Madison Benfer — Central Cove
Ali Bieser — Cowanesque
Abraham Black — Tyrone Area
Kelly Bliss — Captain Jack
Shelly Bliss — Captain Jack
Mercadee Blocher — Salisbury-Elk Lick
Chloe Bomgardner — Northern Lebanon
Grace Brammer — Cumberland Valley
Jay Bratton — Greenwood
Raegan Braund — Athens
Logan Broderick — Manor
Nevin Brofee — Greenwood
Ashley Brubaker — Williamsburg
Faith Brumbaugh — Central Cove
Colby Carreon — Black Hawk

- Andrea Clark — Greenwood
Ensley Clark — Trinity
Mackenzie Coffman — Blue Juniata
Bryce Danko — Greenwood
Garrison Dibert — Central Cove
Ryan Duffy — Greenwood
Renee Ealy — Wilmington Area
Vincent Fenati — Wilmington Area
Lyndsey Fleck — Tyrone Area
Jessica Fleisher — Newport
Jeb Friedline — Somerset Area
Carley Fries — Honesdale
Garrett Fuhrer — Headwaters
Ashley Funston — Chestnut Ridge
Megan Garber — Manheim
Adalyn Geary — Somerset Area
Elyssa Gilbert — Big Spring
Cameron Goodyear — Rockwood
Rianna Green — Solanco
Clayton Hetrick — Big Spring
Lillian Hetrick — Oley Valley
Sarah Holland — Trinity

- Madison Hoopes — Headwaters
Chad Hoover — McGuffey
Kalvin Hrutkay — Trinity
Megan Hyde — Headwaters
Anna James — Upper Bucks Tech
Sierra Kapusta — Upper Bucks Tech
Wyatt Kibbe — Headwaters
Alec Klingler — Mifflinburg
Cale Kosa — Headwaters
Regan Kreitzer — Tulpehocken
John Kroft — Dover
Sarah Lasko — Conneaut Area
Rebecca Lehman — Central Columbia
Nathan Lesh — Greenwood
Alex Leydig — Brothersvalley
Kathryn Longnecker — Central Cove
Courtney Martin — Headwaters
Rebecca Martin — Headwaters
Timothy Martin — Grassland
Grace McCarty — Grassland
Chasten McConn — Avella
Desyre McDougan McCombs — Trinity

- Evangeline McGargle — Blue Juniata
Emma McLaughlin — State College Little Lions
Brandon McMichael — Manor
Gracie Mead — Canton
Madison Metzger — Headwaters
Catharine Miller — Big Spring
Tamra Miller — Laurel
Gabriel Mingle — Williamsburg
Madeline Elizabeth Musser — Shippensburg
Natalie Musser — Elizabethtown
Madison Myers — Grassland
Hailey Norden — Albion
Paisley Nudd — Cowanesque
Danielle Oatman — Manor
Savannah Palmer — Laurel
Chloe Perry — Manor
Molly Pifer — Northeast Bradford
Kierson Reasner — Southern Huntingdon County
Kiara Rhoads — Tyrone Area
Madison Ripka — State College Little Lions
Adria Russell — Blue Juniata
Jenna Sassaman — Selinsgrove
Garrett Schmidt — Salisbury-Elk Lick
Dylan Shultz — Williamsburg
Elijah Shultz — Williamsburg
Romy Slick — Wilmington Area
Courtney Smith — Apple City, Biglerville
Ezekiel Smith — Manor
Andrew Snook — Mifflinburg
Lily Sollenberger — Central Cove
Kolby Stoltzfus — Grassland
Katelyn Stringer — Captain Jack
Mathias Sweigart — Cloister
Robert Sweinhart — Tri-Valley
Chloe Tamulinas — Trinity
Erica Teagarden — McGuffey
Riley Sue Thompson — Headwaters
Hartley VanGilder — Brothersvalley
Mary Walter — Mifflinburg
Charity Wampole — Athens
Hunter Weiss — Cumberland Valley
Jessica Weiss — Cloister
Ashley Yokum — Bedford County

Submitted

OFFICER CORNER



NATHAN LESH
VICE PRESIDENT

“Why FFA?”

This question was recently posed to me by a local store owner as I stopped in to pick up a few items.

They continued, “You didn’t grow up on a farm, so what made you want to join the FFA?”

My usual response to this question has always been: “To give back to the organization that has given so much to me.”

While that answer is true, it didn’t fully capture the depth of my reasons for joining.

I began to reflect more deeply. Was it the robust FFA program at my high school? Or perhaps the opportunity to learn more about the agricultural industry? Or maybe it was a combination of these, along with so many other factors.

Recently, the Pennsylvania FFA state officer team returned from the National FFA Convention and Expo. Witnessing nearly 70,000 FFA members from across the country connect, learn and grow together in Indianapolis helped me crystallize a stronger answer to the question.

I realized I joined FFA to become a more educated consumer, to develop my leadership and communication skills and to deepen my knowledge of the agricultural industry. I joined FFA to participate in career and leadership development events and to connect with a community dedicated to excellence in agriculture.

But perhaps the real question isn’t, “Why FFA?” but rather, “Why not FFA?”

Every student deserves the opportunity to experience this transformative organization and to gain a fundamental understanding of where their food and resources come from.

Through FFA, students can cultivate a sense of purpose, build invaluable life skills and explore career paths within agriculture and beyond.

To all current and past FFA members, I encourage you to explore your own answer to why you joined FFA and to share that answer with others.

And to the folks who may be considering, or know someone considering, joining FFA, I encourage you to seize this opportunity to grow, learn and lead.

If your school doesn’t have an FFA chapter, you can always work toward starting one.

After all, FFA is more than just an organization — it’s a pathway to discovering one’s potential and making a lasting impact in agriculture and one’s community.

Pennsylvania Well Represented at Nationals

EVAN ESPENSHADE

Pennsylvania FFA State Reporter

During the Pennsylvania State Convention in June, the top placing teams and individuals from various competitions were selected to represent Pennsylvania at the National FFA Convention and Expo in Indianapolis.

In October, these teams competed against FFA members from across the United States.

Pennsylvania had several teams place in the top 10 nationally, including Manheim placing ninth in the farm and agribusiness competition, Oley Valley placing sixth in food science and technology, and Central Cove placing eighth in veterinary science.

The following teams competed at the 97th National FFA Convention:

- Agricultural Communications: Cumberland Valley — silver
Agricultural Issues: Little Dutchmen — silver
Agricultural Sales: Elizabethtown — silver
Agricultural Technology and Mechanical Systems: Garden Spot — bronze
Agronomy: Manor — silver
Conduct of Chapter Meetings: Greenwood — silver
Dairy Cattle Evaluation: Cowanesque — silver
Environmental and Natural Resources: Sugar Valley Rural Charter — bronze
Farm and Agribusiness: Manheim — gold
Floriculture: Elizabethtown — bronze
Food Science and Technology: Oley Valley — gold
Forestry: Sugar Valley Rural Charter — silver
Horse Evaluation: Wilmington Area — silver
Livestock Evaluation: Midd-West — bronze
Marketing Plan: Cumberland Valley — bronze
Meats Evaluation and Technology: Wilmington Area — silver
Milk Quality and Products: Williamsburg — gold

- Nursery Landscape: Monroe Career and Technical Institute — silver
Parliamentary Procedure: Cedar Crest — silver

- Poultry Evaluation: Manor — silver
Veterinary Science: Central Cove — gold
The following individuals also competed at the 97th National FFA Convention:
Creed Speaking: Chelsie Bomgardner, Northern Lebanon — silver
Dairy Handlers: Jillian Anderson, Penns Valley — gold
Employment Skills: Taylor Heeter, Southern Huntingdon County — bronze
Extemporaneous Speaking: Sarah Firestone, Garden Spot — silver
Prepared Speaking: Kristin Davis, Northeast Bradford — bronze

Pennsylvania FFA is proud of the teams and individuals who competed and for the hard work they’ve put into their respective competitions. Congratulations to all.

FFA Joins Days of Service



Submitted

State officers joined other volunteers to help at the Newfields Horticulture Center in Indianapolis during National Days of Service.