**For Immediate Release**

Contact: April Hamilton

SD FFA Leadership & Program Manager

April.Hamilton@sdstate.edu

605-688-4380

**Photos of STAR finalists available to download at:**

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1OpdYlKasHs2Dc0erU3ZKW4pV_Qm7uxQD?usp=sharing>

**South Dakota State FFA Stars Recognized**

(BROOKINGS, S.D.) – The State FFA Degree, the highest degree conferred by the South Dakota FFA, was presented to 276 agricultural education students at the 2023 South Dakota FFA Convention. Certain students rise to the top as star finalists. These individuals spend countless hours working on their projects and enhancing their potential for future jobs by gaining hands-on experience and developing technical skills. After a review of the students' supervised agricultural experience program and records, four finalists were selected as the best of the best in each category prior to state convention. The finalists interviewed in front of a panel and the most outstanding were selected to be the State Star Farmer, Star in Agribusiness, Star in Placement and Star in Agri-Science. Each State Star will receive a $400 cash award and the finalists each receive $100. Congratulations to the SD FFA Stars!

The results are as follows:

**State Star Farmer – Landon Roling, McCook Central;** sponsored by Farm Credit Services of America. Pictured with parents Ben and Jennifer Roling, Farm Credit Services of America representative Lindsey Haskell, and advisors Mr. Terry Reickman and Mrs. Tracy Chase

**State Star in Agribusiness – Ashley Bjerke, Sioux Valley;** sponsored by Farm Credit Services of America. Pictured with parents Scott and Tania Bjerke, Farm Credit Services of America representative Lindsey Haskell and advisor Mr. Don Sutera.

**State Star in Ag Placement Ella Haven, Northwestern Area;** sponsored by the Dan Streff Family.  Pictured with advisor Mrs. Noelle Swanson, and Dan Streff family members.

**State Star in Agri-Science – Mason Pulse, McCook Central;** sponsored by Glacial Lakes Energy, LLC, represented by Bill Ton. Picture with Glacial Lakes Energy representative Bill Ton, parents John and Angie Pulse, and advisors Mr. Terry Rieckman and Mrs. Tracy Chase.

Finalists and winners in all 4 areas are as follows (photos):

**Star Farmer finalists** – Sponsor Farm Credit Services of America; Landon Roling, McCook Central; Morgan Mackaben, Belle Fourche; Teagan Mason, Doland; Zachary Jacobson, Howard.

**Star in Ag Business finalists** – sponsor, Farm Credit Services of America; Ashley Bjerke, Sioux Valley; Rylee Terveen, Bridgewater-Emery; Aubree Kranz, McCook Central; Karsten Hamilton, Howard

**Star in Ag Placement finalists** – sponsored by The Dan and Karen Streff family: Ella Haven, Northwestern Area, Ail Zacharias, West Central; Austin Schimke, Wessington Springs; Jackson Hofer, Beresford.

**Star in Agri-Science finalists** – sponsor Glacial Lakes Energy, LLC; Mason Pulse, McCook Central; Ethan Boekelheide, Northwestern Area; Shayne Luzmoori, West Central; Ali Zacharias, West Central.

District Star Greenhands are sophomores who were recognized for an outstanding start to their Supervised Agriculture Experience Project as being top in each of their FFA districts. These awards were sponsored by Central Farmers Cooperative.

**District Star Greenhands are:** Emma Schneider, Doland - District 1; Mason Jacobson, Howard - District 2; Allie Westra, Beresford - District 3; Maddy Lauck, McCook Central - District 4; Taya Kirstine, Belle Fourche - District 5; Ridge Roduner, Wessington Springs - District 6; and Ireland McAreavey, Tri-Valley - District 7.

-###-