



FFA's New Era



February 2025

Vol. 91 • No. 2

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP HORSE EVALUATION TEAM!

This is a **1ST TIME ACHIEVEMENT** for any SD FFA chapter.



RAPID CITY STEVENS - NATL. CHAMPIONSHIP HORSE EVAL.

Raising the Bar

Over 72,000 FFA members flooded Indianapolis for the National FFA Convention October 23-26. They engaged in workshops, competitive events, and received messages from keynote speakers. SD FFA members and agricultural educators' engagement in months of preparation led to exciting moments!

1st place National Horse Evaluation Team

– Rapid City Stevens – Elliot Hendrix (10th individually), Ethan Hendrix, Patty Timmons and Kaiva Coleman; advisor Ms. Genetie Hendrix.

3 Star National Chapter Award (highest awarded)

– Brookings FFA

Runner up Service-Learning Proficiency –

Abbie Chase, McCook Central

Runner up Poultry Production Proficiency –

Elden Blume, Redfield

Runner up Wildlife Production Proficiency –

Hailey Kizer, Howard

2nd – Social Systems Div. 6

– Lauren Roling and Alyssa Roling, McCook Central

3rd – Animal Systems, Div. 6

– Colton Stiefvater and Karlie Stiefvater, McCook Central

5th – Power, Structural and Technical Systems, Div. 4

– Gage Egger and Ty Oyen, McCook Central

6th – Power, Structural and Technical Systems, Div. 6

– Sydney Neel and Lexi Nichols, West Central

7th – Social System Div. 3

– Bobbi Eide, Gettysburg

7th – Food Products and Processing, Div. 6

– Zoey Dissing and McKenzie Mack, Tri-Valley

8th – Farm Business Management Team

– Brookings - Levi Murray, Clayton Nelson, Gabriel Stern, Kennedy Nemitz; Advisors Mr. Joshua Johnson and Ms. Michelle Dykstra

8th – Environmental/Natural Resources Div. 6

– Harlee and Mikael Nielson, Hitchcock-Tulare



MCCOOK CENTRAL - SOCIAL SYSTEMS DIV. 6



BROOKINGS - 3 STAR NATL. CHAPTER AWARD



BROOKINGS - FARM BUS. MGMT. TEAM



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Raising the Bar (cont.)

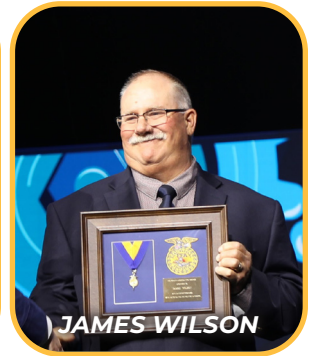
Gold Teams:

Ag Mechanics – Howard - Zachary Connor, Thomas Connor, Gabe Miller and Mason Jacobson; advisor Mrs. Charlene Weber.

Milk Quality – Milbank - Joseph French, Morgean French, Veronica Fonder, and Jacob Erickson; advisor Ms. Sara Colombe.

Honorary American Degree

Recipients – David Kayser, Alexandria, SD & James Wilson, Marion, SD



Member Engagement Creates Solutions



In FFA, **every member is on a journey that will define their lives.** Each of their experiences looks a little different. **You can impact Atlee Olson**, a Junior in the Belle Fourche FFA Chapter with your support of the SD FFA mission.

Atlee joined FFA to meet individuals with similar aspirations, and experience personal growth. FFA provided her knowledge applicable to real-life situations. She shares, "Attending the roundtable discussions at the National FFA Convention was impactful as it allowed me to engage with a variety of perspectives. I met people from across the country who also had a passion for investigating and solving ag related issues." Atlee is working to embody the FFA motto of premier leadership, personal growth, and career success. "I want to develop my leadership skills, grow myself and others, and expand my agriscience research." Her Agriscience SAE focuses on investigating ways to improve cattle operations. She is researching issues in the cow-calf industry, including record-keeping technology, aerial monitoring with drones, cattle behavior metrics, and the impact of stress on cattle reproduction. "I want to reduce the stress of both the cattle and owners, by creating efficient methods that benefit cattle operations."

Atlee recognizes, "Experience is something I can't get from a book or lecture; it comes from time with those who truly work to improve the agriculture industry." **YOU can help** Atlee and members like her experience **life changing opportunities and be inspired to pursue excellence by** sharing your experiences, and funding their opportunities. **Thank you!**

Dare to Lead

The state officer team invites you to apply for a 2025-26 South Dakota FFA State Officer or State Ambassador position. If you are currently a high school senior or college freshman who has a passion for FFA and Agriculture, wants to help members breakthrough, and has a desire to grow as a leader, this is just the position for you. Through the interview process you will experience self reflection and grow as an individual. While the nominating committee puts together the most effective team, you will make connections and meet new friends from across the state. If elected, you will have the opportunity to serve the South Dakota FFA Association. You will network with industry professionals, facilitate workshops, travel the state and nation, and learn about diversity in the agriculture industry. As a state officer or ambassador, you have the privilege to help members develop their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success. To learn more about these positions, contact the State FFA Office at 605-237-7526.

You are needed to ... Empower the Next Generation

Growing leadership in agriculture requires a substantial investment – one we believe is vital and one you can make. The SD FFA is the largest it's ever been, with 112 chapters. That's exciting, and exactly why we need your help. **You can ensure FFA members are genuinely challenged and prepared to be successful in agriculture.**

6,500+ SD FFA members need blue jackets, leadership development events, exposure to agricultural careers, real-life experiences practicing skills, networking opportunities with like-minded members and agricultural industry leaders, dynamic teachers, scholarships, recognition for hard work, encouragement to be servant leaders, and a safe place to grow.

You can do something about it. Make a gift today of time, talent or treasure, and help FFA members become leaders in agriculture.

1. **Connect** with the South Dakota FFA Foundation on **Facebook**
2. **Create a birthday, work or friend challenge** to match your donation to us during **National FFA Week**
3. **Utilize** company **Matching Gift** programs
4. **Thrivent Choice** to benefit the SD FFA Foundation
5. **Donate** – cash, check, online at: sdffaoundation.org (scan the QR code with your phone camera for link), or you can give from your assets – grain, land, stocks, gifts from your IRA, and grants from your Donor-Advised Funds to see larger tax savings!
6. **Volunteer to help judge state agriscience or proficiencies**
7. **Leave a legacy** – Your gift in a will or estate plan will make an impact on future members, just like the impact on you, your spouse or children



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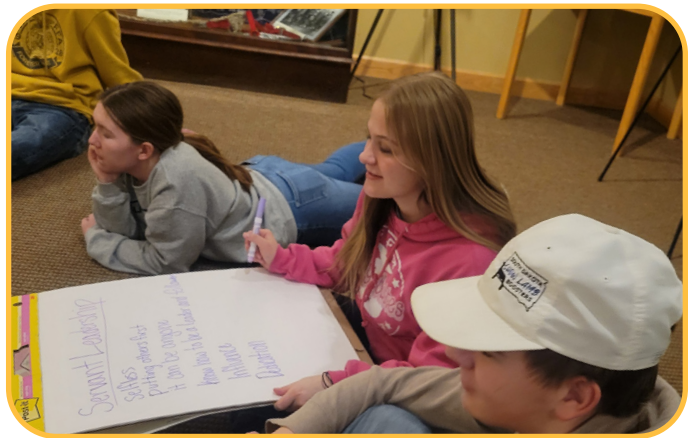
FOLLOW AGTEGRA AT:

DOT Bringing Passion to Pierre

The 2024-2025 district officer teams participated in a training and met with the state officers in Fort Pierre on January 22nd-23rd. Their training revolved around the theme "Secret Services: Mission Lead & Serve," which allowed the teams to define servant leadership, learn what that means for them and their officer team, and develop plans of how to put those skills into action to better their communities. The six leadership sessions, led by the state officer team, encompassed characteristics valuable throughout their year. Recognizing their own leadership style, learning the important role they play, and identifying the influence they have as a district officer and FFA member. The 56 district officers were also joined by keynote speakers sharing their servant leadership stories. Training also included practice handling difficult conversations, and properly engaging in conversation and successfully communicating the value of SD FFA. In the morning, district officers implemented their new knowledge, during breakfast with South Dakota Legislators. They spent the morning conversing with Legislators and Legislative staff, sharing personal stories and experiences, as well as discussing Legislative bills surrounding agriculture. The district officers also ventured to the Capitol, attending committee meetings and meeting with additional Legislators and Lobbyists. The district 2 officer team exclaimed how grateful they were for the experience, "officers were able to become better

informed about past and upcoming bills and decisions within South Dakota as well as develop communication and conversational skills in a professional setting. Sitting in on the Ag Senate committee was also intriguing as officers experienced first hand the process and discussion for agricultural related bills." The morning of fellowship and experiences was a vital part in their district officer training and will better prepare them for their road to success.

District Officer Training and Legislative Breakfast are made possible by our sponsors, through the South Dakota FFA Foundation: South Dakota Association of Agriculture Educators, SD Farmers Union, SD Crop Improvement Association, SD Wheat Commission, Twin Cities Region Northland Ford Dealers, CHS Foundation, Bayer, South Dakota Corn Utilization Council, Farmers Mutual of Nebraska, Agtegra Cooperative, Farm Credit Services of America, Butler, Pioneer/Corteva, First National Bank of Sioux Falls, C&B Equipment, Prairie Grain Partners LLC, BankWest, Dacotah Bank, First Dakota National Bank, RDO Equipment, Titan International, Army/ROTC, Leisinger Farms, Midwest Veterinary Service, Croplan, Titan Machinery, Dakota Grain Connection, LG Seeds, Viaflex, Wilbur-Ellis, Hanson Associates, LLC, BASF, Riverview, Citibank, Christensen Farms, East River Electric, Beck's Hybrids, and Olsen Custom Farms.



Ag Adventure Zone and FFA Day: Advocating for Ag



South Dakota FFA's Ag Adventure Zone continues to be a vibrant and educational presence at Rodeo Rapid City, thanks to the support of the

SD FFA Foundation and sponsor South Dakota Farmers Union. From January 31 to February 8, FFA showcased the diversity of South Dakota agriculture at the Ag Adventure Zone, marking its fifth year at the event. Located in the Ice Arena at The Monument in Rapid City, the Ag Adventure Zone featured interactive and educational exhibits covering everything from beef and swine to grains and more—highlighting agriculture from production to processing. The mission of the Ag Adventure Zone is to demonstrate modern agricultural practices, promote sustainable natural resource use, and emphasize safe, wholesome food production for all ages. Industry volunteers, State FFA officers, and Districts 5 and 8 FFA members led activities and interacted with attendees throughout the event.

In addition to the Ag Adventure Zone, SD FFA hosted "FFA Day" on Monday, February 3rd, as part of Rodeo Rapid City. High school FFA members from South Dakota, Nebraska, and Wyoming participated in hands-on presentations across four key agriculture pathways: animal systems, plant systems, power/structural systems, and advocacy/communications. FFA members had the chance to learn from industry leaders, ask questions, attend seminars, and engage in livestock judging schools, contests, cattle shows and sales, and vendor visits—gaining valuable insights into current agricultural practices and innovations. Wessington

Springs FFA members Brooklyn Caffee and Alexis Roesler share, "We found FFA Day fun and learned many different things. Our favorites included the rodeo and going to the Floriculture workshop. Seeing different ag booths and shops was also cool. We enjoyed Rodeo Rapid City and hope to come back next year with the same excitement."



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Hats Off to Our Champions

Over 600 South Dakota FFA members met in Box Elder for the State FFA Leadership Development Events (LDEs). Students qualified through district competitions, advancing the top two teams and top three individuals from each of the eight FFA districts. While waiting for competitive events, students interacted with agriculture industry leaders, including the SD FFA Star Partners at the Career Expo. FFA members and chapters were recognized for their success in eleven leadership areas at the closing awards ceremony and winners advance to nationals.

Event sponsors include: Agtegra Cooperative; BankWest; Bayer; Twin Cities Region Northland Ford Dealers; Lynn, Jackson, Shultz, Lebrun, P.C. Attorneys at Law; Beck's Hybrid; Butler Machinery Company; C&B Equipment; CHS Foundation, Dacotah Bank; Farm Credit Services of America; Titan International; Farmers Mutual of Nebraska; First Dakota National Bank; Lauck and Koepsell Construction; Pioneer/Corteva; Prairie Grain Partners, LLC; Rock Tuff; SD Corn Utilization Council; and the Western Legacy Foundation.



Parliamentary Procedure – sponsored by South Dakota Farmers Union. The travel scholarship is sponsored by South Dakota Farmers Union, Monte and Ruth Mason, Rachel Mehlhaf, Brett and Tracy Kaltvedt, Ashley and Jordan Wiesen, and Dan and Nicole Tonak.

1. Willow Lake (Kadee Frankfurth, Kelsey Hofer, Evelyn Terhark, Masyn Knock, Johanna Vandernick, Cadence Bocek, Hadley Gejerde, Advisor Dan Tonak)
2. Belle Fourche
3. Harrisburg
4. Brookings

Conduct of Chapter Meetings – sponsored by Patsy Rieckman. The state travel scholarship is sponsored by Patsy Rieckman, YieldPro Ag, and the Dan & Nicole Tonak family.

1. McCook Central (Front- Khloe Klinkhammer, Hadley Flogstad, Hailey Heumiller, Back- Sophia Sandine, Carter Scholl, Alyssa Roling, Leah Feterl, Advisor Terry Rieckman)
2. Willow Lake
3. Montrose
4. Harrisburg



The **All-State Parliamentary Procedure Team** is comprised of the top individual officers from each position in Parliamentary Procedure. Sponsored by Skinner Financial Services.

Chair: Kate Williamson, Belle Fourche
Members At-Large:

- Wyatt Lesmeister, Belle Fourche
- Kadee Frankfurth, Willow Lake
- Raif Parmeter, Belle Fourche
- Izzie Smithback, Harrisburg
- Jazlyn Olson, Belle Fourche

Ag Sales – sponsored by Simplot Grower Solutions. The champion team travel scholarship is sponsored by Kevin & Amber Blagg Family, Mueller Family, Simplot Grower Solutions, Hoegemeyer Hybrids, YieldPro Ag, and Dacotah Diamond Auction.

1. McCook Central (Dylan McGregor, Luke Horstman, Lane Deutsch, Tucker Peterson, Will Oyen)
2. Watertown
3. Brookings
4. West Central



Ag Sales top individual sellers were also selected from each presentation room and is sponsored by Larson Farms and Sorum Farms.

- Dylan McGregor, McCook Central
- Sam Handberg, West Central
- Braxton Yackley, Selby Area
- Carley Crist, Beresford



Marketing Plan – sponsored by Legend Seeds, Inc., and the state winning team travel scholarship is sponsored by Hurley and Associates and YieldPro Ag.

1. Lemmon FFA Chapter (Advisor Renae Gebhart, Katelyn Gebhart, Brooks Foss, Emma Barnes)
2. McCook Central
3. Harrisburg
4. Doland



Ag Communications – sponsored by the SD Broadcasters Association and Farm Progress/ Dakota Farmer. The travel scholarship is sponsored by Farm Progress/ Dakota Farmer and Dakota Farm Talk.

1. Beresford (Advisor Bridget Twedt, Capri Mullinix, Allie Westra, Kylie Mockler, Grace Norling)
2. West Central
3. Parker
4. Harrisburg



Ag Broadcasting/Journalism – sponsored by Prairie Winds Humbolt LLC.

1. Shyla Tvedt, Deuel
2. Mia Fitzgerald, Philip
3. Haydn McGillivray, Watertown Area
4. Ethan Buchmann, Freeman
5. Reagan Pearson, Tri-Valley
6. Quinn Boer, Deubrook



Ag Issues – sponsored by South Dakota Farmers Union. The state winning team travel scholarship is sponsored by South Dakota Farmers Union and Central States Fair Foundation.

1. Howard (Reese Rudebush, Bree Wettlaufer, Lacie Weber, Ellie Becker, Addison Becker, Anna Becker, Advisor Charlene Weber)
2. West Central
3. McCook Central
4. Lyman



Creed Speaking – sponsored by YieldPro Ag and Craig and Bonnie Dybedahl. The state winning travel scholarship is sponsored by YieldPro Ag, Craig and Bonnie Dybedahl, and Joshua and Katie Ramsey.

1. Chloe Sime, Faulkton
2. Kobi Miller, Sturgis
3. Tessa Burke, Bridgewater-Emery
4. Cooper VanderWal, Sioux Valley
5. Braylon Plucker, Lennox-Sundstrom
6. Rylin Fods, Tri-Valley



Employment Interview Skills – sponsored by the South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The travel scholarship is sponsored by Kindra Gordon, Sadie Frey and the Lance Howe Family.

1. Atlee Olson, Belle Fourche
2. Connor May, Brookings
3. Karley Luke, Marion
4. Isabella Smithback, Harrisburg
5. Aedan Klawonn, Madison Central
6. Brody Stenger, Sioux Falls CTE Academy

Prepared Public Speaking – sponsored by Hefty Seed Company/Ag PhD. The travel scholarship is sponsored by Jim and Michelle Andrews Family Farm, Central States Fair Foundation, and Hefty Seed Company/Ag PhD.

1. Bennett Gordon, Sturgis
2. Josie Nold, Brookings
3. Julia Tinker, Brandon Valley
4. Vivian Johnson, Madison Central
5. Alexis Christensen, Garretson
6. Delaney Zoss, Mitchell



Extemporaneous Public Speaking – sponsored by South Dakota Farmers Union. The travel scholarship is sponsored by South Dakota Farmers Union, Crazy Lady Consulting, and Jim and Michelle Andrews Family Farm.

1. Laney Andrews, Beresford
2. Bradyn Small, Langford Area
3. Colton Stiefvater, McCook Central
4. Skyler Plucker, Lennox Sundstrom
5. Gage Anderson, Lemmon
6. Briella Wettlaufer, Howard

Here's to strengthening communities

In keeping with Citi's mission of enabling growth and economic progress, Citi applauds the South Dakota FFA Foundation for helping to develop resources to financially reward successful FFA members and South Dakota FFA Chapters.

Thank you for bringing positive change that strengthens communities.



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TO SEE FIRST HAND
WHAT FFA MEANS
TO OUR MEMBERS!

Her Vision. Their Action. Changes Our World.

Returning home from the National FFA Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C., Madison Lauck, McCook Central FFA member, was **compelled to use the skills and motivation developed to make a difference in her community.** It turned into a life-changing service project, FFA agriscience project, and great personal growth.

Madison got her idea while sorting through her clothes and preparing to take them to Goodwill or throw them away. She remembers, "I had never really given any thought to what happens next. I started researching and realized clothing companies like Shein, a major fast fashion retailer, produce cheap clothing made from synthetic materials that contribute to textile waste and high carbon emissions, causing a significant impact on our environment. I discovered Trashie, whose mission is to create an easy, accessible, and rewarding way to recycle clothing. I reached out and started working with their social media and community manager to see what I could do."

Madison thought bigger than just her local FFA chapter, contacting FFA chapters statewide. Seven chapters, including McCook Central, participated. Madison says, "I wanted to gauge the growth of knowledge through their participation. Hence, **I developed a survey to understand their knowledge of fast fashion, textile waste, and ways we can be part of the solution.** I created an educational presentation for the chapters and surveyed their growth of knowledge after the presentation. To bring the project full circle, each chapter got 10 take-back bags from Trashie to fill

with textiles, and created a short video of them collecting their items to share on their social platforms. **This brought awareness to their communities of the effects of textile waste and fast fashion.**" When Trashie got the 70 bags, they sorted, graded and processed the materials for recycling, upcycling, or reusing, ensuring minimal waste. Items were either cleaned and re-sold globally, fiber-to-fiber recycled, sorted for larger recycling programs, or down-cycled for applications like paper making, and fortifying building materials.

Her final Agriscience project will not only have analyzed data and research on a critical environmental issue but also **active, life-changing steps that were made by several FFA chapters** across the state. In fact, with each of the seven chapters doing their part, they saved 10,721 lbs of CO2 emissions from the lower atmosphere, 1,065 lbs of clothing and textile waste from landfills, and 113,316 gallons of water. Madison reflects, "**I learned that a thought and vision can come to life through determination and the ability to adapt to challenges. FFA has given me the gift of bringing this vision to life.**"

Scan the QR Code with your phone camera to see Madison's presentation:



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Fueling Potential: State FFA Officers Spark Growth

During their year of service to the South Dakota FFA Organization, state FFA officers had the opportunity to visit chapters across the state, sharing the many opportunities available to students in agricultural education. The team connected with members from all areas of the state, inspiring them to reach their full potential. These visits were filled with impactful activities focused on teamwork, conflict resolution, and understanding the value of FFA and each member's unique role within the organization. Through interactive workshops and meaningful conversations, the officers encouraged members to grow as leaders and individuals. The sessions included activities designed to build skills and enhance understanding, where members learned to manage team conflicts and communicate effectively. These experiences reinforced the idea that agricultural education and FFA empower every member to make a difference, both within the organization and beyond.



Can't-Miss Convention Events

The 97th South Dakota State FFA Convention is right around the corner! FFA members will meet at Dacotah Bank Center in Brookings, SD **April 3-5, 2025** to grow leadership skills, serve the Brookings community, and compete in Career Development Events on the campus of South Dakota State University.

Thursday will include Career Development Events, a Day of Service – packaging 60,000 meals for Feeding SD, workshops and the opening session, which will welcome new chapters, highlight our district greenhand recipients, thank our Star Partners, recognize the SD FFA Family of the Year, and kick off with a keynote.

Friday will hold more Career Development Events, the

Career Carnival, workshops, and an afternoon session – recognizing our scholarship and State FFA Degree recipients and hearing our national officer keynote.

Friday evening a VIP banquet will connect Stars Pageant and proficiency sponsors with member finalists. There will also be a **Past State Officer gathering**. The evening session will highlight proficiency finalists, have our Stars Pageant, and honor our Honorary Degree and Distinguished Service Award recipients.

Saturday morning we'll wrap up, recognizing Golden Owl Award advisors, announcing Career Development Event winners and National Chapter Awards, and electing the 2025-26 state officers.

FFA in Action

Bowdle - co-hosted a fall festival with the FCCLA. Held in conjunction with the Bowdle FFA's Harvest week, it was a community service project partially funded by the SD FFA Foundation and included a petting zoo, costume contest, pumpkin patch, trunk or treat, caramel apple booth, games and ag education. During Harvest Week, members conducted ag lessons for the Bowdle K-5 students on harvest and harvest equipment, helped students decorate harvest Thank you bags, had Chapter President, Josie Thomas read "How did that get in my lunchbox" to them and then FFA officers and students packed the thank you bags with snacks and a bottle of water. Officers delivered the Harvest Thank you bags to area farmers in line at Agtegra Cooperative. Spencer Cody from Edmunds Central also spoke on Bees and honey harvest. They got to see tools used, learn where bees travel in the United States and try on a bee suit.

Gregory County - is busy in February by hosting a Rancher's Rise Up breakfast in coordination with FCCLA and National Honor Society to thank local producers for all the support they have given to the school and organizations. During National FFA Week we will host a Meal on Main with National FFA President Thaddeus Bergschneider speaking, and volunteering to deliver meals on wheels.

Lake Preston - made 25 tie-blankets at their Christmas party to deliver to the Ronald McDonald Charity House! Around 900 kids enter through the RMCH doors a year and each kiddo receives a blanket, book, and stuffed animal.

Webster - toured Glacial Lakes Energy in Watertown and attended the Soil Health Conference on January 16th. At the Soil Health Conference, FFA member Tevin Howder placed first in the essay contest. We also had a team of Caleb Gaikowski, Dylan Carlson, Blaise McGregor, and Tevin Howder place second in the video contest, winning our chapter \$500!

A Tax Saving Way TO HELP FFA

70 1/2 or older? You can **give from your IRA directly to the South Dakota FFA Foundation** without paying income taxes (commonly called an IRA Charitable rollover, qualified charitable distribution, or QCD).

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3. **Feel good!** Your gift will be put to use today, allowing you to see the difference your donation is making.

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Countdown to a Fabulous FFA Week

From dress up days to all school events, FFA member will celebrate the eight days of National FFA Week, Feb. 15-22 (yes, there's so much to do, it's EIGHT days). Here are eight creative ways for community and FFA to celebrate together.

- 8 Host a breakfast/brunch/lunch** with members and community members catching up.
- 7 Parade tractors** that students drive to school through main street too – at noon or after school (lawn tractors count too!)
- 6 Hold a food drive** at a local sporting event and donate collected items to your local food pantry.
- 5 Wear FFA t-shirts** – Have employees at local businesses wear FFA t-shirts at work one day, and members stop by after school for photos.
- 4 Speakers** – feature alumni, sponsors, business leaders, or state/national FFA officers in class or for a school assembly.
- 3 Career Exploration** – Have local FFA members shadow someone in the ag industry. Whether planning to pursue that career or just interested in learning more, spark an interest, and share what the chapter is doing.
- 2 Throwbacks** – gather alumni then/now photos & stories. Post daily on social media, sharing how FFA impacted their careers and lives.
- 1 Baskets for Bears** – Invite everyone to bring stuffed animals to a varsity BB game. At halftime, everyone tosses their stuffed animals on the gym floor. The one nearest center court receives a prize gift basket from the FFA chapter, and all stuffed animals are donated to a hospital, shelter or Children's Home Society.

Celebrate FFA/Ag Ed in the whole community, and have fun!

