



# BLUE AND GOLD

## Pennsylvania FFA Happenings

*INITIATE, CREATE, ILLUMINATE*  
[www.paaffa.org](http://www.paaffa.org)

## Pa. Members Exhibit Spirit for FFA Week

Every year around George Washington’s birthday in February is a weeklong celebration. The National FFA Organization names this week National FFA Week.

National FFA Week is dedicated to celebrating agriculture education, the accomplishments of its members and the agriculture industry. First designated in 1947, this week provides an opportunity for members to educate the public about agriculture. More than 653,000 FFA members conduct various activities on the local, state and national levels.

Pennsylvania kicked off National FFA Week with about 400 members attending the third and final week of the Agricultural Cooperation Establishes Success leadership conference. There, students attended various workshops where they learned about personal development, leadership and socialized with other FFA members from across the state. The students also worked within their chapters to develop community service projects to conduct in their hometowns, possibly during National FFA Week.

The Pennsylvania FFA state officer team hosted an event called Meet Your State Officer. Each of the seven state officers hosts FFA chapters and their families at a Hoss’s Steak and Seahouse. The event provides the opportunity for members to interact directly with a state FFA officer and share an evening with their family and FFA chapter. This year, more than 250 members attended the event across the state at seven different Hoss’s locations.

Thousands of members also shared their experiences and knowledge with their communities. Cumberland Valley High School and Bald Eagle Area Junior Senior High School highlighted their FFA programs through an agriculture education showcase. Chapter members gave presentations and tours of the classroom facilities for community members, school faculty and administrators.

Elizabethtown FFA hosted a pig roast for the high school faculty and staff. This year, almost 140 faculty were present for the after-school meal. The members spent their time preparing and serving the food, selling Elizabethtown FFA apparel, and interacting with teachers and staff.

Whether it be showcasing their agriculture education programs, meeting with state officers, or holding a teacher-appreciation meal, Pennsylvania FFA members took advantage of the opportunity to educate and advocate about agriculture during this year’s National FFA Week.



FFA members attend the Meet Your State Officer event at the Elizabethtown Hoss’s.



# I CAN. WE WILL.

National FFA Week // Feb. 17-24, 2018

## Officer Meet and Greet Reaps Ag Fellowships

National FFA Week is always a highlight for FFA members. but one event has a unique way of bringing these future agriculturists together.

A running joke at conferences is that FFA stands for Friends, Food and Agriculture, but this rang true at the annual Meet Your State Officer Night at Hoss’s Steak and Seahouse.

FFA members, advisers and supporters gather for a night of great food and camaraderie.

This event began as a thank-you to Bill and Nancy Campbell, the owners of Hoss’s, for their continued support of Pennsylvania FFA and agricultural education. It has grown into an event that more than 400 people attended statewide.

This year’s Meet Your State Officer Night was on Feb. 20. Each state officer visits a different location.

Officers were elated to visit the following locations: Enola: Kelsey Stewart; Elizabethtown:

Thomas Gabel; DuBois: Philip Winklosky; Huntingdon: Nathan Moyer; Lititz: Taylor Halbleib; Meadville: Brody Coolidge; and Williamsport: Justin Kurtz.

This event also is open to special guests all across the state. Joining the state officers and FFA members were members of the Pennsylvania FFA Foundation, Penn State University Literacy, Education, & Agricultural Development Society members, and even legislators.

At the Enola Hoss’s, state Rep. Mark Keller, R-New Bloomfield, covered the meal costs for all who attended.

During a week to celebrate the world’s largest youth-led organization, and one that is fundamentally based on agricultural education, it was only right to gather around with friends, food and of course, agriculture.

## Down Life’s Pathways

### FROM THE OFFICERS STATION

What started as my first agricultural education class at James Buchanan High soon turned into the journey of a lifetime.

I’m Kelsey Stewart, serving as this year’s Pennsylvania FFA state chaplain. I come from Mercersburg, where I raised and showed Boer goats and dairy heifers at the county fair. My passion for agriculture started when I was young — I’ll never forget the way we got our first goat. We saw one running through the cow pasture behind our house, so my dad crawled under the fence, wrangled the goat, and ever since we’ve always had a few.

I got started in FFA because my older brother was involved in our chapter, and was a senior my freshman year. I remember walking into the first day of my dairy science class. I didn’t know anybody, so I sat in a random seat between two people who looked vaguely familiar. I later realized they were friends with my brother. Some people fear living in their older sibling’s shadow, but I couldn’t be more grateful for my brother and his friends for taking me under their wing that year, showing me such genuine compassion and pushing me out of my comfort zone. I credit my first adviser, Herb Hoffeditz, for giving me the boost of confidence I needed to realize that a little bit of hard work and dedication can go a long way. We were then blessed with Brittany May, who taught us that no matter what you’re doing, give it all you’ve got.



KELSEY STEWART

Through my journey in the organization, I have seen the lasting impact FFA can leave on individuals, and have come to value the fact that it is truly a student-run organization. It can take a shy, soft-spoken student who has no confidence in themselves, and give them the tools to turn into an articulate speaker who carries themselves with poise. We recognize that it’s not our organization that makes our members great, but it’s the strength in the diversity of our membership that makes our organization great.

These last nine months have left my six teammates and me with lifelong memories and friendships, and we couldn’t be more grateful. From chapter visits, conferences, and midwinter convention, being able to interact with and get to know the 13,000 members in this fantastic commonwealth has been an incredible blessing. From learning how to square dance at Laurel, playing with lots of bunnies at McConnellsburg, making room spray at Central Columbia, and all of the laughs had, jokes made, and friendship begun in between, I cannot express how much this year has meant to me.

It is because of these last nine months that I have decided to change my major from nursing to agribusiness, and next fall plan on attending Penn State Mont Alto. I have realized that there truly is a place for everybody in agriculture, what’s yours?

*Editor’s note: Kelsey Stewart is Pa. FFA state chaplain.*