



# BLUE AND GOLD

## Pennsylvania FFA Happenings

**ACTIVATE: Purpose-Passion-Potential**  
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### More Than Service at Redbank Valley



JILL PALMER  
Pennsylvania FFA State Reporter

The Redbank Valley FFA Chapter, located in Clarion County, Pennsylvania, offers classes in animal science, engineering and horticulture. Members take their commitment outside of the classroom by serving their community.

My teammate Maddy Buss and I were able to witness firsthand all of the things Redbank Valley does to improve their community. Not only does this FFA chapter promote agriculture in their community, they also promote honor. These members are working hard each day to top everything they’ve done before.

Redbank Valley starts with the education of others, like eighth graders, on good agricultural practices. They also provide a petting zoo for elementary students and talk about their favorite parts of farming during their Fall Festival. Using the knowledge they gain in their landscaping and horticulture classes, these FFA members put their skills to use in the greenhouse. Animal science students host a local rabies clinic with their alumni,

where they give rabies vaccinations to dogs and cats.

This FFA chapter is also working hard to honor those who put their lives on the line for our country. Veterans Day is also a big task that these members look forward to each year. While they serve lunch to all veterans, they connect with veterans as they tell their stories. Redbank Valley has presented a flag to the family of a veteran who worked for the school.

The members work with the local Red Cross chapter to host two blood drives at their school gym. During the drives, members use the theme “Beef Up the Blood Supply.” They serve beef to the donors and educate them about including beef in their diet.

This FFA chapter also knows how to have some fun with their annual Ag Olympics. Students can sign up to participate in fun farming games, hang out and relax.

Putting on their FFA jackets has meant more than just zipping up the jacket. Chapter President Maggie Rankin said, “It made me so much more outgoing, which in turn led



Members of the Redbank Valley FFA chapter.

me to gain better speaking skills and so many more friends.” Chapter Reporter Patty Smith also said that being a part of FFA allowed her to better communicate and work with

others that have a completely different mindset from her.

Of course the future is also a major benefit from putting on the blue and gold, as Vice President Katlynn

Traister said. “I’m excited for the future and to get involved more in my community. I’ve been taught so many valuable skills and feel better prepared for my life.”

### Falling Into Spring

#### FROM THE OFFICERS STATION

Growing up on my family’s dairy farm, I have learned to despise winter. Simply because it’s too cold.

This winter was not as bad as some years, but I have had my share of busting the ice off water bowls, feeding heifers in the snow, and trying to work with numb fingers.

Luckily, spring is approaching quickly. However, that calls for extra work on the farm because along with spring comes planting season.

Planting season is a busy time on the farm. It means the time that is not spent in the barn milking cows will be in the tractor, and sleep becomes an option, not a necessity. Not only is planting season a busy time, but it is also an important time. It is important to plant carefully and strategically so we can maximize our crop yield and have the right amount of each crop we need.

Planting season is accompanied by fall harvest season, which also is a busy and important time on the farm. The farm depends on the amount of harvest each year to make sure we have enough feed for the cows in the upcoming year. So then our farm can continue to be successful and I can continue to expand my herd of dairy cows which has been my Supervised Agricultural Experience the past five years.

The FFA operates similarly to our farm. We rely on the past and history of



JACOB KLINE

our organization for the programs and events we now have and enjoy. Likewise, the high anticipation of spring planting on the farm, FFA is driven today by new, engaged members that are excited to “ACTIVATE” their purpose, passion, and potential as they go through their

journey in FFA.

At our annual Agricultural Cooperation Establishes Success Conference I had the opportunity to facilitate workshops and interact with the members. It was encouraging to hear the thoughts of hundreds of members on how we can help solve hunger in our local communities. I had the opportunity to share my story with members as they asked for advice in their FFA experiences.

Recently, I had the opportunity to visit the Upper Dauphin FFA Chapter, then decided I was going to stop at Tractor Supply Company to make a donation in honor of National FFA Week. As I stood in the checkout line, I struck up a conversation with an elderly man, Woody. He began telling me about his experiences in the blue corduroy jacket as well. As we shared our similar stories with FFA, many years apart, we came to the conclusion that FFA plants a seed in the lives of our members that will sprout, and “transform” their future.

*Editor’s note: Jacob Kline is the Pennsylvania FFA state vice president.*

### FFA Hosts 19th ACES Conference

JILL PALMER  
Pennsylvania  
FFA State Reporter

Agricultural Cooperation Establishes Success, also known as the ACES Conference, was held last month in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Over the span of three weekends, 1,500 Pennsylvania FFA members come to the Sheraton in the Harrisburg-Hershey area to learn leadership skills and prepare for a future in or out of the agriculture industry.

Members arrived for one of the conferences at the Sheraton on a Saturday where current and past Pennsylvania state FFA officers led workshops. This year’s topics included setting SMART goals, learning about agriculture across the country, preparing for the future, and learning how to communicate the FFA brand.

After workshops ended, students were able to enjoy dinner and some musical entertainment from Mr. B Entertainment. FFA members heard reflections from four state officers all on



the topic of this year’s conference theme, “Journey.”

In the morning, students were invited to the ballroom of the Sheraton to participate in a time of inspiration put on by this year’s state chaplain, Tricia Hojnowski. She talked to the students about love and shared some of her favorite Bible verses on the topic.

Pennsylvania FFA Foundation Executive Director Sarah Sparks shared ideas and activities about how FFA members can fight hunger in their communities. Members were encouraged to plan projects to help solve hunger and raise awareness within their communities about food insecurity.

The state officer team was excited to have had the opportunity to hold this conference and are also looking forward to the State Legislative Leadership Conference held for three days at the Sheraton where members will learn about the legislative process, perform acts of community service, and meet with their representatives and senators at breakfast on the last day of the conference.

