



# BLUE AND GOLD

## Pennsylvania FFA Happenings

### ACTIVATE: Purpose-Passion-Potential

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# Reaching Out to Teach Ag at Cumberland Valley



JILL PALMER

Pennsylvania FFA State Reporter

1954 marked many diversified and unique accomplishments in the town of Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, just outside of Harrisburg. It was the first time that the number of tractors on farms exceeded the amount of horses and mules. The Cumberland Valley FFA Chapter was also chartered. Since 1954, the Cumberland Valley FFA members worked to better themselves as student’s leaders improving their community.

Each year these individuals put on an “Ag in the Valley Day.”

Fourth-grade students are invited to the agriculture education rooms to learn more about the industry that

feeds them. The chapter organizes different stations for the elementary students to learn about the effort put forth by farmers.

Another youth activity that this FFA chapter puts on is their annual YOLO event. This is one of unique impact on the students of Cumberland Valley High School.

The leadership committee of the FFA chapter plans this “YOUTH Leadership Operation,” or YOLO, as a lock-in for new members to experience all that FFA has to offer and to meet older FFA members.

Students are given opportunities to explore workshops on FFA basics and compete in Ag Olympic activities. The night ends with dinner and line dancing.

Agricultural educators Darla Romberger and Jessica Weyer lead the program at Cumberland Valley.

These women educate their students on everything from intro to agriculture to biotechnology. Class offerings include food science, plant science, and leadership.

Cumberland Valley FFA works hard to create the leaders of tomorrow by encouraging students to be proactive in gaining FFA proficiencies.

Cumberland Valley has produced several state proficiency winners. Last year, four members were named state proficiency winners.

Mackenzie Yorlets won for beef production, Wyatt Dale was first in sheep, Emilliann Goodhart took the gold in equine entrepreneurship, and Cheyenne Murlatt took hold of the state winner’s spot in the area of equine placement.

The chapter has produced 14 state FFA officers since 1998.

Cumberland Valley FFA members have found success at several events this past year.

At the 2016 Mid-Winter Convention during the Pennsylvania Farm Show, 18 first-year FFA members were awarded their FFA jackets. Another 11 earned their Keystone Degrees.

The chapter was recognized at the National FFA Convention for the past four years as a three-star chapter. Teams like parliamentary procedure and environmental and natural resources have also qualified to compete at the national level and represent their state.

This year’s chapter theme is “Transforming New Ideas” as this chapter creates new opportunities to grow, lead, and succeed in agricultural education.



Members pose with the chapter window display about White Nose Syndrome at the 2016 Farm Show.



Submitted photos

Members add their handprints to a banner after receiving the Green-hand degree. The degree is given during National FFA Week.



At the end of June, the chapter hosted a showmanship and fitting clinic for sheep and goat exhibitors to practice their skills before Shippensburg Fair.

# Falling into Autumn

## FROM THE OFFICERS STATION

One of my favorite seasons of the year is finally here — fall! The beautiful sights of leaves changing color and the sweet smell of pumpkin pie and apple cider have surrounded us once again. One of my favorite activities every October is hunting during archery season. I love putting on my camouflage overalls and going to sit in the woods at the crack of dawn. There are no words to describe the peaceful feeling of being engulfed by nature. The moments spent in the woodland provide a great time of reflection. A time to look back on what all has already happened and what is coming ahead.

So much has happened. As FFA officers, we were up on our feet, running into October. After a few beautiful days spent in Massachusetts for the Big E we came home to a week spent at the Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, for the All-American Dairy Show. We had many Pennsylvania chapters competing in various events throughout the few days spent at the Big E representing Pennsylvania.

The All American Dairy Show brought on some new experiences of its own. FFA chapters and 4-H groups are invited to compete in a judging event at the All-American Dairy Show. The state officers handled the cows in the arena for the students to judge. The event sounds quite normal, but the occasion was the first time many officers showed a cow. In fact, I was one of those first-time cow-showing officers. It was most definitely an interesting experience that I was not expecting to encounter. I have had experience showing draft horses and pleasure horses before, but the skills used to show



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various horse breeds are slightly different than those used in the dairy cow arena. The show concluded with no fatalities or serious injuries from showmen or cows, which made for a fun, successful day. Such experiences that occur without warning make each day spent as an officer different and very exciting.

October started with the fall leadership conference held in Blair County. The state officer team activated purpose, passion and potential with approximately 300 FFA members from across the state. The conference theme was, “It starts with us to activate our own purpose, passion, and potential in agriculture.” The event was a load of fun and energized everyone for the year ahead of us. After the conference, the road to Indianapolis was not far out of sight.

This year National Convention is being held in Indianapolis. The excitement of sessions, awards, and other FFA activities has been heating up for this event. I have never been to the National Convention in Indianapolis, and I am excited to be receiving the American Degree along with some of my high school classmates.

As you can see, October is not just a great month to be out in the woods with a bow. October is a great month to be a Pennsylvania FFA member, with opportunities that may take you just down the road or maybe even half way across the country. There is no better time to enjoy the FFA experience than living it out right now.

Editor’s note: Tricia Hojnowski is the Pennsylvania state FFA chaplain.

# Leading for Agriculture in Washington County

MADELINE BUSS

Pennsylvania FFA State Treasurer

The Washington County Leadership Conference was held at Fort Cherry High School in Washington County on Sept. 28. There were approximately 80 FFA members from Washington County in attendance along with two state officers, Libby Baker-Mikesell and Madeline Buss. The members engaged in numerous opportunities to strengthen their leadership and communication skills throughout the evening.

The event kicked off with the Washington County FFA officer team performing the opening ceremonies. State officers Libby Baker-Mikesell and Madeline Buss led two workshops.

Baker-Mikesell focused on leadership and AGvoting. She gave the members an opportunity to express their leadership abilities and gave them a perspective on how important promoting agriculture truly is in our society. She led the members in several activities, such as using emoticons to tell a fairy tale. The event showed how to get one’s point across with as little explanation as possible.

Buss gave her workshop on FFA’s past, present, and future. She had groups think about what it would be

like to introduce something new to a time period. Each group acted out what they believed what might happen. The activity set the stage to think about what it was like in 1928, the year FFA was founded. She had the members moving around the room to explore past events and dates, current events and possible future events that are in the control of FFA members.

There were three chapters that participated in the conference: Fort Cherry, McGuffey, and Trinity. The Washington County agriculture education teachers organize this as a first FFA event for new members to meet. The conference also allows experienced members the opportunity to strengthen their leadership roles and mentors for younger members.

The state officers conducted chapter visits in Greene and Washington Counties. In addition to the three Washington chapters, they also visited West Greene and Waynesburg FFA chapters.

Baker-Mikesell and Buss presented workshops about strengthening members’ communication and teamwork skills. They also showed members how to explore [agexplorer.com](http://agexplorer.com) to discover different career pathways.