



# BLUE AND GOLD

## Pennsylvania FFA Happenings

### ACTIVATE: Purpose-Passion-Potential

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# Central Columbia FFA Shines Light on Ag



JILL PALMER  
*Pennsylvania FFA State Reporter*

Chartered in 1942, the Central Columbia FFA Chapter of Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, has adapted its programs to keep pace with the advances in agriculture.

This FFA chapter started out under the direction of adviser Robert Eck-

rote, who initiated a strong emphasis for those interested in a career in agricultural production. Offerings were expanded when the chapter's second adviser, Carl Everett, arrived. He expanded the program to include an animal science emphasis. Everett also expanded the program as he recognized the values of adding other aspects of agricultural industry into class activities.

Current chapter adviser Doug Brown arrived in 1991. Courses in forest science, wildlife science and environmental resources were added to allow students to expand their focus.

As the chapter membership and interest grew, the school knew that it needed another instructor. The program became a two-teacher department with the addition of Curt Turner, who was one of Brown's former students.

Central Columbia also added a middle school agriscience educator. Jen Fisher

sparks student interest by getting them involved in hands-on activities that would soon lead them into the agricultural education program at Central Columbia High School. This is one of six chapters with a middle school program in the state.

Central Columbia offers four agriscience courses: environmental science, land surveying, animal science, forest science, and wildlife science — giving students many opportunities to expand their horizons and shine in agriculture. Not only do these FFA members get the chance to learn in a classroom, but they also are able to get hands-on experience through career development events and supervised agriculture experiences.

Students compete in a wide range of career development events contests. They range from dairy judging, where finding the best animals for your herd is of utmost importance, to agriculture mechanics, in which students must figure out the issue in an engine.

Central Columbia shines in the community by completing service projects that highlight the importance of their program and other agriculture programs across the state.

A popular project at Central Columbia is Outdoor Adventure Camp. Elementary students arrive at Kocher



Chrissy Yoder, left, and Meagan Readler work together to provide vet tech skills to animals housed in Central Columbia's animal science lab.



Submitted photos  
Agricultural/environmental science instructor Doug Brown provides information to students in the environmental science course as they study soils and prepare for the Envirothon.

Park where FFA members and Columbia County Conservation District staff educate the students on the different aspects of environmental science and resource management.

Other projects the chapter holds consist of making garden pallets for the school's courtyard and operating a research-based greenhouse. Members hold an annual citrus and beef jerky sale to support program activities.

The Three Star Gold National

Chapter Award presented by the National FFA Organization has been awarded to the chapter for their diverse program of work and contests.

In its 74 years of existence, this FFA chapter has shown what agricultural education is all about.

With support from the school's principal, assistant principal, and superintendent, agriculture education supporters can be expected to see more great things come from these members and educators.

# Royalty and Agriculture Meet in State College

TRICIA HOJNOWSKI  
*Pennsylvania FFA State Chaplain*

ROCK SPRINGS, Pa. — On Aug. 16, the Pennsylvania FFA state officer team met Miss America 2016 Betty Cantrell during Penn State's Ag Progress Days. Cantrell grew up on a 700-acre farm in Warner Robins, Georgia, which has given her the knowledge and passion for showing the importance of agriculture. She was crowned Miss America in September of 2015, and her reign ended earlier this month.

At the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau booth, she promoted her national platform called Healthy Children, Strong America. She led an agricultural education activity for the youths who made an appearance at the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau exhibit hall on Tuesday at Ag Progress Days.

The Pennsylvania FFA Asso-



Submitted photo  
Members of the Pennsylvania State FFA officer team stop for a photo op with Miss America 2016 Betty Cantrell. They are joined by Pennsylvania Farm Bureau President Rick Ebert, left, and Penn State Agriculture Dean Richard Roush, far right.

ciation state officer team attend a press conference with Cantrell and the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau. During this time, she spoke of the

importance of educating children on where their food comes from and encouraging them to make good decisions.

# Hitting the 'Activate' Button

## FROM THE OFFICERS STATION

A little less than three months ago, our team was called one-by-one to serve Pennsylvania as the 2016-2017 Pennsylvania FFA state officer team. Following the team announcement, Executive Director Michael Brammer summoned us into a huddle. Through the smiles, tears and looks of excitement found on my fellow teammates' faces, he said one phrase, "It starts here."

We soon found ourselves traveling across the state and beyond advocating for the blue and gold. We first interacted with members at the Western Pennsylvania Leadership Conference, gained further appreciation for our teachers at the PAAE conference, and learned more about our partners at Lancaster Farming, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau and Cargill.

Although the team has had dozens of opportunities over the past three months, one experience I will never forget happened in late July. It was then that my fellow teammate Jacob Kline and I had the incredible opportunity to join 101 other state officers at the 2016 State Presidents' Conference in Washington, D.C. Although I enjoyed learning about agricultural advocacy, starting



LIBBY BAKER-MIKESELL

delegate work for national convention, and meeting officers from across the country, I left with one lasting impression. Throughout the week, we

had the opportunity to interact with the national officer team. Although a little starstruck at first, I quickly realized how personable all of the officers were. They went out of their way to connect with state officers, make them feel at home, and forge friendships that would last a lifetime. I returned home with the mission to bring that feeling of inclusion to all members the team interacts with this year.

The theme for Pennsylvania FFA this year is "Activate: Purpose-Passion-Potential." As this month progresses, we will soon find ourselves in the midst of chapter visits, the Big E, and in early October, the Fall Leadership Conference. Whether through partnerships, career development events, conferences, or conventions, the state officer team cannot wait to "activate" opportunities for FFA members and supporters throughout this month and beyond.

*Editor's note: Libby Baker-Mikesell is the Pennsylvania FFA state president.*

# Blue and Gold Takes on the Ballroom

JILL PALMER  
*Pennsylvania FFA State Reporter*

The Pennsylvania FFA Alumni Association is preparing for one of its largest fundraisers to support the Pennsylvania FFA — The Blue and Gold Ball.

The ball is held each year at the Sheraton Harrisburg Hershey Hotel in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. This year's ball is scheduled for Oct. 15. The evening event has a jam-packed schedule to support its future leaders of the agriculture industry. At 6 p.m. cocktail hour will kick off the night while dinner follows at 7 followed by music and dancing. A silent auction is also held to support to jacket campaign.

The Blue Jacket Campaign awards new jackets to first-year members.

Last year nearly 500 first year FFA members filled out the application and were awarded a blue and gold corduroy FFA jacket. Before the Keystone Degree ceremony each year, these members are asked to

make a large circle in the Large Arena of the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex and zip up their jackets for the first time.

The money raised during this event will help not only first-year members, but also those with a passion to continue their education.

One major scholarship the alumni fund is for the Washington Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C.

During this conference, members from all across the state participate in workshops with National FFA officers and learn about advocating for agriculture. Students also go on tours of memorials and monuments within the city. Another scholarship is the State Officer Scholarship.

The Alumni Association is still looking for sponsors for the ball. Sponsor packages will start at \$250 while tickets are set to be \$50 per person or \$90 per couple. The association is also looking for donations for the silent auction.