



# BLUE AND GOLD

## Pennsylvania FFA Happenings

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# National FFA Convention Sees Record Attendance

**KAYLA WALLACE**  
*Pennsylvania FFA State Reporter*

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — I remember my first trip to the National FFA Convention when I was in ninth grade. I had no idea what to expect from the trip, let alone all of the stuff that happens at nationals.

My first year at nationals, I had no idea about all of the competitions that take place, the official business that is conducted or the friendships that are formed with members from across the United States.

The 86th National FFA Convention was quite a convention, with a record attendance of 62,998 members, advisers and guests present. Not only was there a record attendance, but there was also a record number of American FFA degrees earned by members.

The American Degree is the highest degree that an FFA member can earn and requires a tremendous amount of dedication to a Supervised Agricultural Experience, participation in the FFA and service to the community. This year, 75 Pennsylvania FFA members earned their American degrees.

Pennsylvania also had three very special degrees awarded at the National FFA Convention. Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Matthew Meals; Gary Heckman of AgChoice Farm Credit; and Eric Cowden, the community outreach manager of the Marcellus Shale Coalition, each receive an honorary American FFA Degree. Honorary American FFA degrees are awarded to individuals who have provided the FFA, agriculture or agricultural education with outstanding service. We are proud to say that these three gentlemen have done just that.

In the competitions that happened at the National Convention, Pennsylvania had great representation from members from across the state. We would like to congratulate all of our participants on a job well done. Below is a list of our participants:

**Agricultural Communications**

- Team: Conococheague FFA, bronze award.
- Individuals: Michaela Suder, silver award; Mikayla Barnhart, silver award; and Austin Wingert, silver award.



Photo courtesy of Pa. FFA Association

Seventy-five FFA members received their American FFA degrees at the National FFA convention.

- Agricultural Issues Forum**

  - Team: Cumberland Valley FFA, bronze award.

**Agricultural Sales**

  - Team: Conococheague FFA, silver award.
  - Individuals: Sarah Gress, gold award; Matthew Brake, silver award; Kolbey Stewart, silver award; and Candice Plessinger, silver award.

**Agricultural Technology and Mechanical Systems**

  - Team: Central Mountain FFA, bronze award.
  - Individual: Cameron Porter, silver award; Zach Meyer, bronze award; and Kodey Schenck, bronze award.

**Agronomy**

  - Team: Penn Manor FFA, silver award.
  - Individual: Jesse Burkholder, gold award; Aaron Breneman, silver award; Kayla Major, silver award; and Katie Hess, silver award.

**Creed Speaking**

  - Individual: Dylan Schoemaker, Conrad Weiser FFA, bronze award.

**Dairy Cattle Evaluation and Management**

  - Team: Conococheague FFA, silver award.
  - Individual: Hannah Horst, gold award; Stuart Ocker, silver award; Grant Heckman, bronze award; and Nathan Heckman, bronze award.
- Dairy Handling**

  - Individual: Hannah Riser, New Oxford FFA, silver award.

**Environmental and Natural Resources**

  - Team: Garden Spot FFA, gold award.
  - Individual: Seth Yoder, gold award; Benjamin Martin, silver award; Michael Bressi, silver award; and Abbey Martin, bronze award.

**Extemporaneous Public Speaking**

  - Individual: Shawna Weller, West Perry FFA, bronze award.

**Farm Business Management**

  - Team: Manheim FFA, 10th place, gold award.
  - Individual: Austin Horning, gold award; Janelle Geib, silver award; Allyson Balmer, silver award; and Jared Harnly, silver award.

**Floriculture**

  - Team: Kutztown FFA, silver award.
  - Individual: Kayla Fusselman, gold award; Kristy Heftner, silver award; Katie Eigenbrod, silver award; and Jessica Sterner, silver award.

**Food Science and Technology**

  - Team: Oley Valley FFA, third place, gold award.
  - Individuals: Hali Hoch, first place, gold award; Callista Miller, gold award; Kathryn Bergman, silver award; Nichole Lynch, silver award.

**Forestry**

  - Team: Athens FFA, silver award.
- Individual: Samuel Burkett, gold award; Austin Jelliff, gold award; Caleb Jelliff, silver award; and Nicholas Vosburg, silver award.

**Horse Evaluation**

  - Team: Big Spring FFA, silver award.
  - Individual: Kelsey McKillip, ninth place, gold award; Sienna Gussler, silver award; Brittany Olson, silver award; and Mikayla Kutz, bronze award.

**Job Interview**

  - Individual: Katie Osborne, Greenwood FFA, silver award.

**Livestock Evaluation**

  - Team: Twin Valley FFA, silver award.
  - Individual: Lewis Frame, silver award; Rachel Wilkoski, silver award; Dalton Kubovcsak, bronze award; and Savannah Lorah, bronze award.

**Milk Quality and Products**

  - Team: Garden Spot FFA, silver award.
  - Individual: Bethany Sauder, gold award; Ethan Yoder, gold award; Nathan Moyer, silver award; and Jessica Zimmerman, silver award.

**Nursery/Landscape**

  - Team: W.B. Saul FFA, silver award.
  - Individual: Mohammad Abuawadeh, silver award; Damond Powell, silver award; Doung Lau, silver award; and Keleaf Johnson, bronze award.
- Parliamentary Procedure**

  - Team: Cumberland Valley FFA, gold award.

**Poultry**

  - Team: Penn Manor FFA, gold award.
  - Individual: Sammy Bleacher, gold award; Katey Bleacher, gold award; Emily Witmer, gold award; and Chad Goshert, silver award.

**Prepared Public Speaking**

  - Individual: Tony Rice, Midwest FFA, silver award.

**Veterinary Science**

  - Team: Technical College, Chester Co. FFA, silver award.
  - Individual: Samantha Read, gold award; Mayra Quiroz, silver award; Daniel Jansen, silver award; and Megan Ramsey, silver award.

**Agri-Science Fair**

  - Individual: Shawna Weller, West Perry FFA, second place overall.
  - Individual: Libby Baker-Mikesell, Greenwood FFA, second place overall.

**Proficiency Winner — Agri-Science Research — Animal Systems**

  - Individual: Katie Osborne, Greenwood FFA, national winner.

**Talent**

  - Grace Kensinger and Emily Stoltzfus, Amazing Grace, Manheim FFA, top three overall placing.

*Editor's note: For the full list of Pennsylvania American Degree recipients, visit [www.ffa.org/Programs/Degrees/AmericanDegree/Pages/AmericanFFADegreeRecipients.aspx](http://www.ffa.org/Programs/Degrees/AmericanDegree/Pages/AmericanFFADegreeRecipients.aspx).*

# Blue and Gold Ball Furnishes Success

**CHRIS TOEVS**  
*Pennsylvania FFA President*

What happens when FFA alumni, industry leaders and public supporters come together? None other than the annual Blue and Gold Ball, a Pennsylvania FFA Alumni-sponsored event that directly benefits the Pennsylvania FFA Alumni First Year Jacket Campaign.

The night of the ball was Oct. 19 at the Sheraton Hotel, where 25 jackets were given to first-year FFA members.

The Pennsylvania FFA Alumni sponsor the same number of FFA jackets as the number of Keystone Degree recipients, the highest award a member can receive from the Pennsylvania FFA. The occasion commemorates the end of the FFA journey in Pennsylvania with the Keystone Degree and the beginning of new journeys in the FFA with the award of a FFA jacket to new members. Last year, the Pennsylvania FFA Alumni raised money for 302 jackets, equaling the 302 Keystone Degree recipients.

The Blue and Gold Ball is a prepaid event that hosts a dinner and dance for the attendees. In addition to the dinner, there is a silent auction where entries are bid on to further help the efforts of raising money for the Jacket Campaign. The auction carried everything from FFA memorabilia to in-kind donations.

Furthermore, local FFA chapters were encouraged to participate in the Pennsylvania FFA Alumni Chapter Basket Challenge. Chapters created themed baskets that were voted on by the attendees of the Blue and Gold Ball.

The themes ranged from Halloween goodies, to campfire necessities or fall creations. At the end of the night, the votes were tallied up and the winner of the Pennsylvania FFA Alumni Chapter Basket Challenge was the Big Spring FFA Chapter with their Halloween Candy Creation. The baskets were also a part of the silent auction and at the end of the night they were sold to the highest bidder.

Matt Dodson, Pennsylvania's National FFA officer candidate, gave remarks on behalf of the Pennsylvania FFA Association. His remarks included the fact and reminder that the FFA blue corduroy jacket was first selected as the main wear of the National FFA Organization 80 years ago at the fifth National FFA Convention, where it was first worn by the Fredericktown FFA chapter from Ohio. From there, it has to be one of the most recognizable symbols of the FFA.

The result of the Blue and Gold Ball was a successful impact on the lives of FFA members. The Pennsylvania FFA Association and the Pennsylvania FFA Alumni would like to thank all of the people who attended the Blue and Gold Ball and gave their support to the Pennsylvania FFA Alumni First Year Jacket Campaign.

In addition, anyone interested in helping further the efforts of the Blue and Gold Ball and sponsor an FFA member's first FFA jacket can do so for \$55. If interested, you may send a check payable to Pennsylvania FFA Alumni Association, c/o Krista Pontius, 405 East Sunbury Street, Millerstown, PA 17062.

# National Convention Re-Wind

## FROM THE OFFICER'S STATION

Just over a week ago, I may have had the very best experience of my state officer year. That experience was the 86th National FFA Convention.

The first morning, the Pennsylvania state officers participated in a day of community service. We traveled by bus with FFA members from all over the country to a Habitat for Humanity site to assist in building houses for people less fortunate than us. I felt right at home smelling the fresh cut lumber and hearing nails being pounded into boards, working in the shop to assemble walls for the interior of the house.

However, along with getting work done, the team and I wasted no time getting to know members from other states, such as Washington, Florida and Texas.

Along with helping the community in Louisville, the team and I were fortunate enough to serve as delegates. The delegates are charged with assessing current issues within the National FFA Organization. In total, 475 delegates with each state represented partook in making changes that were necessary.

Two days were spent in committee work hammering out how to assess the challenges that we were confronted with before each committee was ready to present the ideas to the entire delegate body. After careful listening and some discussion,



STEPHEN WINKLOSKY

we found ourselves passing ideas that could change the course of our great organization. I felt honored to be down on the floor with other members, knowing what we were doing could quite possibly affect more than 550,000 members of the FFA.

Although helping the community and serving as a delegate were amazing experiences, perhaps the best was looking out in the expo hall and seeing a mass of blue jackets. Even before walking into the hall, I could hear the voices of thousands of students. While walking around seeing all that the expo hall had to offer, I couldn't help but to find myself reading the backs of jackets to see where each member called home. It was nothing to have a member walk up to me and start a conversation. Through all of this I learned about agriculture throughout our country. I was able to meet and simply hang out with members from Kansas, Arizona and, of course, Pennsylvania. Seeing members from my home state was an amazing experience.

Though it all, I had the time of my life. It was all made possible by FFA and its members. If I learned one thing, it is the future of agriculture in our great nation is safe and sound in the hands of FFA.

*Editor's note: Stephen Winklosky is the Pennsylvania FFA vice president.*