



BLUE AND GOLD

Pennsylvania FFA Happenings

GROW ... LEAD ... SUCCEED

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Photo by Mike Brammer

Recipients of the American Degree, the highest degree the FFA can award, pose for a picture inside Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

Pennsylvania FFA GROWS in Indianapolis

MARIS WILSON
State FFA Reporter

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. — Just a few weeks ago, Indianapolis was flooded with blue corduroy jackets as the 85th National FFA Convention began. Members filled the streets to meet people from all over the country, and to compete in career development events.

Pennsylvania was lucky enough to have many students participate in career development events, including the Agriscience Fair and parliamentary procedure, to name a few. One of Pennsylvania’s members was even in the talent competition, where she was able to sing at the American Degree ceremony during convention.

Many of our members were also awarded their American Degrees, the highest degree awarded by the FFA. It took much hard work to get to that level, and all the recipients are truly the future of agriculture. Not only were Pennsylvania FFA members recognized, so were some of our partners. Gary Swan and Louis Sallie from the

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau were awarded their Honorary American Degrees this year for their dedication and support of the Pennsylvania FFA. Overall, the 85th National FFA Convention was a success, and all of Pennsylvania’s members were able to grow a little bit more as members.

Sweet Times With the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau

MIRANDA KANE
State FFA Treasurer

HERSHEY, Pa. — This year, the Pennsylvania FFA attended the 62nd Annual Pennsylvania Farm Bureau Meeting at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center. Members of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau had an opportunity to reunite with one another, update and discuss amendments to their constitution on agriculture-related issues, and congratulate members for their excellence. As attendees of the event, the officers met with other members of the individual county Farm Bureaus and learned about agriculture in their areas. Within the Farm Bureau there are many who wore the blue jackets before or who had been touched by the National FFA Organization. Their stories were enlightening. Pennsylvania FFA officers first showed the Farm Bureau members our opening ceremonies and spoke about how it is an important tradition within the organization which we proudly continue to uphold. Officers had a role to play in helping out during the delegate sessions, too. They assisted with handing the microphones to members who wished to speak and share their ideas with others. The Pennsylvania FFA members also enriched their knowledge about the Young Farmers and Ranchers Program operated through the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau. This program gives young adults the opportunity to not only become active in the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, but also to connect with younger members. Members between the ages of 18 and 35 can be involved in events and learn how they can teach others about agriculture in their homes and communities. Youth who are nonmembers can also get involved by attending the FACE conference held over the summer which demonstrates leadership



Photo by PA Farm Bureau

Pennsylvania FFA State President Casey Shawver gives remarks at the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau’s opening luncheon.

and other skills. The youth who come to this conference make friends who they keep for a lifetime. The convention was sweet — and not just because it was in Hershey! Pennsylvania FFA would like to congratulate those who participated in the competitive events, as well as the members who served as delegates and represented Pennsylvania agriculture well this year. The FFA would also like to show its appreciation to the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau for their continued encouragement and partnership, and for providing the chance to attend their 62nd convention.

The Heart of FFA

FROM THE OFFICERS STATION

ERIE, Pa. — The second I was elected as a Pennsylvania FFA state officer, I had a million thoughts running through my head, and one of those thoughts was, “Am I going to be alone?” As the months have gone by the more I realize how many people are behind me and support every move I have made with my duties as the PA FFA state secretary. At first I thought it was only my close friends and family that would support me. But soon after we started visiting schools and putting conferences together, I started to realize that not only are my close friends and family supporting what I’m doing, but the members are behind me and support me as well. Just as I need supporters, the FFA needs supporters and people behind the organization — partnerships. One of the partnerships for FFA would be the FFA Alumni. Each year, the FFA Alumni give jackets for the Freshman Jacket Campaign, allowing first-year members to apply and possibly receive a free FFA jacket at Mid-Winter Convention held at the Pennsylvania Farm Show. I know that those FFA jackets that are awarded are always worn with pride, just as I wear my own jacket. The jacket has become a part of me, a part of my daily routine, and will always be a part of my heart. The jacket has been with me for the past four and a half years, and when I get ready to hang my FFA jacket up for the last time at activi-



SHANNON COPELAND

ties week in June, I will need a backbone to hold it together on stage. As a Pennsylvania FFA state officer, I need to have a backbone, the core to why I am doing what I am doing. And that backbone for me is the members. The members make me a stronger speaker and team player, and most of all the members make me a stronger person in everything I do and never let me wonder why I am doing what I do. The members’ energy and enthusiasm motivates me to strive to be the best state representative I can be for the organization. The FFA Foundation works as the FFA’s backbone. They are the ones that seek out more partnerships between the FFA and companies, and they are always looking for the best for the FFA members. They even provide different ways of earning money in chapters throughout the state by allowing the members to come and work in the foundation booth serving food during Ag Progress Days and Pennsylvania Farm Show. These are only two examples of how the FFA has become such a successful organization. There are hundreds of local and state partnerships that create the roots of the FFA organization and each and every year we are growing as well as succeeding. All of us greatly appreciate the support from all of the partnerships that FFA has. Without them our organization’s roots would not run as deep as they do today. Shannon Copeland is Pennsylvania FFA state secretary.