



BLUE & GOLD NEWS

Pennsylvania FFA Happenings

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Ag Progress Days: Experience to Last a Lifetime

As the FFA officers dive deeper into their year, they continue to learn, grow and develop as they travel the state.

To start the month of August, the officers had the opportunity to partake in Ag Progress Days in State College.

Ag Progress Days is the biggest outdoor agricultural exposition in the state of Pennsylvania. During the three-day event, the team had the pleasure of a group discussion with U.S. Rep. G.T. Thompson in which there was talk about everything and anything to do with agriculture. The officers also shared memories of

their experiences and plans after their year of service in FFA.

As the event progressed, the team and government officials participated in a summit that included workshops with U.S. Rep. Thompson and Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding. The officers also held their first board meeting.

The team also had the opportunity to meet with all of the 4-H state council team.

When not at a meeting, roundtable discussion or luncheon, the officers most likely were spotted at the FFA concession stand, serving lunch to the thousands at attendees.



The FFA officer team stands in a field at Ag Progress Days in August. From left, Callie Whiting, Grace Benton, James Winklosky, Jeremy Rose, Ben Torrey, Delilah Morton and Zaleigh Wade.

FROM THE OFFICERS STATION



DELILAH MORTON
PENNSYLVANIA FFA SENTINEL

I've had a lot of people ask me in the past few months, "What is your agricultural background?"

With that, I've gotten a lot of confused looks when I respond, "I don't have any background in agriculture."

Growing up, I never had any

The Door

connections to the industry. My father grew up on a small farm in Maryland, but had veered away from his agricultural roots. However, I have always had a love for helping people, and animals.

After many changes on what I wanted to be when I grew up, I landed on veterinarian. So, I signed up for an animal science class in my high school.

After that, I was enrolled in FFA. My teachers, Miss Case and Miss Romberger, made it easy and fun to learn. I got to work with real animals, and I started doing community service. I realized that I wanted to be a part of this community forever.

I realized that, once again, I was changing career paths. But this time, I was set. I wanted to be an agricultural educator. With that, I knew I had to educate myself on everything there was to know about

agriculture.

I gained valuable experience working with Angie Grove at the Bent Pine Alpaca Farm outside of school. Mrs. Grove taught me the discipline it takes to work on a farm. My favorite part of the experience was herd health day, where we administered vaccines and weighed each alpaca.

Through the rest of my schooling, I was motivated by my mentors and peers to continue my FFA journey. I knew that I could make a difference in the lives of fellow FFA members.

When talking to my parents about it, my father uttered his most famous quote, "If you want it, go get it."

I had no idea that four years later I would be standing here today. However, I have to say it is the best experience I've ever had and I am grateful for every moment here.

Sponsor a Jacket

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."
— Winston Churchill

Over the past 15 years, the Pennsylvania FFA Alumni Association has worked to provide 5,334 Pennsylvania FFA members with the first step in a student's success in this organization — a national blue and corn gold corduroy jacket.

As FFA alumni across the nation know, the blue and gold jacket provides a tremendous amount of pride, as well as the unlimited opportunities that are made available for each and every student in the organization.

The alumni organization has set a goal to present 400 students with jackets at the Pennsylvania FFA Mid-Winter Convention, which will take place in conjunction with the Pennsylvania State Farm Show.

In order to reach the goal, the state FFA officer team is asking for your help. For \$60, you could sponsor a jacket for a first-year FFA member.

The presentation of the jackets will take place Jan. 9, at 2 p.m., in the New Holland Arena.

At the convention, we will wit-

ness the conferring of the coveted Keystone FFA degrees, watch the announcement of the stars across Pennsylvania and stand in awe as hopefully 400 first year members create a sea of blue and gold as they zip their national blue and corn gold corduroy jacket for the first time.

As alumni, we know the tremendous amount of opportunities that lay before each of these fledgling FFA members and the excitement of becoming a part of this life-changing organization.

The commonwealth's FFA alumni secures the promise of the FFA mission and agricultural education by creating an environment where people and communities can develop their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success.

Thank you for considering this opportunity to help a young FFA member open the door to the unlimited possibilities of this tremendous organization.

If you are interested, you may send a check payable to:

Pennsylvania FFA Alumni Association, c/o Krista Pontius, 405 E. Sunbury St., Millerstown, PA 17062.

Member Spotlight on Ethan VanCamp

JEREMY ROSE
Pennsylvania FFA Reporter

Ethan VanCamp is the son of Eric and Christina VanCamp of McKean County.

VanCamp is a senior and proud member of the Otto-Eldred FFA chapter, where he serves as the chapter reporter.

Growing up, VanCamp never had a major interest in agriculture. He thought it was for people with "country and farming" backgrounds. Thankfully, VanCamp met his new agricultural educator and that idea drastically changed.

"Mr. Brandon Witmer has been one of the most influential people to come into my life," VanCamp said.

Entering into his sophomore year, VanCamp had no idea what he wanted to do. He didn't have any "big future plans," and he honestly thought agricultural classes would just be an easy grade to boost his grade point average.

But after VanCamp took his first

class with Mr. Witmer, he was instantly in love with agriculture. VanCamp began to take every agriculture class that Otto-Eldred had to offer.

Mr. Witmer taught VanCamp that the field of agriculture is so big that he will have a chance to change the world and improve the lives of the people who live in it.

VanCamp is now beginning his senior year and he credits Mr. Witmer for inspiring him to put in the work. He is now eligible for his Keystone Degree this upcoming January at Mid-Winter Convention.

VanCamp's supervised agricultural experience project involves a research study on how ATVs on public land not only cause unnecessary soil erosion, but also cause habitat disturbance. Where VanCamp resides, that is one of the biggest problems facing woodland areas.

After high school, VanCamp plans to pursue a bachelor's degree in wildlife and fisheries science, while also taking time to consider



Ethan VanCamp holds an alligator. He plans to major in wildlife and fisheries in college.

going into agricultural and Extension education.

"When people say FFA changes lives, they are not kidding, thank-fully it changed mine," he said.

Visitations Key to Growth

JEREMY ROSE
Pennsylvania FFA Reporter

As the FFA state officers learn throughout their year, a big part of that growth is taking part in business and industry visits.

The team recently had the opportunity to visit the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, Horizon Farm Credit and also take part in an event with Lykens Valley Grange.

During the Farm Bureau visit, the officers had the opportunity to learn about the grassroots operations and the opportunities available while being a farm bureau member.

During the Horizon Farm

Credit visit, the team learned about the importance of good credit, how to build and maintain credit, and also who Horizon Farm Credit services across the commonwealth.

To round out the month of August, the officer team was able to assist in the operation of the FFA Foundation Golf Outing.

The officers assisted in passing out drinks throughout the course to the golfers, preparing and serving appetizers, operating the putt putt contest and general set up and tear down.

The team is appreciative of all the opportunities that come their way, and the officers cannot wait for what's next.