



# BLUE & GOLD NEWS

## Pennsylvania FFA Happenings

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# Avon Grove Welcomes New FFA Chapter

**JEREMY ROSE**  
*Pennsylvania FFA Reporter*

Avon Grove High School in southern Chester County is excited to welcome a new FFA chapter. Creating this chapter was a long process. It was a labor of love for both the students and their adviser. Avon Grove students were able to grow this chapter purely through their love of agriculture and the desire for more hands-on experiences. In the previous school year, the club's founding member, Madeline Bulla, approached her agriculture teacher, Christopher Herrman, with the idea of starting an agricultural group at the high school. After discussing the idea, they gathered a group of about 10 students and created a cabinet. Their first order of business was organizing a homecoming fundraiser. As challenging as this process was, it was a great way to learn the process of organizing and implementing a club. Once homecoming was over, the cabinet jumped straight into learning how to lead an FFA chapter. Throughout the year, the chapter had put together three fundraisers,

raising over \$1,200, competed in two regional career development events, and organized five educational field trips. As the year progressed the cabinet began focusing on gaining its charter so it could be recognized as an official state FFA chapter. Although already certified to teach technology education, Mr. Herrman had to become certified in agricultural education by the commonwealth. After completing his certification, the chapter could finally receive their official charter. The charter was presented at the Mid-Winter Convention, held at the Pennsylvania Farm Show in Harrisburg on Jan. 9. The chapter is also now recognized by the National FFA Organization. As the current year progresses, the chapter will continue to make improvements and reach for larger goals. Currently, the chapter is fundraising to be able to attend the Pennsylvania state CDE competition this spring at Penn State. The Avon Grove FFA members are excited to finally be a part of such an amazing program, and can't wait to see where this opportunity takes them.



Pennsylvania FFA  
Jeremy Rose, right, Pennsylvania FFA reporter, stands with the members of Avon Grove FFA to receive their official charter into the organization during the Mid-Winter Convention at the Pennsylvania Farm Show on Jan. 9.

# Passions From the Ear of Corn

**FROM THE OFFICERS STATION**



**GRACE BENTON**  
*PENNSYLVANIA FFA SECRETARY*

Hello my name is Grace Benton. Looking back on my story I realized how blessed I am to have had the opportunities which brought me to where I am today. My story is nontraditional, as I was not raised on a farm and I did not have any family members involved in FFA. Growing up in a rural-suburban community called Dover, located in York County, brought me a mix of farms and city. My only farm experience was being surrounded by horses. Owning my own horse, named Orlop, helped to spark my interest in joining FFA my freshman year of high school, and start my supervised agricultural experience (SAE).

Little did I know that choice would be the best decision I could have made. FFA opened doors to new learning experiences and grew my understanding and passion for agriculture. Growing and learning in my agriculture experiences, I realized Dover had a lot of small agriculture business from dairy goat operations, pumpkin patches, flower

farms and so much more. As I started to share these places with people in my community, I found people did not know any of these businesses even existed. During my senior year of high school, I decided I wanted to connect Dover's community with our FFA Chapter and local agriculture. Starting a new SAE, I decided to host the first FFA Day. This event showcased the diverse agriculture businesses our FFA members and their own SAEs, while connecting and educating the Dover community. This lit a flame in me to share my passion for the agriculture industry and for FFA, that still drives me to this day. I thank the FFA and all the people who have supported me in my journey this far. I hope students in my community realize their future is unwritten, and they choose to make their own story. It does not matter what your background is; everyone has a place in agriculture and FFA. You have a chance to be a part of the blue and gold family that I personally consider myself blessed to be a part of.

# Gratefulness Is Abundant Along the FFA Journey

**ABIGAIL O'NEILL**  
*Pennsylvania National Officer Candidate*

Six months ago, I hung up my Association jacket alongside my best friends at the conclusion of the 94th Pennsylvania FFA State Convention. As I entered a season of retirement from my state officer role, I was eager to start my journey as a college student at the Penn State. During my first few weeks in State College, I was honored to make friends from across the country and as we began to learn more about one another, I could not wait to share my experiences in the FFA with them. I quickly found out that my new friends had little knowledge of the agricultural industry and even less knowledge regarding "the people in the blue jackets." As I sought to explain such a big part of my life to them, one word came to mind: home. The FFA has been my home for the last six years and has carved my future as I seek to return to the classroom as an agricultural educator someday. The FFA has been a safe space for me to grow, succeed, and fall short a few times. As I reflect on the countless blessings this organization has presented to me, I am



Pennsylvania FFA  
State adviser Chris Davis presents Abigail O'Neill with her new national officer candidate jacket at Mid-Winter Convention during the 2023 Pennsylvania Farm Show on Jan. 9 in Harrisburg.

overwhelmed with gratitude and recharged with a mission to create this same positive experience for all students of agricultural education. Now, I have the privilege to continue my journey in the FFA, as Pennsylvania's national officer candidate and I am excited to keep the idea of home close to my heart. Although the long road of preparation and training can feel daunting, I know that this FFA communi-

ty I call home will always be there to guide, encourage, and ultimately fuel me each step of the way. Serving as your candidate is a dream come true and one that the uncertain, shy freshman I was six years ago could never fathom. Today I count my lucky stars and celebrate new seasons of opportunity, immense gratitude, and a home-like organization to thank for it all.

# The Mid-Winter Convention Experience

The 2022-2023 state officer team had the distinct honor to host the Mid-Winter Convention at the Pennsylvania Farm Show. This year the Pennsylvania FFA Association was honored to distribute 410 Keystone degrees

and the Alumni awarded 391 jackets to the state FFA first-year jacket recipients. Throughout the beginning of the Farm Show, the state officers put in hard work and showed the commitment behind the scenes to ensure

that the Mid-Winter Convention looked flawless as always. All of the state officers could feel the anticipation building, but when Monday arrived they were all ready. Post Mid-Winter Convention the state officers could be found around

the Farm Show Complex at various events throughout the week. Attending luncheons with government officials to throwing straw bales on wagons during the feed scurry, the state FFA officer team felt it was an all around great experience.





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Octorara FFA receives a check at Farm Show for their log splitter project. From left, William Piper, Farm Show Foundation chairman; Greg Hostetter, Pennsylvania deputy ag secretary; FFA students Mason Woodall, Billy Miller, Merle Reyburn, Cyrus Stoltzfus, Dylan Colagreco, and Eric Hurlock, Lancaster Farming.

## Log Splitters

Continued from A20

for originality. They used an old metal gas can for the hydraulic reservoir and wheels from a 1940s Jeep for the trailer.

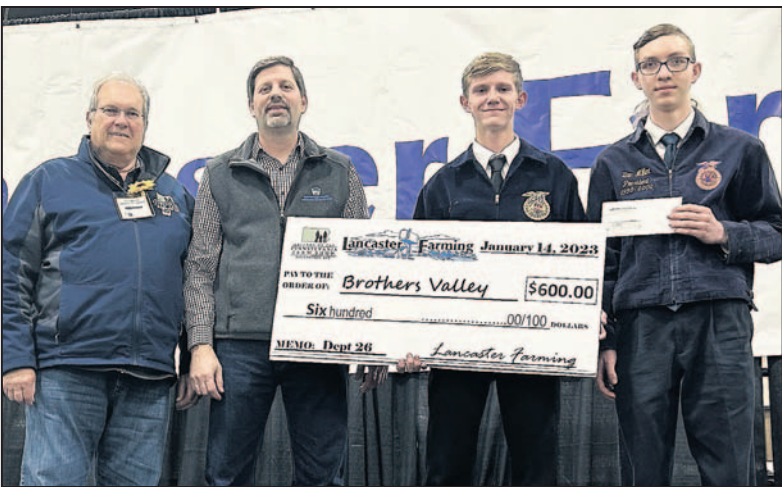
In previous years, the Farm Show

ag mechanics project was to rebuild an antique tractor, but Billy Miller, a junior at Octorara High School and lead welder on Octorara's log splitter, said, "The log splitter was fun to make and we learned a lot."

Carole Faye, Pennsylvania SAE specialist and a retired ag teacher

who is involved with many FFA events at the Farm Show, said the antique tractor competition will be returning next year.

"Some of the schools have already told me that they have tractors planned for next year, which is very exciting," she said.



Berlin Brothervalley FFA receives a check at Farm Show for their log splitter project. From left, William Piper, Farm Show Foundation chairman; Greg Hostetter, Pennsylvania deputy ag secretary; and FFA students Jacob Knopsnyder and Andrew Chonko.



The log splitter entry from Lebanon County CTC FFA won the prize for most creative.

**The Original Lancaster County Gun Show**



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Parts sale going on all week Feb. 6 – Feb. 10, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
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Whatever amount you put down on sale days, we'll add 10%\*.

Example: Put \$1,000.00 down, and we'll add \$100.00, and you'll save  
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All accounts must be current to qualify. Credit must be used within 1 year.

\*Some exclusions apply - call store for details.

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