

Vision of Virginia

WINTER 2021



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UPCOMING events

- MAY**
2-6: National FFA Land Judging Contest
- JUNE**
20-24: Forestry Camp
27-30: VA FFA State Convention (Blacksburg, VA)
- JULY**
10-15: FFA Camp
18-21: VAAE Conference



by Jackson Lohr – VA FFA 2021-2022 State Vice President

On Saturday, November 6th, 2021, FFA Members from several chapters as well as four State Officers attended the Blue Ridge Sprouts Food Festival at West Oaks Farm Market in Winchester, VA. The Blue Ridge Sprouts Food Festival helps to shine a spotlight and focus on the food industry and agriculture within the Shenandoah Valley and Northern Virginia with 100% of the proceeds going to non-profit organizations including the Virginia FFA Association. Visitors of the Food Festival got to take part in many activities. The festival hosted several demonstrations and workshops by professional chefs and health experts, cooking and trivia contests, educational children’s activities, agricultural and food vendors, and some of the best food the Blue Ridge area has to offer. Members donning their blue corduroy jackets were willing and ready to assist the organizers of the event with any task at hand and operated a booth about Virginia FFA. Members at the booth spoke to potential future members and supporters of the blue jackets. Overall, the Blue Ridge Sprouts Food Festival was an outstanding success

and hosted a great time for our FFA members in attendance. We would like to give a big thank you to the Taste of Blue Ridge and West Oak Farm Market for this amazing opportunity!



Children at the festival spent time with local and state FFA officers to learn more about agriculture through a Virginia map game and take home activities.

VIRGINIA FFA ASSOCIATION

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94TH NATIONAL FFA Convention & EXPO



Virginia FFA State Staff Andy Seibel, Alison Jones, and Jennifer Armstrong with the State Officer Team.

by **Charlie Moser** – VA FFA 2021-2022 State President

This past fall, one of the biggest events on the FFA calendar returned to an in-person experience—the 94th Annual National FFA Convention and Expo in Indianapolis, Indiana! Over 60,000 FFA members, their advisors, and a sea of blue jackets flooded downtown Indianapolis from October 25-30. Members had an action-packed week filled with exciting sessions, new friends, and some even competed in the national contest for their CDEs and LDEs! Some Virginia FFA members had the opportunity to experience other activities such as a concert by Brett Young and Alex Miller that was held exclusively for FFA members. On another night during the week, some members had the opportunity to attend a rodeo that featured some next level bull and bronc riders. In addition to music from the concert and the music that flooded the streets of downtown, the National FFA Band and Chorus performed throughout the week with members from across the nation and filled Lucas Oil Stadium with catchy tunes. FFA members even had the chance to check out the college and career displays set up throughout the convention center. There were various interactive learning opportunities for members throughout the expo center, including workshops, virtual reality tractor driving, welding, and much more! To cap off the week, a select group of FFA members from each state association were recognized for their tremendous achievements within our organization by receiving their American Degree—the highest degree that can be awarded within the National FFA Organization.

Following the American Degree ceremony, the 2021-2022 National FFA Officers were selected and installed. The Virginia FFA Association is incredibly proud of Andrew Seibel for representing Virginia as our National Officer Candidate, and for consistently showing his enthusiasm, passion, and love for our state association, members, and every individual that he met throughout the process. Thank you, Andrew, for your continued leadership, your service, and your deep compassion for others. We're excited to see you continue to experience success in your future endeavors!

While members were exploring downtown Indy and the Expo, the 2021-2022 Virginia FFA State Officer team served as Delegates for the National FFA Organization. Each officer served on one of six committees. Every committee group established recommendations to bring to the attention of the National FFA Board of Directors. These recommendations were voted on by all 475 National FFA Delegates who represented every association within the organization. The recommendations that were approved by a majority of delegate votes were then sent to the National FFA Board of Directors for further consideration.

The 94th Annual National FFA Convention and Expo was a week that no one who was in attendance is sure to forget! Friends became family, core life memories were made, and the waves of blue jackets filled Indianapolis, Indiana!

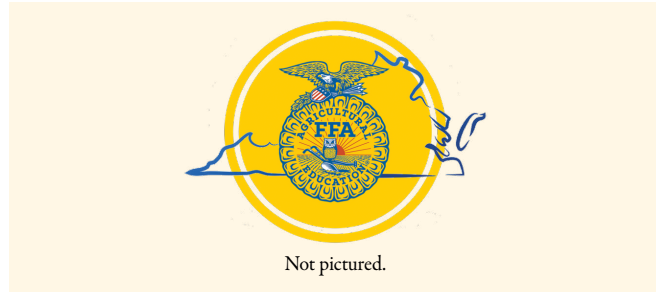
Virginia FFA showed up and showed out at the 94th annual National FFA Convention and Expo! Contest results are as follows:



AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS

Nelson FFA

Abigail Bryant, Sarah Hicks (Silver Individuals),
Katherine Powell, Jack Rodgers (Bronze Individuals)
Bronze Team



Not pictured.

AGRICULTURAL SALES

Stuarts Draft FFA

Anna Henderson (Silver Individual), Madelline Baska,
Nealynn Hurd, Ashley Hamby (Bronze Individuals)
Bronze Team



AGRICULTURE TECHNOLOGY AND MECHANICAL SYSTEMS

Sherando FFA

Kyle Hunter, Clarke Heffern (Gold Individuals),
Cody Ridings, Jacob Stout (Silver Individuals)
Silver Team



AGRONOMY

Randolph Henry FFA

Hannah Geesamen (Silver Individual), Colby Cary,
Mason Hamlett, Emily Geesamen (Bronze Individuals)
Bronze Team



CONDUCT OF CHAPTER MEETINGS

Broadway FFA

Jessica Dove, Julia Haviland, Katie Payne, Jackie Diaz,
Thomas Lohr, Bryson Funk, and Herschel Hoffeditz (All Silver Individuals)
Silver Team



CREED SPEAKING

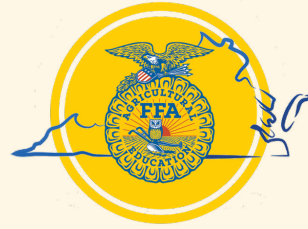
Randolph Henry FFA

Rebekah Sanderson
Bronze Individual



DAIRY CATTLE EVALUATION AND MANAGEMENT
Riverheads FFA

Emily Kegley (Silver Individual), Charleigh Wheeler, Kenzie Waymack, Tavis Layne (Bronze Individuals)
Bronze Team



Not pictured.

DAIRY HANDLERS ACTIVITY
Central FFA

Ashley Bushong
Silver Individual



Not pictured.

EMPLOYMENT SKILLS
Bassett FFA

Samantha Wall
Bronze Individual



ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
Spotswood FFA

Richard Marshall, Drake Cupp (Silver Individuals), William Painter, Chloe Shepard (Bronze Individuals)
Bronze Team



EXTEMPORANEOUS PUBLIC SPEAKING
Luray FFA

Kate Shifflett
Bronze Individual



FARM AND AGRIBUSINESS MANAGEMENT
Massanutten Technical FFA

Rachel Craun (Gold Individual – pictured), Kaylee Hill, Kaytlyn Hill, Ella Warns (Bronze Individuals)
Bronze Team



FLORICULTURE

John S. Battle FFA

Phil McCroskey Sr, Josie Short (Silver Individual), Nealie Cunningham (Bronze Individual), Kylie Bowman, Rocco Malina (Silver Individuals)
Silver Team



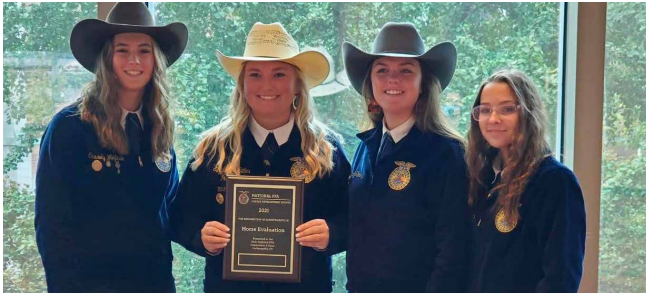
FOOD SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
Magna Vista FFA

Clay Coleman (Silver Individual), Hailey Chitwood,
Claudia Phillips, Cooper Owen (Bronze Individuals)
Bronze Team



FORESTRY
Broadway FFA

Jessica Showalter (4th Overall), Grace Fravel, Allen
Showalter, Blake Payne (6th overall) (Gold Individuals)
Gold Team



HORSE EVALUATION
Eastern View FFA

Morgan Butler, Elizabeth Bates, Cassidy Wolfcale
(Silver Individuals), Cameron Stanley (Bronze Individual)
Silver Team



LIVESTOCK JUDGING
Liberty FFA (Bedford County)

Charlie Moser (Gold Individual, 6th Overall)
Kevin Painchaud, Makenna Garrett (Silver Individuals)
Maegan Cash (Bronze Individual)
Silver Team



MARKETING PLAN
Fort Defiance FFA

Courtney Begoon, Sam Martin,
Evelyn Wade (Silver Individuals)
Silver Team



MEATS EVALUATION AND TECHNOLOGY
Broadway FFA

Stephanie Schweigert, Jared Hoover, Jenna Wolf (Silver Individuals), Creed
Combs (Bronze Individual)
Silver Team



MILK QUALITY AND PRODUCTS
Sherando FFA

Mattea Krejci (Gold Individual),
Ella Borst, Emily Orgen, Christine Morris (Silver Individuals)
Gold Team



NURSERY AND LANDSCAPE
Mechanicsville FFA

Macie Banton, Tyler Rankin, McKenzie Marker
(Gold Individuals), Meg Coble (Silver Individual)
Silver Team



PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE
Buffalo Gap FFA

Cameron Bowers, Blake Caricofe, Laurel Graham, Grace
Rexrode, Makayla Talley, Madison Wheeler (Bronze Individuals)
Bronze Team



POULTRY JUDGING
Broadway FFA

Bethany Gentry (Gold Individual), Will Zerkel, Nathan Zerkel
(Silver Individuals), Ethan Foltz (Bronze Individual)
Silver Team



PREPARED PUBLIC SPEAKING
E.W. Wyatt Middle FFA

Makayla Bryant
Silver Team



VETERINARY SCIENCE
Appomattox Senior FFA

Rose Clark (Gold Individual), Tyler Martin, Christian Godin,
William Morgan (Silver Individuals)
Gold Team

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Ryan Altis | Desirae Nicole Morris |
| Jonathan Ames | Grayson Moyer |
| Crista Bain | Jessica Marie Myers |
| Emily Anne Bray | Jordan Alexander Newman |
| Benjamin Austin Burch | Troy Joseph Payne |
| Hunter Carson | Jeremy Petrie |
| Maeve Davis | Chloe Phillips |
| Megan Ashleigh Day | Megan Nicole Pollock |
| Faith Louise Dellinger | Kelly Price |
| Jacob Ryman French | Allison Reiter |
| Austin Funk | Kloe DelRae Rife |
| Karlynn Goforth | Andrew Seibel |
| Samuel Gaston Hadacek | Faith Settle |
| Sarah Elizabeth Harvey | Zane Shepherd |
| Tiffany Heishman | Mackenzie Shull |
| Tucker Michael Kiracofe | Malik Rashad Thornton |
| Joshua Leamy | Casey Edward Toney |
| Kaitlin Ann Mantz | Alexis Danielle Warren |
| David Moomaw | Bailey Rein Watson |
| Autumn Madeline Moore | |

Congratulations
TO THE 2022 AMERICAN
DEGREE RECIPIENTS

HONORARY *American Degree* RECIPIENTS



These 3 Virginians each received an honorary American Degree for their continued support of agriculture, FFA, and agriculture education in Virginia as well as on a national level. Each of these individuals continue to do an outstanding job supporting and teaching Virginia FFA members. The unwavering support and guidance they offer Virginia Agriculture educators is tremendously appreciated! We are very thankful for all they have done and continue to do for both Virginia and National FFA!



Mrs. Katherine Carter



Dr. Oskar Scheikl



Mrs. Teresa Lindberg



Susan Hilleary



Billy Newman



Chrissy Whitacre

NATIONAL *Chapter Awards*



3 STAR CHAPTERS

- Appomattox Senior
- Broadway
- Central
- Liberty (Bedford)
- Liberty Middle
- Sherando
- Tunstall High
- Wilson Middle



2 STAR CHAPTERS

- Abingdon
- C.L Payne
- Carroll County Middle
- Elkton Middle
- Mechanicsville
- Signal Knob Middle
- Wilbur S. Pence Middle



1 STAR CHAPTERS

- North Fork Middle
- Pulaski County
- Turner Ashby



STATE soils

by Ellie Vance – VA FFA 2021-2022 State Treasurer

The State Soils contest was held on November 2nd at West Oaks Farm in Winchester, Virginia. While the weather was not cooperative, it did not deter the excitement that was brought by the FFA and 4-H members from across the state. The competition was held at four different soil plots at various locations across West Oaks Farm. Each ranging in soil type, elevation, and environmental factors. Students were allotted freedom to feel the soil within the pit and roam the surrounding area to gather the needed data for their records. Each rotation lasted for approximately 30 minutes, leading to a relatively short competition time. With seriousness and vigor, all participating chapters competed competitively and brought pride to their advisors. At the end of the competition, members were given the opportunity to network with other chapters over a BBQ lunch provided by West Oaks Farm. Prior to results, competitors received a word of encouragement from one of the owners of the facility; Joe Snapp. The Virginia FFA Association would like to send a special thanks to the employees and Mr. Snapp for allowing us to host the competition on their property and for their continued support of the FFA!



JUNIOR HIGH INDIVIDUALS

- 1st - Ayla Janney (Broadway)
- 2nd - Leah Stout (Sherando)
- 3rd - Addison May (Powhatan Middle)
- 4th - Kate Guntag (Sherando)
- 5th - Hannah Baker (Nelson County Middle)
- 6th - Morgan Legge (Sherando)
- 7th - Colton Copeland (Powhatan Middle)
- 8th - Jacob Goff (Powhatan Middle)
- 9th - Kyleigh Mccollum (Sherando)
- 10th - Wyatt Campbell (Nelson County Middle)



JUNIOR TOP TEAMS

- 1st - Sherando
- 2nd - Powhatan Middle
- 3rd - Nelson County Middle
- 4th - Broadway

SENIOR TOP TEAMS

- 1st - Atlee
- 2nd - Central
- 3rd - Powhatan
- 4th - Holston



SENIOR HIGH INDIVIDUALS

- 1st - Andrew Farrell (Atlee)
- 2nd - Daniel Letter (Atlee)
- 3rd - Jake Huffman (Atlee)
- 4th - Ben Huffman (Atlee)
- 5th - Ava Tucker (Powhatan)
- 6th - Shalyn Keeler (Strasburg)
- 7th - Landyn Llewellyn (Powhatan)
- 8th - Zach Cooper (Central)
- 9th - Graham Roulsten (Central)
- 10th - Logan Boyer (Grayson County)



Turning the Key WITH NAAE

by Hope Showalter – VA FFA Staff Intern

On November 29, five VAAE members set off to New Orleans, Louisiana for the 2021 National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) Convention. Throughout the week, members had the opportunity to participate in professional development, member recognition ceremonies, professional networking, and receive national updates on agriculture education.

The VAAE and NAAE are associations for ag teachers that advocate for agricultural education, provide professional development for agricultural educators, and work to recruit and retain agricultural educators in the profession. This year, the NAAE Conference provided over 60 innovative learning sessions that were held by agriculture teachers for agriculture teachers. Educators had the opportunity to gain a broader scope of agriculture and agriculture education through networking with other members from across the United States.

Mrs. Makenah Roberts of Louisa County High School was recognized as Virginia's Teachers Turn the Key Scholarship Winner. To receive this scholarship, Mrs. Roberts first met with her admin members to ensure that she had support to apply for the TTTK program. She also had to fill out an application that consisted of reference letters, an essay about her overall experience as an ag teacher in all three circles of agriculture education, explain her philosophies on agriculture



Mrs. Makenah Roberts of Louisa County High School was recognized as Virginia's Teachers Turn the Key Scholarship Winner at the NAAE Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana.



The Virginia Delegation smiles for a picture after representing Virginia at the NAAE Convention during the week of November 29 through December 4, 2021. From left to right: Brian Alexander, Makenah Roberts, Christy Huffman-Kerr, Melessa Suder, Andy Seibel.

education, her plans for professional development, and provide evidence of her teaching experiences and successes. "Overall, I was nervous to complete the award application because I worried that I wouldn't be qualified, and I started comparing myself to other agriculture teachers and other chapters. However, completing the application allowed me to reflect on a lot of the things that I have been able to accomplish during my teaching career and it was really rewarding seeing all those accomplishments written out into one document," Roberts said.

The TTTK program adds an additional day of professional development that is tailored to early-career agriculture teachers. Roberts reflected on her time in professional development, "I love learning from other ag teachers, so there was time set aside to focus more on sharing ideas from our own experiences while also learning new strategies and techniques for addressing many of the key issues we find as ag teachers early in our careers. I think, ultimately, the biggest takeaway was reigniting my passion for agricultural education, learning new strategies, and building up confidence in myself as an educator."

Although teachers across the country have been experiencing some challenges throughout the past few years, Roberts and other attendees at the NAAE Conference had a different perspective at the conclusion of the week. "A lot of us arrived in New Orleans feeling burnt out and ready for winter break and a little unsure that leaving our students with substitutes for a week was the best choice. However, upon leaving the conference, I was still tired but I also felt renewed, inspired, and equipped with new tools to tackle the challenges I have been facing... I am still far from perfect, and face challenges each day, but I feel I can better address these challenges and I have more confidence and a more positive outlook for the future of my teaching career," said Roberts.

When asked about what advice she would give to future ag teachers, Roberts said, "Focus on relationships. Right now, you can build relationships and build a network with ag teachers across the country who will be there to support you

when you do enter your role as an educator. Don't wait to take advantage of agriculturally related professional development opportunities. There are a variety of programs offered through NAAE/VAAE and even some community-based or informal professional development opportunities geared towards future ag teachers. And lastly, find your "why" and hold tightly to

it. If your "why" is to recreate the exact same experience you had as a student you are most likely going to be disappointed, so ensure that your "why" focuses on the overall impacts and values that you hold dear. If you are living true to your values through your work as a teacher you will find it easier to make decisions, set boundaries, and feel more fulfilled in your career."



Mrs. Makenah Roberts and 33 other Teachers Turn the Key recipients from across the country had the opportunity to participate in an extra day of professional development tailored to early career Agriculture Educators.

Block & Bridle

by Emma Jackson – VA FFA 2021-2022 State Secretary

The Block and Bridle (B&B) Horse Weekend kicked off a great start to the upcoming spring competitions. On Friday, February 11th, 2022, there were a grand total of 322 contestants and 97 teams that participated in the hippology contest. The Hippology Contest is a way for students and members to test their knowledge of all things horse related. The contest includes breed identification, placing classes, a quiz, and a team problem.

The Horse Judging Contest took place in Blacksburg Virginia, Saturday February 12th, 2022. There were over 268 contestants and 88 teams competing in this competition. Constants spent the day judging seven classes of horses ranging from Hunter Mares and Geldings in hand, performance mares, ranch riding, and western pleasure. All who competed in the advance division gave sets of oral reasons on their placings.

A big congratulations to all who participated in the contests!

Hippology

TOP JUNIOR INDIVIDUALS:

- 1st – Emma Ransom
- 2nd – Marybeth Martin
- 3rd – Eden Farr

TOP SENIOR INDIVIDUALS:

- 1st – Kaylee Hill
- 2nd – Olivia Lapanta
- 3rd – Joise Galvin

TOP JUNIOR TEAMS:

- 1st – Montgomery County County Kids
- 2nd – Albemarle
- 3rd – Loudon 4-H

TOP SENIOR TEAMS:

- 1st – Albemarle
- 2nd – Orange County High
- 3rd – Smyth County

Horse Judging

TOP 3 INDIVIDUALS IN THE JUNIOR REGULAR DIVISION:

- 1st – Kaleb Taylor
- 2nd – Anna Snoddy
- 3rd – Emma Ransom

TOP 3 INDIVIDUALS IN THE SENIOR REGULAR DIVISION:

- 1st – Amanda Roberts
- 2nd – Lauren Williams
- 3rd – Analise Eddins

TOP 3 INDIVIDUALS IN THE JUNIOR ADVANCED DIVISION:

- 1st – Marybeth Martin
- 2nd – Norah Akenhead
- 3rd – Rebecca Hoemann

TOP 3 INDIVIDUALS IN THE SENIOR ADVANCED DIVISION:

- 1st – Mattie Debord
- 2nd – Carrie Miller
- 3rd – Levi Phipps

JUNIOR ADVANCED:

- 1st – Bedford Eclectic 4-H Team A
- 2nd – Montgomery County 4-H Country Kids
- 3rd – Bedford Eclectic 4-H Team B

JUNIOR REGULAR:

- 1st – Pegasus 4-H Horse and Pony Club
- 2nd – Wythe County Saddles and Bridles
- 3rd – Nelson Middle FFA Team A

SENIOR ADVANCED:

- 1st – Rockingham County 4-H Equismartz
- 2nd – Blacksburg High FFA
- 3rd – Albemarle 4-H

SENIOR REGULAR:

- 1st – Franklin County FFA
- 2nd – Dinwiddie Team B
- 3rd – Nelson County FFA

VIRGINIA *Farm Bureau* CONVENTION



Virginia FFA State Officer Team with Farm Bureau President, Mr. Wayne Pryor.

by Charlie Moser – VA FFA 2021-2022 State President

The 95th Annual Virginia Farm Bureau Convention was held from November 29 through December 2nd in Williamsburg. During this event, the State Officer Team had the chance to network with multiple industry leaders from across the Commonwealth. The FFA booth was one of the many displays found throughout the convention. The State Officers enjoyed interacting with the many FFA alumni who stopped by the booth and discussed their FFA journeys. Many Virginia Farm Bureau employees were FFA alumni, and it was encouraging to see the unwavering support from everyone at the convention. The blue jacket has and continues to be a tremendous unifier for all those within the agriculture industry. Booths for the Virginia Cattlemen's Association, Hunters for the Hungry, and an interactive farm display provided by Virginia Farm Bureau were just some of the many sights throughout the convention! The State Officer team even had the opportunity to listen to the Virginia Young Farmers Discussion Meet. The participants discussed

multiple issues impacting Virginia agriculture, as well as issues impacting the industry on a national level. Some of these issues included the supply chain, transportation, and labor. The State Officers learned so much about the issues facing the agriculture industry and had a phenomenal time at the 95th Annual Virginia Farm Bureau Convention!



Virginia FFA State Officer Team with USDA Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, Dr. Jewel Bronaugh.



Virginia FFA State Officer Team pictured with Mr. Ron Saacke (left) and Mr. Dana Fisher with Virginia Farm Bureau (right). Thank you both for inviting us to Williamsburg!





RAILYARD Dawgs

Emma Jackson, VA FFA 2021-2022 State Secretary and Beth Gillespie, the president of the Smith Mountain FFA Chapter (above and below).

by Emma Jackson – VA FFA 2021-2022 State Secretary

On December 19, 2021, FFA chapters across the Commonwealth came together to enjoy the Railyard Dawgs Teddy Bear Toss Hockey Game, located at the Roanoke Berglund Center. The opportunity to host the hockey game was on behalf of the Allstate Gillespie Agency. Every year they choose to assist an organization, and this year they decided to support the Virginia FFA Association! We would like to thank Beth Gillespie, the president of the Smith Mountain FFA Chapter, who helped to make this opportunity happen! Beth was at the forefront of orchestrating this amazing event, which included countless hours of planning, contacting the Vice President of the Rail Yard Dawgs, and communicating with the Virginia FFA State Association Staff. Gillespie stated, “There were many zoom calls and emails to organize the event. Once everything was ready, I sent an email to all the chapters in the state and contacted a few FFA members I had become friends with across the commonwealth to see who was interested in helping. Everything else just fell into place!”

Before the game, FFA members gathered out front to sell teddy bears to fans for the famous teddy bear toss. Once the fans had their hands full of bears the game started. When the first home goal was scored, the entire crowd stood up and threw the teddy bears onto the ice. This year FFA members had the unique opportunity to run out on the ice and collect the bears that made their way down. Each bear collected from the game goes to local organizations in need such as rescue missions, food pantries, EMS stations, hospitals, and schools.

Gillespie said, “It’s crazy to see how much of an impact a few FFA members can make on the community.” In total, with the help of FFA members, Virginia FFA, as well as Smith Mountain FFA, were able to raise over a combined \$1,000 and collect many teddy bears for those in need of comfort during a hard time. Gillespie stated, “The members were able to see the power of unity in the jacket.” She hopes this event will continue to make a positive impact on the community and members across the commonwealth.



GEORGE H. SEIBEL MEMORIAL *Scholarship*



VIRGINIA
FFA FOUNDATION

Today, we're focused. Our mission and cause are clear. We have a vision—inspired and designed by those we serve, and those that serve with us every day. Our focus on deepening a culture of philanthropy and developing principled student leaders is still at the core of our work and serves as the common thread throughout the history of FFA's efforts in the commonwealth, and throughout the country. Legacy funds are crucial to providing our members with opportunities to grow as leaders for years to come. Each fund was created to honor those who have left a lasting legacy on Virginia FFA. Keep reading to learn more about one of the Legacy Funds you can give a gift to, today!

The George H. Seibel Memorial Scholarship Fund was created in honor of a beloved husband, father, grandfather, neighbor, and friend of agriculture. Mr. George Seibel believed that agriculture was a way of life and as a past FFA chapter president, encouraged young people to take part in and learn about agriculture's innovative opportunities. George had a great faith in God, believed that community service was a way of life, always included others, and cherished his close friendships. J.R. Miller said, "The only thing that walks back from the tomb with the mourners and refuses to be buried is the character of a man. What a man is—survives him. It can't

be buried." George had great character and a greater love for agriculture. Building on Miller's quote, the Virginia FFA Foundation established a scholarship fund that benefits students wishing to pursue a degree in an agricultural related field who exhibit the exemplary qualities that George possessed including superior work ethic, love for agriculture, and a zest for life.

When you support Virginia FFA, you change the lives of our future leaders. In a fast-paced world with disconnect from the farm to table, one organization has remained steadfast in its dedication to developing the next generation of leadership for our nation's pinnacle industry—agriculture. The FFA Organization is guided by the phrase - "Learning to do, doing to learn, earning to live, living to serve" and its members live out hands-on service in their daily lives. The largest youth leadership organization in the world began right here in Virginia in 1927. Won't you be a part of it today? Visit us online at vaffafoundation.org to join us in inspiring premier leadership, personal growth, and career success for FFA members across the commonwealth!

We believe in the future of our members. We believe in the future of agriculture. And we believe in you.



WRITE
Virginia FFA
Foundation
P.O. Box 40
Weyers Cave,
VA 24486

DONATE
to the Virginia FFA Foundation

EMAIL
donate@vaffa.org

VISIT
vaffafoundation.org



NATIONAL *Leadership* SEMINAR FOR STATE OFFICERS



The State Officer Team with Andrew Seibel, the past Virginia FFA State Secretary (2020-2021) in front of the San Francisco Bay Bridge.

by Lauren Rhodes – VA FFA 2021-2022 State Reporter
and Charlie Moser – VA FFA 2021-2022 State President

From January 4-13, the Virginia FFA State Officer team, and Past State Secretary, Andrew Seibel, joined 40 other state officers from 14 states in Sacramento, California. Together, the group embarked on a 10-day journey from Sacramento to San Diego, stopping at different agricultural facilities to learn more about their operations, and agriculture in another state.

Starting in Sacramento, the group heard from Karen Ross, the Secretary of Agriculture in California. She discussed the issues facing California agriculture, her job as the Secretary of Agriculture, and how her department is helping the agriculture industry move forward in the Golden State. Following this, they headed to Sterling Caviar, the largest caviar producer in the United States. Caviar, also known as fish eggs, is harvested from female white sturgeon. Once the meat and caviar are harvested, both are processed and packaged for consumer consumption. After the first day, there were multiple farm tours in

the days following. Starting in Sonoma County, the group toured the Benziger Family Winery. The Benziger's utilize biodynamic farming methods within their operation. They have an insectary (insect garden) which holds bugs that kill mites that attack their vines and grapes. This eliminates the cost for pesticides and allows mother nature to come in and work with the farm to achieve peak performance. The second stop that day was to Stemple



Sterling Caviar's finished product (fish eggs).



Vineyards at the Benziger Family Winery.

Creek Ranch, a sustainable grass-fed beef operation. The cattle are fed grass year-round and rotationally grazed with mobile fencing. The rotational grazing ensures the cattle always have access to fresh, healthy grasses, which they convert into beef. Soon, the current and past State Officers were on the road again headed to Beretta Family Dairy. The Beretta's run a 300-cow operation with Holstein, Jersey, and Montbeliarde cows. Their operation recycles water to ensure they maintain a strong water supply. The manure the cows produce is reused and made into bedding for the cows and even fertilizer for local gardeners, thanks to a manure separator machine.

The group went from exploring cattle operations one day, to oysters the next as they stopped at Hog Island Oyster Company in Tomales Bay! This company raises multiple kinds of oysters, including Atlantic, Olympia, and Pacific oysters on 160 acres. There, the group learned that the company harvests and sells over 5 million oysters and Manila clams each year. It takes their oysters 10 months to grow and be ready to harvest. The flavor of the oysters is based on their location throughout the bay as oysters growing closer to the bay mouth have a saltier taste due to the higher salinity content. The State Officers even got to shuck some oysters and have a tasting! After



A Jersey calf from Beretta Family Dairy.



Harris Ranch feedyards and their cattle.



Harris Ranch feedyards and their cattle.



Oyster shucking at Hog Island Oyster Company.



Muir Woods National Monument.

trying oysters, the next stop was Muir Woods National Monument where they had the opportunity to see the famous redwoods! While many of the trees within Muir Woods are between 500-800 years old, the oldest tree there is over 1200 years old. The coastal redwoods there are the tallest of any living thing found in the world. It's named after John Muir, who was a naturalist and advocate for nature conservation in the 1800s. The 554-acre national monument is a habitat for animals ranging from coyotes to spotted owls and serves as a popular tourist destination for those from all over the world.

Day 4 included visits to the San Francisco Farmers market and a whale watching tour in Monterey, out on the Pacific Ocean. Meeting with locals about their products at the farmers market was really mind opening to see all the different agriculture products on display. On day 5 the group toured Harris Ranch and their feed yards as well as their horse division. The feed yard was holding over 99,500 head at the time of our visit with a max holding capacity of over 120,000 head. Their cattle grade either choice or prime 95% of the time and their feedlots as well as their facilities were designed by Temple Grandin. Harris Ranch even sells hot



Raspberries from Rancho Laguna Farms.



Engines from the Ag mechanics shop at the Mark Richardson CTE Center.



Some of the different plant varieties at Olive Hill Greenhouses.

fat trim from their cattle carcasses as biodiesel! The horse division was just as impressive. Their custom breeding and training facility raises and sells purebred racing thoroughbreds. Their farm boasts multiple Kentucky Derby winners including California Chrome. The following day the group traveled to Rancho Laguna Farms where they raised 500 acres of raspberries, blackberries, strawberries, and blueberries. Instead of starting their plants with soil, they utilize coconut husks as a substrate growing material for all their plants. They even grow for Driscoll's, so next time you purchase some berries from Driscoll's, they might be coming to you from Rancho Laguna Farms! Another incredible opportunity State Officers had on this trip was a visit to the Mark Richardson CTE center and agricultural farm. This 22-million-dollar facility was possible due to public funding and community support. The center holds a diesel and mechanical shop, a kitchen for culinary students, and even a barn to hold livestock projects for students. The center allows students to receive hands-on learning about multiple paths for careers in the agricultural industry. After leaving the CTE center, the group headed to Plantel Nurseries, a 150-acre operation where they grow vegetable transplants for farmers all over the west coast. Plantel makes their own irrigation systems for the plants while utilizing a recycling water system to conserve water.

Day 7 was filled with bike riding, sightseeing, and exploring the beach in Santa Barbara. Our 8th and final day of industry visits was all about PLANTS! The first stop of the day was to Olive Hill Greenhouses where they grow and sell everything from your basic houseplant to decorative wedding flowers. Olive Hill receives plant material from China, South America, and other parts of the world which has allowed them to expand their connections and business. By the afternoon, we found ourselves at Plug Connection where they specialize in raising young plants. Their top seller is Vinca, also known as "Perrywinkle" as they sell ¾ of a billion seeds of Perrywinkle each year. Plug Connection grows over 5,000 varieties of plants including aloes, agaves, and succulents. The last industry visit before heading to the final hotel before departure was a stop to Rockwood Ranch. Here, they grow and sell avocados, various citrus, and wine grapes. With 23,000 total acres on the ranch, Rockwood spreads 75% of their pesticides through drones since it's most efficient and cost effective for their operation. They also maintain a herd of 800 beef cows and even utilize

autonomous tractors (tractors that are driverless) to maintain their farming practices.

Throughout the entire experience, the State Officers and Andrew made so many connections with not only those within the California agriculture industry, but with other current and past state officers. Making new friends and building relationships is what our organization is all about! Each attendant learned a tremendous amount about the issues facing California agriculture and the commodities that drive the California agriculture industry forward. It was really exciting to learn about ways to incorporate sustainable agriculture practices, advocate for our industry, influence policy within our state governments related to agriculture, and understand what we can do to teach others about our industry on a national level. Being able to bring this knowledge back to Virginia and share our experiences in California, we hope will continue to spread the message of agriculture advocacy. Our crew had an absolute BLAST!



Sea lions from our whale watching tour.



Our team in front of the Benziger Family Wine Cellar.

74th VIRGINIA GOVERNOR Inauguration



by Ellie Vance – VA FFA 2021-2022 State Treasurer

The Virginia FFA State Officer Team had the incredible opportunity to attend the 74th Virginia Governor Inauguration on January 15th, 2022. Having been several years since anyone representing Virginia FFA was present at the inauguration, many attendees commented on the pleasantness of seeing blue jackets within the stands. Prior to the start of Governor Glenn Youngkin's Inaugural Address, the State Officer Team was able to network with others who were in attendance and were encouraged by the supportive commentary that followed. The topic of the newly elected Governor's address was titled "Strengthening the Spirit of Virginia". Governor Glenn Youngkin expressed his support for the Virginia Farmer and for furthering the improvement of our education system. He explained, "...the tenacity and grit of Virginians, of parents, students and teachers, of entrepreneurs and small business owners, of law enforcement and first responder heroes, of hard-working Virginians coming home from the midnight to 8 a.m. shift of active duty military, veterans and their families, of farmers, factory workers and healthcare heroes." (Youngkin). The support given from our new Governor enlightens a new hope that agricultural education and student-led organizations—like the FFA—will be at the forefront of the minds of various government officials in Virginia. Walking away from the Inauguration, the State Officers felt confident in the future of the FFA and agricultural education. While the event itself only lasted a few short hours, the impact of Governor Youngkin's words provided everyone who attended with a spark of hope. A new hope, not only for the future of our commonwealth, but for the support that our organization and the agriculture industry have from our government.



The State Officer Team in front of the Virginia State Capitol.



VIRGINIA
FFA ASSOCIATION

VIRGINIA YOUNG FARMERS *Winter Expo*

by Sammy Leach – VA FFA 2021-2022 State Sentinel

The Virginia State FFA Officers had a blast in Virginia Beach for the Virginia Farm Bureau Young Farmers Winter Expo. This event took place February 18 through February 20. The expo provided some time to relax after the beginning of FFA Week. The officers had the opportunity to network with other farmers, attend workshops, and attend a tour on the Eastern Shore. On the way to the tour, attendees saw a rocket launch that sent a satellite to space. On the tour attendees saw an aquaculture facility and learned about chainsaw safety. They also had the opportunity to meet with Delegate Don Scott and speak with him about agriculture and how important it is to our Commonwealth! During one of the dinners at the expo, Charlie, Jackson, Mario, and Sammy got to compete in the Ag Olympics contest. The team placed second overall and got to make a new friend along the way! The Lousia FFA Alumni members served dinner following the Ag Olympics contest.



This is the demonstration of safety for chainsaw use.



Virginia Institute of Marine Science Director, Dr. Richard Snyder provided a tour of the facility. Pictured on the right is Farm Bureau Young Farmers past chair and Eastern Shore farmer, Kyle Sturgis. Kyle was our leader for the tours that day.



The State Officers with Delegate Don Scott.



FFA & FIRST RESPONDER CLUB TEAM UP FOR *Safety*

by Carter Swanberg – member of the Appomattox FFA Chapter

On March 15th, 2022, The Appomattox Senior FFA and the Appomattox County High School First Responder Club held a joint meeting with the Appomattox Volunteer Fire Department about the importance of farm safety. There they simulated a tractor rollover. According to the Department of Labor, tractor rollovers account for 44 percent of all tractor fatalities. The volunteer firefighters and First Responder club members demonstrated how to safely extricate a mannequin from underneath the tractor. Afterward, there was a power take off (PTO) shaft injury simulation using a bush hog. A straw scarecrow was drawn into the rotating PTO Shaft.

According to the CDC, about 167 agricultural workers suffer a lost work time injury every day. Five percent of the injuries result in permanent impairment. Each participant was reminded that safety is an important attitude to incorporate into the agricultural lifestyle. The Appomattox FFA would like to thank the Appomattox Volunteer Fire Department for taking their time to teach high school students about farm safety.

Appomattox Volunteer Firefighters demonstrated how to use cribbing while stabilizing the flipped tractor. In the rear, AVFD Fire Chief and First Responder Club Advisor, Jonathan Garrett, speaks with FFA members about safe use of agricultural tractors.



FFA and First Responder Club members observe a simulated PTO shaft injury during the Farm Safety Workshop.