

Vision of Virginia

SUMMER 2025



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THE Sea of Blue IN BLACKSBURG



The newly elected 2025-2026 VA FFA State Officer team closing final session.

by Emma Alexander – VA FFA 2025-2026 State President

On June 9th, 2025, just over 2,100 Virginia FFA members arrived on the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg, VA. Members were pretty busy all week. With the opportunity to compete in 32 different LDE/ CDE, students from across the Commonwealth of Virginia gave it their all. Across all six sessions, members were given the opportunity to hear from some keynote speakers, such as Jack Lingenfelter, Zach Jacobs, and each of the retiring officers. Middle school members played a visible and well-integrated role in the convention. The event included a Middle School Ag Exploration contest with categories such as Food & Fiber, Plant Science, Small Animal Care, Quiz Bowl, and Ag Technology & Mechanical Systems, designed specifically to introduce younger students to Career Development Events (CDEs) and Leadership Development Events (LDEs). Additionally, middle schoolers participated in a dedicated “Middle School Mixer” on Day 1 and received awards during Session 3, showcasing their achievements alongside high school competitors.

In competition results, Ella Doctolero from R. E. Aylor Middle earned 1st place individual in Ag Exploration, followed by Aidyn McGinnis (2nd) and Rieley Woolridge (3rd) from Wilson Middle. As a team, R. E. Aylor Middle, comprising Ella Doctolero, Emma Walko, David Dodson, and Lyric Dodson, captured the 1st team overall award in Middle School Ag Exploration. These achievements highlighted the enthusiasm and emerging talent of Virginia’s middle school FFA members.

UPCOMING events

OCTOBER

27-NOV 1: National FFA Convention

DECEMBER

1-4: Farm Bureau Convention

DECEMBER

5-6: FFA Gala

DECEMBER

7-12: NAAE Convention

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**Alli
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Reporter

**Danika
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Sentinel

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Deputy Secretary of Education Zach Jacobs delivers a keynote speech.



Emma Alexander, Grayson Long, and Kelsey Weston – three presidents, one shared passion.



2024-2025 State Vice President Keller Cooley enjoying the pre-session activities.



2024-2025 State Sentinel Ryan Livesay celebrating after delivering a touching retiring address.



2024-2025 State Treasurer Braelyn Durban hanging up her corduroy one final time.



National Vice President Jack Lingenfelter sharing advice and remarks during session.

NEW LEADERSHIP, NEW Adventures!



On June 12th, 2025, the Chicago Bulls Theme Song roared as seven new officers were elected to serve Virginia FFA. Meet the 2025-2026 Virginia FFA State Officers!



Emma Alexander
President

Questions Bank

1. How do you fill your free time?
2. Why did you join FFA?
3. What's a fun memory you have from your SAE?
4. Why did you run for state office?
5. What's one thing you wish you could say to every FFA member for the upcoming year?

1. I enjoy spending time with my family, especially when we're outside together, soaking up the fresh air and open space. Whether we're working livestock or just enjoying the land, those moments bring me a deep sense of connection and purpose.
2. I chose Virginia FFA because of the incredible networking opportunities, the lasting friendships, and the strong support system it offers. The energy and passion within the organization inspire me to grow both personally and professionally.
3. One of my favorite experiences within my SAE has been raising show cattle, building trust through daily care and hands-on training. Watching their progress and knowing I played a part in their development makes the hard work especially rewarding.
4. I ran for Virginia FFA State Office because I felt a deep love for the organization and a calling to give back to the community that shaped me. I wasn't ready for my FFA journey to end and knew I still had more to give, more to learn, and more lives to impact.
5. Every member should "be here now" because the moments we're in, whether big or small, are where growth, connection, and purpose take root. Fully showing up allows you to make the most of every opportunity FFA offers and leave a lasting impact.



Kylie Bailey
Secretary

1. I ride horses and run my farm of equine animals as I rehabilitate horses.
2. I joined FFA to find a family and a community of likeminded people.
3. My favorite memory is when I was able to deliver my first foal, and now show and breed him.
4. I ran for state office because I truly believe that without agriculture our country wouldn't thrive. I believe that FFA strengthens people to become the best versions of themselves as it changed me for the better and continues to help me grow into a independent individual who strives for a strong and better tomorrow.
5. With hard work, consistency, and dedication, you can and will achieve anything you set your mind to do. No matter where you come from or who you are never doubt your bail to be so much more.



Lee Kent
Vice President

1. I'm an avid fisherman growing up next to a river. Most evenings I'll go down and fish.
2. I joined FFA because I wanted to gain my knowledge about agriculture.
3. Spending time working the land!
4. To make an impact on members and to show them all the opportunities the industry has.
5. Always remember to stop and take every moment in for what it was, good or bad, and to always find the good in every situation.

1. I have been and always will be a pickleball FANATIC! It's an amazing way for me to hang out with my friends while showing some competitive spirit.
2. In 8th grade, my sister's best friend, Ale, was telling us she got to miss school to compete in poultry evaluation. I was drawn in by the fact that I knew we both came from nonagricultural backgrounds, and the opportunity to skip school!
3. A 150lb Newfoundland launched himself on me while I was sitting on a lawn chair. Somewhere there is camera footage of the chair collapsing underneath me.
4. There is so much power, influence, and beauty in having someone believe in you. I'm excited to spend the next year believing in every member has a place in agriculture!
5. You are never alone! Whether you need help with an SAE or just someone to listen, there is an upperclassmen, advisor, or state officer excited to support you along the way. FFA will always be here for you :)



Franco Abud
Vice President

1. I like working out, hiking, and when I'm inside I enjoy reading and journaling.
2. I joined FFA because I've always been interested in agriculture and I wanted to explore my passion.
3. I work at an orchard and one fun memory I have is moving pumpkins with my coworkers and just tossing them around. A couple were broken, but I laughed a lot.
4. I ran for state office because I wanted to show FFA members that quiet and shy kids can accomplish their dreams.
5. Just go for it! There may be some hard moments but don't be afraid of failure because otherwise you'll miss out on some amazing memories.



Georgia Grady
Treasurer



Alli Phillips
Reporter

1. In the rare occasion that I have free time, I tend to go swimming. Whether it's doing laps or just chilling I love a dip in the pool. I also really enjoy watching cooking shows with my mom.
2. While I'm not from an agriculture background, one of my best friends is. In middle school she would always nag me to join an ag class and FFA, which I did to get her to pipe down, and I ended up falling in love.
3. In my first SAE of raising backyard chickens, I had a silkie hen named Loretta who was a sweetheart. She would always follow me around, and I loved to take her on walks.
4. I had an opportunity during my FFA journey to help coach a contest for younger members, and I got to watch a switch flip in them as they fell in love with FFA. I want to help flip a million more switches in a million more members.
5. In my FFA journey, I held myself back so much due to fear of not being good enough. I regret not doing more now and would challenge you to try at least one new thing this year, even if it's scary!

1. I don't have free time. JK. I fill my free time by going fishing, working on my truck, or working out at the gym.
2. I joined FFA because at the time I saw many of my friends doing it and I thought it would be fun! FFA is something that would interest me over time as I fell in love with serving my community and finding a family.
3. Not necessarily a fun moment but a funny moment was when I was making copies of safety tests for shop class. They all printed upside down on the back pages... I never heard the end of it.
4. I ran for state office because FFA helped me find my passion and a family. I want to do the same for others that haven't found their passion yet.
5. FFA gives you many different opportunities and chances. Even though you don't think you will like it, still try because you may end up loving it or making a lifelong best friend. Like Cody Johnson said, "If you got a dream chase it, 'Cause a dream won't chase you back" (Til You Can't).



Danika Landreth
Sentinel



  
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VIRGINIA FFA JOINS GOVERNOR YOUNGKIN TO RECOGNIZE *Agriculture's Impact*

The Virginia FFA Officer Team standing alongside Governor Glenn Youngkin after announcing the Virginia Agriculture Week Proclamation.

by Danika Landreth – VA FFA 2025-2026 State Sentinel

On June 26th, the Virginia FFA State Officer Team had the honor of joining Governor Glenn Youngkin at Bowmont Family Farm, owned by the Shipp family in Franklin County. This event celebrated both Virginia Agriculture Week and Dairy Month, recognizing the vital contributions of Virginia's farmers and the agricultural industry. In attendance were a diverse group of agricultural advocates and leaders, including government officials, representatives from Virginia Cooperative Extension, the President and faculty of Ferrum College, Franklin County School Board officials, and Franklin County FFA members.

Bowmont Family Farm, which specializes in dairy, was a fitting location since Franklin County ranks among the top five milk-producing counties in Virginia. During the event, Governor Youngkin presented a Certificate of Recognition for the Virginia Agriculture Week Proclamation, formally acknowledging the importance of agriculture and dairy to the state's economy and daily life. The proclamation honored the hard work and dedication of those who keep the industry thriving, like the Shipp family. Additionally, Maola Milk and Homestead Creamery partnered with the Shipp Family to provide delicious milk and ice cream for attendees.

Reflecting on the experience, Elan Catoe, a member of the Franklin County FFA, said, "I've always been a big fan of Governor Youngkin, so I was very surprised when he came.

It was amazing to talk to him about agriculture in our state." William Jones, also a Franklin County FFA member, added, "I learned about Virginia Agriculture Week and the awards given to these local farms." This event highlights the importance of agriculture to our state and economy, celebrating those who keep it thriving, as agriculture continues to serve as Virginia's largest private industry. time to organize their efforts and collaborate on lobbying for legislation that supports the state's agricultural priorities.



Franklin County FFA Member, Elan Catoe, shaking hands with Governor Glenn Youngkin.

Learning TO DO, DOING TO Learn



The first time the past state officers aren't wearing official dress happens during camp pictures with the new team- and it can be an emotional moment.

by Georgia Grady – VA FFA 2025-2026 State Treasurer

Unforgettable memories, impactful workshops, and lots of laughter- this year's leadership camp at Graves Mountain Lodge truly had it all. Starting out on Sunday, July 6, Virginia FFA held a celebration for camp co-director Mr. Turner Trice, who was celebrating his 60th year of running FFA camp. The current state officer team, the 2024-2025 state officer team, other past state officers, and ag advisors from all over the state attended the luncheon, where everyone shared memories from their time at FFA camp.

From there, the camp staff moved into day camp, which took place on Monday, July 7. Despite the short length of the camp, the past state officer team made the day unforgettable, coordinating interest classes, running workshops, and holding reflections at the end of the day for everyone to think back on their time. Over 70 kids attended day camp this year, making it a truly memorable experience for everyone involved.

Then, from Tuesday to Friday that week, or from the seventh to the eleventh of July, Virginia FFA held an overnight camp. This camp hosted nearly 200 kids and advisors, and the days were filled

with laughter and amazing memories as the kids learned more about FFA and leadership. Competitions such as prepared public speaking, extemporaneous public speaking, and the talent show gave campers a glimpse into the world of FFA and the variety of activities they could get involved in. Campers also had the opportunity to grow as leaders by running for FFA camp office. Sophia Talampas, who attended camp for the first time this year as a rising freshman from Wilson Memorial FFA, said that her

favorite workshop was the one that past State Secretary Blair Rutherford ran on leadership because it showed that "teamwork isn't ruled by one person, it's [ruled] by everyone putting something in to make it work." Rising senior Colton Moye from Giles FFA also had a similar experience in his workshop run by past State Sentinel Ryan Livesay. Colton said, "We completed an activity where we had to put ourselves in the proper number order without talking or seeing. This activity made us think fast to avoid chaos. It also gave us the opportunity



Before breakfast every day, a group of campers would volunteer to assist in the Raising of the Flag ceremony, where they would each read a paragraph about the history of our nation to start the day off strong.

to step up and be a leader.” Mealtime games, icebreakers, nightly reflections, and the FFA Dance helped everyone get to know each other a bit better. Ainsley Davis, a rising senior from Hanover FFA, said that “the last night of reflections was truly such a bittersweet moment that allowed us all to connect on a deeper level and better not only our understanding of leadership, but what it means to be a Virginia FFA member.” The memories and friendships made will last far beyond this amazing week.



The picnic shelter, where meals, the dance, workshops, and icebreaker activities were constantly filled with people making new friends, eating delicious food, and learning exactly what it means to be an FFA member.



QUESTIONS TO ASK CAMPERS:

1. How many years have you gone to camp?
2. What was your favorite memory from camp this year?
3. What was your favorite activity/workshop?

ANSWERS:

COLTON MOYE

Giles – Rising Senior

1. “This is the first year I was able to attend camp.”
2. “My favorite part was being able to network with individuals in different careers. One person I particularly enjoyed talking to was Ken. Ken was a part of the Creek-Insect experiment and opened my eyes to a different career path. He enlightened me on the multiple roles that a geographer can be involved in and even gave me some of his firsthand examples. I also enjoyed being able to network with other FFA members.”
3. “My favorite workshop activity was with Ryan. We completed an activity where we had to put ourselves in the proper number order without talking or seeing. This activity made us think fast in order to avoid chaos. It also gave us the opportunity to step up and be a leader.”

AINSLEY DAVIS

Hanover – Rising Senior

1. “This was my first year at FFA Camp!”
2. “My favorite memory was definitely the reflections each night, not only did they keep us grounded in why we were at camp, but that vulnerable space allowed everyone to be much more honest and open. The last night of reflections was truly such a bittersweet moment that allowed us all to connect on a deeper level and better not only our understanding of leadership, but what it means to be a Virginia FFA Member.”
3. “My favorite workshop was definitely the string art! Even though learning how to clean a carburetor may have been something I needed to learn more!”

SOPHIA TALAMPAS

Wilson Memorial – Rising Freshman

1. “This year was my first year going to camp. My favorite memory at camp was the last night at the bonfire, even though it was really sad it was really wonderful hearing everyone’s stories about why they used to fear that. It even inspired some people to let go of some of theirs. My favorite workshop was Braelyn’s. I loved when we did those stories and everyone had to write something down from the ideas we had already picked but then just had to write an interesting story about it. And at Blair’s I loved the duck one. It showed us to be a team and if not everybody made it over we weren’t successful, because teamwork isn’t ruled by one person it’s by everyone putting something in to make it work.”



The VA FFA State Officer Team outside of Virginia State Representative Ben Cline's office.

by Kylie Bailey – VA FFA 2025-2026 State Secretary

The 2025-2026 National FFA State Officer Summit provided the state officer team with an incredible opportunity to connect and collaborate with fellow state officers from across the United States. Throughout the summit, we engaged in meaningful conversations, sharing ideas and experiences that strengthened our understanding of agriculture and leadership. Exploring Washington D.C. together, we toured iconic monuments and landmarks, deepening our appreciation for the nation we serve and the values that unite us as FFA members.

A highlight of the summit was the chance to meet with our representatives from various regions of the country.



The VA FFA State Officers connecting with others under monuments.

During these visits, we emphasized the importance of agriculture by highlighting everything it has done for us personally and professionally. Our discussions were rooted in the impact agriculture has on communities, the economy, and the environment. This advocacy allowed us to leave a lasting impression on our representatives while reinforcing the significance of FFA's role in shaping future leaders and agricultural innovation.



The VA FFA State Officers arriving at Union Station.

Beyond the professional and educational experiences, the summit was a personal journey of connection and growth. We bonded not only with other state officers but also with national officers, discovering common ground through our shared passion for agriculture and leadership. These relationships were strengthened by the appreciation of each individual's unique contributions to their communities and FFA chapters. As the summit concluded, we left inspired, having made an impact on others while establishing a legacy of dedication and camaraderie that will continue to influence the future of FFA.



The State Officers meeting with a Senator Tim Kaine representative to discuss the FFA Caucus.



The VA FFA State Officers outside of the U.S. Capitol going to speak with representatives about the FFA Caucus.



The State Officers outside Senator Tim Kaine's office meeting with a Texas representative to practice discussing the FFA caucus.

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2025 FARM BUREAU YOUNG FARMERS *Summer Expo*



Danika, Kylie, Emma, and Lee learning about the Beef Cattle operation at the Titmus Ag Center during farm tours.

by Alli Phillips – VA FFA 2025-2026 State Reporter

On July 25th-27th, the state officer team had the opportunity to travel to the campus of Ferrum College in Franklin County for the Farm Bureau Young Farmers Summer Expo. Agriculturalists from across the state gathered for a variety of events, such as a Candidate Forum, Casino Night, and Farm Tours.

The first activity the team was able to participate in was a gubernatorial candidate forum, where the two main candidates for Virginia Governor, Abigail Spanberger and Winsome Earle Sears, shared their stances on various agricultural and forestry related issues. After this, the state officers had the opportunity to end the first day at a “Shine Bright” casino night, where in addition to a wonderful meal and a variety of card games, participants also had the chance to take part in a Farm Bureau trivia game and watch a “Hot Ones” challenge with Farm Bureau President Scott Sink and Young Farmers State Chair Thomas Henley. The next day the team participated in a variety of contests such as Discussion Meet and Outstanding Young Agriculturalist. Then they attended general session and were able to hear a presentation from Marshall Sewell on “Mind Your Melon”, a program which advocates for mental health awareness in agriculture. After which, they went on farm tours with the Titmus

Ag Center, Melvins Farm-to-Fork, Pacabellas Farm, and Homestead Creamery, before wrapping up the weekend at the Double D Arena for the Awards Banquet, celebrating not only the achievements of all their great members, but the 50 year bench mark of the Young Farmers.

The Farm Bureau Young Farmers Summer Expo aims to offer chances for agriculturalists from across the state to interact and bond with each other in order to build strong field relationships. It also aims to encourage advancements in the field through tours, presentations, and contests such as Excellence in Agriculture, Achievement Award, and Outstanding Young Agriculturalists. Overall, the state officers had a great time and learned a lot at the Expo!



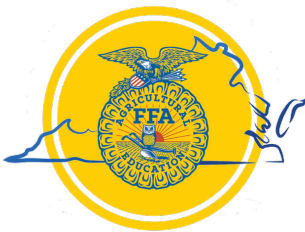
FFA State Officers (Danika, Alli, Georgia, Franco, Lee, Kylie, Emma) meeting the gubernatorial Candidates Abigail Spanberger and Winsome Earle Sears.



The State Officers posing at the Awards Banquet.



Participants judging red and white dairy heifers.



VIRGINIA STATE *Dairy* JUDGING CONTEST

by Lee Kent – VA FFA 2025-2026 State Vice President

The Virginia State Dairy Judging Contest, held on July 31, 2025, at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds in Rockingham, Virginia, provided an opportunity for middle and high school students to apply knowledge learned in dairy science, dairy judging, and leadership. The contest involved a written exam, cattle judging, an oral presentation, and a team problem. This competition encourages critical thinking, teamwork, and public speaking skills.

Contestants judged a total of six classes. There were four heifer classes and two milking cow classes. In addition, participants completed a written exam and a team problem. Another aspect of the event was the dairy handling competition. Here, participants demonstrated professional showmanship skills by leading cattle in the ring.

Throughout the competition, the Virginia State FFA officers' duties consisted of handling administrative tasks such as collecting exams and organizing participants for oral reasons. They directed competitors to their proper areas and presented awards to the winning individuals and teams. Through their service, they offered encouragement and support to the participants.

The State Dairy Judging Contest gives an opportunity for students to display their knowledge of dairy science while strengthening professional skills such as public speaking and problem-solving. This competition provides participants with hands-on experience that applies to future careers.

SENIOR DIVISION RESULTS

High Point Individual: Avery Caffrey

Broadway FFA

2nd: Averie Keller

J. Frank Hillyard FFA

3rd: Alexis Davis

Wilson Memorial FFA Team A

4th: Eli Gatesman

Broadway FFA

5th: Hope Bruce

Broadway FFA

Top Senior Teams:

1. *Broadway FFA*

2. *J. Frank Hillyard FFA*

3. *Wilson Memorial FFA*

JUNIOR DIVISION RESULTS

High Point Individual: Trey Daubert

Wilbur S. Pence FFA

2nd: Aidyn McGinnis

Wilson Middle FFA Team A

3rd: Claire Drumheller

Wilson Middle FFA Team B

4th: Rieley Woolridge

Wilson Middle FFA Team

5th: McKinley Glass

Wilson Middle FFA Team B

Top Junior Teams:

1. *Wilson Middle FFA Team A*

2. *Wilson Middle FFA Team B*

3. *Wilbur S. Pence Middle FFA*

DAIRY HANDLING RESULTS

High Point Individual:

Maggie Toothman – *Broadway FFA*

2nd: Sadie Houff

Spotswood FFA



The Senior High Point team from Broadway FFA includes team members Avery Caffrey, Eli Gatesman, Hope Bruce, and Aaron Manetta. Delegate Chris Runion is also featured in the photo.



The Senior 4-H High Point Team from Rockingham 4-H includes team members Ayla Janney, Trey Daubert, and William Hewitt. Delegate Chris Runion is also featured in the photo.



The Junior FFA High Point Team from Wilson Middle FFA Team A includes team members Aidyn McGinnis, Rieley Woolridge, Bryson Morris, and Tayler McDaniel. Delegate Chris Runion is also featured in the photo.



The Junior 4-H High Point Team from Rockbridge 4-H includes team members Stella Zollman, Sawyer Zollman, and Samuel Zollman. Delegate Chris Runion is also featured in the photo.

D.C. FARMERS MARKET



The 2025-2026 Virginia FFA State Officer Team smiles with Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins in front of a gold FENDT tractor.

by Kylie Bailey – VA FFA 2025-2026 State Secretary

Agriculture from the state of Alaska to the Virgin Islands, and from the state of Maine to Hawaii, was celebrated at The Great American Farmers Market! From August 3rd to 8th, farmers, ranchers, and consumers united in the center of Washington, DC. The United States Department of Agriculture hosted this event, featuring farmer vendors, goat yoga, and more. Washington, DC, left with a deeper understanding of the importance of agriculture and small farmers.

At the heart of the Great American Farmers' Market was a stage on which Virginia FFA shone! Secretary Rollins congratulated Lillian Morgan from



Louisa FFA members (from left to right) Lily Hix, Levi Burkett, and Garret Rosson, posing with Secretary Duffy.

Nelson Senior and Joe Horn from Buffalo Gap as prestigious Tractor Supply scholarship recipients. Throughout the event, the Virginia FFA State Officer Team shared the importance of FFA and agriculture education to vendors and consumers.

On August 4th, the Louisa FFA Chapter represented the Virginia Association at the nation's capital. Chapter President Lily Hix shared, "My Agricultural Issues Team and I, in partnership with Tractor Supply Company, engaged with key figures including U.S. Secretary Rollins and Secretary Duffy, and provided a platform to hear insights from RFK Jr." Courtland FFA visited the farmers market on August 5th. Finnius Burkett, the Courtland FFA Reporter, said, "It was amazing to educate people from different walks of life through agriculture." From scholarships to advocacy, Virginia FFA made its mark at the Great American Farmers Market.



Lillian Morgan from Nelson Senior and Joe Horn from Buffalo Gap, along with the Virginia FFA State Officer team, on stage being introduced and recognized for the Tractor Supply Scholarship by Secretary Rollins and Hal Lawton.



Courtland FFA Members (from left to right) Julia Zinc, Julia Storen, Finnius Burkett, Drake Monroe, and Franco Abud during an interview with the USDA discussing the importance of suburban agricultural education.



VA FFA State Officers (from left to right) Alli Phillips, Franco Abud, Lee Kent, posing near two highland cows with Tractor Supply CEO Hal Lawton.



Governor

FARMERS MARKET

Connecting With Community, One Market at a Time

VA FFA State President Emma Alexander and State secretary Kylie Bailey, taking a photo with 4-H members and ambassadors.

by Kylie Bailey – VA FFA 2025-2026 State Secretary

This past week, the Virginia FFA State President and State Secretary proudly represented the organization at the Governor's Farmers Market in Richmond. The event brought together local agricultural businesses, state leaders, and youth organizations in celebration of Virginia's thriving agricultural community. During the market, the FFA officers had the honor of meeting Governor Glenn Youngkin and First Lady Suzanne Youngkin, sharing in meaningful conversation about agricultural education, youth leadership, and the importance of supporting local farmers.

In addition to connecting with the Governor and First Lady, the FFA team had the opportunity to engage with numerous local businesses and vendors, learning firsthand about the products and hard work that fuel Virginia's agriculture. The officers also introduced themselves to representatives from Virginia 4-H, strengthening the bond between two of the state's leading youth organizations dedicated to agricultural excellence and leadership development. To meet with their fellow peers who enjoy the world of agriculture as much as the state officers do. They weren't just conversations; they were connections that we made. As they discussed personal stories of where they are from and what they do in our everyday lives that make them unique and similar. From topics of showing



Kylie Bailey and Emma Alexander meeting with local businesses to ask about their story. In this production they all contribute to the farm and grow produce to sell locally.

sheep, to leading our community they all wandered the market sharing our stories and connecting what they have learned to what every business was supplying. The day was filled with shared stories, inspiration, and the unmistakable sense of community that defines the spirit of Virginia agriculture.

Being recognized by the governor is a heartfelt moment for us state officers, reminding us of the impact we can make as

advocates for agriculture. This event stands out as a cherished memory that fuels our passion and commitment to serving the farming community. We are excited for future opportunities to support and collaborate with agricultural businesses across the state, continuing our mission to lead, serve, and grow alongside Virginia's agricultural future.



Having every contributor of the Farmers market be recognized with a speech.



“The FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success.”

~ FFA Mission Statement

VA AG Expo

Virginia FFA State Officers Attend the Virginia Ag Expo

by Lee Kent – VA FFA 2025-2026 State Vice President

On August 7th, the Virginia FFA State Officer team had the opportunity to attend the Virginia Ag Expo, held at Brook Farms in Locust Grove, Virginia. The Ag Expo is one of the state's premier agricultural events, featuring equipment demonstrations, vendor booths, crop reviews, and educational talks.

During the event, the State Officers played an active role by assisting with visitor registration, guiding attendees to different areas of the farm, and announcing various programs throughout the day. They also spent time networking with key leaders and organizations in Virginia agriculture.

The Virginia FFA Foundation hosted a booth at the Expo to promote the mission and opportunities of Virginia FFA. In addition, the State Officers had meaningful conversations with members of the Orange and Brentsville FFA Chapters, building connections and sharing experiences.

A highlight of the day was the opportunity to meet and speak with Representative Vindman, further emphasizing the importance of agricultural advocacy and leadership.



Orange County School FFA Officers.



State Officers with Representative Vindman.



Students from the Brentsville FFA chapter.

COLTS

CULTIVATING LEADERS, ONE COLT AT A TIME

by Emma Alexander – VA FFA 2025-2026 State President

Virginia FFA members recently gathered for the annual Area COLTS (Chapter Officer Leadership Training Session), a dynamic event focused on building leadership skills and strengthening chapters across the state. State FFA officers led a series of engaging workshops, including Advocacy, Leap and Lead, Self-Discovery, and Team Conflict. Each session gave participants hands-on opportunities to practice communication, problem-solving, and teamwork while preparing them to lead their chapters with confidence in the coming year.

Throughout the day, members explored a variety of topics designed to help them grow both personally and professionally. From navigating challenging conversations to understanding their own leadership styles, participants were encouraged to step outside their comfort zones. These sessions also emphasized the importance of advocating for agriculture and sharing the story of FFA with their schools and communities, showing members how to be strong voices for the organization and the industry.

By the end of the event, members walked away with more than just new skills—they gained a deeper understanding of what FFA truly represents. Through activities and meaningful



Members of all ages from the South Ridge Area attempt the human knot challenge during the Team Conflict workshop.

reflections, participants discovered that FFA is not just for “agriculture kids,” but rather a place where anyone can find opportunities to grow as a leader. Area COLTS continues to be a powerful experience that shapes future leaders and inspires members to make a lasting impact in their chapters, schools, and communities.



After a long evening of workshops, the state officer team takes a selfie with the Central Area members.



NORTHERN AREA Tractor Driving

I Believe in the Future of Agriculture

by Georgia Grady – VA FFA 2025-2026 State Treasurer

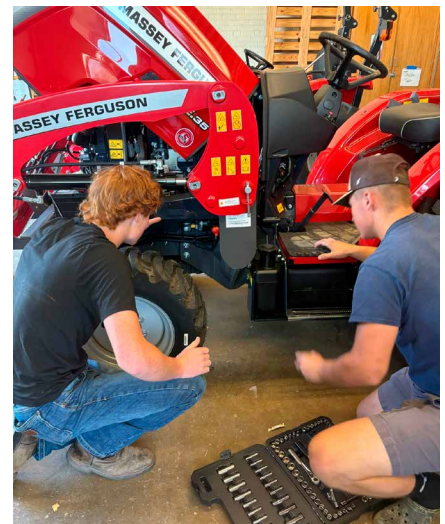
The Northern Area Tractor Driving and the Tractor Troubleshooting competition took place on a beautiful fall day on Tuesday, September 9th at Fauquier High School in Warrenton, Virginia. Members started showing up at 8:30 for their timeslot for either Tractor Operators or Tractor Troubleshooting, and teams showed up periodically throughout the rest of the day to compete. No matter the competition though, the members competing started out with a written test before moving into the hands-on part of their competition. For Tractor Driving, that consisted of two driving courses. Competitors first had to drive a tractor with a two-wheel wagon attached through a figure eight driving course that included two areas to back into. Then, they had to switch to a four-wheel wagon and pull it out of one barn bay and back it into another. This competition tested not only the members' driving skills, but also their time management skills as they had ten minutes to complete the first task and ten minutes to complete the second task.

At the same time as this, Northern Area Tractor Troubleshooting, which is a two-person event, was also happening. After they finished the written exam,

they would head to the shop where there were two tractors with various issues. The team would have to figure out what was wrong with both tractors and then they would be randomly assigned a tractor to fix. This event required teamwork, good communication, and a wide range of tractor knowledge to finish the task in a limited amount of time.

This experience was a great learning experience for everyone involved because everyone competing had to think on their feet and make split second decisions as unexpected challenges arose. Corinne Cooley, a senior from Sherando High School, has competed in Tractor Troubleshooting for two years, and she says that her favorite part of the competition is “getting to learn more about the newer tractors with all the different electronics and sensors since I’m used to working on older, more antique tractors.” No matter how much experience someone has in this area, every competition holds something new as everyone gets to drive a different tractor or work on a different piece of equipment, which ensures that everyone leaves the competition with some new knowledge.

The four-wheel wagon part of the Tractor Driving competition tested members time management and problem-solving skills as they had a limited space to move the trailer around in.



Members in Tractor Troubleshooting, such as the ones above, had to work together to fix an issue on the tractor with limited information and a wide range of possible issues.



With the two-wheel wagon part of the Tractor Driving competition, competitors had to balance speed with carefulness as they had to try and make it through a narrow driving course without making any mistakes.



Chapter Visits

New School Year, New Connections



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The beginning of the school year brings a lot of firsts for students all over the state including new classes, new friends, and new memories. It also signals a change in the life of the State Officers as they begin to facilitate chapter visits to members from all over the state. So far this year, the State Officers have visited Lord Botetourt, Peter Muhlenberg Middle, Caroline Middle, Buffalo Gap, Appomattox Middle, ACE Center at Hermitage, Legacy Christian Academy, and James River. While these visits can seem daunting at first, they are the core of what State Officers do, and the amazing connections made with members erase any of the potential nerves. Jailyynn Simon, an eighth grader from Caroline Middle, said that Franco Abud and Georgia Grady, who visited her chapter for their monthly club meeting back in August, “showed compassion [and] connected with the middle school chapters.” For the State Officers, these genuine connections and memories go a long way.

The workshops the State Officers deliver also provide a break from the normal routine for students. Whether the visit is during a class or during an after-school meeting, the State Officers strive to teach the FFA knowledge and leadership skills through fun activities. Whether that be through an Official Dress style dress up game or a teamwork game that involves keeping a balloon in the air for as long as possible with a group of members, these fun and unique activities make the workshops special and memorable for the students



Students in ag classes at Lord Botetourt High School participated in a teamwork game where they had to work with their group to keep the balloon in the air.

State Officers Franco Abud, Georgia Grady, Lee Kent, and Danika Landreth with the Peter Muhlenberg FFA chapter after their first FFA meeting.



Students from Caroline Middle School participated in a history date match-up with some of the important dates in FFA. This competition motivated the students to pay attention and work together to get the dates correct.

and members. Rylee Orr, another eighth grader from Carline Middle, said, “My favorite part of the workshop was having something interactive to do rather than lecture style learning.” These games not only make the workshops more interesting for the members, but they also make it more fun for the State Officers to facilitate, and they make it easier for the State Officers to form genuine connections with the members they meet.

This upcoming school year holds a lot of new experiences for both the State Officers and FFA members across the state. The one constant through it all will be the chapter visits, with all the laughter, lightbulb moments, and memories that’ll last a lifetime. Just as students all over the state are getting into their groove with school, the Virginia State Officers are getting into their groove as well, improving on both their workshops and their facilitation techniques all with the promise of a great school year ahead!