

Vision of Virginia

FALL 2023



CONTENTS

- B** THE STATE OFFICERS TAKE ON THE MEDIA
C STATE DAIRY JUDGING AND HANDLING
D LEARNING LEADERSHIP ACROSS THE STATE
G SPEAK AG CONFERENCE
H LOTS TO SEE AT THE BIG E
K OFFICERS CHOICE CROSSWORD PUZZLE
L STATE FAIR MINI ARTICLES
Q COOP CONFERENCE AT OLD DOMINION
R HOKIE VILLAGE
T A TASTE OF THE BLUE RIDGE
U DR. JOHN H. HILLISON LEGACY FUND

UPCOMING events

FEBRUARY

15-24: FFA Week Tour

MARCH

22-24: VICE Conference

APRIL

17-20: VA Beef Expo

JUNE

24-27: FFA Convention

THE STATE OFFICERS TAKE ON *the Media*



by **Liberti Sell** – VA FFA 2023-2024 State Reporter

The 2023-2024 State Officers take on the media! With the help of the Virginia Farm Bureau, the state officers were able to get one on one training for how to navigate and work with the media. We were mock interviewed and recorded after learning some tricks on how to word our responses and were able to watch ourselves to see how we can better improve when interacting with the media. We had an amazing time spending the day with Mr. Norm and getting to meet the Virginia



Farm Bureau president, Mr. Pryor, and speaking to him while learning a little about what happens behind the scenes at Farm Bureau.



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STATE DAIRY JUDGING AND HANDLING:

Not Just a Cow Contest



by Kirin Miller – VA FFA 2023-2024 State Vice President

What does perfect weather, dairy cattle, and hard work sound like to you? For the 2023 State Dairy Judging and Handling contest participants, August third was the day all these things came together for a day of fun and competitive spirit!

The Dairy Judging contest includes judging and placing different classes of cows and then giving your reasoning, taking an exam about things like diseases, feed, and management practices, and completing a problem with your team about different aspects of herd summaries. The Dairy Handling contest includes how well individuals can move and present cattle and lead exercises with them based on the animal and contestant's appearance and behavior.

It all started at nine A.M. Two different contests were being held at the same time in conjunction with each other. The dairy handling participants show the cattle that the judging participants judged! There were six classes of dairy cattle with four animals in each one: Jersey winter calves, red and white winter yearlings, Brown Swiss winter yearlings, Holstein two-year-olds, red and white cows, and Holstein four-year-olds. After this, the contestants gave their reasons for why they placed the Holstein four-year-olds the way they did individually.



The Dairy Judging contestants study the calves being shown by the handlers.

The Dairy Judging and Handling contestants gather to listen for instruction from Dave Winston (Extension Dairy Specialist).



A Dairy Handler shows a red and white cow up close.

There is one category for the Handlers contest, while the Judging contest has four: 4-H Junior, 4-H Senior, FFA Junior, and FFA Senior. Only the FFA Senior Division in Dairy Judging completes a team problem.

The Dairy Handling and Judging contests then split ways. The Dairy Handlers move on to taking heifers through a workout such as fast and slow walking. Meanwhile, the Dairy Judges start their two written exams.

The winner of the Dairy Handling contest was Cameron Stanley from Eastern View! The top individual from the 4-H Junior Dairy Judging contest was Sedona Sifford, and the first-place team was Rockingham. The top individual from the 4-H Senior division was Maggie Toothman, and the first-place team was Rockingham. The top individual from the FFA Junior division was Hunter Wampler, and the first-place team was Wilson. The top individual from the FFA Senior division was Maggie Toothman, and the first-place team was Broadway.

Congratulations to the winners, and if these contests sound like something you may be interested in, be sure to check them out next year!

APPALACHIAN AREA *COLT*



by Jadyn Smith – VA FFA 2023-2024 State Treasurer

In early September, the Appalachian region hosted its Chapter Officer Leadership Conference (COLT) at Mountain Empire Community College. State officers held three workshops for conference participants, covering FFA 101, Communication Toolbox, and Growing Leaders.

This COLT offered a valuable learning experience for more than 100 local officers and members, enabling them to build their leadership and communication abilities with the aim of using this knowledge to grow their home chapters.

Area officers took the lead in guiding area members towards a brighter future by instructing them on the use of true colors to enhance team dynamics and emphasizing the significance of teamwork.

“The [Appalachian] area COLT is where seeds of inspiration are sown, and where young leaders grow.”

~ Alyson Blackburn, 2023-2024 Appalachian Area Reporter

This year’s COLT proved to be a transformative experience, training members and officers into more influential leaders and communicators while expanding their knowledge of FFA. This event plays a pivotal role in shaping the growth and development of these participants, who aspire to become future agricultural leaders.



LEARNING *Leadership* ACROSS THE STATE

Northern

On September 6th, 2023, the state officer team traveled north to Strasburg High School for the Northern area Chapter Officer Leadership Training (COLT). The members got to experience some amazing workshops to help them grow in their leadership skills, and how to form an effective SMART goal.



South Ridge

FFA members in the South Ridge Area had the opportunity to meet on September 7th, 2023, in Bedford County to guide them in developing as leaders. 155 students spent the evening working in groups based on their officer positions. Each group expanded their knowledge of their roles as chapter officers and found ways to thrive as leaders in the FFA.



Southeast

On September 20, 2023, the Southeast Area held their annual Chapter Officer Leadership Training at Dinwiddie High School. To expand their leadership skills, each student had the opportunity to go through the FFA 101, Growing Influential Leaders, SMART Goals, and Communication toolbox workshops.



Central

It's the middle of the State Fair. Members from across the commonwealth have been competing and enjoying the fair all week long. On Thursday, September 28, in the midst of the business and excitement of the State Fair, the Virginia State Officer Team travels to Doswell for the Central Area Col! Chapter Officers from the entire central area gathered to enhance their leadership skills and impact in their home chapters. It was an awesome experience for all, and we finished the event with a lovely barbeque meal and spent time making new friends!



Blue Ridge

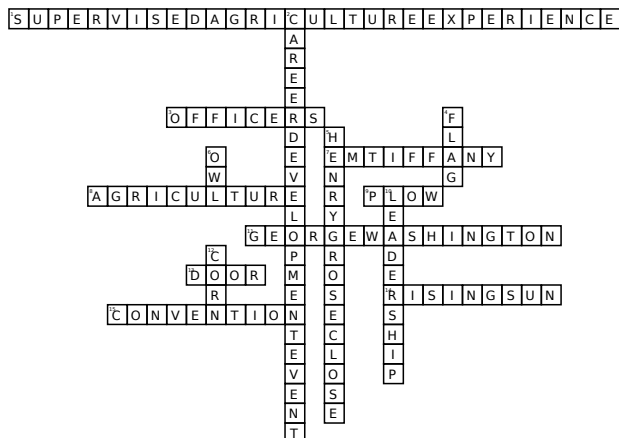
On October 18, 2023, the Blue Ridge Area FFA members came to Nelson County for the Chapter officer leadership training. Members had the opportunity to learn more about communication, and FFA with the state officers. They also had the chance to learn more about the different careers in agriculture through local business and colleges.



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#SUPPORTVAFFA #DRIVEFOR1000

**Answers KEY for the Officers Choice
Crossword Puzzle on page K.**



SPEAK UP AND *Speak Ag!*

by Grace Walbroehl – VA FFA 2023-2024 State Secretary

What do you get when you put together 16 state officers from across the nation who all share a passion for agriculture and advocacy? An amazing #SpeakAg Pioneer Training! The #SpeakAg Pioneer program is for state officers who have a passion for agriculture literacy and advocacy and wish to use their social media platforms to share that passion. The 2023-2024 Virginia FFA State Secretary Grace Walbroehl was chosen to be a Pioneer this year. She has loved the experience so far saying, “SpeakAg Training was so much fun, and I loved being able to learn so much about how to effectively use social media to advocate for agriculture and FFA!” The #SpeakAg Pioneer Training was held from September 20-22 in Indianapolis. It was a jam-packed two days but an incredible experience for all who attended.

The Pioneers’ training blasted off on Thursday morning at the Indiana State Fairgrounds. They got to see some agriculture literacy skills in action as a field trip was held for local preschoolers to learn more about where their food comes from! The rest of the day was spent learning some social media and branding tips from Pence Media Group, the professional marketing group that is partnered with National FFA. The Pioneers were taught how to improve their content creation, social media engagement, and how to represent the FFA brand. This information will serve them well as they take on the responsibility of advocating for agriculture, FFA, and agriculture education throughout the next year. After a day of work, it was time to relax with a little friendly competition



at the Game Show Battle Rooms in Indianapolis. Team Snow White and the Seven Dwarves faced off against team Red (Taylor’s Version) in an epic showdown that ended with team Red (Taylor’s Version) claiming the victory!

Training on Friday was held at the National FFA Center, this was exciting as several pioneers had never visited this FFA landmark before! Friday started with a conversation with Ms. Christine White, the Chief Program Officer for National FFA, where the pioneers learned more about the future of FFA. Then they were able to hear from Mr. Gary Truitt, the founder of Hoosier Ag Today, as he shared his experience working in media and sharing the story of agriculture. Later that afternoon, the pioneers headed home with a toolbelt full of new skills, 15 new friends, and countless memories.



LOTS TO SEE AT THE *Big E* 2023!

by Anne Kathryn Martz

VA FFA 2023-2024 State Vice President

Back in September, Virginia FFA took a group all the way up to Massachusetts for The Big E! Wait a minute, what is The Big E? Well, for those of you that don't know, it's the largest expo on the east coast, highlighting all the New England states... they each actually have their own building on the grounds! You can visit Massachusetts, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, each just a few feet from the other! Besides the state buildings, there is so much else to see. They have hundreds of vendors and attractions, ranging everywhere from great food, parades and fair rides to live music and the famous Budweiser Clydesdales! The Big E also offers an incredibly unique internship experience to six selected State Presidents from the Eastern Area. This year, Virginia's very own, Kelcey Weston was chosen! During her time at the fair, she was constantly on the go, helping with everything from running FFA activities to learning the inner workings of the fair itself.

While The Big E largely represents the New England States, many others are invited to compete in different FFA competitions. Each of the seventeen states sends either their first or second place teams to compete. Virginia sends their second-place teams, so those who earn a second-place spot at the state convention are invited to compete! The State Stars in agriculture from the National FFA's Eastern Area also "compete" for the top spot during the fair week. We had several attend the expo and go through the interview process this year, Blake Caricofe from Buffalo Gap (Star Farmer), Georges Saison from Rappahannock (Star in Agriscience), and Daniel Heath from Clarke (Star in Agribusiness). Below is an attached list of the Virginia competitors and their final placings. We are so very proud of them! A special part of the FFA awards banquet is the final award, the FFA Sweepstakes! Every year, the state with the highest number of top placings. The 2023 Sweepstakes winner at The Big E was... VIRGINIA! This was a huge accomplishment, and the Virginia FFA Association would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to those who competed and helped train the students for their competitions.



The Big E proved to be a great time for everyone! The State Officers had lots to say about their visit up north...

"It was such a cool experience, getting to meet so many people from around our part of the country, as well as really getting to know and spend time with the Virginia members who were there with us!"

~ AK Martz



"Having the opportunity to work behind the scenes at The Big E was a great experience for me. I truly enjoyed seeing everything that goes into the setup of all the contests offered to our members."

~ Kelcey Weston

"Competing at The Big E was a lot of fun. It definitely got me out of my comfort zone being in a different environment, while also doing new parts of the AG Mechanics contest"

~ Nate Zerkel

"I am so proud of all the Virginia FFA members who competed at The Big E! It was also incredible to meet new people and learn about the New England States."

~ Kirin Miller



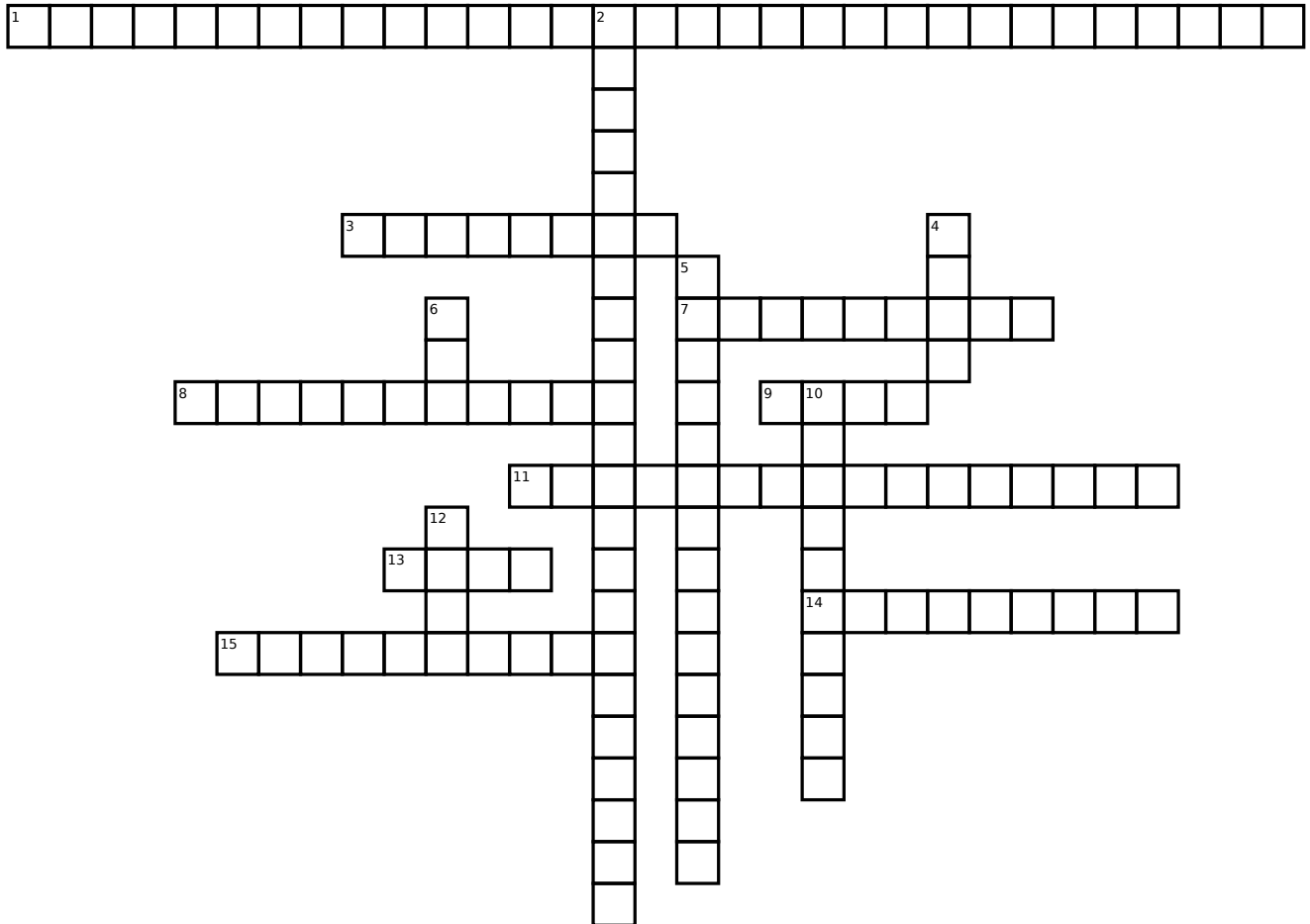
STATE WINNING TEAMS & INDIVIDUALS

Contest Name	School/Chapter	Overall Team Placings	High Individual Placings
Ag Issues	Carroll County	5th	
Agricultural Technology & Mechanical Systems	Broadway	2nd	8th - Ethan Foltz 9th - Nate Zerkel
Creed Speaking	Appomattox	7th	Savannah Jones
Dairy Cattle Evaluation & Management	Broadway	2nd	1st - Ayla Janney 4th - Haelyn Keller
Dairy Handlers	Spotswood		Lucy Johnson
Extemporaneous Public Speaking	Rappahannock	3rd	Anne Kathryn Martz
Farm Agribusiness Management	Appomattox	1st	4th - Bruce Jones 5th - Tyler Martin
Floriculture	Gloucester	2nd	3rd - Ailin Harpole 8th - Eliza Felder
Food Science & Technology	Broadway	2nd	5th - Stephanie Schweigert 6th - Julia Haviland 7th - Eden Myers
Forestry	Carroll County	2nd	2nd - Aidan Hill 5th - Jacob Burcham 8th - Michael Worrell
Horse Evaluation	Blacksburg	1st	1st - Chloe Smith 2nd - Anna Szefc 5th - Lindsay Miller 8th - Anna Bell
Livestock Evaluation	Nelson County	3rd	
Marketing Plan	Magna Vista	5th	
Milk Quality	Broadway	2nd	6th - Romney Ritchie
Nursery/Landscape	Atlee	1st	2nd - Helen Levy
Parliamentary Procedure	Broadway	2nd	
Poultry Evaluation	Central		7th - Brooke Ray
Prepared Public Speaking	Patrick Henry	5th	Blair Rutherford
Safe Tractor/Equipment Operators	Appomattox	3rd	James Harris

OFFICERS CHOICE CROSSWORD

puzzle

by Grace Walbroehl – VA FFA 2023-2024 State Secretary

**Across:**

1. Part of the 3 Circle Model
3. The team that leads an FFA Chapter
7. Writer of FFA Creed
8. The Industry that feeds the world
9. Vice President Station Marker
11. Treasurer Station Marker
13. Sentinel Station Marker
14. President Station Marker
15. We have two of these each year

Down:

2. Competitions that teach career skills
4. Reporter Station Marker
5. The Father of FFA
6. Advisor Station Marker
10. FFA can give you these skills
12. Secretary Station Marker

For answers, see the Crossword Puzzle KEY on page F.



2023 State Fair OF VIRGINIA



AG POSTER

by Adam Hawkins – VA FFA 2023-2024 State Sentinel
and Ellie Vance – VA FFA Undergraduate Intern

Members from FFA and 4-H presented posters to judges on an experiment of their choice picked from various agricultural topics in the Agricultural Poster Demonstration Career Development Event. Their poster consisted of a detailed description of each step of the scientific method used to conduct their experiment. Students were expected to display clear results from their experiment coupled with pictures presenting their hard work. Each student who participated in this contest presented their chapter well. The top placing individual for this competition in the Senior Division was Nathan Paris from Chatham FFA. In the Junior division the top placing individuals was Sylvia Woodie, and Traci Price from Liberty Bedford FFA. Congratulations to these teams, and a special thanks to all individuals who assisted in coordinating this event.

STRONG FOUNDATIONS IN Dairy

by Kirin Miller – VA FFA 2023-2024 State Vice President

On September 22, over 285 FFA and 4-H members competed in the Junior Dairymens contest that examines their knowledge on the basics of the dairy industry. To start off, there are four identification exercises: dairy equipment, cattle equipment, feeds, and dairy products. Next, contestants take a fifty-question exam on topics, such as the history of the dairy industry, the Dairy Herd Improvement chart, and how to care for dairy cattle. Finally, students placed two classes of dairy cattle, which included two-year-old Holsteins and winter calves. In the Senior division, the first-place individual was Herschel Hoffeditz from the Broadway FFA Chapter! The first-place team in the Senior Division was Sherando Team A! In the Junior division, the first-place individual was London Drewry from the Wilson Middle FFA Chapter. The first-place team in the Junior Division was Wilson Middle Team A! Thank you to Extension Dairy Specialist Dave Winston for coordinating this contest.

AG DEMO

by Nate Zerkel – VA FFA 2023-2024 State Vice President
and Ellie Vance – VA FFA Undergraduate Intern

The Agriscience Demonstration contest allows both FFA and 4-H members alike to present their skills in an agricultural topic of their choice. Students provide judges with a poster describing the overall process of their demonstration as they actively display and explain their project. Oftentimes the contest is conducted individually or with a partner from the same chapter. Virginia FFA would like to congratulate Anne Motley and Taylor Moore from Rappahannock FFA Team B for placing first in the Senior Division. Congratulations to Caroline Middle FFA for placing first in the Junior Division. A special thanks goes to the individuals who volunteered to judge the contest, and to the dedicated Ag teachers who made this contest a possibility!

FORESTRY Field Day

by Adam Hawkins – VA FFA 2023-2024 State Sentinel

Students from across the state came to the State Fair of Virginia to participate in the annual Forestry field day competition. This contest consisted of multiple events such as water accuracy, log throwing, log rolling, and a team crosscut saw. Congratulations to Amherst FFA which was the top placing team from the Senior Division, and to Randolph Henry which was the top placing team in the Junior Division. Virginia FFA would like to thank Payne Logging who donated the chainsaw awarded to the State winning senior team. We would also like to thank Thomas Snoddy, Billy Newman, and the students from Mountain Gateway Community College who assisted in running this event. Finally, a huge thank you goes to the Virginia Forestry Educational Foundation for sponsoring the 2023 Forestry Field Day as a whole.



MIDDLE SCHOOL AG Exploration CONTEST

by Jadyn Smith – VA FFA 2023-2024 State Treasurer

The annual Middle School Event took place at the Virginia State Fair. This contest provides middle school students with an exciting opportunity to participate in various contests. These contests included Small Animal Care and Production, Horse Judging, Quizbowl, Livestock Judging, and Dairy Product Identification. This event stands out for its unique feature; helping new members discover their interests within Career Development Events (CDE). The top three individuals from this year's event were: Alexis Davis from Wilson Middle, London Drewry from Wilson Middle, and Noah Grant from Wilson Middle. The top-performing team is also from Wilson Middle, composed of team members Alexis Davis, London Drewry, Noah Grant, and Sawyer Irvine.





Hippology

by Grace Wahlbroel – VA FFA 2023-2024 State Secretary

September 29th was the day of the final FFA competition at the State Fair. Members from around the state came to compete in the Hippology Career Development Event. In this contest, 4-H and FFA members were quizzed on their equine knowledge. The members rotate to different stations, including judging halter classes, breeds, equipment, anatomy, and health. The highest-placing senior team was from Gretna! The highest-placing Senior Individual was Carrie Miller from Massanutten Technical. Carrie was honored to win saying, “I was in shock after winning that contest because I was the only contestant from my chapter...I am thankful for all the people who helped put on the contest.” The top winners were also able to receive a scholarship for their accomplishments, including a \$400 scholarship. Congratulations to all who participated in this event, and a huge thank you to those who were a part of putting it on!

Crops JUDGING

by Nate Zerkel – VA FFA 2023-2024 State Vice President
and Ellie Vance – VA FFA Undergraduate Intern

The Crops Judging contest held annually at the State fair of Virginia invites students to not only exhibit their knowledge on various aspects of crop production, but to also judge its overall quality. Students are asked to correctly identify various seeds, insect pests, soil types, and mature crops. They are also presented with an overarching issue related to agronomy that must be addressed and solved within a certain time frame. Virginia FFA would like to recognize all these members' hard work and dedication during the duration of this Career Development Event. The team placing first in the Senior Division was Randolph Henry FFA Team A, with the highest individual being Virginia Davis from Randolph Henry FFA Team B. In the Junior Division, the team placing first is Charlotte Central Middle Team B, with the highest individual being Bailey Walker from Charlotte Central Middle Team B.

JUNIOR Dairymen's

by Adam Hawkins – VA FFA 2023-2024 State Sentinel

Students who competed in the Junior Dairymen's CDE were tasked to identify various milks, cheeses, and feeds, identify tools from the dairy industry, judge classes of dairy cows as well as taking a written test. Congratulations to our first-place Senior team Sherando FFA, and to Herschel Hoffeditz from Broadway FFA for placing as the top individual. Virginia FFA would also like to congratulate our first place Junior team from Wilson Middle FFA, as well as the high individual in the junior event, London Drewry from Wilson middle FFA. A huge thank you to Dave Winston, and Katherine Carter for organizing this event.



STUDENT Garden

by Kelcey Weston – VA FFA 2023-2024 State President
and Ellie Vance – VA FFA Undergraduate Intern

The Student Garden contest provides students with the unique opportunity to combine their creative artistic abilities with their horticultural knowledge. Each garden is made by students and reflects a theme specific to the chapter presenting it. Viewers are encouraged to walk through the gardens to see the various plants chosen that reflect the overarching atmosphere the students have chosen to convey. Students are expected to provide labels for each plant chosen, as well as both biotic (living), and abiotic (nonliving) components to better reflect that of a permanent garden. Virginia FFA would like to congratulate Bassett FFA for being the top-ranking team within this event. A special thanks goes to all the Ag teachers that supported their students in this endeavor.



HORTICULTURE Demo

by Anne Kathryn Martz – VA FFA 2023-2024 State Vice President
and Ellie Vance – VA FFA Undergraduate Intern

The Horticultural Demonstration Career Development Event was held in conjunction with the events held at the State Fair of Virginia. Members from 4-H and FFA came to exhibit their knowledge on a variety of horticultural topics coupled with an active demonstration of said topic. Judges scored students based on their project poster, and their ability to clearly explain their demonstration in chronological order. Virginia FFA would like to congratulate all students from both the Senior and Junior Divisions for their efforts during this event. The teams placing first in each category within the Senior Division are as follows: from Category A is Jezebel Taylor from Tunstall, from Category C is Emma Vernon from Carroll County, from Category D is Larken Harris from Appomattox, and from Category E is Jenna Moore from Rappahannock! Virginia FFA would also like to thank all the judges and ag teachers who made this event possible.



CAREER APPLICATIONS IN Horticulture

by Grace Wahlbroel – VA FFA 2023-2024 State Secretary

On day one of week two at the state fair students were given the opportunity to try out their green thumbs in the Career Applications in Horticulture Career Development Event. Throughout the contest, students rotated through five stations relating to the horticulture field. They had to identify specific plants, plant parts, and greenhouse safety hazards. Students were also asked to locate certain information on the back of a seed packet. The final and perhaps favorite station of most students who competed was the practical application piece. In this portion of the contest, students were required to propagate a plant using the cutting method, and then were able to keep their new plants! The first-place team was from Mecklenburg FFA, and consisted of Ayden Parham, Kathryn Griffin, Makayla Baird, and Carolin St. Rum. The High Individual in this contest was Mahala Martin from Sherando FFA. Congratulations to each of these students, and a thank you to each individual who played a part in conducting this event!





JUNIOR Foresters

by Adam Hawkins – VA FFA 2023-2024 State Sentinel
and Ellie Vance – VA FFA Undergraduate Intern

The Junior Foresters contest was held on September 26, 2023, in the Farm Credit Pavilion at the State Fair of Virginia. It was here that FFA and 4H and FFA members were presented with the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of native tree identification, forestry equipment identification, and the identification of various pests and diseases. This event was heavily attended by chapters across the state and was easily one of the largest events held by the Association at the Virginia State Fair. The team placing first in the Senior Division was Carroll County FFA, with the highest individual being Jacob Burcham from Carroll County. In the Junior division, the team placing first was Fort Defiance FFA Team B, with the highest individual being Gavin Bunn from Magna Vista. Congratulations to these teams and individuals for their accomplishments!

Tractor TROUBLESHOOTING

by Nate Zerkel – VA FFA 2023-2024 State Vice President

Students from 5 areas of the state came to the Virginia State Fair to compete in the tractor troubleshooting contest. In this contest, members must diagnose, and fix problems within the tractors. The top 3 teams included: 1st place is Appomattox, 2nd place is Turner Ashby, and 3rd place is Caroline. Special thank you to James River Equipment and Hooper Inc. for lending their tractors for the competition!



LAWN TRACTOR Driving

by Liberti Sell – VA FFA 2023-2024 State Reporter

The Lawn Tractor Driving Contest was long awaited by many members who competed at the annual State Fair of Virginia. The contest consisted of identifying lawn tractor parts, a multiple-choice test, and demonstration of safe operation by maneuvering through the lawn tractor course. The top four individuals received a scholarship from the State Fair Scholarship Program. Congratulations to Eli Moore from Highland FFA who was this year's high individual.





THE COOPERATIVE *experience* AT THE OLD DOMINION AGRICULTURAL COMPLEX

by Jadyn Smith – VA FFA 2023-2024 State Treasurer

The Old Dominion Agricultural Complex recently hosted its annual cooperative conference, around 70 FFA members were in attendance. For these budding agricultural enthusiasts, this event provided a unique opportunity to dive into the world of cooperatives, connect with seasoned cooperative representatives, and expand their knowledge leadership.

Cooperatives hold a pivotal role within the agricultural sector. They are organizations where individuals unite, pooling their resources, sharing knowledge, and jointly addressing the challenges that confront the agricultural community. During the conference, FFA members looked deeper into the cooperative realm. Their interactions with cooperative representatives offered a firsthand glimpse into the day-to-day operations of these organizations and an invaluable opportunity to learn from experienced cooperative professionals.

The “Growing Influential Leaders Workshop” was a part of the Old Dominion cooperative experience, led by the state officers: Kelcey Weston,

Kirin Miller, and Jadyn Smith. These officers shared insights into effective communication and team building skills that are absolutely vital for those with aspirations of becoming successful leaders. Effective communication within a team serves as the bedrock of a productive work environment, fostering an atmosphere where team members can openly exchange ideas and collaboratively pursue common goals. Building trust is equally vital, serving as the cornerstone of any successful leadership relationship. Trust empowers leaders to inspire and motivate their team members, creating an environment of productivity and harmony.

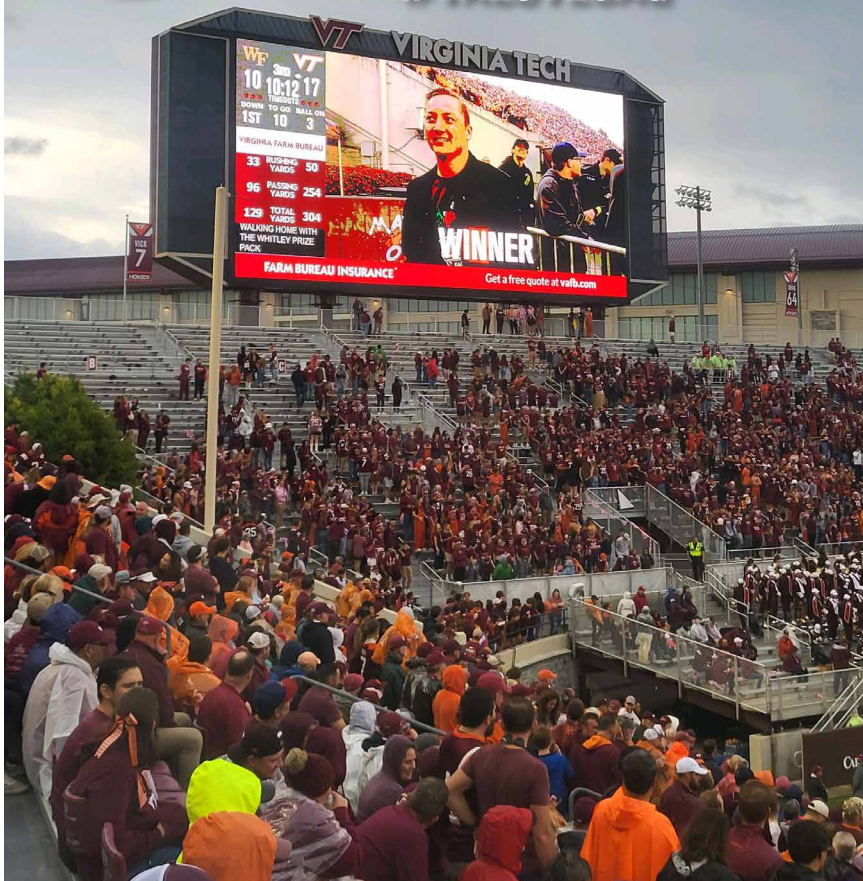
In summary, the Old Dominion Agricultural Complex’s annual cooperative conference served as an

educational beacon for over 70 FFA members. They learned critical insights into the role of cooperatives in agriculture and gained a practical understanding through direct interactions with industry professionals. The “Growing Influential Leaders” workshop placed a strong emphasis on essential communication and trust-building skills for effective leadership, giving these young agricultural leaders the knowledge and tools to make a substantial positive impact in their future endeavors. As they depart from this conference, they carry with them the key ingredients to become influential leaders in the ever-evolving world of agriculture, fostering a brighter and more sustainable future for their community.





A DAY IN *Lane* #VALOVESAG



National FFA President, Andrew Seibel, represented FFA and the agriculture industry for a special recognition activity during the game.

by Anne Kathryn Martz
VA FFA 2023-2024 State Vice President

On Saturday, October 14, 2023, the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation and Virginia Cooperative Extension celebrated Agriculture Day at this year's Virginia Tech Homecoming game! There were several booths set up, one with agriculture themed temporary tattoos, fun games, and even a make-your-own key chain for the "key play!" The state officers were invited to come out and support the Farm Bureau booths, as well as stay for the game, which was a great win - #GOHOKIES!



The state officers pause for a photo with the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Virginia Tech, Dr. Alan Grant.

Farm Bureau has been a longtime friend and supporter of the FFA. Since 1950, the Virginia Farm Bureau has played a vital role in the success of the agricultural industry here in our home state. They have multiple programs that are dedicated to helping young agriculturalists thrive in the agricultural industry. Both the Virginia Young Farmers and the Agriculture in the Classroom programs have been absolutely vital in the success of FFA! Their support is invaluable!

During halftime, someone we all know was actually recognized out on the field. The current National FFA President, Virginia's very own, Andrew Seibel was brought out onto the field! It was pretty cool to see someone who came through Virginia FFA (and someone who's currently in the national spotlight) recognized like that! The announcer spoke about all his hard work and dedication to the organization. I think that it's safe to say that Andrew's years of service will have a long-lasting impact on all of us!

"I honestly had so much fun, the energy there was like nothing I had ever experienced! Being there and being a part of everything that day made me so proud to not only be a part of this awesome organization, but proud to be a Hokie!"

~ AK Martz



The officers made a statement with t-shirts sponsored by Virginia Farm Bureau.

All in all, the 2023 Virginia Tech Ag Day/Homecoming celebration was a major success! We saw countless young faces and spoke to many about the importance that agriculture has in not only this amazing state, but the world! We also saw a few familiar faces too, getting to chat with the

current College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Dean Alan Grant, and Virginia's Commissioner of Agriculture, Joe Guthrie! What a great experience it was to be able to chat with people from every background about the thing that unites us all!

"We had such a great time supporting our Virginia Tech Hokies and spreading the love of agriculture at this football game. There is nothing better than seeing people enjoying the things that they are passionate about!"

~ Kelcey Weston



FFA members interacted with the public and shared information about agriculture and the organization.

A TASTE OF THE *Blue Ridge*



by Adam Hawkins – VA FFA 2023-2024 State Sentinel

On October 8th, 2023, guests made their way to the historic Audley farm in Berryville, VA which is a 3,000-acre Angus, horse, and hay farm for the annual Taste of the blue ridge Great Chefs Table. The farm was founded in 1749 when Lord Fairfax granted a 3,000-acre estate to Colonel George William Fairfax. In 1764, George Washington's cousin, Warner Washington, bought half of the estate from Colonel Fairfax, and from that point Audley remained in the Washington family for 138 years. The Taste of the Blue Ridge features a *Root to Table Culinary Series* where chefs and farmers come together to share in their love of food, from its origin to the table. Along with the food guests had the opportunity to see demonstrations such as “the art of the blown sugar” where Chef Steven Weiss guided us on a journey into the art of crafting Sugar Sculptures. “Where’s the beef” Joel Wilson (Audley Farm) and Lucia Henderson (Chapel Hill Farm) held a conversation about cattle, farming,

and beef while we learned about the differences between small farms and Big Ag. “The lost art of pie making” Chef Cheryl Strasser shared techniques and secrets in perfecting your pie dough.

During and after the dinner there were live and silent auctions and musical entertainment by the Bluegrass Posse

and Winchester based band. We also were given a presentation of the history of the farm given by a young George Washington who was being played by Charles Harbaugh IV. This event raised 10,000 dollars that will be put in the form of grants that chapters across Virginia will be able to apply for.



Dr. John H. Hillison

LEGACY FUND



Dr. Hillison (right) catches up with Dr. Larry Case (left) during the 2023 VAAE Retired Teachers' Reception.

by Ellie Vance – VA FFA 2022-2023 State Treasurer

From his start in pursuing a professional career in agriculture in 1976 upon receiving his Ph.D. from the Ohio State University, Dr. Hillison devoted his life to the development of middle through undergraduate students within agricultural education programs. As a former professor and head of the Department of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Virginia Tech, Dr. Hillison has accomplished much. Such as being selected for the distinguished honor as a Fellow of the American Association for Agricultural Education. He also was recognized by the Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life

Sciences board of visitors with the title of “Professor Emeritus” which infers exemplary service as a retired professor. While since being retired from his former position as department head, Dr. Hillison has yet to cease from sharing his passions with those around him. He has given numerous tours of the FFA Historical room, and shares stories of his time mentoring those in the blue jacket.

Keeping FFA traditions alive and sharing his wisdom with current FFA members is just a few examples of the many ways Dr. Hillison continues to serve this organization. In honor of his life's work,

the Dr. John H. Hillison Legacy Fund was established to award scholarships to five outstanding members who excelled in the written exam portion of the Quiz Bowl CDE. These outstanding students are then qualified to compete against one another for this scholarship to fund their way to compete at the National FFA Convention. Dr. Hillison continues to embody what it means to be a true leader in agricultural education, and it is an honor to recognize his life's work. Donations to his Legacy Fund are made available through the Virginia FFA website underneath “Foundation” and then by selecting “Donate.”



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