

Vision of Virginia

FALL 2024



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by Grayson Long
VA FFA 2024-2025 State President

Group photo after completing Checkpoint 1 training with our National FFA facilitator, Lauren Bigler, a past state officer in Colorado.

UPCOMING events

MARCH

21-23: VICE Conference

APRIL

15-19: Virginia Beef Expo

JUNE

9-13: State FFA Convention

JULY

6-12: State FFA Camp

After a busy summer of getting to know one another, the state officers were eager to begin visiting chapters and spreading their love of FFA across the Commonwealth. On August 5-9 the 2024-25 State Officer Team met in Blacksburg, VA, for their second National FFA training of the year known as "Checkpoint 1." During this week-long training, the officers learned essential skills such as effective communication and how to write and facilitate workshops. They even began partnering up and writing the three base workshop offerings to be used at the area COLTs and chapter visits throughout the year. Before the training's end, the team was also trained to be accommodating to all and ensure each student is offered an equal opportunity to learn.



State officer team participating in a group reflection on the activity they just completed.



State President Keller Cooley and State Sentinel Ryan Livesay practicing their active and empathetic listening skills.

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Farm Bureau NEXT GENERATION

by Keller Cooley – VA FFA 2024-2025 State Vice President

On July 26-28, the Virginia FFA State Officer Team attended the Young Farmers Expo in Nelson County. On the 27th, we traveled to Nelson County High School, where we had the opportunity to participate in a discussion meet competition. A few of the state officers took up the challenge.

After the competition, an agricultural business career fair was set up in the cafeteria and we were able to connect with industry leaders to become more aware of the different aspects and businesses in Virginia Agriculture. We then were served a delicious lunch while having a panel of individuals within some sort of government level to share how we as



An excellent picture of the historic Woodson's Mill, which remains in operation to this day.

Thank you to Ms. Kelly Roberts, Mr. Dana Fisher, Mr. Wayne Pryor, and the rest of Young Farmers in Farm Bureau for hosting and inviting the State FFA Officer Team during the Expo.



Some of the produce, mainly peaches, available at Saunders Bros. Farmers Market.

farmers and members of the organization, can strengthen the connection between us and government leaders.

After lunch, we had the fantastic opportunity to tour local farms in the area to see the type of agriculture in Nelson County, such as Seamans' Orchard, Saunders Bros. Farm Market, Campbell Farms, the historic Woodson's Mill, and many others. We then had an amazing banquet dinner to wrap up the evening and celebrate the Young Farmers Expo.

The following day, before the end of the expo, Farm Bureau hosted a bluegrass band as a great show of entertainment.



The Virginia FFA State Officer Team in front of the Saunders Bros. sign at their farmers market and greenhouses.

MOO-ving on to Nationals:

VIRGINIA STATE DAIRY JUDGING CONTEST



by Allison Rhodes – VA FFA 2024-2025 State Vice President

The Virginia FFA State Dairy Judging Contest was held on August 1st at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds. During this event, students completed a written exam on dairy industry knowledge, evaluated several production cows classes, and presented oral reasons on the classes. This year, ten junior teams and six senior teams competed in the event. Fort Defiance placed first in the senior contest, while J. Frank Hillyard won the junior competition. The senior team members included Lee Kent, Hunter Wampler, Ashley Tutwiler, and Jeffrey McGlaughlin, with coaches Allison Mongold and Jacob Lewis. The junior team included Averie Keller, Maddy Schweigert, Gracy Arbogast, and Rylie Floyd. The state-winning senior team from Fort Defiance also earned the opportunity to compete in the national dairy evaluation contest at the 97th National FFA Convention and Expo in Indianapolis this October. **We would like to thank Mr. Dave Winston for coordinating this event.**



Fort Defiance members celebrate with their coaches after winning the state contest!



S.G. Stewart Middle team members Cameron Moyer, Tyler Simmons, Garrett Packer, and Averigh Wampler get their smiles on as they prepare to compete in the contest.

TOP 3 JUNIOR INDIVIDUALS

1st - Averie Keller

J. Frank Hillyard

2nd - Trey Daubert

Wilbur S. Pence

3rd - Kenley Rhodes

Wilbur S. Pence

TOP 3 SENIOR INDIVIDUALS

1st - Ayla Janney

Broadway

2nd - Avery Caffrey

Broadway

3rd - Haelyn Keller

Broadway



Fort Defiance members earn a silver rating at the National Dairy Evaluation Contest at the 97th National FFA Convention and Expo.

GROWING Leaders

AREA LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES PREPARE MEMBERS FOR A GREAT YEAR



Members at the Southeast Area Leadership Conference, held on September 25th, are 'picture ready' after three rotations of workshops.

by Blair Rutherford
VA FFA 2024-2025 State Secretary

This fall, six area leadership conferences were held across the state. The conferences brought together chapter officer teams, first-year FFA members, and middle school FFA members to learn more about how they can best serve their FFA Chapter. Members attended workshops highlighting key leadership topics such as team building, empathetic listening, intentional growth, and more.



Members at the South Ridge Area Leadership Conference, held on September 5th, try to untangle the "human knot." This activity helps members practice teamwork and problem-solving.



Members at the Appalachian Area Leadership Conference, held on September 6th, learn the importance of active listening by trying to converse while juggling balloons.

One of the offered workshops was "FFA 101," a workshop designed to help members increase their knowledge of FFA. Members learned about the history of FFA, upcoming opportunities, and contests and finished up by playing FFA Jeopardy! Area leadership conferences are held each year and are an excellent opportunity for members to start their year off right by developing their leadership skills, by learning more about FFA, and by meeting other members from their area. **We would like to thank each area for hosting these conferences, teachers and members for attending, and workshop facilitators.**



Members at the Central Area Leadership Conference, held on October 3rd, practice their active listening skills while Grayson Long delivers activity instructions for the workshop titled: "Open Ears, Open Minds."



At the Blue Ridge Area Leadership Conference held on October 15th, some of the Virginia FFA State Officers delivered a presentation on the roles of a chapter officer.



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Big E-ffort Big Results:

VIRGINIA FFA SHINES IN MASSACHUSETTS

by Jackie Diaz – VA FFA 2024-2025 State Reporter

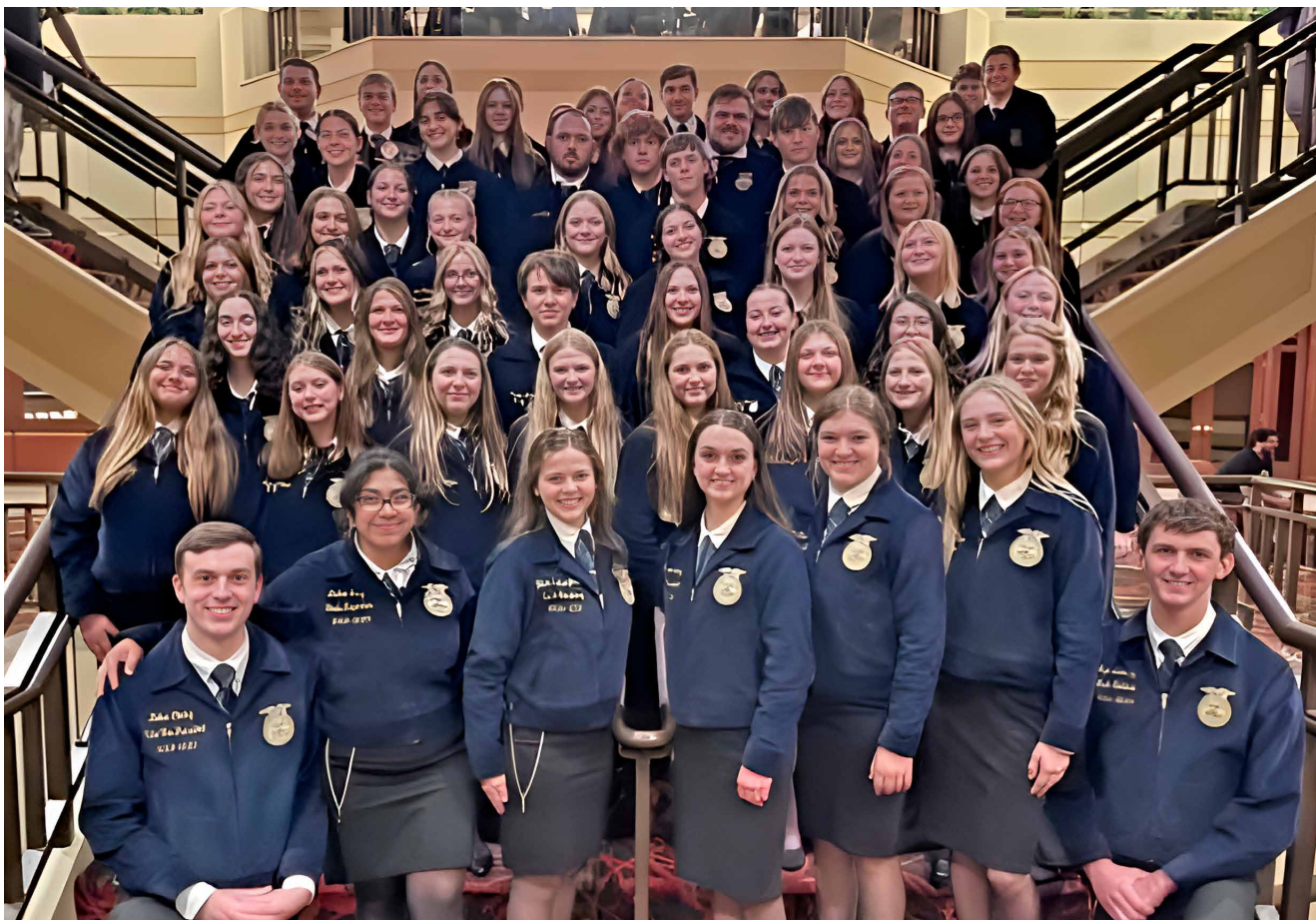
The Eastern States Exposition, colloquially known as “The Big E,” took place September 12th-15th in West Springfield Massachusetts. Virginia FFA was well represented. Teams that place second in Virginia FFA state contests are eligible to compete at The Big E and are recognized at an awards banquet held at the Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel. **Congratulations to all our chapters and competitors and a huge thank you to our state staff, teachers and advisors, and the Virginia FFA Foundation for making this trip possible!**



BIG E STAR FARMER
Grayson Long

STATE WINNING TEAMS & INDIVIDUALS

Contest Name	School/Chapter	Team Placings	High Individual
Ag Issues	Nelson	2nd	
Agricultural Technology & Mechanical Systems	Wilbur S. Pence Middle	2nd	1st - Charles Bryant 8th - Owen Fitzgerald 9th - Austin Harris
Creed Speaking	Signal Knob Middle		6th - Emmalee Hamrick
Dairy Cattle Evaluation & Management	Broadway	6th	9th - Alli Phillips
Employment Skills	Louisa		3rd - Emma Alexander
Extemporaneous Public Speaking	Giles		1st - Colton Moye
Floriculture	Gloucester	1st	3rd - Ailin Harpole 7th - Emma Lynch 8th - Hailey Ware
Food Science	Central	6th	
Forestry	Broadway	2nd	4th - Rachel Haviland
Horse Evaluation	C.L. Payne	5th	1st - Karen Keaton 7th - Sarah Wyles
Livestock Evaluation	James Wood	6th	4th - Braelyn Durbin
Marketing Plan	Wilbur S. Pence Middle	2nd	
Milk Quality	James Wood	5th	
Nursery & Landscape	Atlee	6th	
Parliamentary Procedure	Sherando	1st	
Poultry Evaluation	Fort Defiance	1st	1st - Hailey Keagy 3rd - Allison Rhodes 9th - Rachel Bergdoll
Prepared Public Speaking	James Wood		3rd - Lauren Funk
Safe Tractor/Equipment Operators	Dinwiddie		6th - Colton Reiter
Veterinary Science	Appomattox	4th	5th - Niki Ballagh 7th - Taylor Smith



Group photo of members and the 2024-2025 Virginia FFA State Officer Team.

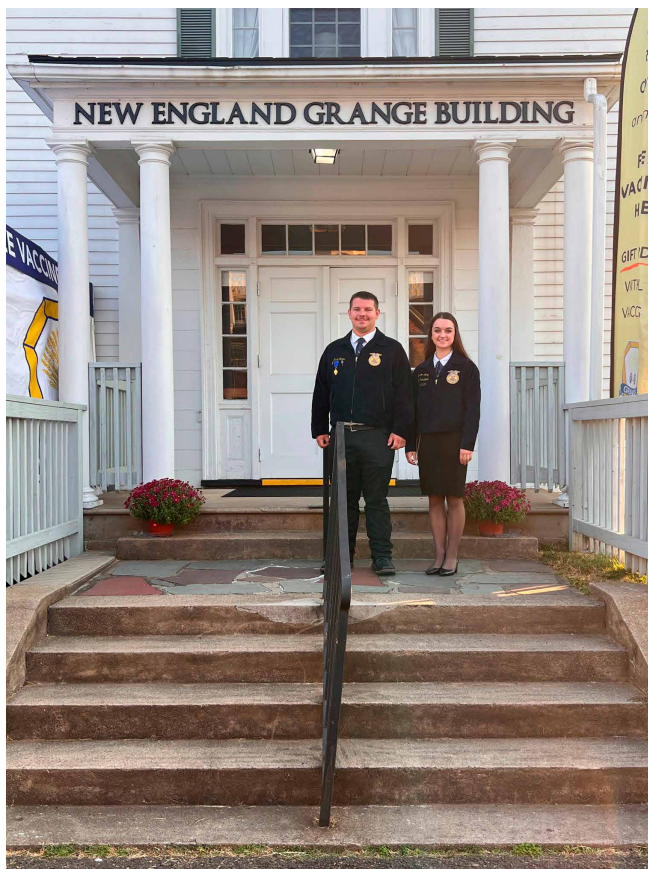
- Virginia is the southernmost state that participates in FFA Days and competes at the Big E.

- The FFA state presidents participate in an internship program wherein they ensure the successful operation of The Big E FFA Program; this entails getting materials ready for competitors and organizing the awards banquet, among other activities.

FUN FACTS:

- The Big E is known for their Avenue of States; a highlight of students every year is touring the New England state houses and getting a glimpse into their respective industries, with agriculture front and center.

- Each year, the Virginia FFA State Reporter serves as a flag bearer during the Stars Assembly and Awards.



FFA Stars competitors Grayson Long (State President, Massanutten Technical Center) and Bruce Jones (Appomattox) posing in front of the New England Grange Building.



Northeast Fall National Holstein Show.



State President Grayson Long, State Secretary Blair Rutherford, and State Reporter Jackie Diaz inside the Massachusetts state house; Jackie is drinking a maple iced coffee from the Tree of Life Maple Farm in Vermont.



Stars Assembly and Awards held inside the circus tent at the Big E.

Here's To the Farmer

AN OFFICIAL RECOGNITION OF ALL VIRGINIA FARMERS

by Grayson Long – VA FFA 2024-2025 State President

It isn't every day that you get to meet a celebrity that supports the FFA! On Sunday, September 22nd, Virginia FFA President Grayson Long was given the unique opportunity to attend the Luke Bryan #Farm Tour concert in Chesapeake, Virginia, alongside the Virginia 4-H President Riley Crabtree. By Governor Youngkin's invitation, Grayson and Riley assisted in presenting a proclamation recognizing Virginia Farmers and their pivotal role in our state. Grayson and Riley also met Luke Bryan backstage and socialized in the Bayer Crop Science VIP tent with the top-grossing farmers in Virginia. One of these farmers they met was the 2023 Sunbelt Farmer of the Year Heath Cutrell, who lives in Chesapeake, VA. It was apparent that Luke Bryan has a large heart for the agriculture industry and cares deeply about those involved.



Grayson Long and Riley Crabtree posing outside of the Bayer Crop Science VIP area, eagerly waiting for the Virginia farmers to arrive.

Presenting the "Here's to the Farmer Day" proclamation backstage. L-R Virginia Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Travis Rickman, Virginia Secretary of Agriculture Matt Lohr, Virginia FFA State President Grayson Long, Virginia 4-H State President Riley Crabtree, Luke Bryan, Governor Glenn Youngkin, First Lady Suzanne S. Youngkin, Gabriella Miyares, Virginia Attorney General Jason Miyares.



Virginia FFA State President Grayson Long shaking the hand of country music singer Luke Bryan.



CERTIFICATE of RECOGNITION

By virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution in the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, there is hereby officially recognized:

HERE'S TO THE FARMER DAY

WHEREAS, Virginia farmers work year-round to provide nutritious, safe, and affordable food for all Americans and people around the world; and

WHEREAS, agriculture is Virginia's largest private industry with an economic impact of over \$82 billion a year and generates more than 380,000 jobs; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's agricultural and forestry exports totaled over \$3.6 billion in 2023; and

WHEREAS, Virginia is home to 39,000 farms and each farm feeds an average of 166 people a year; and

WHEREAS, ninety-five percent of Virginia farms are family owned and operated; and

WHEREAS, Virginia farmers will be asked to do even more in the future to help feed the world's population, which is expected to grow to 10 billion by 2050; and

WHEREAS, Virginia farmers care deeply about protecting the environment and sustaining our precious natural resources; and

WHEREAS, Virginia farmers are passionate about what they do, work hard, help others, and deeply value their farms and families; and

WHEREAS, we are thankful for the two percent of our population who raise the products we all need every day for food, clothing, shelter, and fuel;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Glenn Youngkin, do hereby recognize September 20, 2024, as **HERE'S TO THE FARMER DAY** in our COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA, and I call this observance to the attention of all our citizens.



Glenn Youngkin
Governor

Kerry Lee
Secretary of the Commonwealth

A closer look at Governor Youngkin's proclamation.



2024 State Fair OF VIRGINIA



by Ryan Livesay – VA FFA 2024-2025 State Sentinel

Agricultural DEMONSTRATION

The Farm Credit Pavilion was full of eager Virginia FFA members excited to compete in Agricultural Demonstration. Members arrived with their presentations on agriculturally based topics that they are passionate about. Students and presentations were judged on their content, delivery, and interactiveness with the judges. Thank you to Dr. Hannah Scherer and Dr. Brett Milliken for coordinating this event and James River Equipment for sponsoring.

RESULTS:

Senior team winner - Franco Abud - Cortland

Junior team winner - Trinley Robson and Bailey Thornton - Floyd T. Binns Middle

Crops

The crops contest allows students to show their knowledge of seeds, insects, soils, and crops. They also show their skills in solving complex problems related to crop production and agronomy. Virginia FFA would like to congratulate and recognize all the hard work given by members throughout this career development event. Thank you to Mr. Tom Hardiman for coordinating this event and James River Equipment for sponsoring this event!

SENIOR RESULTS:

1st - Virginia Davis - Randolph Henry 4-H

2nd - Niki Ballagh - Appomattox 4-H

3rd - Jodie Saunders - Nelson County

1ST TEAM OVERALL:

Niki Ballagh, Timothy Henderson, Savanna Jones, and Kat Broyhill - Appomattox 4-H

Agriscience POSTER

The Agriscience Research Poster Contest is a wonderful opportunity for FFA members interested in the agricultural industry. Students present original scientific research in one of the following areas: Animal Systems, Environmental Services/Natural Resource Systems, Food Products and Processing Systems, Plant Systems, Power, Structural and Technical Systems, or Social Systems. Congratulations to all who competed in this event! Thank you to all the judges and Dr. Hannah Scherer and Dr. Brett Milliken for coordinating this event as well as James River Equipment for sponsoring this event.

SENIOR RESULTS:

1st - Annastas Bell and Lilly Secrest - Magna Vista

2nd - Georgia Grady and Kelby Grady - Fauquier

3rd - Grant Hoffman and Colt Loring - C. L. Payne

JUNIOR RESULTS:

1st - Eleanor Mccann - Appomattox 4-H

2nd - Olivia Scarving - William C. Taylor Middle

3rd - Pierce Rorer and Jeb Stanley - Liberty Bedford Middle

JUNIOR RESULTS:

1st - Annemar Tate - Charlotte Central Middle

2nd - LJ Atkins - Appomattox 4-H

3rd - Suraiya Simmons - Charlotte Central Middle

1ST TEAM OVERALL:

Annemar Tate, Suraiya Simmons, Bail Walker, and Ryleigh Metts - Charlotte Central Middle

FORESTRY *Field Day* *Hippology*

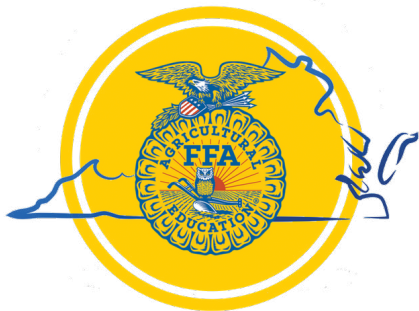
Virginia FFA members from across the state came together to compete in the annual Forestry Field Day competition. The Forestry Field Day contest allows students to demonstrate skills related to the forestry industry. Each team will consist of 7 students, 2 in a log roll, 1 in log throw, 2 in crosscut saw, 1 in water accuracy, and 1 in bow saw. Virginia FFA would like to thank Mr. Thomas Snoddy for coordinating this event and James River Equipment for their generous sponsorship!

SENIOR TEAM:

- 1st - Josh Lehman, Camden Tucker, AJ Jennings, Jacob Case, Devin Wright, Matthew Dixon, and Hunter Knott - *Randolph Henry*
 2nd - William Mays, Kevin Hamm, Kameron Goins, Jayden Brown, Lance Clark, Braeden Hicks, and Joseph Hunt - *Amherst*
 3rd - Luke Vernon, Samuel Brown, Hunter Gravely, Logan Bond, Saford Marshall, Chance Hill, and Jacob Nicholson - *Carroll County*

JUNIOR TEAM:

- 1st - Brantley Martinn, Jasper Tomlin, Preston Maddox, Bella Torres, Olivia Hughes, Thomas Campbell, and Jesse Tomlin - *Amherst Middle*
 2nd - Brody Delp, Alsonsa Rojas, Cale Fender, Josh Talbert, Talon Henley, Skyler Hylton, and Grayson Jones - *Carroll County Middle*
 3rd - Gabby McGinley, Waylon Belew, Luke Hubler, William King, Baylor McLeod, August Edelberg, and Garrett Atkinson - *Louisa Middle*



Virginia FFA members were excited to compete in the state Hippology contest this year! The contest is composed of four phases: horse judging, an exam composed of a written test and projected slides, and stations. Thank you to Ms. Hunter Liles for helping make this contest possible and James River Equipment for sponsoring this event.

SENIOR RESULTS:

- 1st - Emmakate Sazonov - *Country Kids 4-H*
 2nd - Marybeth Martin - *Country Kids 4-H*
 3rd - Emma Ranson - *Pegasus 4-H Horse and Pony Club*

1ST TEAM OVERALL:

Bridgett Thompson, Eden Farr, Irelyn Hobbs, and Melina Rochester - *Hoof-N-Woof 4-H Club, Inc*

JUNIOR RESULTS:

- 1st - Josie Helton - *Hip Equine 4-H Club*
 2nd - Sammy Hubbard - *Liberty*
 3rd - Alexis Davis - *Wilson Memorial*

1ST TEAM OVERALL:

Sammy Hubbard, Abby Salkowitz, Leann Wright, and Mackenzie Curtis - *Liberty*

CAREER APPLICATIONS IN *Horticulture*

In the Career Applications in Horticulture contest, students were able to demonstrate their knowledge of plant science through identification and anatomy, greenhouse safety and horticultural sciences. Contestants rotated through 5 different stations to test their knowledge. Congratulations to all who competed. A big thank you to Cindy Green and Alison Jones for coordinating this event and James River Equipment for sponsoring!

RESULTS:

- 1st - George Twigg - *Sherando*
 2nd - Xzyia Kelly - *Northern Neck*
 3rd - Thresa Rowe - *Appomattox*
 4th - Kameron Maith - *Northern Neck*
 5th - Preston Bayne - *Amelia County*

JUNIOR Dairymen's

The Junior Dairymen's contest has students complete a 50-question written exam, 4 different identifying classes, answer 10 questions on DHIA records, and judge a class of cows and heifers. A big thank you to Southland Dairy Farmers for sponsoring scholarships for first place. As well as Mr. Dave Winston and Virginia Tech School of Animal Sciences for coordinating this event.

SENIOR INDIVIDUAL RESULTS:

- 1st - Sarah Craun - *Turner Ashby*
- 2nd - Maggie Toothman - *Broadway*
- 3rd - Emma Wisecarver - *Sherando*
- 4th - Avery Caffrey - *Broadway*

JUNIOR Foresters

The junior foresters contest allows students to demonstrate knowledge and skills related to the forestry industry. Each contestant took a 50-question test, identified 25 tree species, identified 10 bugs, and participated in a measurement activity. Thank you to Mr. David Slack for coordinating this event and James River Equipment for sponsoring this event.

SENIOR RESULTS:

- 1st - Samuel Brown - *Carroll County*
- 2nd - Brandon Wallace - *Louisa 4-H*
- 3rd - Jacob Burcham - *Carroll County*

1ST TEAM OVERALL:

Samuel Brown, Jacob Burcham, Luke Vernon,
and Alexis Shockley - *Carroll County*

JUNIOR RESULTS:

- 1st - Jacob Hamilton - *Charlotte Central Middle*
- 2nd - Paden Leake - *Atlee*
- 3rd - David Wolford - *Atlee*

1ST TEAM OVERALL:

Paden Leake, David Wolford, Ethan Meyer,
and Brynne Anderson - *Atlee*

Horticulture DEMONSTRATION

FFA members from across the state came together to compete in the Horticulture Demonstration contest. Competitors present an informative topic related to horticulture to a panel of judges and then receive and answer questions. Congratulations to all who competed this year. Thank you to Mr. Ed Olsen for coordinating this event and James River Equipment for sponsoring this event!

RESULTS:

- Category A winner - Anna Houchins - *Mecklenburg*
- Category B winner - Jenna Moore and
Addison Vaughn - *Rappahannock*
- Category C winner - Anna Ritenhour - *Central*
- Category D winner - Emma Lynch - *Gloucester*
- Category E winner - Savanna Jones - *Appomattox*
- Category F winner - Aaliya Akram and
Carter Burkett - *Louisa County Middle*

LAWN Tractor OPERATORS

The Lawn Tractor operators contest consists of three distinct components: a written exam, parts identification, and a hands-on driving challenge. This event saw 18 students put their skills to the test, demonstrating both their technical expertise and practical skills in real world settings. Thank you to James River Equipment for sponsoring this event! Thank you to Mr. Andy Seibel and Ms. LaVeta Nutter for coordinating this event.

RESULTS:

- 1st - Jacob Showalter - *Broadway*
- 2nd - Turpin Rowe - *King William*
- 3rd - Jay Harris - *Appomattox*
- 4th - Justin Brewton - *Courtland*
- 5th - Zachary Streett - *Stonewall Jackson*

MIDDLE SCHOOL AG *Exploration*

The Middle School Ag Exploration contest is designed to introduce middle school students to the world of FFA and agriculture. Students are exposed to agricultural concepts and are given the chance to explore these opportunities in a safe competition environment. Congratulations to all the members who competed in this event. Thank you to Ms. Alison Jones, Mr. Andy Seibel, and Ms. LaVeta Nutter for coordinating this event and James River Equipment for sponsoring this event.

RESULTS:

- 1st - Ella Doctolero - *R. E. Aylor Middle*
- 2nd - Aidyn McGinnis - *Wilson Middle*
- 3rd - Rieley Woolridge - *Wilson Middle*
- 4th - Emma Walko - *R. E. Aylor Middle*

1ST TEAM OVERALL:

Ella Doctolero, Emma Walko, David Dodson,
and Lyric Dodson - *R. E. Aylor Middle*

SMALL *Engines*

The Small Engines contest consists of 20 multiple choice questions, 1 measurement question, 5 tools to identify, and 1 replacement part to look up. Contestants finish the competition by displaying their practical skills by troubleshooting an engine malfunction. Thank you to James River for sponsoring this event. A big thank you to Mr. Andy Seibel, Mr. James Wilt, and Mr. Stuart Byrd for coordinating this event.

RESULTS:

- 1st - Christian Siegler - *Luray*
- 2nd - Billy Couch - *Honaker*
- 3rd - Timothy Henderson - *Appomattox*

STUDENT *Garden*

In the Student Garden contest, FFA members are invited to collaborate in the aspects of designing, planning, and creating garden displays that celebrate agriculture. Entries are judged on concept, functionality, and design quality. This year's theme was "Where Homegrown Happens." Thank you to James River Equipment for sponsoring this event.

TEAM RESULTS:

- 1st - *Brentsville*
- 2nd - *Mechanicsville*
- 3rd - *Nelson County*

Tractor TROUBLESHOOTING

FFA members from across the state competed in the Tractor Troubleshooting contest. This event consists of a written exam, evaluating members knowledge of routine tractor maintenance and machine operations. Then contestants are given time to identify a problem within their machine and resolve the problem to their best ability. Virginia FFA would like to thank Mr. Andy Seibel and Mr. Dave Balderson for coordinating this event as well as James River Equipment for sponsoring this event.

TEAM RESULTS:

- 1s - Reilly Olinger and Darrin Kiblert - *Stonewall Jackson*
- 2nd - Janie Davis and Olivia Tarbell - *Fort Defiance*
- 3rd - Kyle Prince and Layton Richardson - *Appomattox*
- 4th - Dylan Spillman and Thomas Custer - *Fluvanna*
- 5th - Blake Gragg Xzavier Helling - *John S. Battle*



VIRGINIA
FFA ASSOCIATION

Hokie for a Day

STATE OFFICERS ASSIST VIRGINIA FARM BUREAU AT THE HOKIE VILLAGE



State Officers hand out "Friend of the Farm" stickers to children visiting the village.

by Allison Rhodes – VA FFA 2024-2025 State Vice President

On November 9th, the Virginia FFA State Officer team worked with the Virginia Farm Bureau to advocate and facilitate activities at a booth in the Hokie Village. This day was named "Ag Day" and highlighted many organizations incorporated with Virginia agriculture. During this event, the state officer team talked to people of all ages to advocate for the agriculture industry in Virginia. One station displayed the top commodities in each area of Virginia and provided fun facts for observers. Our other station provided virtual field

trips for those who scanned the QR code. Trips include harvesting peanuts in the field, milking a cow in a dairy barn, and observing chicks in a poultry house. These wonderful experiences allowed everyone to become involved in agriculture with their existing resources. Participants were left with a fun sticker or temporary tattoo to remember their experience. Many special guests were also in attendance, including Dr. Mike Gutter, director of Virginia Cooperative Extension; Mr. Joe Guthrie, Commissioner of the

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, as well as Dr. Mario Feruzzi, the Dean of Virginia Tech's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The state officers enjoyed seeing many new and familiar faces to speak to about Virginia agriculture. They celebrated the day by attending the football game as the Hokies took on the Clemson Tigers. We would like to thank Ms. Kelly Roberts, Mr. Dana Fisher, and the Virginia Farm Bureau team that helped make this experience possible!



Dr. Gutter speaks with the team about Virginia Cooperative Extension.



Allison Rhodes, Grayson Long, and Blair Rutherford speak with Dr. Feruzzi about how agriculture has impacted their lives and inspired them to become involved in the industry.

THE NEXT GENERATION OF Leaders

by Braelyn Durbin – VA FFA 2024-2025 State Treasurer

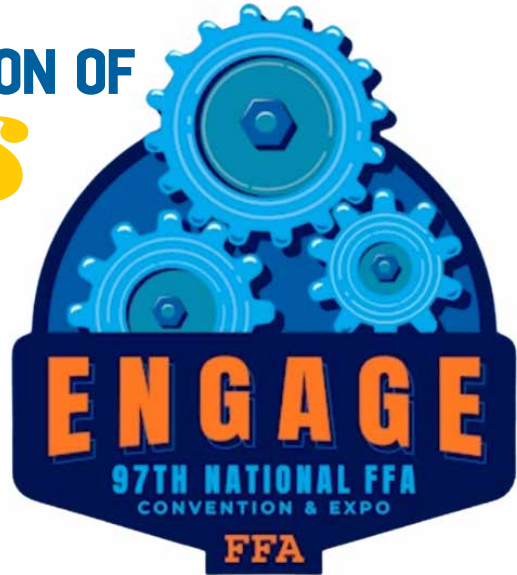
Let's *Engage*! The 97th National FFA Convention was held October 23rd through October 26th in Indianapolis, Indiana. Through this year's theme of *Engage*, FFA members were encouraged to *Engage* in their leadership skills where they will find inspiration to become a great leader that is ready to make an impact. During the week FFA members competed in Career Development and Leadership Development events, received American FFA degrees, participated in National Leadership Development Workshops, took part in the National FFA Day of Service, attended general sessions, and browsed the National FFA Career Expo. During these activities and events, members are given deeper insight on how to find out who they are, who they want to become, and how they want to be the change.



The National Middle School Model of Excellence: Signal Knob Middle!



Andy Seibel received the National FFA Organization's VIP citation. This award is given to someone who has made significant contributions to agricultural education and FFA.



State Officers from across the nation, spanning from Alaska to the Virgin Islands and from the state of Maine to Hawaii also *Engaged* this week serving as delegates for their state associations advocating for positive change within the National FFA Organization. Each delegate has the power to influence decisions, no matter how big or small. This experience gives State Officers the opportunity to be the future change and find their voice of who they are. This year Virginia proudly sent 7 delegates, who were assigned to 6 different committees, to contribute their perspectives and ideas.

The National FFA Convention and Expo allows for students to make friends all across the country, bring back new experiences within their home chapters, explore career opportunities, and strengthen leadership skills. FFA is growing the next generation of leaders who will change how the world grows.

We would like to thank the National FFA Organization and their sponsors: John Deere, Tractor Supply, Cargill, Bayer, CHS, and Microsoft for making this event possible!



Rhiannon Mongold of Wilbur S. Pence Middle FFA Chapter placed 4th in the Agriscience Division 1 Plant Systems!

AINSLEY DAVIS, HANOVER FFA

Member Spotlight

by Blair Rutherford
VA FFA 2024-2025 State Secretary

Ainsley Davis is a junior at Hanover High School and currently serves her FFA chapter as Chapter Vice-President. Ainsley joined FFA three years ago, and since then has competed in numerous contests including Vet Science and Horse Hippology.

Last fall, Ainsley was helping serve milk at the State Fair of Virginia for Farmville Creamery when she noticed that both children and adults were asking, what she considered to be, odd questions. Questions like, “Are the cows hooked up out back, since this milk is fresh?” and “Do the brown cows make chocolate milk?” Although these may seem silly, Ainsley realized that these were serious questions from real-world consumers. Ainsley’s experience at the state fair inspired her to help bridge the gap between the producer and the consumer by educating people about the agriculture industry, and thus, her Instagram account, @ainsleys_ag_adventures, was born.

Ainsley’s advocacy Instagram account highlights agriculture by sharing fun facts, current agricultural issues, and her own experiences in agriculture and FFA. She said it has developed into her “passion project,” as she hopes to inspire others to ask questions and learn more about the agriculture industry.

Ainsley’s social media account serves as her supervised agricultural experience and when asked if she had any advice for members interested in starting a similar project, she said, “Do it! Be honest, be open, and always continue to learn.” Ainsley said she is not an expert on every agriculture topic, but by taking that step to start her social media page, she has increased her own agricultural knowledge while hopefully doing the same for those who explore @ainsleys_ag_adventures.



Ainsley Davis, creator
of @ainsleys_ag_adventures.



ainsleys_ag_adventures Happy AG Fact Friday! The National FFA Organization, founded in 1928, is the premier youth agriculture organization, that helps build knowledge and skills, and creates connections for life! For more information about FFA, check out @nationalffa or go to ffa.org.

Every Friday I'll be posting about AG facts to share with y'all! DM me with any questions you have or topics you'd like me to cover

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Ainsley's first "Ag-Fact Friday" featuring FFA!

DR. GLENN Anderson

by VA FFA Staff

A champion for agricultural education in Virginia, Dr. Glenn Anderson proudly served as the Virginia FFA State Advisor for over twenty years. During this time, he worked with nearly 300 state officers on over thirty different teams, enriching the lives of members and officers with his wisdom and advice.

In 1968 Anderson earned his bachelor's degree from Virginia Tech and is considered a life-long Hokie after earning both his master's and doctoral degrees from the University as well. In addition to his role as a state FFA advisor, he served as an agricultural education specialist for the Department of Education. Anderson was instrumental in new teacher education through both roles.

Glenn was a proud husband to his wife Anne Anderson and father to children Glenn Jr. and Julia. Though he has now passed, his legacy lives on through the work he left behind. The Dr. Glenn Anderson Legacy Fund aims to continue that work through the support of the State FFA Degree Program and other defined opportunities that impact FFA members across the Commonwealth.



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