



NEWS RELEASE

APRIL 19-23:

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Nearly 300 Minnesota FFA Members Earn State Degree Honors

Austin FFA Member awarded State Star

MINNEAPOLIS – (April 19, 2021) The Minnesota FFA named Braden Greibrok of the Austin FFA Chapter as the 2021 State Star in Agriscience. The Star in Agriscience is awarded to the FFA member that demonstrates the top agriscience-based Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) in the state, including students who are actively engaged in doing their own research individually, as well as those students who may be cooperating on research projects with others. The 2021 Stars Over Minnesota awards are sponsored by Compeer Financial Services.

The announcement was part of the organization's 92nd Convention with the theme *Worth It*. Convention events are a mix of virtual sessions, live recognition, interactive state competition finals and workshops, as well as in-person convention-in-the-classroom activities. Today's virtual session was sponsored by the Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council - MAELC.

Greibrok said he improved his farm management, agronomy knowledge and precision technology skills through his corn hybrid research as part of his FFA SAE. After planting two common corn hybrids, Greibrok evaluated the differences in grain yield and profitability after harvest. He took on many roles during his research. He was the seed buyer, equipment operator and information analyst.

Greibrok has been involved in FFA since 2017 and currently serves as the Austin FFA Chapter vice president. He has participated in local FFA activities in the Austin community and competed in the Agricultural Mechanics Career Development Event (CDE) and the Parliamentary Procedure Leadership Development Event (LDE). He is the son of Laurie and Allan Greibrok.

Other finalists for the award included: Samuel Sauber – Staples-Motley FFA Chapter, Brooke Anderson – Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg FFA Chapter and Andy Krohnberg – United South Central FFA Chapter.

Yesterday, National FFA Officer Artha Jonassaint of Florida addressed Minnesota FFA members during Sunday night's premiere of the Minnesota FFA Convention. Jonassaint shared the perspective she gained to appreciate the humanity of people when she temporarily removed something from her life.

"When we only share the good and the great with the world, we deprive ourselves of the love that other folks have to give to our broken parts, and we can't let light in if we hide the cracks," said Jonassaint.

In her retiring address, “The Uffda Zone,” Elaina Knott, state treasurer, of the Thief River Falls FFA Chapter encouraged members to reclaim the phrase we use to express frustration, disappointment or embarrassment.

“The next time we find ourselves in the ‘uffda zone’, own its potential and embrace every moment that makes us who we are going to be,” Knott said.

Two-hundred and sixty-four agricultural education students from across the state were awarded the State FFA Degree during the first day of the convention. The State FFA Degree is given to the top members of a State FFA Association, and nearly 2% of Minnesota FFA members earned this degree. This degree demonstrates the student has put an exceptional amount of time into their SAE, local chapter and community.

To be eligible, members must earn and invest at least \$2,000 into their SAE. Candidates must complete a minimum of two years of classroom instruction in an agricultural, food and natural resources education program. Members are required to have contributed more than 25 community service hours to their communities and participate in at least 10 FFA activities beyond the chapter level. A complete list of the 264 Minnesota FFA Degree recipients can be found at mnffa.org/press-releases.

The Minnesota FFA State Degree charms are sponsored by Riverview, LLP.

Seven FFA Chapters competed as finalists for the Model of Innovation award. These chapters exhibit qualities in all categories of growing leaders, building communities and strengthening agriculture. This award is one of the many ways FFA members accomplish the FFA mission and succeed in making a difference in their communities and the lives of others.

The top chapter, earning the overall Model of Innovation award, is Chatfield FFA. Category winners are: Academy for Sciences and Agriculture – Strengthening Agriculture, Sleepy Eye – Growing Leaders and Chatfield – Building Communities.

Finalist FFA chapters for Model of Innovation sponsored by the Minnesota FFA Foundation are:

- Redwood Valley FFA;
- Princeton FFA;
- Sleepy Eye FFA;
- Randolph FFA;
- Academy for Sciences and Agriculture FFA; and
- Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted FFA

Supervised Agriculture Experience state winners in the categories of Animal Systems were recognized for their achievements, along with Agriscience Fair participants in those categories. Animal Systems Proficiency winners included:

- Beef Production Entrepreneurship – Hannah Wetzel, Faribault, sponsored by Greg, Karen and Nick Gosen;
- Beef Production Placement – Madison Jaster, Medford, sponsored by Hormel Foods;
- Dairy Production Entrepreneurship – Aly Dieball, Sibley East, sponsored by Minnesota Select Sires Coop, Inc;
- Dairy Production Placement – Gabby Lange, Martin County West, sponsored by Midwest Dairy Association;
- Diversified Livestock Production – Karter Jax, Southland, sponsored by the Minnesota Veterinary Medical Foundation;

- Equine Science Entrepreneurship – Josie Schumann, United South Central, sponsored by Zinpro Corporation;
- Equine Science Placement – Abby Lesch, Heron Lake-Okabena, sponsored by the Minnesota FFA Foundation;
- Goat Production – Lynn Larson, Medford, sponsored by the Minnesota Veterinary Medical Foundation;
- Poultry Production – Meredith Taylor, Randolph, sponsored by the Minnesota Turkey Council;
- Sheep Production – Catie Erickson, Fertile-Beltrami, sponsored by James E. and Nancy L. Youngs Proficiency Fund;
- Small Animal Production and Care – Samuel Sauber, Staples-Motley, sponsored by the Minnesota Veterinary Medical Foundation;
- Specialty Animal Production – Isaac Beck, Hayfield, sponsored by Ralco;
- Swine Production Entrepreneurship – Garrett Johnson, Byron, sponsored by Christensen Farms;
- Swine Production Placement – Adrienne Lipinski, Eden Valley-Watkins, sponsored by Christensen Farms; and
- Veterinary Science – Wyatt Halverson; Thief River Falls, sponsored by the Minnesota Veterinary Medical Foundation

Agriscience Fair Gold awards for Animal Systems were given to: Klara Kett, Isle; Miriana Eiden, Buffalo; Camryn Ferris, Staples-Motley; Xavier Satre, Academy for Sciences and Agriculture; and Colton Converse, Staples-Motley.

FFA Chapters in schools across Minnesota participated in convention activities today, such as sharing photos and videos of chapters in action, recognizing “*Worth It*” celebrations to carry out the day’s theme, *The Struggle is Worth It*.

Workshops offered online included Review, Reflect, Renew: Seizing challenges as a tool for a brighter future, and Joys and Discomforts: Careers in agriculture are worth the struggle. The online Blue Room provided students with presentations surrounding 21st century challenges in agriculture, food and natural resources.

Throughout the convention, content is available on the [Minnesota FFA website](#), the [Minnesota FFA YouTube Channel](#), on the organization’s [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) pages and on the Convention app (<https://crowd.cc/mnffa2021> or by download from <https://crowd.cc/s/3ZLxW>).

The State FFA Convention is offered in partnership by the Minnesota FFA Association, the Minnesota FFA Foundation and the Minnesota FFA Alumni.

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Note: For many awards and events, photos can be obtained by emailing snewellopitz@gmail.com during convention week, and jtolosky@umn.edu beginning April 26. Photos of Proficiency winners can be viewed at <https://www.instagram.com/mnffa/>.

About Minnesota FFA

FFA is a national organization developing students’ potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education with more than 700,000 members in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Minnesota FFA Association represents nearly 12,500 members and nearly 200 high school chapters across the state. Agricultural education engages students through hands-on learning in the classroom, work-based learning opportunities known as Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) projects and FFA activities.

About Minnesota FFA Foundation

The Minnesota FFA Foundation will be hosting additional events to support the 12,500 FFA members across Minnesota. The Minnesota FFA Foundation is incredibly honored to support the Minnesota FFA and thanks its donors and sponsors who make this possible. It is the mission of the Minnesota FFA Foundation to secure strategic partnerships and financial resources that promote and enhance premier leadership, personal growth and career success for Minnesota youth in Agricultural Education. To learn more about supporting Minnesota FFA through the Minnesota FFA Foundation at www.mnffaoundation.org.

About Minnesota FFA Alumni and Supporters

The Minnesota FFA Alumni Association and Supporters works to support the 12,500 FFA members, through 72 Alumni and Supporters affiliates across the state. Adult membership is open to anyone interested in supporting and promoting agriculture, agricultural education and FFA at the local, state and national level. One need not have worn the blue jacket to be a member of the FFA Alumni and Supporters, whose mission is to work to secure the promise of Agriculture Education and FFA by creating an environment where people and communities can develop their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success. Learn more about the Minnesota FFA Alumni Association at MNFFAAlumni.org.

Learn more about the experiences of FFA members and supporters by visiting MnFFA.org and FFA.org.