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Minnesota State FFA Convention Recognizes Top Students

Proficiency winners named, future teachers commit to Teach Ag, Premier Chapter announced, and retiring address from Dessa Terning.

MINNEAPOLIS — (April 21, 2026) Minnesota FFA Convention’s second day kicked off with awards for the top proficiencies in agriculture, food and natural resources, along with the naming of the state’s top three chapters for 2026, and a ceremony during which high school students sign for their intention to teach agriculture. Session three was sponsored by Pembina.

Chapter Awards presented

Minnesota’s Premier FFA Chapter for 2025-2026 is Sleepy Eye FFA, named from among the top three announced Monday. Glencoe-Silver Lake was the second-place winner, while Granada-Huntley-East Chain placed third. Each of the three winners also received National Superior and Gold awards.

Proficiency awards given

Supervised Agricultural Experience Proficiency awards were given to outstanding members in the following categories, with these winners named:

- Agricultural Communications, sponsored by The Farmer
 - Addison Wohlhuter, Martin County West
- Agricultural Education, sponsored by the Jim Ertl Fund
 - Addisyn Schiller, Crookston
- Agricultural Mechanics Design and Fabrication, sponsored by John Deere
 - Levi Schultz, Russell-Tyler-Ruthton
- Agricultural Mechanics Repair and Maintenance Entrepreneurship, sponsored by NAPA
 - Ivy McClain, Atwater-Cosmos-Grove City
- Agricultural Mechanics Repair and Maintenance Placement, sponsored by Lynnes Welding Training
 - Elijah Lightfoot, Tracy
- Agricultural Processing, sponsored by CHS Foundation

- Treyton Enter, Sibley East
- Agricultural Sales Entrepreneurship, sponsored by Old National Bank
 - Wyatt Rauenhorst, United South Central
- Agricultural Sales Placement, sponsored by Peterson Farms Seed
 - Valeria Orozco, Highland Park
- Agricultural Services, sponsored by Rosen's Diversified Inc.
 - Nathan Madsen, Heron Lake-Okabena
- Agriscience Research - Integrated Systems, sponsored by Minnesota Grain & Feed Association
 - Courtney Fernholz, Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg
- Beef Production Entrepreneurship, sponsored by Minnesota Beef Council
 - Taylor Christensen, Milaca
- Beef Production Placement, sponsored by Hormel Foods
 - Kaitlyn Byker, Milaca
- Dairy Production Entrepreneurship, sponsored by Select Sires Member Cooperative
 - Henry Salzl, Eden Valley-Watkins
- Dairy Production Placement, sponsored by Midwest Dairy
 - Emily Brogan, Saint Charles
- Diversified Agricultural Production, sponsored by Peterson Farms
 - Ella Doehling, Sibley East
- Diversified Crop Production Entrepreneurship, sponsored by Charles and Barb Melberg
 - Kody Tollefsrud, Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg
- Diversified Crop Production Placement, sponsored by Minnesota Corn
 - Weston Korman, Alden-Conger
- Diversified Horticulture, sponsored by Compeer Financial Services
 - Kimberly Ohm, Park Rapids
- Diversified Livestock Production, sponsored by Minnesota Veterinary Medical Foundation
 - Abby Woitalla, Holdingford
- Environmental Science and Natural Resources Management, sponsored by RDO Equipment/R.D. Offutt Farms
 - Andrew Schmitz, Eden Valley-Watkins
- Equine Science Entrepreneurship, sponsored by Zinpro
 - Addison Buboltz, Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart
- Equine Science Placement, sponsored by Minnesota Veterinary Medical Foundation
 - Addison Barrick, Granada-Huntley-East Chain
- Fiber and Oil Crop Production, sponsored by Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council
 - Nina Mathiowetz, Southwest Metro
- Food Service *Minnesota only, sponsored by Prairie Farms
 - Addison Spielman, Windom
- Forage Production, sponsored by Pioneer
 - Ambrose Rinkenberger, Hancock
- Forest Management and Products, sponsored by Vermeer Sales and Service
 - Andrew Mutchler, Grand Rapids
- Fruit Production, sponsored by myfruitsale.com

- Addison Schumacher, Heron Lake-Okabena
- Goat Production, sponsored by Minnesota Veterinary Medical Foundation
 - Kaytlynn Kenyon, Hancock
- Grain Production, sponsored by Pioneer
 - Ben Capistran, Crookston
- Landscape Installation, sponsored by AgriBank
 - Jameson Buboltz, Glencoe-Silver Lake
- Nursery Operations, sponsored by NextEra Energy
 - Charlie Safratowich, Park Rapids
- Outdoor Recreation, sponsored by Northland Ford Dealers
 - Shelby Johnson, Tracy
- Poultry Production, sponsored by Department of Animal Science - University of Minnesota
 - MaKenzie Heim, Saint Charles
- Sheep Production, sponsored by James E. and Nancy L. Youngs Proficiency Fund
 - Marshall Heldberg, Cleveland
- Small Animal Production and Care, sponsored by Minnesota Veterinary Medical Foundation
 - Riley Kreemer, Osakis
- Specialty Animal Production, sponsored by Land O'Lakes
 - Jaden Ebnet, Holdingford
- Specialty Crop Production, sponsored by Charles and Barb Melberg
 - Grace Sullivan, Cedar Mountain
- Swine Production Entrepreneurship, sponsored by Christensen Farms (stipends from Minnesota Pork Board)
 - Shayna Erickson, Barnesville
- Swine Production Placement, sponsored by Christensen Farms (stipends from Minnesota Pork Board)
 - Ava Wisch, Glencoe-Silver Lake
- Turf and Landscape Management, sponsored by Golf Course Superintendent Association of America, Minnesota Chapter
 - Wyatt Juenemann, Sleepy Eye
- Vegetable Production, sponsored by AgCountry Farm Credit Services
 - Katelyn Ruppert, Tracy
- Veterinary Science, sponsored by Minnesota Veterinary Medical Foundation
 - Jilian Schoenfeld, Russell-Tyler-Ruthton
- Wildlife Production and Management, sponsored by George and Mary Peichel
 - Andrew Schmitz, Eden Valley-Watkins

Students sign intentions to teach agriculture

Eighteen FFA members signed with nine universities and technical colleges in a ceremony demonstrating the students' intention to join the ranks of the teachers who have instructed, coached and mentored them. The "Teach Ag" initiative works to address the shortage of agriculture, food and natural resource educators across the state. The Minnesota Agricultural Education and Leadership Council spearheads the effort.

Those who participated in the event and their post-secondary intentions included:

- Allison Smith, Barnesville FFA, North Dakota State College of Science
- Owen Blat, Highland Park FFA, North Dakota State University
- Hannah Brandt, Ada-Borup-West FFA, North Dakota State University
- Kendra Ross, Pelican Rapids FFA, North Dakota State University
- Alyssa Winkle, United South Central FFA, Oklahoma State University
- Braden McGlinchey, Belle Plaine FFA, South Central College, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities-Transfer Pathway
- Lydia Anderson, Fergus Falls FFA, South Dakota State University
- Alexandria Confer, Sleepy Eye FFA, South Dakota State University
- Hilari Palodichuk, Cannon Falls FFA, South Dakota State University
- Piper Rigge, Redwood Valley FFA, Southwest Minnesota State University
- Fiona Robillard, Windom FFA, Southwest Minnesota State University
- Shayna Erickson, Barnesville FFA, University of Minnesota-Crookston
- Ella Aarsvold, Kasson-Mantorville FFA, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
- Mason Lichy, Holdingford FFA, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
- Liv Vander Kooi, Worthington FFA, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
- Kylie Plambeck, Farmington FFA, University of Minnesota-Crookston
- Olivia Johnson, NRHEG FFA, University of Wisconsin-River Falls
- Dawson Sanford, Cannon Falls FFA, University of Wisconsin-River Falls

Retiring secretary and visiting national officer provide inspiration

Retiring 2025-2026 Minnesota FFA Secretary Dessa Terning from the Dassel-Cokato FFA Chapter gave her retiring address.

“The reputation your name carries will not be built by the thoughts you overanalyze; it will be built by the moments you choose to live,” said Terning.

Lilly Nyland, National FFA Secretary from Michigan, shared words of inspiration and encouragement for FFA members gathered at the evening session. “When we start to cover up what we think are our weaknesses, we need to remember that sometimes, those can be our greatest strengths...Find what makes you, you, and fully step into that, because you are beautifully and wonderfully made and not one thing about you is a mistake,” said Nyland.

Auctioneering Invitational Contest

Contestants from across the state competed in the Minnesota FFA Auctioneering Invitational. Awards were presented by the Minnesota State FFA Auctioneer Association. First place went to Riley Rickford, Barnesville FFA, second place Lane Olson, GFW Pioneer Express FFA, and third place was Jake Siltala, Sebeka FFA.

For more information on the Minnesota FFA State Convention, visit [MNFFA.org](https://mnffa.org), or follow Minnesota FFA on its [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages.

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Editor's Note: Photos are available [here](#). Additional photos will be shared as sessions and recognition occur.

About Minnesota FFA

FFA is a national organization developing students' potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (AFNR) education with more than one million members in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Minnesota FFA Association represents just over 16,000 members and over 200 high school chapters. AFNR 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 hosts events to support more than 16,000 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 AFNR education. To learn more about supporting Minnesota FFA through the Minnesota FFA Foundation at mnffaoundation.org.

About Minnesota FFA Alumni and Supporters

The Minnesota FFA Alumni and Supporters works to support more than 16,000 FFA members, through Alumni and Supporters Chapters. 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 and Supporters at MNFFAAlumni.org. Learn more about the experiences of FFA members and supporters by visiting MNFFA.org and FFA.org.