



**APRIL 21-24:**

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**Minnesota Schools Recognized with National Chapter FFA Awards**

*Second day of convention kicks off with chapter awards, officer retiring addresses and more Agriscience Fair awards and Proficiencies*

MINNEAPOLIS – (April 22, 2024) Minnesota's top 10 FFA chapters were recognized at the second general session of the 2024 Minnesota FFA Convention today. The session also named students who were the top winners with their Supervised Agricultural Experiences in the Animal Systems and Plant Systems pathways.

SAEs are part of the agriculture, food and natural resources education model that includes FFA.

Throughout the day, members competed in Career and Leadership Development Events related to their areas of interest. FFA members also attended a variety of workshops and tours focused on those subjects as well as leadership and personal development.

**Chapter Awards presented**

Minnesota's top FFA chapters were announced, while additional chapters received National Superior and Gold awards. The chapters that placed in the top 10 in Minnesota's Gold ranking are:

- Tenth place, ROCORI.
- Ninth place, Chatfield.
- Eighth place, Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted.
- Seventh place, Mankato.
- Sixth place, Tracy Area.
- Fifth place, Highland Park.
- Fourth place, Glencoe-Silver Lake.

The winning FFA chapter will be announced during the fifth general session on Tuesday from among the top three, which include Rockford High, Rockford Middle, Sleepy Eye.

## **Grams, Mason deliver retiring addresses**

The retiring address of Mason Grams, 2023-2024 Minnesota FFA treasurer from the Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart chapter, highlighted the session. He spoke about passion in his address, "Passion In Growing Self (P.I.G.S.)."

"We should all strive to find our passion in this world," said Grams.

## **Agriscience Fair awards presented**

The top three projects from individual categories of the FFA's Agriscience Fair were recognized. Animal Systems Division One, which recognizes individual researchers in grades seven or eight, included:

- First place, Sam Murrell, Braham.
- Second place, Kenedi Wersal, Sleepy Eye.
- Third place, Megan Fernholz, Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg.

Division Two winners, recognizing pairs of researchers in grades seven or eight, included:

- First place, Sophia Wendorff and Tycen Woods, Braham.

Division Three winners, recognizing individual researchers in grades nine or 10, included:

- First place, Aliyah Lingbeek, Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg.

Division Four winners, recognizing pairs of researchers in grades nine and 10 included:

- First place, Courtney Fernholz and Ellie Bestge, Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg.

Division Five winners, recognizing individual researchers in grades 11 or 12, were:

- First place, Marin Knott, Tracy Area.
- Second place, Tyler Courtney, Academy for Sciences and Agriculture
- Third place, Jaxon Burgraff, Lake City.

Division Six winners, which recognizes pairs of researchers in grades 11 or 12, included:

- First place, Ellen Hartman and Julia Odenthal, Tri-City United.

Plant Systems winners in Division One, recognizing individual researchers in grades seven or eight, include:

- First place, Jordan Thao, Academy for Sciences and Agriculture.
- Second place, Karly Wendinger, Sleepy Eye.
- Third place, Ava Sellner, Sleepy Eye.

Division Two winners, which recognize pairs of researchers in grades seven and eight, included:

- First place, Keeyan Netzke and Connor Mack, Sleepy Eye.
- Second place, Cloud Eckton and Kai Benert, Academy for Sciences and Agriculture.
- Third Place, Breanna Lopez and Mia Davila, Sleepy Eye.

Division Three winners, recognizing individual researchers in grades nine or 10, were:

- First place, Alex Confer, Sleepy Eye.
- Second place, Sarah Silva, Academy for Sciences and Agriculture.
- Third place, Livy Cook, Academy for Sciences and Agriculture.

Division Four winners, recognizing pairs of researchers in grades nine or 10, were:

- First place, Ariana Albecker and Katie Fisher, Academy for Sciences and Agriculture.
- Second place, Logan McIntyre and Declan McIntyre, Academy for Sciences and Agriculture.
- Third place, Logan Webb and Stygian Gralish, Academy for Sciences and Agriculture.

Division Five winners, which recognize individual researchers in grades 11 or 12, included:

- First place, Xavier Cain, Academy for Sciences and Agriculture.
- Second place, Ethan Collins, Academy for Sciences and Agriculture.

### **Proficiency winners recognized**

Animal Systems Proficiency winners and their FFA chapters included:

- Agriscience Research, sponsored by the Department of Animal Science at the University of Minnesota - Madison Anderson, Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg.
- Beef Production Entrepreneurship, sponsored by Greg, Karen and Nick Gosen - Cowan Mortenson, Morris Area.
- Beef Production Placement, sponsored by Hormel Foods - Jada Johns, Tracy Area.
- Dairy Production Entrepreneurship, sponsored by Minnesota Select Sires Co-op - Abby Holtkamp, Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg.
- Dairy Production Placement, sponsored by the Midwest Dairy Association - Grace Weitalla, Holdingford.
- Diversified Livestock Production, sponsored by the Minnesota Veterinary Medical Foundation - Ava Schoenfeld, Russell Tyler Ruthton.
- Equine Science Entrepreneurship, sponsored by Zinpro - Jilian Schoenfeld, Russell Tyler Ruthton.
- Equine Science Placement, sponsored by Minnesota Veterinary Medical Foundation - Samantha Zoller, Thief River Falls.
- Goat Production, sponsored by Minnesota Veterinary Medical Foundation - Sam Becker, Glencoe-Silver Lake.

- Poultry Production, sponsored by the Department of Animal Science at the University of Minnesota - Addriana Ellsworth, St. Charles.
- Sheep Production, sponsored by the James E. and Nancy L. Youngs Proficiency Fund - Isaac Marquette, Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted.
- Small Animal Production and Care, sponsored by Minnesota Veterinary Medical Foundation - Mallorie Hicks, Tracy Area.
- Specialty Animal Production, sponsored by Central Farm Services - Brendon Arndorfer, Leroy-Ostrander.
- Swine Production Entrepreneurship, sponsored by Christensen Farms - Audree Rosekrans, Brainerd.
- Swine Production Placement, sponsored by Christensen Farms - Billy Roesch, Ada-Borup-West.
- Veterinary Science, sponsored by Minnesota Veterinary Medical Foundation - Grace Grant, Stillwater.

Plant Systems Proficiency winners and their FFA chapters included:

- Agriscience Research, Integrated Systems, sponsored by Minnesota Grain and Feed Association - Olivia Noble, Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg.
- Agriscience Research, Plant Proficiency, sponsored by the Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council - Alex Confer, Sleepy Eye.
- Diversified Agricultural Production, sponsored by Petersen Farms - Porter Kuechle, Eden Valley-Watkins.
- Diversified Crop Production Entrepreneurship, sponsored by Land O'Lakes - Adam Hicks, Tracy Area.
- Diversified Crop Production Placement, sponsored by Minnesota Corn Growers - Jaime Johnson, West Central Area.
- Diversified Horticulture, sponsored by Compeer Financial Services - Jackson Walters, Maple River.
- Fiber and Oil Crop Production, sponsored by Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council - Jacob Sowers, Maple River.
- Forage Production, sponsored by Pioneer - Ely Rinkenberger, Hancock.
- Fruit and Nut Production, sponsored by myfruitsale.com - Carter Eiden, Belle Plaine.
- Grain Production, sponsored by Pioneer - Nina Mathiowetz, South West Metro.
- Landscape Management, sponsored by AgriBank - Cole Sundeen, Rockford High.
- Specialty Crop Production, sponsored by Charles and Barb Melberg - Aaron Johnson, United South Central.
- Turf Grass Management, sponsored by Golf Course Superintendent Association of America Minnesota Chapter - Matthew Neubauer, Park Rapids.
- Vegetable Production, sponsored by AgCountry Farm Credit Services - Chloe Kieser, Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted.

## **Models of Innovation**

The Models of Innovation program focuses on FFA chapters that are growing leaders, building communities and strengthening agriculture on the local level. The following chapters are this year's Models of Innovation winners in their respective categories.

In the Strengthening Agriculture category, the top chapter and program is Sibley East with their project titled "Nursing Home Ag Literacy Club." Sibley East was also named the overall Minnesota FFA Models of Innovation winner.

In the Growing Leaders category, the top chapter and program is Mountain Lake with their program titled "Rock N' Roll."

In the Building Communities category, the top chapter and program is Cedar Mountain with their program titled "Bags for Foster Care Kids."

### **Students sign intentions to teach agriculture**

Twenty-three FFA members signed with 10 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.

### **Adult volunteers recognized**

The state's FFA showed appreciation for adults who served on the Adult Board, Career Development and Leadership Development Event Committees, Region advisors, the Minnesota FFA Foundation and Executive Sponsors Board.

New in 2024, all convention attendees including adults will be required to be registered and display a button to access the convention today and Tuesday, April 22-23. Guests should register onsite for \$10 per session.

The Minnesota FFA Convention is offered in partnership by the Minnesota FFA Association, the Minnesota FFA Foundation and the Minnesota FFA Alumni and Supporters. 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. Find the link on the Minnesota FFA website.

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### **About Minnesota FFA**

FFA is a national organization developing students' potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through AFNR education with more than 800,000 members in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Minnesota FFA Association represents nearly 15,000 members and over 210 high school chapters

across the state. 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 will be hosting additional events to support the nearly 15,000 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](http://mnffaoundation.org).

### **About Minnesota FFA Alumni and Supporters**

The Minnesota FFA Alumni and Supporters works to support the nearly 15,000 FFA members, through 73 Alumni and Supporters Chapters 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 and Supporters at [MNFFAAlumni.org](http://MNFFAAlumni.org).

Learn more about the experiences of FFA members and supporters by visiting [MnFFA.org](http://MnFFA.org) and [FFA.org](http://FFA.org).