



What It Takes

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Minnesota FFA Names Stars at State Convention

State FFA Degree recipients honored, Honorary State FFA Degrees awarded, National FFA Vice President delivers keynote speech

MINNEAPOLIS – (April 22, 2024) Four Minnesota FFA members were named as the organization’s top achievers during the third general session of the Minnesota FFA Convention tonight in the 3M Arena at Mariucci. These recognitions, known as the Star awards, are presented annually to the top individuals from four different Supervised Agricultural Experience areas and are sponsored by Compeer Financial. The Star awards program recognizes members for their outstanding achievement and dedication to their SAEs.

2024 State Star award winners are:

- **Star Farmer: Isaac Lendt** from the Sleepy Eye FFA chapter, who has raised 400 hogs each summer on his family’s farm. His efforts have assured healthy pigs and allowed him to contribute \$40,000 toward his college education. He plans to pursue pre-medicine in college.
- **Star in Agriculture, Food and Natural Resource Sciences: Olivia Noble** from the Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg FFA chapter, who has pursued a variety of agriscience projects involving wood, insulation, oil and animal digestion. She plans to pursue a college degree in crop and soil science.
- **Star in Agribusiness: Jaime Johnson** from the West Central Area FFA chapter has been an agronomy intern at Red River Sales in Elbow Lake for two years. In that role she has done crop scouting and soil sampling, and has flown drones and completed other tasks as well as helping on the family farm. His plans include returning to that farm after attending technical college to study agribusiness.
- **Star in Agricultural Production Placement: Rachael Dose** from the Sibley East FFA chapter works on her family’s cow-calf, feedlot and grain farm. Her work for Dose Family Herefords has netted her more than \$45,000 to put toward her college degree in animal science and agricultural communications.

Katie Ketchum gives retiring address

Retiring 2023-2024 Minnesota FFA President Katie Ketchum, from the Lewiston-Altura chapter, gave the retiring address tonight during the convention's third general session. Her address was titled "Live It Like It's Your Last."

Ketchum said, "Not every moment is a good moment, but we can find a little bit of good in every moment."

Honorary State Degree recipients

The Minnesota FFA Association relies on the support of exceptional teachers, individuals and companies to provide life-changing experiences for its members. Individuals who have provided outstanding service on a state level to agriculture, agricultural education or FFA are eligible for the Honorary FFA Degree. Additionally, teachers who have created exceptional agricultural education programs that motivate and inspire their students to achieve success are eligible.

Honorary FFA Degrees for 2024 were presented to:

- Kyle and Jill Grams, Buffalo Lake, FFA supporters.
- Miles and Sarah Kuschel, Sebeka, FFA supporters.
- Mike and Mary Ketchum, Lewiston, FFA supporters.
- Pete and Mary Eiden, Corcoran, FFA supporters.
- Kevin and Kathy Ratka, Cold Spring, FFA supporters.
- Kari Murrell, Cambridge, FFA supporter.
- Craig and Carol Nutt, Cambridge, FFA supporters.
- Senator Heather Gustafson, Vadnais Heights, Minnesota state senator.
- Troy Haugen, Fergus Falls, director of career and college readiness at Lakes Country Service Cooperative.
- Dr. Maria Pieters, St. Paul, associate professor in the Department of Veterinary Population Medicine at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.
- Amanda Sommers, Waseca, Minnesota FFA Foundation program coordinator.
- Representative Mary Frances Clardy, Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota state representative.
- Paula Mohr, Anoka, former editor of The Farmer magazine.
- Michael Schutz, St. Paul, animal science department head, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.
- Jeff Coulter, St. Paul, professor and extension agronomist at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.
- Magnus Nelson, Brainerd, agricultural educator.
- Linnay Schweisthal, Alexandria, agricultural educator.
- Joe Ramstad, Rockford, agricultural educator.
- Rob Cole, Litchfield, agricultural educator.
- Joe Biren, Slayton, agricultural educator.
- Myron Oftedahl, Glencoe, farm business management instructor at South Central College.
- Nikki Flaaen, Zumbrota, agricultural educator.
- Larry Christopher, Jackson, FFA volunteer and supporter.

- Keith and Sarah Lendt, Sleepy Eye, FFA supporters.
- Josh and Kris Noble, Kerkhoven, FFA supporters.
- Lance and Heidi Johnson, Evansville, FFA supporters.
- Kristin Johnson, Barrett, FFA supporter.
- Allan and Joleen Dose, Arlington, FFA supporters.

Keynote Speech: National FFA Officer

Morgan Anderson, National FFA Eastern Region Vice President from Ohio, shared words of inspiration and encouragement for FFA members gathered at the evening session.

“When you show up and show out for others,” Anderson said, “That is when you lead by example.”

State Degree recipients

Three hundred ninety-five agriculture, food and natural resources education students from across the state were awarded with Minnesota State FFA Degrees. The degree is given nationally to the top members of a state FFA Association, and only two percent of Minnesota FFA members earn the distinction. It demonstrates the student has put an exceptional amount of time into their FFA experience, and has gone above and beyond in their local chapter and community.

New in 2024, all convention attendees including adults will be required to register and display a button to access the convention. 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.

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.

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