



History of the Illinois FFA



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History of the Illinois FFA

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1. Introduction

The history of the Illinois FFA started before its original foundation date of June 12, 1929. It even started before the National FFA was officially organized. Before learning about the history of the Illinois FFA, let's take a quick look at how the national FFA was organized and why.

In 1917, Congress enacted into law the Smith-Hughes Act. This act got its name from the two men from Georgia who proposed it, Senator Hoke Smith and Representative Dudley Hughes. The act encouraged and supported vocational education by supplying funds for any high school that had a vocational education program.

After the enactment of this law, the number of vocational agriculture programs increased rapidly. Before the adoption of the Smith-Hughes Act, there were only 14 states that had any vocational agriculture at all. Five years later, there were more than 2,500

schools in 48 states offering vocational education.

With the rapid increase in agriculture programs, many agriculture clubs were organized. These clubs had such names as Junior Farmers, Master Farmers, Young Farmers, and even Future Farmers.



Fig. 1. Early agriculture clubs were the foundation of the FFA.

DID YOU KNOW:

The 1917 Smith-Hughes Act encouraged and supported vocational education.



Fig. 2. FFA members at the first national convention, in Kansas City, Missouri, in November 1928.

In 1926, vocational agriculture students were invited to participate in a three-day program in Kansas City. This three-day program consisted of contests in which students participated in judging contests, as well as tours of meat packing plants and agriculture business establishments. The *Kansas City Star* newspaper hosted a banquet for the 1,544 boys from 22 states who attended the three-day activity. Will Rogers, a popular entertainer at the time, appeared during the event.

Within two years, the first national convention of the FFA was held at the Baltimore Hotel in Kansas City, Missouri, on November 20, 1928. Along with the national convention, agriculture students participated in judging contests, also in Kansas City. Attending this first national convention were 18 states, represented by 33 official delegates.

The delegates adopted a constitution and set dues at ten cents per member. Leslie Applegate of New Jersey became the first National FFA president. Dr. C.H. Lane was named national advisor and Henry Groseclose, who is remembered as the Father of the FFA, was named executive secretary-treasurer. Groseclose was very instrumental in “setting up” the FFA and is credited with giving the Future Farmers of America its name.

Thus, at this national convention in Kansas City, a national organization was created to develop agricultural leadership, cooperation, and citizenship among agriculture students. After the convention, many students left with a feeling of pride in and expectation for this new organization. This momentous date of November 20, 1928, will long be remembered as the starting point of a great youth organization.

DID YOU KNOW:

An FFA officer is only allowed to wear 3 medals on their jacket.

2. Organization and the Illinois FFA

Similar to the national organization, records show that as early as 1912, Illinois schools had organizations made up of agriculture students. Likewise, these agriculture clubs participated in judging contests and competed with their projects at local fairs.

Father-and-son banquets were held in communities by interested agriculture students. In 1928, there were 76 banquets with 5,756 people attending. The banquets' purpose was to promote agriculture and youth involvement in its future.

In the fall of 1928 the FFA was mentioned for the first time in Illinois at a state teachers convention. The State Supervisor of Agriculture Education, J.E. Hill, told the agriculture teachers in attendance about a new organization called the Future Farmers of America. Hill informed the teachers that an organization for youths had been formed nationally. Hill went on to encourage the formation of such a program in Illinois.

Hill's encouragement paid off as nearly 1,500 students and their advisors showed up in June to organize an Illinois FFA. They met in

the auditorium of the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign on June 12, 1929, and organized the Illinois Association of Future Farmers of America.

At this convention, a state constitution was adopted and state officers were elected. The first state president was Homer Edwards of Antioch. Edwards was 16 years old and a junior in high school when elected.

Convention representatives divided Illinois into 12 different sections, electing a sectional vice president for each section. They also elected Wilson Bryant secretary-treasurer and Randall Hart state reporter.

J.E. Hill was named Illinois's first state FFA advisor. Hill was known to many in Illinois as Mr. FFA. He served as advisor for the Illinois FFA for 27 years.

At this first state convention, these students and advisors set the stage for other agriculture clubs to follow. Many students and advisors looked at this new organization with great enthusiasm and pride. In fact, by Illinois's second FFA convention there were 156 chapters and 3,014 members.



Fig. 3. Father-and-son banquets were held to help promote agriculture and youth involvement.

DID YOU KNOW:

The National FFA was founded in 1928 and Illinois FFA was founded in 1929.

3. The First Years: 1930-39

FFA activities in the 1930s consisted of just about any kind of contest a young farm boy could dream about. Such contests included horseshoe pitching, state championship softball games, swimming events, and the FFA Follies.

The FFA Follies were stunts and acts presented at the state convention by various FFA chapters. The follies are similar to what are known as Talent Acts still performed at the Illinois FFA Convention today.

More importantly, FFA chapters competed strongly in many state judging contests in the same way chapters do today. Because travel was not as easy in the early years of the FFA, most of these state contests were held in conjunction with the state FFA convention.

Another contest that was introduced to FFA members for the first time and was held at the second state convention was the prepared public speaking contest. Homer Edwards, state president, urged every chapter to enter and participate. As an added attraction, there were prizes of gold, silver, and bronze medals to the top three contestants in each sectional contest.

Ivan Peach of Walnut High School was the winner at the first state public speaking contest on June 20, 1930. There were two other outstanding awards organized during the first year of Illinois FFA. They were announced at the second state convention. These awards were the American and State Farmer degrees. Two boys had the honor of receiving the American Farmer degree. They were Edwin Johnson of Assumption and Elmer Williams of Dixon. Also, 12 boys were awarded the State Farmer degree that year.

The FFA jacket was introduced to FFA members for the first time at the 1933 National FFA Convention. However, the first time an FFA jacket was worn by an Illinois FFA member was not until the fall of 1939. Although the FFA jacket did not catch on in Illinois until the 1940s, many Illinois members had FFA patches on their sweaters and shirts, instead of owning FFA jackets.

During the 1930s, Illinois was honored to have two national officers. Randall Hart was state president in 1930-31 and national second vice-president in 1931-32. Harvey Schweitzer, Jr., was national student secretary in 1938-39. Besides these two, many young men of the 1930s became successful farmers and leaders, fulfilling the goal of the FFA.

Because the number of FFA chapters and members had increased rapidly in the state in the 1930s, Illinois was divided in 1931-32 into 15 sections. In November of 1939, Illinois was divided once again, this time into 20 sections and four districts. By 1939, Illinois had grown to 311 chapters and 9,753 members.

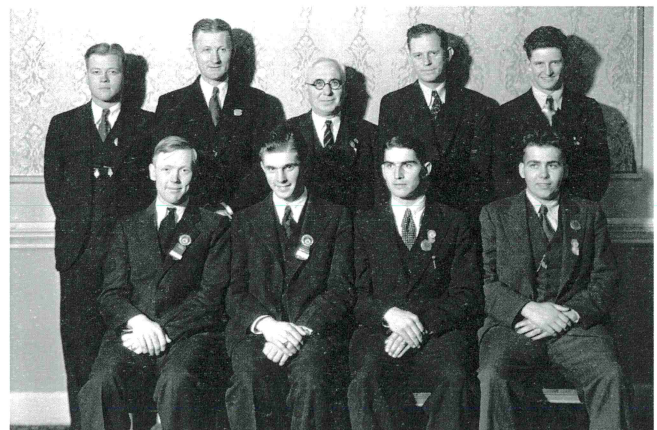


Fig. 4. Randall Hart (front row, far right) was 1931-32 national second vice-president.

DID YOU KNOW:

The FFA jacket was introduced in 1933 and the first Illinois FFA jacket was worn in 1939.



Fig. 5. Harvey Schweitzer, Jr. (back row, far right) was 1938-39 national student secretary.

4. The Trying Years: 1940-49

World War II strongly affected the activities of the FFA organization in the beginning years of the 1940s. Many contests and activities were canceled on the national and state level. At the 1942 national convention only 217 people attended. During the 1945 Illinois State Convention, only the three state officers and 20 sectional vice presidents were allowed to attend.

Many of the older FFA members were drafted to serve their country in the military. Before the war had ended, 5,988 FFA members from Illinois had gone into armed services. Nationally, tens of thousands FFA members served during World War II with

7,188 FFA members losing their lives during their service.



Fig. 6. Many FFA members served their country through military service during WWII.

DID YOU KNOW:

Currently 73% of FFA members live in rural and farm areas and 27% of FFA members live in urban and suburban areas.

Many FFA chapters pulled together in their own way to help win the war. Numerous chapters planted victory gardens, canned food, held scrap iron drives, and collected any materials that were beneficial to the war effort. At the 1942 State Convention it was reported that over seven million pounds of scrap iron had been collected by Illinois FFA chapters that year.



Fig. 7. FFA chapters held scrap metal drives to support the war effort.

Chapters such as Argenta collected 320 tons of scrap iron. The Bethany chapter collected 87 tons, and Shabbona chapter 78 tons. Many chapters contributed in other ways besides collecting iron. The Harrisburg chapter collected 5,522 pounds of rags, Arthur and Tonica collected 20,000 pounds of paper, and Argenta collected 25,000 pounds of rubber.

The war efforts were so intense in 1942 that the winners of the public speaking contests at the section levels were given pennants instead of medals because there was no metal available to make the medals.

Besides the Illinois FFA helping out the war effort in the 1940s, many other FFA events took place. On June 6, 1947, the Illinois Foundation FFA was organized. The

foundation's major goal was to raise money for FFA members to increase the benefits of the FFA organization. This money was used for plaques and awards for members, state officer expenses, public relations, and leadership activities for FFA members. The foundation raised \$1,695 of contributions during its first year.

In 1946, FFA members were entertained at the state convention by Illinois's first state FFA band. The band consisted of 67 members from FFA chapters throughout Illinois.

Also, parliamentary procedure contests became popular during this time. In 1948, the Mt. Sterling chapter was crowned as the first state winner. The following year, members of the Piper City chapter won.

By 1949, the Illinois FFA consisted of 464 chapters and 15,191 members. The FFA had survived the trying years of war and began to prosper again. With the rapid growth of the FFA, the state was redivided by the organization for the third and final time, adding five more sections. This gave Illinois 25 sections and five districts; these geographic divisions still stand today.

Illinois was also fortunate to have two national presidents during the 1940s. J. Glyndon Stuff of Polo was president in 1945 and George Lewis of Mt. Sterling in 1949. In 1943, Ralph Salzman of Ashton served as second national vice president.

One final honor that brought pride into the heart of every Illinois FFA member was given at the 1948 National Convention. At this convention, Kenneth Cheatham from Greenville was named Star Farmer of America. Cheatham was Illinois's first recipient of the National FFA's most prestigious award.

DID YOU KNOW:

The official colors of the FFA are national blue and corn gold.

5. The FFA Continues to Grow: 1950-59

Radio became an important resource for the FFA in the 1950s. FFA chapters began to publicize on such radio stations as WLS-Chicago, WILL-Urbana, WIRL-Peoria, WNLN-Olney, and WSMI-Litchfield. Radio gave local FFA members a chance to publicize to hundreds and even thousands of people about their chapter FFA programs and activities. This was an excellent opportunity for FFA members to make the FFA known to people who were not familiar with the organization and its activities.

In 1952, the State FFA Chorus was organized to accompany the state band. Also at the 1952 convention, the state delegates decided to add the state office of vice president. This office was added because the work and demands upon the current officers' time

were increasing each year and proving too much for just three state officers.

In 1953, Illinois FFA members gathered in Champaign to celebrate at the organization's 25th convention. FFA took time to reflect on how the organization had grown and prospered in 25 years. At the 25th convention, the Illinois FFA reached a high of 495 chapters and 17,421 members.

Serving as state president that year was Harlan Rigney. That fall Rigney was elected national vice president of the Central Region. During Harlan Rigney's term as a national officer, the FFA's officer team traveled across the United States. They visited numerous companies and people who had donated money to the FFA.



Fig. 8. Radio was a prominent marketing tool of the FFA during the 1950s.

DID YOU KNOW:

Future Farmers of America was shortened to FFA in 1988.

In Illinois, the State Extemporaneous Speaking Contest was introduced as a new contest for FFA members in 1957. The first state winner was Bill Holmes of Galesburg.

At the 1956 convention, J.E. Hill spoke to FFA members for the last time as their state advisor. Mr. Hill retired September 1, 1956, after 27 years of service to the FFA. H.R. Damisch replaced Mr. Hill and served as

state FFA advisor until 1963.

J.E. Hill was known as a forceful and admired man who advised, defended, and promoted the Illinois Association FFA for 27 years. He was a man with much ability and an untiring dedication to an organization in which he believed the future of agriculture rested.

6. A Big Change in the FFA: 1960-69

During the 1960s the question of whether females should be allowed into the FFA became a heated argument. Before females were finally admitted into the organization, delegates of the five previous conventions voted not to allow females into the FFA.

At the 42nd national convention in 1969, the convention delegates amended the constitution to make it legal for females to become FFA members. But even in 1969, the amendment came close to failing. After a lively 20-minute debate on the floor of the national convention, the motion passed by the required two-thirds majority: 76 for and 35 against.

Besides females being admitted into the FFA in the 1960s, reporter workshops were introduced for the first time. They were designed to teach chapter and sectional reporters about their duties. Five workshops were set up throughout the state so these reporters could receive help in writing news releases, taking pictures, doing radio interviews, and publicizing their chapters or sections. Illinois was also fortunate to have three national officers during the 1960s. In 1962, Kenny McMillan of Bushnell was elected national president. In 1963, Joseph Coyne of Minooka and in 1968, Tom Johnson of Ashland were national vice presidents of the Central Region.



Fig. 9. Females were allowed to become FFA members in 1969.

DID YOU KNOW:

Females were granted full membership to the FFA in 1969. Today females make up nearly half of the membership and leadership positions.

7. Rapid Growth in Programs: 1970-79

The 1970s was a decade of rapid growth in programs and award areas for the FFA in Illinois and on the national level. For example, the “Building Our American Communities” program was started in 1970; the Illinois FFA Alumni Association was chartered June 6, 1971; and “Food for America” was introduced in 1975. Likewise, three national contests were added:

- Agriculture Mechanics (1972)
- Horticulture (1974)
- Farm Business Management (1976)

Many national proficiency award programs were added too:

- Agricultural Processing (1971)
- Agricultural Sale and/or Service (1971)
- Outdoor Recreation (1971)
- Fish and Wildlife Management (1971)
- Swine Production (1974)
- Sheep Production (1974)
- Beef Production (1974)
- Horse Proficiency (1975)
- Floriculture (1977)
- Nursery Operations (1977)
- Turf and Landscape Management (1977)
- Fruit and Vegetable Production (1977)

Many females began to get involved in FFA programs and activities during the 1970s. In 1970, Christy Carter of Carrollton became the first female to receive the State FFA degree. Debby Fraley of Carrollton was the first female to win a state award. Fraley was the winner of the Poultry Production award in 1977, and Michele Birkner of Morton was the first female to receive the Star award in Agribusiness.

At the 1979 national convention, Illinois was proud to have Lynette Marshall of Sparland become the first female to win the National Prepared Public Speaking award. Also in 1979, Noreen Nelson of Seneca was the first female in Illinois to be elected to a major state office. She served as state reporter.

While females were successful in the 1970s, Vernon Rohrscheib of Fairmount was also making a name for himself. Rohrscheib was named Star Farmer of America in 1974. He became only the second Illinois member to be honored with this prestigious award.

At the beginning of the decade, Dan Lehmann of Pleasant Plains became Illinois's fourth national president. Lehmann served as national president in 1970-71. In 1977 the Illinois FFA saw its membership rise to an all-time record of 18,215 members. The only time in the history of the Illinois FFA that its membership exceeded 18,000 members. The following year, FFA members participated at the 50th national and state convention.

Chapters participated in the burial of a time capsule near the Morrow Plots at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. This event, which was held during the summer of 1979, was a project to preserve some of Illinois FFA's history for years to come. The time capsule was to be reopened at the 75th State Convention in 2004.

DID YOU KNOW:

There are over 600,000 FFA members from the United States, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands.

8. Image and Information: 1980-89

The 1980s brought the FFA more in line with what was occurring nationally concerning the focus of agriculture. These changes were to make a great impact on the FFA organization. Because of an energy crisis in the United States, President Jimmy Carter established a President's Energy Challenge. Alamosa Colorado FFA Chapter was the first to win this award in 1981.

The FFA organization elected its first female president in 1982. She was Jan Eberly from California. Since then many females have been elected to national office, signifying their prominence in the future of agriculture.



Fig. 10. Jan Eberly of California was the first female national president, elected in 1982.

The information business was in full swing with several new items available from the FFA. The National FFA Convention printed its first daily newspaper, called the *FFA Times*, in 1981. The newspaper highlighted

events and activities and focused on special interest stories concerning the National FFA convention. In 1984, the FFA issued its first television public service announcement, starring Eddie Albert of the popular television show "Green Acres." Each year a new PSA is aired nationwide. In 1985, the FFA produced a prime-time special called "Agriculture's Next Generation: A Conflict of Interest."

The National FFA Convention was first broadcast via satellite in 1987. This provided another way for the FFA to be seen in more areas. The National FFA launched a new emblem in 1989, changing the wording from "Vocational Education" to "Agricultural Education."

Computers were becoming integrated into the business world, education, and agriculture in this period. The FFA initiated several computer-based programs in the 1980s. The Ag Ed Network, a computer informational service, was started in 1983. The Computers in Agriculture award was established that same year for FFA members showing innovative uses of the computer in their Supervised Agriculture Experience programs. Also, a subscription computer service named ACCESS was established for teachers.

Educational curricula were changing in the classroom from production agriculture to science- and math-based agriculture. The National FFA established two award programs as a result of this change in curriculum. In 1986 the Agriscience Teacher of the Year was initiated. This award was followed in 1988 with the Agriscience Student Recognition award.

DID YOU KNOW:

The FFA Emblem was changed from Vocational Education to Agricultural Education in 1989.



Fig. 11. Bob Quick (front row, right) was 1980-81 national secretary.

Many official changes took place on the delegate floor of the National Convention. In 1988, the delegates voted to change the name of Future Farmers of America to the National FFA Organization. The delegates also followed up with 18 constitutional amendments. The following year the official FFA magazine name was changed from *The National Future Farmer* to *FFA New Horizons*. These changes dealt with the ongoing image problem the FFA was experiencing. At the time the organization's members were identified only as farmers, when the FFA and agricultural education had grown to be so much more. Members were being prepared to be future leaders, scientists, doctors, and other professionals.

Illinois FFA was also going through changes. The starting of the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences (CHAS) was a new bright spot for the Chicago area. Enrollment and membership in FFA peaked in 1977; there were still many fine FFA programs and

accomplishments. Growth continues today, especially in urban and suburban areas.

Illinois was also proud to have two National FFA officers during this decade. Bob Quick from Bement became the National FFA secretary in 1980-81. In 1987-88, Bill Hollis from Bushnell Prairie City was elected Central Region vice president.



Fig. 12. Bill Hollis (far right) was 1987-88 Central Region vice president.

DID YOU KNOW:

Champaign hosted the Illinois FFA Convention until 1994. National FFA Convention was hosted in Kansas City, MO until 1998.

9. Moving Forward: 1990-99

In 1990, at the State FFA Convention, delegates elected Illinois's first female State FFA President, Mindy Elvidge from Lincolnwood. Mindy was also the 1989-90 State FFA Reporter, making her the first person to serve on two state officer teams.



Fig. 13. Mindy Elvidge was the first female elected state president in Illinois.

The 1990s marked the end of the decline in membership in FFA. Membership has consistently increased each year since 1992, showing that agriculture and FFA can weather the times and continue to train young people for careers in agriculture. The growth in membership can be credited to the modernization of agricultural curriculum and the addition of agriscience in Illinois. Utilization of technology began to take hold in the 1990s. The first electronic State Degree application was launched in 1995, integrating computers in the agriculture classroom and FFA.

The Illinois Foundation FFA experienced significant growth in the 1990s. In 1993 the Foundation collected \$217,060, compared to

\$1,695 in 1947. Likewise, Illinois Foundation FFA awards grew to 30 individual awards. Also, Work Experience Abroad, and the Heritage and Cooperative Programs grew each year. An additional officer was added to the Illinois Officer Team in 1997; secretary and treasurer were established as two offices, resulting in five Illinois State Officers. This was the first growth in the number of officers since 1952.

In the 1990s, the Illinois FFA initiated a new contest in Ag Sales. Creed speaking was held as a national contest for the first time at National Convention in 1999. The location of the Illinois FFA Convention changed in 1994, when the last convention was held at Assembly Hall in Champaign. The 1995 convention was held at the Prairie Capitol Convention Center in Springfield. After 70 years in one location the last National FFA Convention was held in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1998. The 1999 convention was hosted in Louisville, Kentucky.



Fig. 14. Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences was one of the first urban FFA Chapters in Illinois.

DID YOU KNOW:

In 1990 Mindy Elvidge became the first female elected president of the Illinois FFA.



Fig. 15. Raquel Lacey (second from left) was 1993-94 Central Region vice president.

Illinois was honored to have two national officers in the 1990s, including one making history. Raquel Lacey of Nokomis served as the National FFA Central Region vice president in 1993-94. The following year Corey Fluorney of Chicago became the first African-American to serve as national president. He served as vice president on the 1992-93 Illinois officer team. Illinois also had a national award winner. Jay Harris of the Franklin FFA chapter won the American Star in Agribusiness award in 1999. Jay served as Illinois Vice President in 1998-99.

Another major event occurring in the late 1990s was the construction of the Illinois FFA Center. After much consideration and review of proposals, Springfield was the selected location. Groundbreaking occurred on April 16, 1999, and the center opened two years later. A fund drive to construct the center was done at the national, state, and local

levels. The entire construction mortgage for the Illinois FFA Center was paid off in 5 years.



Fig. 16. Corey Fluorney (front row, left) was 1994-95 national president.

DID YOU KNOW:

Corey Fluorney was the first African-American and urban member elected to an Illinois and National leadership office.

10. The New Millennium: 2000-09

The new Illinois FFA Center opened with a ribbon cutting on March 16, 2001. Much growth occurred in the early 2000s at the chapter and state levels. An Illinois FFA constitution amendment allowed junior high students to become members. The Chapter Scrapbook Contest was established and three new contests for FFA members were added: Ag Communications as a Career Development Event and Agronomy and Job Interview as demonstration events. FFA Chapters were allowed to participate in the State Envirothon beginning in 2006.

The use of EZ Records, internet based software, continued to grow in the 2000s. EZ Records was approved for use by students to record Supervised Agriculture Experiences (SAE) and for award and degree purposes. In 2009 electronic voting was utilized by delegates to elect the Illinois State officer team.

In 2004, Illinois FFA celebrated 75 years. The celebration included a parade in Springfield prior to State Convention. Also, a time capsule that was buried at the 50th Illinois FFA Convention in 1979 was dug up that fall. A new time capsule was buried, again near the Morrow Plots at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The 2% limit of state membership for State FFA degrees was removed, expanding the ability for students to obtain the award. The first Illinois FFA president, Homer Edwards, passed away in 2004.

Community service was added to the requirements to obtain Chapter, State, and American FFA degrees. Recipients were required to complete 10 hours for a Chapter degree, 25 hours for a State degree, and 50 hours for an American degree. A Day of

Service activity was also added to the State Convention schedule.

Illinois was honored to have three national officers during the 2000s. Robin Niehaus of Hillsboro served as secretary in 2001-02, Jay Kelley of Princeville served as Eastern Region vice president in 2004-05, and Kacy Baugher of Windsor served as secretary in 2006-07. Andrew Bowman of the ROWVA FFA chapter received the American Star Farmer in 2006, becoming the third Illinois FFA member to receive the award.

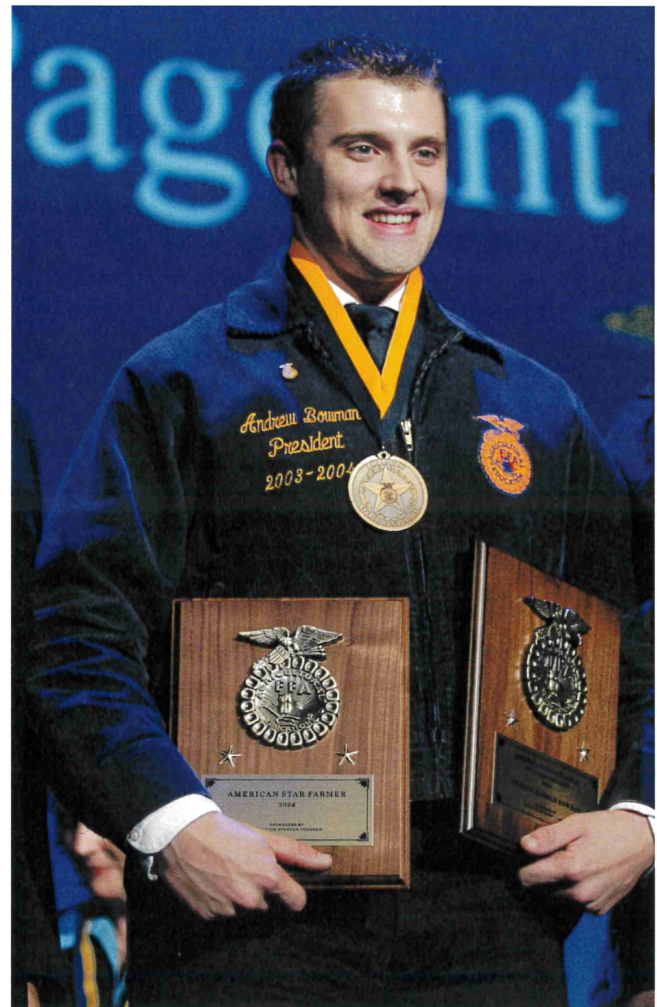


Fig. 17. Andrew Bowman, ROWVA FFA chapter, 2006 American Star Farmer.

DID YOU KNOW:

There are over 17,000 FFA members from over 300 chapters in Illinois.

11. A Bright Future: 2010-2015

Between 2010 and 2015 Illinois FFA continued to grow for the future. Proficiency areas had grown to over 50, and new CDEs included Veterinary Science and Food Science. Illinois FFA Convention hosted a web broadcast for the first time in 2012. In 2015 the governor of Illinois signed a proclamation declaring FFA Week.

Illinois FFA members were successful at the national level. In 2012 and 2013, for the first time ever, Illinois had consecutive winners of the American Star Farmer. In 2012, Clayton Carley of the Cissna Park chapter received Star Farmer and in 2013 Tyler Loschen of Tri-Point brought home the award. These were only the fourth and fifth times that an a Illinois member won the award.

On February 2, 2013, the National FFA launched a national marketing campaign and fundraiser with Dodge Trucks. During the Super Bowl, a commercial ran featuring Paul Harvey's 1978 speech from the National FFA Convention titled "So God Made a Farmer." As a result of YouTube views of the commercial, Dodge donated 1 million dollars to the National FFA Foundation.

This unit is designed to give you a broad overview of how the FFA in Illinois has grown and changed. But the history of the Illinois FFA does not stop here. That history is presently in the making, and you are part of it. You and your chapter are adding to that history right now. The Illinois FFA has many golden memories to reflect on, but these memories are of the past, and you must strive to make the organization's history even greater in the future.

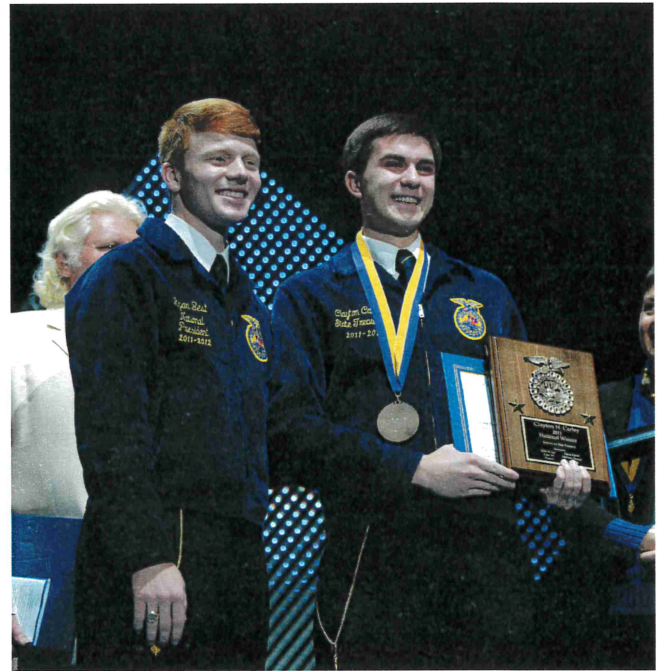


Fig. 18. Clayton Carley, Cissna Park FFA chapter, was 2012 American Star Farmer.

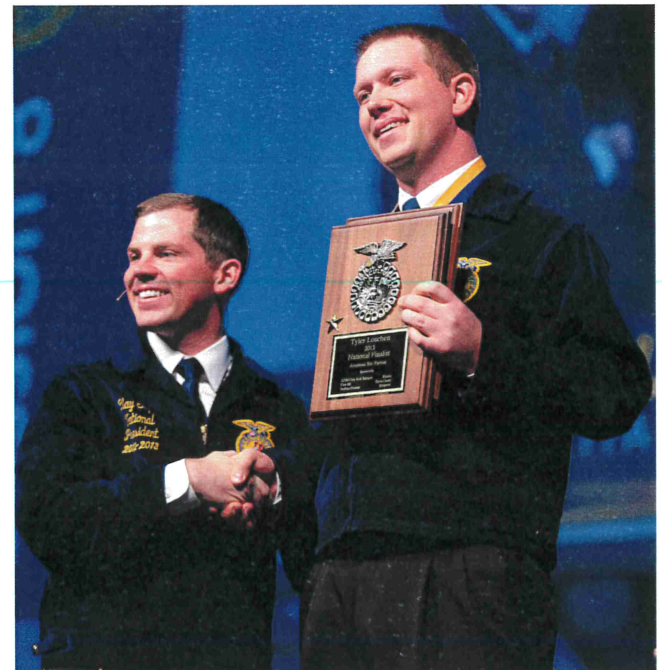


Fig. 19. Tyler Loschen, Tri-Point FFA Chapter, was 2013 American Star Farmer.

DID YOU KNOW:

National FFA Convention has been held in Kansas City, MO; Louisville, KY; and Indianapolis, IN.

12. Past State Presidents and National Officers

1929-30	Homer E. Edwards, Antioch	1955-56	Charles Wendt, Mahomet
1930-31	Randall Hart, Beardstown	1956-57	Jim Brandt, Pearl City
1931-32	Donald McMillian, Chillicothe	1957-58	Donald L. Kimmel, Lawrenceville
1932-33	Paul E. Powel, Jerseyville	1958-59	Tommy W. Clark, Catlin
1933-34	Milbourn DeMunn, Capron	1959-60	V. Gwinner Snyder, Assumption
1934-35	Edgar Hargis, Sparta	1960-61	Lynn Laible, Washburn
1935-36	Adolph Rieckenberg, Chester	1961-62	Kenny McMillan, Bushnell
1936-37	Charles Volland, Chenoa	1962-63	Gary Ludwig, Armstrong
1937-38	John Gehlbach, Beason	1963-64	Kent Slater, Augusta
1938-39	Warren Friedrichs, Sterling	1964-65	Tom Fisher, Lawrenceville
1939-40	Leland Glazebrook, Fisher	1965-66	Gary Organ, McLeansboro
1940-41	Charles J. Kinsey, Centralia	1966-67	Enid Schlipf, Gridley
1941-42	Joe Lynn, Stonington	1967-68	Tom E. Johnson, Ashland
1942-43	Ralph Salzman, Ashton	1968-69	J. Dan Lehmann, Pleasant Plains
1943-44	Wayne Canterbury, Cantrall	1969-70	Artie Tenhouse, Liberty
1944-45	J. Glyndon Stuff, Polo	1970-71	Mercer Turner, Wapella
1945-46	William Kuntz, Monmouth	1971-72	Dennis Dazey, Paxton
1946-47	Richard Higbee, Avon	1972-73	Ben Wessels, Oneida
1947-48	Kenneth W. Cheatham, Greenville	1973-74	Gene Schwarm, Brownstown
1948-49	George Lewis, Mt. Sterling	1974-75	Jon Scholl, Tri-Valley
1949-50	Bob Herriott, Mahomet	1975-76	Boyd Schaufelberger, Greenville
1950-51	Albert L. Kurz, Lee Center	1976-77	Brian Elsasser, Princeville
1951-52	Richard Resler, Fisher	1977-78	John Kermicle, Olney
1952-53	Harlan Rigney, Freeport	1978-79	William Christ, Washburn
1953-54	Gary E. Mueller, Reynolds	1979-80	Bob Quick, Bement
1954-55	Larry Royer, Assumption	1980-81	Joe Maher, Wyoming

DID YOU KNOW:

The Illinois FFA Center opened in Springfield in 2001. Illinois held its 75th Annual State FFA Convention in 2004.

1981-82	Jon Dietrich, Varna	2006-07	Brad Pilcher, Paxton-Buckley-Loda (Paxton)
1982-83	Rodney L. Morris, Champaign	2007-08	Kaitlin Weitekamp, Lincolnwood (Raymond)
1983-84	Ken Burrow, Altamont	2008-09	Clay Zwilling, Sherrard
1984-85	Jeffrey Gregory, Moweaqua	2009-10	Amie Burke, Oakwood
1985-86	Charles Schone, Bluffs	2010-11	John Edgar, Trico (Ava)
1986-87	Bill Hollis, Bushnell-Prairie City	2011-12	Mike Shively, Paxton-Buckley-Loda (Buckley)
1987-88	Alvie McCormick, Trico (Campbell Hill)	2012-13	Darren Riskedal, Somonauk Leland Sandwich (Leland)
1988-89	Corey Torrance, Northwestern (Sciota)	2013-14	Sam Detwiler, Flanagan-Cornell (Flanagan)
1989-90	Timothy Reed, Hardin County (Elizabethtown)	2014-15	Cody Morris, Mattoon
1990-91	Mindy Elvidge, Lincolnwood (Raymond)	2015-16	Kade Hill, Paxton-Buckley-Loda (Paxton)
1991-92	Sam Taylor, Rushville	Past National Officers from Illinois	
1992-93	Jason Kuhlemeier, Pearl City	1931-32	Randall Hart, National Second Vice President, Beardstown
1993-94	David Mouser, Normal	1938-39	Harvey Schweitzer, Jr., National Student Secretary, Malta
1994-95	Allyn Buhrow, Ashton	1943-44	Ralph Salzman, National Second Vice President, Ashton
1995-96	Lynn Boughton, Indian Creek (Waterman)	1945-46	J. Glyndon Stuff, National President, Polo
1996-97	Hunt Lacey, Nokomis	1949-50	George Lewis, National President, Mt. Sterling
1997-98	Matts Wells, Cisne	1953-54	Harlan Rigney, National Vice President, Central Region, Freeport
1998-99	Parker Bane, Ridgeview (Arrowsmith)	1962-63	Kenny McMillan, National President, Bushnell
1999-00	Jake Hughes, Sullivan	1963-64	Joseph Coyne, National Vice President, Central Region, Minooka
2000-01	Steve Woodrum, Franklin		
2001-02	Colleen Dickinson, Amboy		
2002-03	Jay Kelley, Princeville		
2003-04	Ryan Robinson, Sullivan		
2004-05	Kacy Baugher, Windsor		
2005-06	Jake Bonnell, Amboy		

DID YOU KNOW:

Illinois had consecutive American Star Farmer winners in 2012 and 2013.

- 1968-69 Tom Johnson, National Vice President, Central Region, Ashland
- 1970-71 J. Dan Lehmann, National President, Pleasant Plains
- 1980-81 Bob Quick, National Secretary, Bement
- 1987-88 Bill Hollis, National Vice President, Central Region, Bushnell
- 1993-94 Raquel Lacey, National Vice President, Central Region, Nokomis
- 1994-95 Corey Fluorney, National President, Chicago
- 2001-02 Robin Niehaus, National Secretary, Hillsboro
- 2004-05 Jay Kelley, National Vice President, Eastern Region, Princeville
- 2006-07 Kacy Baugher, National Secretary, Windsor

DID YOU KNOW:

The governor of Illinois signed a proclamation declaring FFA Week in 2015.

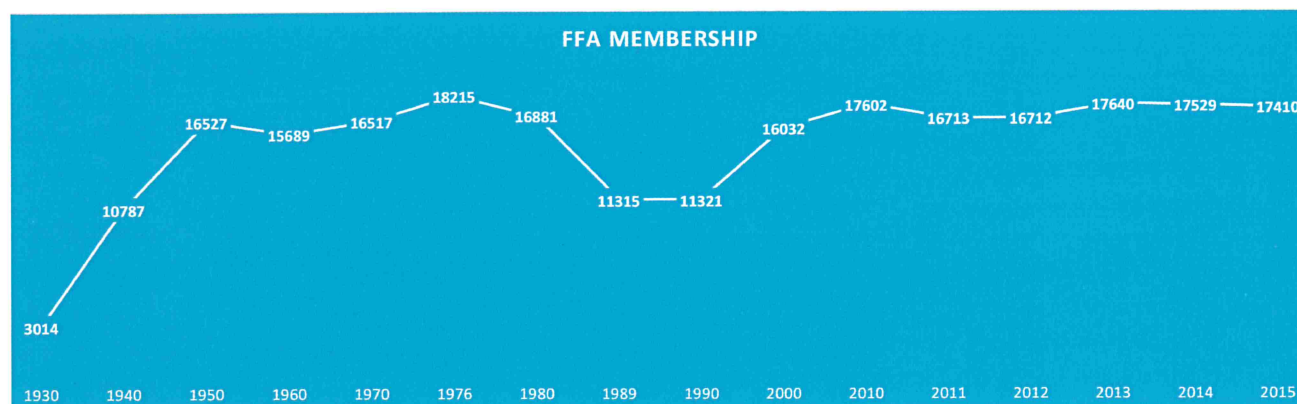
13. Review Questions

1. What was the official foundation date of the Illinois FFA?
 2. What act of Congress was made into law that encouraged and supported vocational education? When was it adopted, and who was it named after?
 3. When was the first National FFA Convention, and where was it held?
 4. How many states and official delegates attended this convention?
 5. Who was the first National FFA president?
 6. Who is Henry Groseclose remembered as?
 7. Who was Homer Edwards?
 8. How many sections did the FFA start out with, and how many sections are there now?
 9. Who is remembered as Mr. FFA, and what important role did he have with the Illinois FFA?
 10. When was the prepared public speaking contest introduced to the Illinois FFA, and who was its first winner?
 11. When was the FFA jacket introduced to FFA members for the first time? Where?
 12. When was the first FFA jacket was adopted by an Illinois FFA member?
 13. What did many FFA members wear before the FFA jacket was adopted?
 14. How many national officers has Illinois had? Name each person, what office he or she held, and in what year.
 15. What significance did World War II have for the FFA?
 16. How did FFA chapters contribute to the war effort?
 17. When and why were the Illinois Foundation FFA organized?
 18. What year were the state FFA band and chorus organized?
 19. What state contest did the Mt. Sterling chapter win in 1948?
 20. What honor did Ken Cheatham receive at the 1948 national convention? Has any other member from Illinois received this honor? If so, name the member.
 21. What year did the Illinois FFA celebrate its 25th convention? How many chapters and members were in Illinois that year?
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22. What year were females admitted to the FFA?
 23. Did females face much difficulty being voted into the FFA? Why or why not?
 24. How many national proficiency awards were added in the 1970s?
 25. What did Lynette Marshall do that no other female had done before?
 26. Who was Illinois's first female major state officer?
 27. What year did the Illinois FFA reach its all-time membership record? What was Illinois's membership that year?
 28. What special event did Illinois celebrate in June of 1978?
 29. Where is the FFA time capsule buried?
 30. How many Illinois Foundation awards are there?
 31. In what year did the National FFA Convention print its first daily newspaper?
 32. What significant change occurred during the 1988 National Convention?
 33. Who was the first female elected to the position of National FFA president?
 34. Who was the first female elected to the position of Illinois FFA president?
 35. FFA membership has consistently increased since what year?
 36. Who was the first African-American elected to Illinois and national office?
 37. When did the Illinois FFA Center open?
 38. Are junior high or middle school students allowed to be FFA members?
 39. How many hours of community service are required for a State FFA degree?
 40. How many American Star Farmers has Illinois had?
-

FFA Membership Graph

Illinois FFA membership grew rapidly from 1930 to 1950, then experienced steady to slight growth for several decades. The record of 18,215 members was achieved in 1976. Shortly after the peak, however, membership declined; the 1989 membership of 11,315 was the lowest since the 1930s. But growth followed again, with membership steady for the past 25 years.



The FFA Creed

I believe in the future of agriculture, with a faith born not of words but of deeds - achievements won by the present and past generations of agriculturists; in the promise of better days through better ways, even as the better things we now enjoy have come to us from the struggles of former years.

I believe that to live and work on a good farm, or to be engaged in other agricultural pursuits, is pleasant as well as challenging; for I know the joys and discomforts of agricultural life and hold an inborn fondness for those associations which, even in hours of discouragement, I cannot deny.

I believe in leadership from ourselves and respect from others. I believe in my own ability to work efficiently and think clearly, with such knowledge and skill as I can secure, and in the ability of progressive agriculturists to serve our own and the public interest in producing and marketing the product of our toil.

I believe in less dependence on begging and more power in bargaining; in the life abundant and enough honest wealth to help make it so--for others as well as myself; in less need for charity and more of it when needed; in being happy myself and playing square with those whose happiness depends upon me.

I believe that American agriculture can and will hold true to the best traditions of our national life and that I can exert an influence in my home and community which will stand solid for my part in that inspiring task.

The creed was written by E.M. Tiffany and adopted at the Third National FFA Convention. It was revised at the 38th and 63rd Conventions.

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