



# 2023

Illinois Agriculture, Food,  
and Natural Resources  
Education Report

Agricultural Education is delivered through **three** interconnected **components**.



Agricultural education programs in Illinois public schools are supported by **local, state, and federal** funding opportunities.

State funding includes specialized funding from the Agricultural Education Line Item in the State Board of Education’s annual budget. This line item funded five unique grant programs in fiscal year 2023, including the Teacher Three Circle Grant program and incentive funding for programs in Grades 5-12. The Teacher Three Circle Grant program partners with local school districts to extend agricultural education teacher contracts to 12 months. Incentive funds are distributed directly to districts based on annually published program quality indicators and can be spent on new equipment, curricular resources, professional development, and student services.

State funding for agricultural education also includes the Career and Technical Education-Improvement (CTEI) fund. CTEI funds and federal Perkins funds are distributed through Illinois’ Education for Employment (EFE) systems. EFE systems are consortiums of school districts that partner to strengthen CTE opportunities in their region. Each EFE system is managed by a director and governed by a Board of Control composed of district superintendents. Agricultural education programs, which are a hallmark of career and technical education at the local, state, and national levels, are supported through these systems in a variety of ways.

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# 42,217

**FFA Membership (56.30% ↑)**

\*FFA Membership dues paid by Illinois Department of Agriculture

# 40,526

**Ag Ed Enrollment, Duplicated (1% ↓)**

# 39,929

**Ag Ed Enrollment, Unduplicated (8.96% ↑)**

**39,714 Public, 215 Private**

\*Enrollment is lower than FFA membership due to course conflict/graduated.

# 10,877

**Calendar Year SAE Participation (11% ↑)**

**30% of students with SAE Projects**

# 18,058

**Unique SAEs Completed by Students**

# \$12,547,199

**Calendar Year SAE Earnings (1.27% ↑)**

### Agriculture in the Classroom (AIRC) Data

**80** AIRC Coalitions

**573,232** PreK-12 Students

**\$1,970,187** State and Local Funds Invested in AIRC

### Agricultural Education Program Data

**372** Agricultural Education Programs

**76.1%** Offering AFNR as Science Credit

### Ag Ed Teacher Data

**519** Agricultural Education Teachers

**9.22%** increase from FY 2022

**66%** Teachers in Three Circle Grant

### FCAE Program Data

**863.5** Professional Development Hours

**3** Graduate Courses Offered

**938** Onsite or Virtual Program Visits

**133** Teaching Vacancies Filled

FY23 Line Item Breakdown	
Three Circle Grant	<b>\$3,200,000</b>
Incentive Funding Grant	<b>\$1,857,360</b>
FCAE - LPS	<b>\$1,024,500</b>
GAST	<b>\$300,000</b>
PreService Internship	<b>\$225,640</b>
FCAE - CRM	<b>\$216,000</b>
FCAE - WBL	<b>\$146,500</b>
University Incentive	<b>\$80,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,050,000</b>

**Which role do you serve for**

**Agricultural Education?**

**These pages are for you!**

**Legislative Leader 3-10**

**Industry Friend 8-21**

**Aspiring Student 12-21**

**Community Supporter 20-25**

**Local Educator 22-37**



### Teacher Three Circle Model of Agricultural Education

Three Circle grants support implementation of the Three Circle Model of agricultural education by working with Local Education Agencies (school districts and career centers) to compensate teachers for extended working time outside of their regular duties. Teachers must document 400 additional working hours equal to 60 additional days on FFA, SAE, curricular, and professional learning.

**\$3,200,000** Total FY 2023 Allocation  
**344** Number of Participating Teachers  
**259** Number of Participating Local Education Agencies



### Incentive Funding for Programs in Grades 5-12

Incentive funds support local agricultural education programs for Grades 5-12. Funding can be used for a variety of purposes based on the needs of the local program. Allocations are based on the achievement of program quality indicators each year. Quality indicators address all aspects of school-based agricultural education, including teacher qualifications, student services, courses offered, facility and technology improvements, work-based learning integration, student leadership, and other FFA opportunities.

**\$1,837,360** Total FY 2023 Allocation  
**\$63.27** per Quality Indicator  
**361** Participating Local Education Agencies



### Incentive Funding for Teacher Preparation Programs

Incentive funds support agricultural education teacher preparation programs at public universities. Funding can be used for a variety of purposes based on the needs of the program and preservice teachers. Allocations are based on the achievement of program quality indicators each year. Quality indicators address all aspects of teacher preparation programs, including teacher readiness, academic advising, course content, preparation for licensure, and comprehensive field experiences offered to preservice teachers.

**\$80,000** Total FY 2023 Allocation  
**\$197** per Quality Indicator  
**4** Participating Universities



### Growing Agricultural Science Teachers

Growing Agricultural Science Teachers (GAST) funds are given to colleges and universities offering an agricultural education program of study to include the Introduction to Agricultural Education course (AGED 100) articulated across the state. Funds support initiatives to recruit, develop, and retain agricultural education teachers. The program has four main objectives – recruitment and retention, development of preservice teachers, professional learning for early career teachers, and professional learning for teacher educators.

**\$300,000** Total FY 2023 Allocation  
**11** Participating Colleges  
**150** Preservice Teachers Impacted



Jennifer Waters, FCAE  
State Coordinator



John Heiser, District I  
Program Advisor



Luke Allen, District II  
Program Advisor



Allie Bode, District III  
Program Advisor



Megan Coy, District IV  
Program Advisor



Casey Bolin, District V  
Program Advisor



Mindy Bunselmeyer,  
Executive Director



John Edgar,  
Associate Director



Andrew T. Klein,  
Principal Consultant

ISBE works with the **Illinois Committee for Agricultural Education** and the **Illinois Leadership Council for Agricultural Education** to administer a statewide program of **agricultural education**.

Three grants make up the Facilitating Coordination in Agricultural Education (FCAE) program. They are: 1. Local Program Support grant provides onsite educator assistance, agricultural consumer literacy, teacher recruitment and retention, and other related initiatives. 2. Work-based Learning grant provides statewide student and teacher record-keeping services, Supervised Agricultural Experience professional learning and related awards/incentive programs. 3. Curricular Resource Management grant maintains existing agricultural education curricular resources, develops new resources, and delivers curriculum-related professional learning opportunities.

### FCAE Local Program Support: \$1,024,500

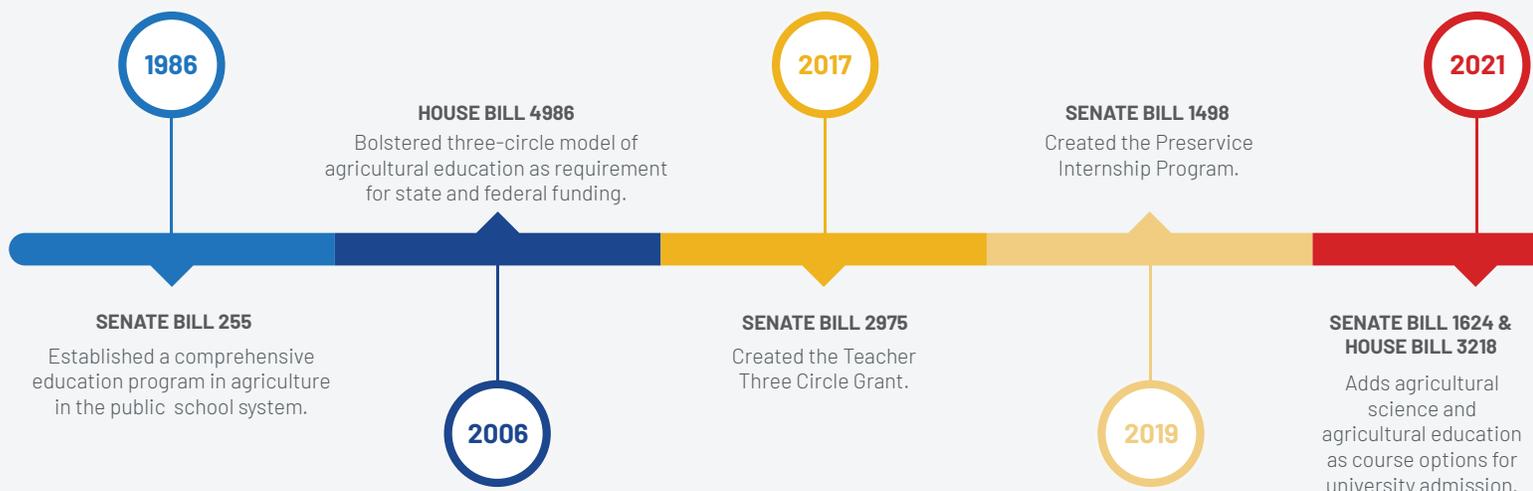
\$ <b>\$732,685</b> Local Program Support	\$ <b>\$95,000</b> Agricultural Literacy	\$ <b>\$36,052</b> Teacher Professional Development	\$ <b>\$19,052</b> Indirect Costs
\$ <b>\$34,650</b> MANRRS Pilot Project	\$ <b>\$10,000</b> Website Management	\$ <b>\$13,490</b> Conference Exhibits	\$ <b>\$4,929</b> Annual Report
\$ <b>\$55,000</b> Urban AFNR Initiative	\$ <b>\$6,000</b> External Review	\$ <b>\$6,000</b> Administrator/ Counselor Workshop	\$ <b>\$11,642</b> Marketing, Printing, & Promotion

### FCAE Work-based Learning: \$146,500

### FCAE Curricular Resource Management: \$216,000

**FCAE, the Illinois FFA Center, and ISBE** work together to **improve** all aspects of **agricultural education in Illinois**.

- FCAE coordinates the statewide program of agricultural education through local program support, teacher professional development, and agricultural literacy initiatives.
- Illinois FFA Center coordinates professional services for all agricultural education-related organizations to include the FFA student organization, FFA Foundation, FFA Alumni, Illinois Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers, Illinois Association of Community College Agriculture Instructors, and Professional Agriculture Students.
- ISBE administers state funding for agricultural education to include the FCAE project.



**Senate Bill 255** passed and was signed into law on September 19, 1986, creating Public Act 84-1452 and Chapter 122, Section 2-3.80 of the Illinois School Code stating: "The General Assembly recognizes that agriculture is the most basic and singularly important industry in the state, that agriculture is of central importance to the welfare and economic stability of the state, and that the maintenance of this vital industry requires a continued source of trained and qualified individuals for employment in agriculture and agribusiness." SB 255 thereby established a comprehensive education program in agriculture in the public school system – pre-K through adult education – and required that the State Board of Education make this program readily available to school districts.

**House Bill 4986** passed Public Act 84-1452, which amended the Illinois School Code, on January 20, 2006, stating: "Provides that a school district that offers a secondary agricultural education program that is eligible for state and federal funding must ensure that, at a minimum, the following are available to its secondary agricultural education students: (1) an instructional sequence of courses approved by the State Board of Education; (2) a state and nationally affiliated FFA Chapter that is integral to instruction and is not treated as an extracurricular activity; and (3) a mechanism for ensuring the involvement of all secondary agricultural education students in formal, Supervised Agricultural Experience activities and programs."

**Senate Bill 2975** passed and was signed into law effective January 1, 2017, creating Public Act 99-826 and Section 2-3.80b of the Illinois School Code. This legislation "created an agriculture education teacher grant program to fund personal services costs for agriculture education teachers in school districts. The grants shall be for the purpose of assisting school districts with paying for personal services costs of agriculture education teachers." This grant today is known as the Teacher Three Circle Grant.

**Senate Bill 1498** passed and was signed into law effective August 13, 2019, creating Public Act 101-554 and Section 2-3.80d of the Illinois School Code. By this new law, the "State Board of Education must, in consultation with the Board of Higher Education, develop an Agricultural Education Pre-Service Teacher Internship Program, beginning at the secondary education level, for pre-service teaching students." This program today is known as the Preservice Internship Program.



FFA members pictured with Representative Norrine Hammond with the IL FFA Speciality License Plate.

## Historical Legislation

**HOUSE BILL 3178**

Changes the composition of the Illinois Committee for Agricultural Education.

**FFA MEMBERSHIP PAID FOR BY DOA**

Illinois Department of Agriculture provides FFA membership dues funds for every student enrolled in Agricultural Education.

**AD ED LINE ITEM RECEIVES 41% INCREASE**

ISBE Increases Ag Ed Line Item to \$7.05M.

2022

**IL FFA Specialty Decal for License Plates**

IL FFA Specialty Decal for License Plates seeks 2,000 requests for residents of Illinois to share their support of the Illinois Foundation FFA through the Office of the Secretary of State.

**House Bill 3814**

House Bill 3814 allows student absences related to their involvement in FFA and 4-H to be listed as excused absences. This law goes into effect on January 1, 2024.

**Senate Bill 1624 and House Bill 3218**

passed and were signed into law effective January 1, 2022, creating Public Act 102-0403. This Public Act amended various Acts relating to the governance of public universities in Illinois. With respect to the high school coursework that a person must satisfactorily complete for university admission, adds agricultural sciences as a course option for the science category and agricultural education as a course option for the electives category.

**House Bill 3178** passed and was signed into law, creating Public Act 102-0463. This Act amended ILCS 5/2-3/80 effectively changes the composition of the Illinois Committee for Agricultural Education.

**House Bill 3184** allows student absences related to their involvement in FFA and 4-H to be listed as excused absences. This law goes into effect on January 1, 2024.

Fiscal Year	Amount
1987	\$48,500
1988	\$48,500
1989	\$1,000,000
1990	\$1,040,000
1991	\$1,040,000
1992	\$1,040,000
1993	\$1,040,000
1994	\$1,081,600
1995	\$1,081,600
1996	\$1,181,600
1997	\$1,299,000
1998	\$1,429,700
1999	\$1,500,000
2000	\$2,000,000
2001	\$2,000,000
2002	\$1,950,000
2003	\$1,881,200
2004	\$1,881,200
2005	\$1,881,200
2006	\$2,381,200
2007	\$2,881,200
2008	\$2,881,200
2009	\$3,381,200

2010	\$3,043,100
2011	\$1,947,600
2012	\$1,800,000
2013	\$1,800,000
2014	\$1,800,000
2015	\$1,759,900
2016	\$1,800,000
2017	\$1,800,000
2018	\$5,000,000
2019	\$5,000,000
2020	\$5,000,000
2021	\$5,000,000
2022	\$5,000,000
2023	\$7,050,000
2024	\$7,050,000

The State Board of Education worked with the Governor and state legislature to increase the Agricultural Education Line Item to \$7.05 million to allow for the growth of programs, students, and teachers.

The **Illinois Committee for Agricultural Education (ICAE)** is a group of professionals **tasked with advising the Illinois State Board of Education on agricultural education.** Pursuant to Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/2-3.80), the 13-member committee is composed of members representing a variety of agricultural education roles.



**Erika Allen**  
Chair  
Urban Growers Collective

**Allyn Buhrow**  
Farmer, Pioneer Seeds

**Kim Haywood, Jr.**  
Brooklyn Unit School District 188  
Lovejoy Technical Academy

**Jody Heavner**  
Pittsfield High School/FFA Advisor

**Amy Leman**  
University of Illinois

**Gary Ochs**  
University of Illinois

**Brad Pilcher**  
Bayer Crop Science

**Kevin Daugherty**  
Illinois Farm Bureau

**William Ladd-Cawthorne**  
Gary Comer Youth Center

**William Hook**  
Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences

**Elizabeth Patton-Whiteside**  
East Side Health District

The **Illinois Leadership Council for Agricultural Education (ILCAE)** is a volunteer, grassroots agricultural industry group **focused on the expansion and improvement of agricultural education programs** at all levels. ILCAE is responsible for the vision of agricultural education through the Illinois Agricultural Education Plan.



**Allyn Buhrow**  
Chair  
Farmer, Pioneer Seeds

**Greg Webb, Vice Chair**  
Archer Daniels Midland (ADM)

**Michael Zecher, Secretary**  
Zecher Farms

**Erika Allen**  
Urban Growers Collective

**Allen Dietz**  
Retired Educator, Dietz Farms

**Jeff Galle**  
Global Pork Production  
Enterprises

**Warren Graeff**  
Old National Bank

**Kenny Hartman**  
Glendell Farms LTD

**Kim Haywood, Jr.**  
Brooklyn Unit School District  
188  
Lovejoy Technical Academy

**Michael Hmurovich**  
Griffith Foods, Inc.

**Chris Kendall**  
Peoria Educational Region  
for Employment Career and  
Training

**William Kling**  
Attorney, Community  
Collaborative, LLC

**Mindy McDermott**  
The Climate Corporation

**Don Moffitt**  
Retired State Representative

**Jared Brown**  
Brandt Consolidated Inc.

**Karen Schieler**  
Compeer Financial

**Kay Shipman**  
FarmWeek

**Haley Siergiej**  
Nutrients for Life Foundation

**Holly Spangler**  
Prairie Farmer & Farm Progress

**Tyler Strom**  
Illinois Agri-Food Alliance

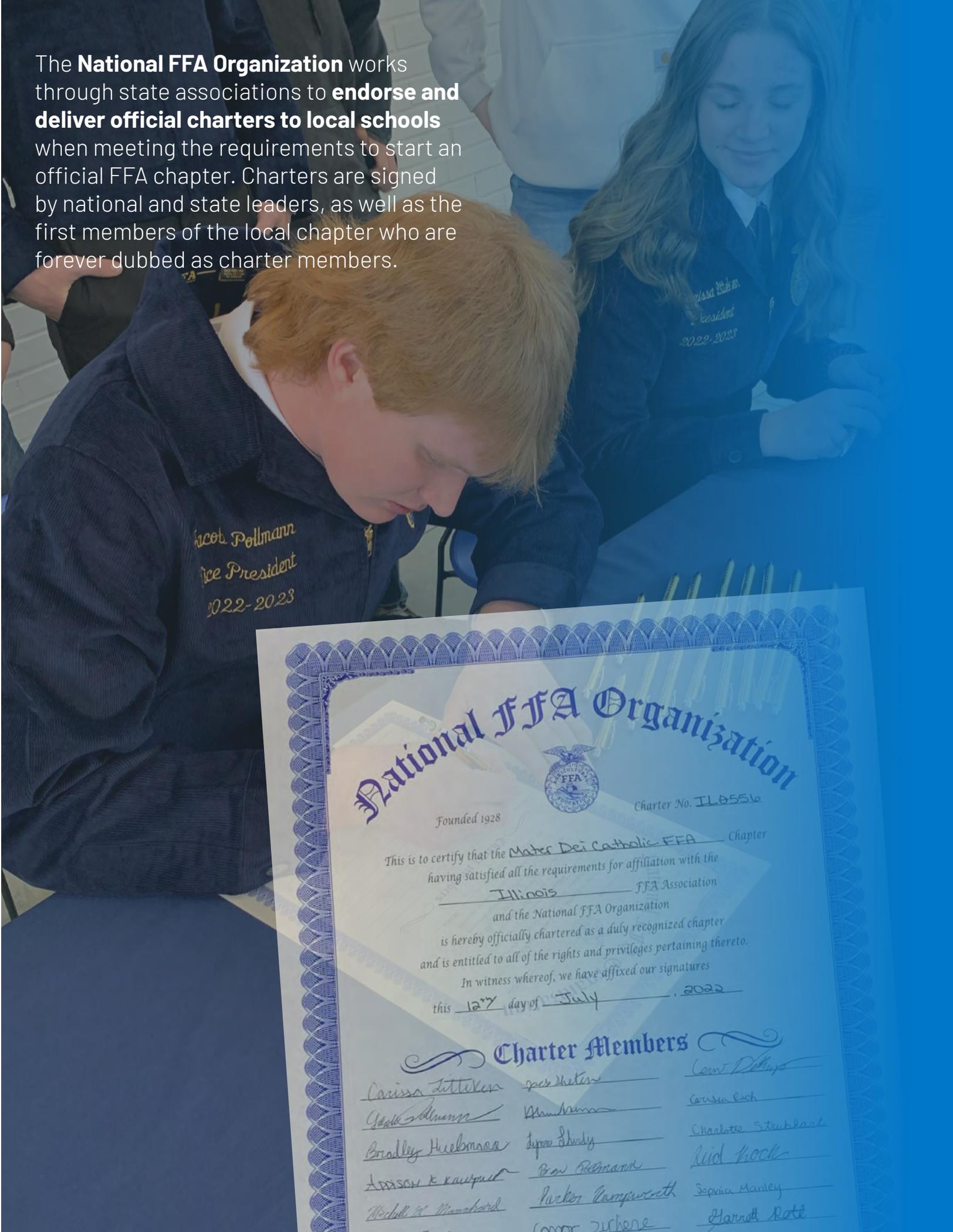
**Dan Swanson**  
Illinois State Legislature

**Ryan Tate**  
Illinois Farm Bureau

**Cynthia Tucker**  
PepsiCo

**Wyatt Williamson**  
Edgar County Farm Bureau

The **National FFA Organization** works through state associations to **endorse and deliver official charters to local schools** when meeting the requirements to start an official FFA chapter. Charters are signed by national and state leaders, as well as the first members of the local chapter who are forever dubbed as charter members.



# National FFA Organization

Founded 1928

Charter No. IL0556

This is to certify that the Mater Dei Catholic FFA Chapter having satisfied all the requirements for affiliation with the Illinois FFA Association and the National FFA Organization is hereby officially chartered as a duly recognized chapter and is entitled to all of the rights and privileges pertaining thereto.

In witness whereof, we have affixed our signatures this 12<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2022

## Charter Members

- |                              |                         |                           |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| <u>Carissa Litten</u>        | <u>Jacob Pollmann</u>   | <u>Carissa Litten</u>     |
| <u>Jacob Pollmann</u>        | <u>Carissa Litten</u>   | <u>Carissa Litten</u>     |
| <u>Bradley Huebman</u>       | <u>Carissa Litten</u>   | <u>Charlotte Stumback</u> |
| <u>Amason K. Kausner</u>     | <u>Carissa Litten</u>   | <u>Adriano Kock</u>       |
| <u>Nicholas M. Mansfield</u> | <u>Parker Camparuth</u> | <u>Sophia Manley</u>      |
|                              | <u>Carissa Litten</u>   | <u>Hannah Rott</u>        |

The **number of openings** for agriculture teachers **exceeds the number of teaching candidates**, so agricultural education is recognized by the Illinois General Assembly as an area of **high staff shortage** (IL110 ILCS 947/65.25). **Aggressive strategies** and **targeted support** are utilized to **recruit, develop, and retain high-quality agriculture teachers** in Illinois public schools.

Fiscal Year	Agricultural Education Job Openings	Graduates in AFNR Teacher Education Programs	Non-traditionally Licensed Teachers Hired in Ag Ed
2021-2022	<b>84</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>21</b>
2022-2023	<b>139</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>36</b>
2023-2024	<b>95</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>36</b>

### State Teach Ag Results Program

The State Teach Ag Results (STAR) program is a project of the National Teach Ag Campaign, a teacher recruitment and retention initiative managed by the National Association of Agricultural Educators. STAR provides funds for states to develop sustainable programs to increase the number of agriculture teachers. High school and college students explore becoming an agriculture teacher.  
**\$8,000** STAR Dollars in FY 2023  
**76** Preservice Teachers Impacted



Preservice teachers learn about Food Science during their bus tour in 2023

### Teacher Contract Lengths

**380** are 40-60 Days Beyond 180  
**14** are 31-45 Days Beyond 180  
**42** are 16-30 Days Beyond 180  
**25** are 01-15 Days Beyond 180  
**84** are 0 Days Beyond 180

### Recruitment Activities for High School Students

**74** Students Competing in the Agricultural Education CDE  
**55** Junior Internships with Agricultural Educators  
**104** Students Attending ELITE Conference



Students interested in becoming teachers participate in hands-on activities at the ELITE Conference in 2023

### Growing Agricultural Science Teachers Program

GAST is a grant project of the Illinois State Board of Education. GAST funds support the efforts of teacher preparation programs to recruit, develop, and retain agricultural education teachers. Allocations are contingent on annual funding priorities. Funding in FY 2023 was used for student scholarships, mentorship programs, and professional development for early career agriculture teachers.  
**\$300,000** GAST Dollars in FY 2023  
**150** Preservice Teachers Impacted  
**195** Early-Career Teachers Impacted

### Teacher Three-Circle Grant Program

The Three Circle Grant program is a project of the Illinois State Board of Education. Three Circle funds support an educator's extended salary beyond the regularly assigned teaching duties. Participating school districts partner with ISBE to provide salary and benefits for 400 additional working hours. ISBE pays a greater amount for new programs.  
**\$3,200,000** Three Circles Dollars in FY 2023  
**67%** of Illinois Teachers Participating  
**345** Participating Teachers  
**\$18,488** Average Salary Increase  
**471** Average Hours Worked Outside of School  
**256** Average Hours on FFA  
**23** Average Hours on SAE  
**143** Average Hours on Curricular/PD

### Retention Activities for College Preservice Teachers

**54** Student Teacher Awards at IAVAT Summer Conference  
**42** Participants in IAVAT Student Branch Activities  
**27** College-level Internships with Agricultural Educators

### Retention Activities for Current Teachers

**42** Teachers at 1st Year Teachers' Conference  
**30** Teachers at 2nd Year Teachers' Conference  
**1,641** Participants in SBAE Professional Development  
**4** New Teacher Retention Grants from IAA Foundation  
**100%** of students majoring in Agricultural Education are eligible for federal loan forgiveness and federal TEACH grants

**We Need Teachers**

## Students by Pathways



The **Agricultural, Food and Natural Resources (AFNR) career cluster** is **focused** on the production, processing, marketing, distribution, financing, and development of **agricultural commodities** and **resources**, including food, fiber, wood products, natural resources, horticulture, and other plant and animal products or resources. ISBE recognizes eight unique pathways.



### Industry-Recognized Credentials

An industry-recognized credential is a verification of a student's qualification or competence. A third party, such as an organization or employer, issues a credential. Credentials are valued in the labor market and are a validation of knowledge and skill. They can take many forms, including certifications, certificates, and licenses. AFNR programs in Illinois offer many credentials, including:

1. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Credentials
2. Illinois Department of Natural Resources Hunter Safety Certification
3. Illinois Department of Agriculture Pesticide Applicator Certification
4. National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America Certifications

### Program Advisory Councils

Quality AFNR programs have close ties with business and industry. These partnerships are critical to ensuring programs meet current occupational needs. Program Advisory Councils, which are required for CTE Programs of Study,

are one of the most effective ways to establish and strengthen these partnerships. An advisory council is a group of stakeholders that may include representatives from local business and industry, school administrators, faculty, staff, and representatives

from transfer institutions who advise the institution on the development, implementation, and evaluation of the program. ISBE utilizes the Illinois Committee for Agricultural Education as a statewide advisory council, and local programs are incentivized to implement local advisory councils through the Incentive Funding Grant.

### AFNR Model Program of Study

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) sponsored the development of Model Programs of Study Guides in crucial industry areas as part of the Illinois State Plan for Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (also known as the Perkins V Plan). The AFNR Model Program of Study Guide was developed in consultation and collaboration with the Illinois State Board of Education and other notable AFNR stakeholders.



**EdSystems**  
EDUCATION SYSTEMS CENTER at  
NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

[View the AFNR Standards](#)



**Work-Based Learning (WBL)** is **sustained interaction with professionals** in **real workplace settings** or **simulated environments in school** that foster in-depth, **firsthand engagement** with the tasks required for specific AFNR careers.

These tasks are also aligned to relevant AFNR curriculum and instructional standards. In local AFNR programs, WBL is commonly facilitated through Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) programs. SAE opportunities are endless and entirely based on exploring students' passions and career interests. Students will start with a Foundational SAE, then expand to include one or more Immersion SAEs.

#### SAE Participation Data

**10,877** (37%) Students with SAEs (7% ↑)  
**18,058** Unique Projects (1.09% ↑)  
**\$12,547,199** SAE Earnings (1.24% ↓)  
**190,504** Journal Hour Entries

#### Project Types

**46%** Placement/Internship  
**27%** Entrepreneurship/Business  
**23%** Foundational  
**4%** Research/Agriscience

#### Project Levels

**87%** Individual  
**12%** School-based  
**1%** Service-Learning

#### Projects by Pathway

**19%** Animal Systems  
**10%** Plant Systems  
**4%** Food Products and Processing  
**4%** Agribusiness Systems  
**4%** Power, Structure, and Technical  
**2%** Career Ready Practices  
**1%** Environmental Service  
**1%** Natural Resources  
**0.10%** Biotechnology Systems

## Work-Based Learning

### FFA Degrees and Star Awards

Student members of FFA are recognized through a sequence of awards based on achievement in multiple aspects of the AFNR instructional program, including academic success, leadership roles, and SAE progression. These awards are known as Degrees.

#### Discovery Awards

The Discovery FFA Degree is awarded to members in Grades 7 and 8 at their local chapter banquet each year. Those middle school members receiving their Discovery Degree can also apply for statewide Star Awards in specific project areas. For this year, those went to:

**Star Agribusiness:** Ava Franzen, Blue Ridge  
**Star Agricultural Placement:** Carson Ford, Franklin  
**Star Agriscience:** Henry Waters, Pleasant Plains  
**Star Farmer:** AJ Harris, Franklin

#### State Awards

The State FFA Degree is the highest honor the Illinois Association FFA can bestow on a student. This past year, 559 members were awarded the coveted State FFA Degree. From these awards, outstanding members are recognized as "stars" in their respective project areas. Illinois' stars in FY 2023 are:

**Star Agribusiness:** Sidney Stiers, Williamsfield  
**Star Agricultural Placement:** Nevin Erbsen, Eastland  
**Star Agriscience:** Megan Baker, Neoga  
**Star Farmer:** Cole Paulek, Taylorville

#### National Awards

The American FFA Degree is the highest honor the National FFA Organization can bestow on a student. This past year, 185 members from Illinois were awarded the American FFA Degree. From these awards, Illinois selects outstanding members to be considered by National FFA for American Star Awards. Those stars are:

**Star Agribusiness:** Skye Schumaker, Heyworth  
**Star Agricultural Placement:** Lance Moritz, Streator\*  
**Star Agriscience:** Matthew Grab, Freeburg  
**Star Farmer:** Tanner Mickey, Taylorville\*



2023 American Star Finalist: Lance Moritz, Streator and Tanner Mickey, Taylorville

**\*National finalists**

**National FFA Band** and **Chorus** members have claimed some of the best seats at the **National FFA Convention & Expo** for more than 70 years – right on stage!



**National FFA Band- representing Illinois**  
**William Berning**, Galena  
**Camren Ferri**, Wesclin  
**Alaina Franklin**, Pontiac  
**Tynan Justice**, Seneca  
**Dale Magelitz**, North Mac  
**Taylor Page**, Hoopston Area

**National FFA Chorus- representing Illinois**  
**Kelei Leab**, Bushnell Prairie City  
**Jacob McCauley**, Stark County



National FFA Chorus - Illinois Representatives



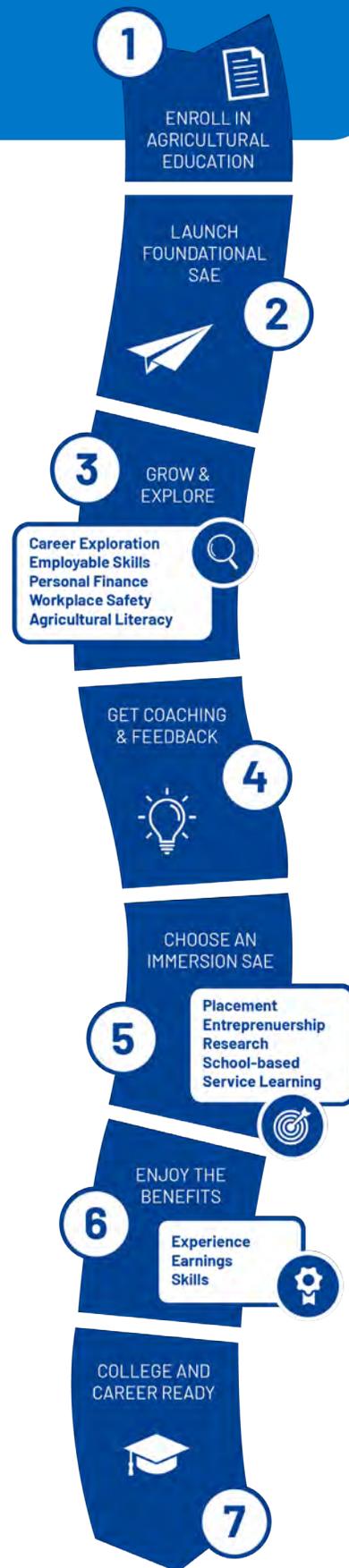
National FFA Band - Illinois Representatives

**Band and Chorus Representatives**

# Proficiency Award Statewide Winners

<b>Agricultural Communications</b>	Chase Dittmar, Galena
<b>Agricultural Education</b>	Madison Schneider, Waterloo
<b>Agricultural Mechanics Design and Fabrication</b>	Carter Ferguson, Cissna Park
<b>Agricultural Mechanics Repair and Maintenance – Entrepreneurship</b>	Tyler Hartman, Prairie Central
<b>Agricultural Mechanics Repair and Maintenance – Placement</b>	Kaitlyn Crowley, Mount Zion
<b>Agricultural Processing</b>	Tyler Worthey, Neoga
<b>Agricultural Sales – Entrepreneurship</b>	Kendra Downing, Cambridge*
<b>Agricultural Sales – Placement</b>	Ella Anderson, Annawan
<b>Agricultural Services</b>	John Upperle, Maroa-Forsyth
<b>Agriscience Research – Animal Systems</b>	Jay Blieler, Taylorville*
<b>Agriscience Research – Integrated Systems</b>	Samantha Alvarez, Central Burlington
<b>Agriscience Research – Plant Systems</b>	Blake Twenhafel, Wesclin
<b>Beef Production – Entrepreneurship</b>	Lauren Wolter, Central Breese
<b>Beef Production – Placement</b>	Reese Ray, Goreville
<b>Dairy Production – Entrepreneurship</b>	Gracen Hoffman, Nashville
<b>Dairy Production – Placement</b>	Brody Will, Dieterich
<b>Diversified Agricultural Production</b>	Cole Paulek, Taylorville
<b>Diversified Crop Production – Entrepreneurship</b>	Nathan Spangler, Bushnell Prairie City
<b>Diversified Crop Production – Placement</b>	Brandon Talty, Streator
<b>Diversified Horticulture</b>	Taylor Beisiegel, Freeburg
<b>Diversified Livestock Production</b>	Waylon Paulek, Taylorville
<b>Environmental Science and Natural Resources Management</b>	Kyle Bradshaw, Pittsfield
<b>Equine Science – Entrepreneurship</b>	Brett Bushue, Sullivan
<b>Equine Science – Placement</b>	Bella McCutchan, Athens
<b>Fiber and Oil Crop Production</b>	Megan Waeltz, Marissa
<b>Food Service - Entrepreneurship (IL only)</b>	Lacey DeClerck, Taylorville
<b>Food Service - Placement</b>	Brayden Matsko, Streator
<b>Forage Production</b>	Matthew McCaskill, Brown County
<b>Forest Management &amp; Products</b>	Joel Bergmann, Nashville
<b>Fruit Production</b>	Macy Moran, Neoga
<b>Goat Production</b>	Chase Hummel, Tri-Point*
<b>Grain Production</b>	Steven Haase, Mount Carmel
<b>Landscape Management</b>	Kaden Larson, Cambridge
<b>Nursery Operations</b>	Elizabeth Corrie, Rushville-Industry

Proficiency Award Statewide Winners



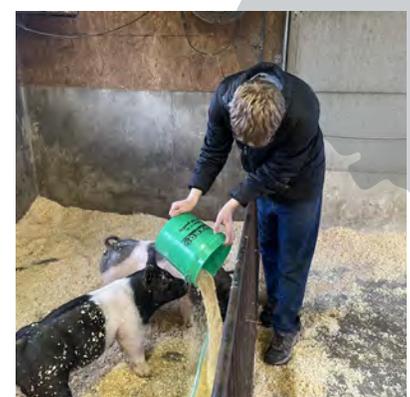
<b>Proficiency Award Statewide Winners</b>	<b>Outdoor Recreation</b>	Connor Wademan, Carlyle
	<b>Poultry Production</b>	Garrett Williamson, Nashville
	<b>Safety (IL only)</b>	Alekshy Corcoran, Normal
	<b>Service-Learning</b>	Trenton Payne, Olney
	<b>Sheep Production</b>	Beau Howe, Iroquois West
	<b>Small Animal Production and Care</b>	Olivia Albrecht, Staunton
	<b>Specialty Animal Production</b>	Korin Kapraun, Maroa-Forsyth
	<b>Specialty Crop Production</b>	Amanda Wieland, Pleasant Plains
	<b>Swine Production – Entrepreneurship</b>	Davis Howell, Clinton*
	<b>Swine Production – Placement</b>	Kaiden Boester, Nashville
	<b>Turf Grass Management</b>	Gabe Hicks, Seneca
	<b>Vegetable Production</b>	Zeke Wackerlin, Indian Creek
<b>Veterinary Science</b>	Olivia Rainey, Carlyle	
<b>Wildlife Production and Management</b>	Jackson Wallen, Maroa-Forsyth	

**National finalists:**

Madison Schneider, Waterloo • Kendra Downing, Cambridge\* • John Aupperle, Maroa-Forsyth • Jay Blieler, Taylorville\* • Lauren Wolter, Central Breese • Nathan Spangler, Bushnell Prairie City • Chase Hummel, Tri-Point\* • Davis Howell, Clinton\*

**\*National winners**

<b>Supervised Occupational Experience Winners</b>	<b>Arts and Communications (IL only)</b>	Kylie Ketcham, Highland
	<b>Finance and Business (IL only)</b>	Erica Kujawa, Nashville
	<b>Information Technology (IL only)</b>	Lillian Gardner, Streator
	<b>Health Science and Technology (IL only)</b>	Nevada Debault, Mount Carmel
	<b>Human and Public Service (IL only)</b>	Jonathan McMinn, Central Breese
	<b>Manufacturing, Engineering, and Trades (IL only)</b>	Brett Walder, Cissna Park



**Career Development Events (CDE)** are team-based challenges for FFA members that focus on **skill development** and **career preparation**. These competitive events develop individual responsibility, foster teamwork, and promote communication while recognizing the value of ethical competition. Members expand their knowledge base by interacting with peers and teachers, as well as business and community leaders, to gain a complete and comprehensive knowledge about specific careers. Events are aligned to Illinois Learning Standards.

**\*National winners**



Prairie Central receives National Plaque for Agricultural Sales



Olney receives National Plaque for Agronomy

CDE	Participation	State Winner
Agricultural Business Management	34%	Unity-Tolono
Agricultural Communications	6%	Prairie Central
Agricultural Education	21%	J Beto, Normal
Agricultural Mechanics	47%	Eureka
Agricultural Sales	36%	Prairie Central*
Agronomy	64%	Olney*
Dairy Cattle Evaluation	74%	Non-Reasons: Nashville Reasons: Prairie Central Middle School: Carlyle
Dairy Cattle Handlers	2%	Nevin Erbsen, Eastland
Environmental & Natural Resources	20%	Stark County
Food Science and Technology	28%	Decatur MacArthur Andreas Ag Academy
Forestry	34%	High School: Olney Middle School: West Prairie
Horse Evaluation	65%	Non-Reasons: Hoopeston Area Reasons: Sherrard Middle School: Clinton
Horticulture	46%	Paxton-Buckley-Loda
Job Interview	50%	Kendra Downing, Cambridge
Land Use	55%	High School: Liberty Middle School: West Prairie
Livestock Evaluation	74%	Non-Reasons: Dieterich Reasons: Newton
Marketing Plan	1%	Cambridge
Meats Evaluation & Technology	34%	Newton
Milk Quality & Products	64%	High School: Prairie Central Middle School: Prairie Central
Poultry Evaluation	43%	Olney
Quiz Bowl	42%	Nokomis
Veterinary Science	36%	Central Burlington

\*Percentages based on the number of programs that participated in these events at or above the section level.



**Students grow in technical skills and professional knowledge** as they compete with their peers in section, district, and state-level **Career Development Events.**



The **Illinois Agriscience Fair** recognizes students who gain **real-world, hands-on experiences in agricultural enterprises**. Students use scientific principles and emerging technologies to solve complex problems related to agriculture, food, and natural resources. The Agriscience Fair is for middle and high school students. Participation begins at the local level and progresses to district, state, and national levels. 64 FFA members participated in the Illinois FFA Agriscience Fair in FY 2023.

\*National winners



National Winner: Megan Baker, Neoga



National Winner: Olivia Shike, Unity-Tolono

Project Category	Grades 7-8	Grades 9-10	Grades 11-12
Animal Systems	High Individual: none High Team: Madelyn Cooper & Kilee Putnam, Southeastern	High Individual: Drake Slutz, Sycamore High Team: Mekaya Cihla & McKenzie Crain, Princeville	High Individual: none High Team: Drew Mickey & Jay Bliler, Taylorville
Environmental Service and Natural Resource Systems	High Individual: none High Team: Grace Stephens & Morgan Wilcox, Southeastern	High Individual: none High Team: Greyson Applebee & Gehrig Bunselmeyer, Maroa-Forsyth	High Individual: Megan Baker, Neoga* High Team: none
Food Products and Processing Systems	High Individual: none High Team: none	High Individual: Chelsey Stotler, Stark County High Team: Masyn Cahill & Ava Hess, Stockton	High Individual: Tessa Gazza, Princeville High Team: Chloe Blunier & Hope Graham, Princeville
Plant Systems	High Individual: none High Team: Kara Stephens & Jaelynn Van Beck, Southeastern	High Individual: Margaret Carter, Stockton High Team: Kyle Haas & Katelyn Winters, Stockton	High Individual: Cooper Lee, Southeastern High Team: Sadie Bays & Olivia Bird, Princeville
Power, Structural, and Technical Systems	High Individual: Henry Waters, Pleasant Plains High Team: none	High Individual: Anna Layng, Paxton-Buckley-Loda High Team: Elijah Haas & Javier Montalvo, Stockton	High Individual: Macy Putnam, Southeastern High Team: none
Social Systems	High Individual: none High Team: none	High Individual: Samantha Goede, Maroa-Forsyth High Team: Olivia Kawula & Tessa Knepper, Rolling Meadows	High Individual: Olivia Shike, Unity-Tolono* High Team: Abby Norris & Abby Erlenbush, Taylorville

**National finalists:**

Madelyn Cooper, Southeastern • Kilee Putnam, Southeastern • Drake Slutz, Sycamore  
Drew Mickey, Taylorville • Jay Bliler, Taylorville • Grace Stephens, Southeastern  
Morgan Wilcox, Southeastern • Greyson Applebee, Maroa-Forsyth  
Gehrig Bunselmeyer, Maroa-Forsyth • Chelsey Stotler, Stark County  
Kara Stephens, Southeastern • Jaelynn Van Beck, Southeastern



### Leadership Development in FFA

Local AFNR programs develop student leadership through FFA programs at the local, state, and national levels. FFA members focus on skill development through Leadership Development Events (LDE). These competitive events develop individual responsibility, foster teamwork, and promote communication while recognizing the value of ethical competition. Events are also aligned to Illinois Learning Standards.

LDE	Participation	State Winner
Agricultural Issues	3%	Streator
Conduct of Chapter Meetings	13%	Olney
Creed Speaking (Grades 7-9)	47%	Sydney Kuergelesis, Waterloo
Spanish Creed Speaking		Leon Ramirez, Streator
Prepared Public Speaking	52% for All Public Speaking	Nicholas James, Highland
Extemporaneous Public Speaking		Thaddeus Bergschneider, Franklin
Parliamentary Procedure	26%	Olney

### Leadership Conferences

Local programs promote leadership and personal growth through conferences held at the local, state, and national levels.

Conference	Audience	Host(s)	Location	Participation
Greenhand	New Students	LLCC, SIUC, UIUC, WIU	Regional Locations	Regional Events
Ground Zero	Grades 9-10	State FFA	SIUC, WIU, UIUC	1080
COLT	Chapter Officers	SIUC & Sauk Valley	Carbondale	Regional Event
BUILD	Grades 11-12	ISU	Normal	600
STAR	Section Officers	BHC, JJC, JWCC, LLC, and SIU	Regional Locations	140
Premier 20	Student Leaders in FFA and 4-H	Illinois Farm Bureau	Bloomington	10
WLC	FFA Members Across the Nation	National FFA	Washington, D.C.	54
Middle School	Grades 7-8	Lincoln Land Community College	Springfield	174

\*Percentages based on the number of programs that participated in these events at or above the section level.

**FFA membership** is an investment in a student's future. **Participation** can be an **uplifting** and **community-building** experience that contributes positively to **personal growth**, including mental and emotional well-being.

In addition to personal gains, FFA membership also builds career skills and professional success for students as they network with industry professionals; explore options for careers; and develop essential skills like public speaking, interviewing, and networking.

FFA also makes a positive difference in communities. Strong chapters are built by strong members, and strong members who come together can have a greater impact on their school and community than they could ever have had independently. These are the primary returns on investing in FFA members – premier leadership, personal growth, and career success. Join your local chapter to reap the full benefits of our wonderful organization!

#### The Value of Leadership in FFA

There are many positive aspects of FFA membership. Ask any former member what they remember most about their time in the FFA, and you will likely get a different answer inspired by their unique experiences. FFA members take ownership in their experiences – all of which develop leadership and teamwork skills. Competitive events, such as public speaking, parliamentary procedure, and agricultural issues, give members a voice in discussing important topics with their local chapter or the agricultural industry. These experiences give members confidence in handling real-world situations by sharing opinions, analyzing problems, or working with a team to make decisions.

Conferences are perhaps the most memorable, especially for new members. Meeting others from different backgrounds and communities teaches students to respect others' ideas and perspectives. Serving as an officer is perhaps the most demanding and rewarding experience for a student. The variety of roles and responsibilities often puts student officers in charge of tasks such as leading meetings, tracking chapter finances, managing public relations, coordinating service projects, and mentoring new students. Through these responsibilities, members develop confidence that you don't often experience through other youth programs, and that is because FFA truly is a student-led organization.

**Student leadership, work ethic, and inspiration** are at the **heart of this organization**, and **all members benefit** from this **system and structure of leadership that is FFA.**



**20,583**

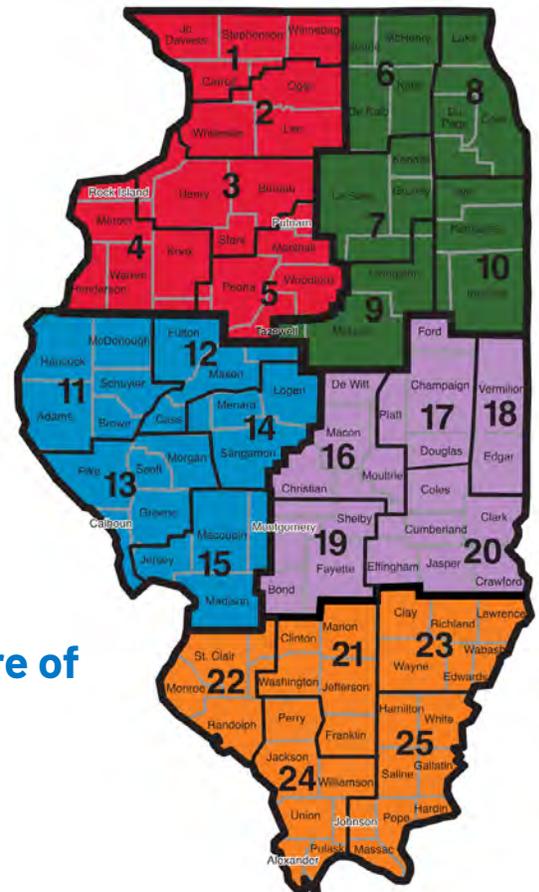
FFA Members FY 2021 (1%↓)

**23,289**

FFA Members FY 2022 (1%↑)

**42,217**

FFA Members FY 2023 (76%↑)



Premier Leadership in FFA

Gender	FY21	FY22	FY23	Change from FY22
Male	11,663 (56.7%)	13,108 (56.3%)	23,463 (56.9%)	+10,355 Members
Female	8,675 (42.1%)	9,863 (42.4%)	17,066 (41.4%)	+7,203 Members
Non-Binary	20 (0.1%)	172 (0.7%)	397 (1.0%)	+25 Members
Non-Disclosed	225 (1.1%)	146 (0.6%)	291 (0.7%)	+195 Members

Race/Ethnicity	FY21	FY22	FY23	Change from FY22
Asian/Pacific Islander	93	141	373 (0.9%)	+232
Black	946	1,088	2,192 (5.3%)	+1,104
Hispanic/Latino	605	759	1,803 (4.4%)	+1,044
Native American	78	88	203 (0.5%)	+115
Two or More	337	451	1,059 (2.6%)	+608
White	17,947	20,429	35,065 (85.1%)	+14,636
Non-Disclosed	577	333	522 (1.3%)	+189



Team of 2023-2024 State Officers

### Our Leadership Structure

Twenty-five Section Presidents and five Major State Officers work together to lead the state FFA throughout the year. Major State Officers postpone college and career for one year to serve the FFA. This year's state officers are:

- President: Thaddeus Bergschneider, Franklin
- Vice President: Eric Wisely, Nashville
- Reporter: Cooper Nelson, Canton
- Secretary: Riley Kessler, Staunton
- Treasurer: Benjamin Bremmer, Pearl City



The **National Chapter Award (NCA) program** is designed to recognize FFA chapters that **actively implement the mission and strategies of the organization**. The **2023 State Premier Chapter** is **Goreville FFA Chapter** in Goreville, Illinois.

Goreville FFA received the highest overall score on the NCA program in Illinois, a direct result of students' hard work and dedication along with the leadership of quality agricultural education teachers. Student officers are responsible for planning and implementing the annual Program of Activities, which this year included several innovative activities.



Goreville FFA Sacking Hunger



Goreville FFA Veteran's Thank You



Goreville FFA Tick Tock Goes the Clock

Premier Chapters by Section	
1	Scales Mound
2	Sterling
3	Cambridge
4	Knoxville
5	Midland
6	Marengo
7	Seneca
8	Rolling Meadows
9	Flanagan-Cornell
10	Peotone
11	West Prairie
12	Canton
13	Pittsfield
14	Athens
15	Staunton
16	Decatur Eisenhower Andreas Ag Academy
17	Fisher
18	Salt Fork
19	Nokomis
20	Neoga
21	Mount Vernon
22	Waterloo
23	Olney
24	Goreville
25	Gallatin County

## Service-Learning SAE Programs

A service-learning Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) is conducted by one or more students in which they plan, conduct, and evaluate a project designed to provide a service to their local school, public entities, or the community. It must benefit an organization or group other than the FFA chapter.

**240** Service-Learning Projects

**114** Students with Service-Learning SAEs

**105** FFA Chapters with Service-Learning SAEs

### Service-Learning Winner in 2023

Trenton Payne from the Olney FFA Chapter is the 2023 State Proficiency Winner in the area of Service Learning. He served as an elected official for the Evansville Lodge Council, which is a part of the Lodge of Ondessonk and Tekakwitha, a service organization based in Camp Ondessonk. Camp Ondessonk is located in the beautiful Shawnee National Forest, which is managed by the United States Forest Service. Trenton's primary duty as a council official revolves around coordinating a diverse range of agricultural service activities that benefit Camp Ondessonk and his community.

Environmental stewardship is a key focus area within the project coordination efforts. Notably, he has identified problems such as excess litter and poor land conditions in both his town and at Camp Ondessonk. Because of this, he has conducted trash sweeps at Olney City Park, mulched Camp Ondessonk's challenge course, and ensured the proper maintenance of Camp Ondessonk's trails. In efforts to organize events that foster agricultural engagement and solve problems within his community, he hosted a food drive centered around donating non-perishable food items to a local food pantry.

## Community Connections



The Taylorville FFA Chapter received the 2023 Premier Chapter: Strengthening Agriculture award during the 96th National FFA Convention and Expo in Indianapolis. #MyMentor began when 38 alumni leaders and business owners partnered with 137 Taylorville FFA Members to provide job shadowing, career development event assistance, SAE guidance and quickly grew to much more! In total 2,350 volunteer hours were given by local community leaders to these members. Drew Mickey, Taylorville FFA President shared, "The #MyMentor Program provided me with the passion and desire to conquer my dreams of attending auctioneering school. Without the program, I would not have been able to vision auctioneering as a career goal." Additionally, a "Meet the Interview World" event was held for students to gain real-life experiences through mock interviews with some leading to career opportunities for students.



### Illinois FFA Alumni

Interested in supporting your local agriculture program and FFA chapter? Former FFA members and interested adults are a natural, supportive resource for FFA advisors and their students. A local FFA alumni chapter helps to rally the community around agricultural education and FFA activities. FFA alumni chapters also provide a helping hand to FFA advisors in coordinating activities for the local FFA chapter.



**203 (includes 3 Corporate Chapters)** Alumni Chapters in Illinois

**11,177** Alumni Members in Illinois

**53.76%** of FFA Chapter with Active Alumni

### Alumni and Advisory Councils

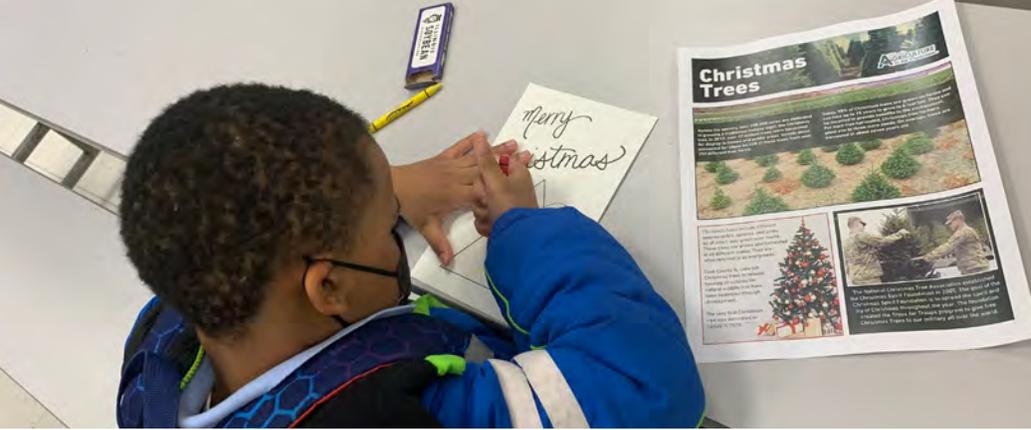
Quality programs have close ties with their local agricultural industry. An advisory council is a group of stakeholders that may include representatives from local businesses, school administrators, faculty, and staff who advise the program on development, implementation, and evaluation of the program. As most FFA alumni chapter members fit these same roles, teachers commonly use the local alumni in place of a separate advisory council. This can be an effective structure as FFA alumni meetings can also serve as program advisory meetings.



**62%** – Programs with Advisory Councils in FY 2023



Illinois FFA Alumni Board, 2023



The **Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC)** program provides **accurate, standards-based agricultural classroom materials** and **resources to preK-12 teachers** across the state.

**573,232**  
PreK-8 Students Reached

**80**  
Agricultural Literacy County Coalitions  
(Covering 90 counties)

**\$647,000**  
Dollars Awarded for County Grants  
(9.5% of these funds from Ag Ed Line Item)

**\$8,079**  
Average Dollars Awarded per Coalition

**37,253**  
PreK-8 Teachers Engaged in AITC

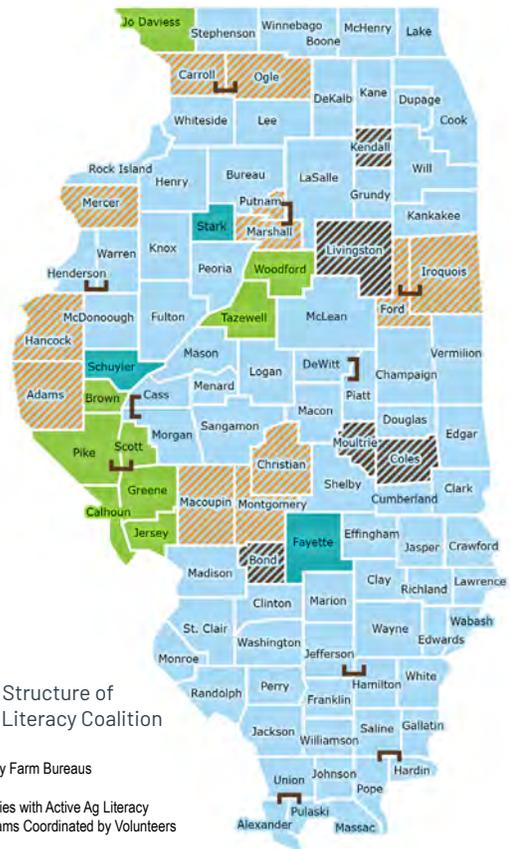
**3,218**  
Schools in IL Engaged in AITC

**91,366**  
Community Members Engaged in  
Agricultural Literacy through AITC

**\$1,970,187**  
State and Local Dollars Invested  
for AITC Statewide

**4,777**  
Volunteers

Using the established network of county agricultural literacy coordinators, Illinois AITC continued to be Illinois' leader in agricultural literacy programming. Matching grants were provided to county coalitions to develop an advisory council and hire an AITC coordinator. Financial support for AITC was provided by agricultural organizations and foundations, business and industry partners, commodity groups, farm bureaus, extension, soil and water conservation districts, and private individuals.



Fiscal Structure of  
Agriculture Literacy Coalition

- County Farm Bureaus
- Counties with Active Ag Literacy Programs Coordinated by Volunteers
- Counties Funded by County Money
- U of I Extension
- SWCD

**Agricultural Literacy**



## Exploring Agricultural Careers in Grades 5-8

Perkins V allows for federal career and technical education funds to provide career exploration and development activities in Grades 5-8, while state CTE funds can support these activities in Grades K-8. Agricultural education in Illinois has included middle school students since 2009. AFNR courses available to students before ninth grade include Career Exploration – a general careers course that includes exploration of all CTE clusters – and Exploratory Agricultural Science. In Exploratory Agricultural Science, students learn fundamental concepts to serve as a foundation for future courses in high school. Topics include, but are not limited to, animal and plant science, agribusiness, horticultural science, agricultural mechanics, and food science.

## Models of Agricultural Career Exploration in Grades 5-8

Agricultural Education is delivered in Grades 5-8 using different models. Some programs utilize one teacher who instructs both middle and high school students while others utilize a teacher dedicated to just middle school instruction. Ninety-seven local programs (27 percent statewide) report offering AFNR courses to students in Grades 5-8. Approved AFNR courses for middle school include Career Exploration and Exploratory Agricultural Science. Middle school courses offered in AFNR are often implemented in a quarterly rotation with other electives, but may also be offered as a semester- or year-long experience. Course descriptions, recommended outlines, and standards-aligned curricular resources can be accessed on the Illinois Agricultural Education website.

Seventy-three percent of programs offering middle school AFNR courses report using a shared classroom/laboratory space for both middle and high school students. Nine local programs reported engaging middle school students in career exploration activities like leadership conferences, college open houses, and the Farm Progress Show. Nineteen programs reported hosting guest speakers in middle school courses, and 30 programs engaged middle school students in career development events like horticulture, livestock evaluation, and veterinary science. See more information on middle school agricultural education below.

**95** Programs offering MS Courses equivalent to 10-25% local full-time equivalent (FTE)

**17** Programs offering MS Courses equivalent to 26-50% local FTE

**7** Programs offering MS Courses equivalent to 51-74% local FTE

**20** Programs offering MS Courses equivalent to 75% or more of local FTE

**53** Programs include MS AFNR Activities in local Annual Report

## Middle School FFA Membership

Students in Grades 7 and 8 are eligible for FFA membership in Illinois. Opportunities for these members include career and leadership development, participation in SAE programs, and achievement of the FFA Discovery Degree. Middle school students are eligible for all FFA activities, including Career Development Events (CDE) and Leadership Development Events (LDE), with the exception of those specifically agerestricted in the rules.

**5,946** FFA Members in Grades 7-8\*

**61** FFA Chapters awarding Discovery FFA Degrees to MS Students

**12** FFA Chapters where MS member participated in LDEs and CDEs

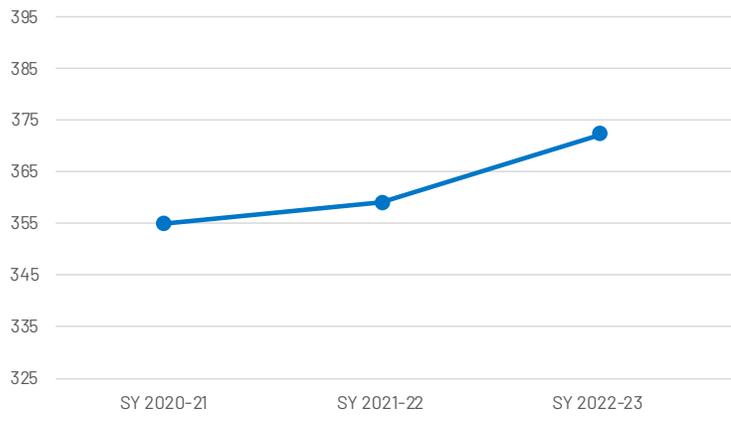
\*Includes FFA members from stand-alone middle school programs and combined middle and high school programs.





# Agriculture Program Characteristics

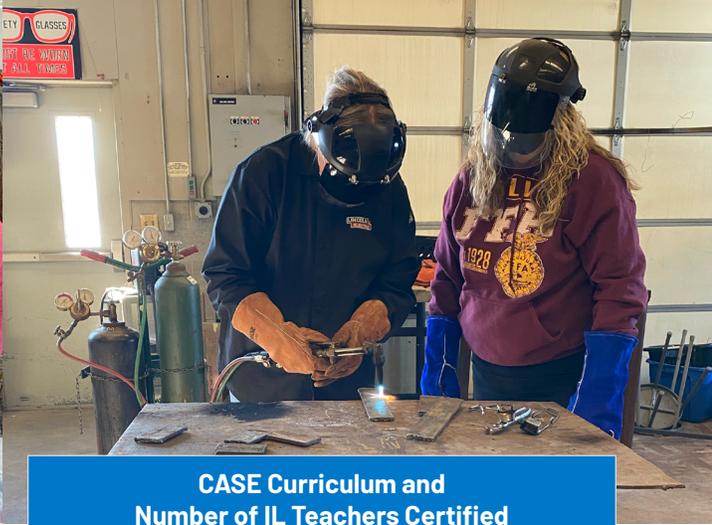
**Programs Offered by School Year**



- 20** Average AFNR Class Size
- 143** Programs with Two or More Teachers
- 57** Programs with College Articulation Agreements
- 108** Programs with Dual Credit AFNR Courses
- 100%** Programs that Utilize Illinois Core AFNR Curriculum
- 62%** Programs with Advisory Councils
- 200** Programs with Alumni Group
- 156** Programs with AFNR Courses in Grades 5-8
  
- 76%** (271) Programs offering Science Credit
- 40%** (142) Programs offering Consumer Education Credit
- 7%** (25) Programs offering Math Credit
- 4%** (15) Programs offering Social Studies Credit
- 4%** (15) Programs offering Language Arts Credit

**Ag Program Facilities**

- 80%** with Mechanics Facilities
- 67%** with >10 Computers/Laptops
- 76%** with a Greenhouse
- 49%** with Land/Plant Facilities
- 91%** with 1:1 School Technology
- 53%** with Instructional Landscaping
- 7%** with a Garden
- 28%** with Agriscience Facilities
- 29%** with Aquaculture Facilities
- 27%** with Small Animal/Veterinary Science Facilities
- 24%** with Food Science Facilities
- 21%** with a Nursery
- 8%** with Large Animal Facilities



### Illinois Core Curriculum for AFNR

The Illinois Core Curriculum for AFNR is free and accessible to Illinois teachers and administrators at [www.ilaged.org](http://www.ilaged.org). Curriculum libraries are complete, with full lesson plans aligned to Illinois Learning Standards. Each lesson includes a digital textbook (eUnit), presentation slides, related labs and activities, and assessments.

**11** Number of Curriculum Libraries  
**927** Lessons

### Teacher Credentials

Illinois teachers continually seek professional credentials in various AFNR career pathways to enhance learning for their students. Credentials sought by teachers include:

1. AWS Weld Inspector, Educator, and Welder
2. Anhydrous Ammonia Applicator and Transportation License
3. Briggs and Stratton Small Engine Basic Engine Theory Certification
4. Illinois DNR Hunter Safety Certified Instructor
5. Introduction to OSHA, OSHA 10, and 30
6. Illinois Department of Agriculture Certified Pesticide Applicator
7. SERVSafe Certified Food Handler
8. Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Pilot License



### Curriculum for Agricultural Science Education (CASE) in Illinois

CASE is a curriculum and professional development initiative of the National Council for Agricultural Education that is managed by the National Association of Agricultural Educators. CASE courses are developed using elements from pedagogical approaches that are recognized in educational literature. CASE curriculum is available to educators who complete certification through a CASE institute, which is an immersive professional learning experience in a specified course. Illinois teachers have taken on leadership roles within the CASE organization, and many have become certified in CASE curriculum based on local program needs.

### CASE Curriculum and Number of IL Teachers Certified

Agriculture Business Foundations 138	
Introduction to AFNR 120	
Agriculture Science-Animals 76	
Agriculture Science-Plants 59	
AgXplore Middle Schools 51	
Agriculture Power & Technology 20	
Natural Resources & Ecology 17	
Food Science & Safety 16	
Mechanical Systems in Agriculture 6	
Small Gas Engines 6	
Agriculture Research & Development 4	
Animal & Plant Biotechnology 2	
Environmental Science Issues 2	

**Illinois AFNR teachers** are eligible to become members in Illinois’ agriculture teacher organization – the Illinois Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers (IAVAT). **IAVAT offers professional learning, teacher leadership, and advocacy for agricultural education.**

Teachers are professionals, and membership in IAVAT has significant returns on investment. In addition to teacher benefits, students of teacher-members are eligible for discounted registration costs for in state-level competitive events aligned to agricultural careers. Dues for membership are often covered by the members’ schools because of this benefit.



Demographics of IL AFNR Teachers Total Number of Agriculture Teachers in Illinois 519, 8.7% increase from FY 2022	
Male	44%
Female	56%
Didn't Grow Up on a Farm	39%
Member of IAVAT	90%
Under Age 30	36%
Over Age 50	16%
Early Career (Less than five years)	38%
Late Career (More than 25 years)	9%

**Teacher Licensure Demographics**

Teachers in Illinois are licensed to teach AFNR in three main ways. Traditional licensure through an approved university teacher preparation program results in a Professional Educator License (PEL). Alternative means of licensure includes seeking an Educator License with Stipulations (ELS), which requires 60 college credit hours and 2,000 hours of professional experience in AFNR. Another alternative means of licensure includes seeking a CTE-Provisional (CTEP), which requires 8,000 hours of professional experience in AFNR.

Number of Teachers with Professional Educator License: **75%**  
 Number of Teachers with Educator License with Stipulations: **25%**

**Teacher Salaries**

Average Teacher Salary in FY 2023: **\$59,893.72**  
 Average Starting Teacher Salary in FY 2023: **\$55,304**

**Building Illinois’ AFNR Teaching Corps**

Agricultural education in Illinois benefits from a growing, diverse corps of professional educators. To continue to grow the number and diversity of AFNR teachers, Illinois’ Team Ag Ed is implementing several initiatives. The Growing Agriculture Science Teachers (GAST) Grant for universities and colleges distributes annual funds to empower students to major in agriscience education. The Joint Board of Directors (IAVAT and FFA) oversees a statewide diversity and inclusion task force to develop initiatives to increase access to agricultural education among diverse students. FCAE initiated a pilot program for school districts to start Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS) junior chapters at Illinois high schools. FCAE and the IAVAT Recruitment and Retention Committee implement annual initiatives to increase students majoring in agricultural education.

Visit Teach Ag



**Outstanding Educators**



The Illinois Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers is proud to partner with Nationwide Insurance, Illinois Association FFA, Farm Credit Illinois, and Compeer Financial to offer the **Golden Owl Award**.

The Golden Owl Award® allows these organizations to also extend their support to agricultural educators who devote countless hours – and often their own resources – to positively impact the lives of their students. The Golden Owl Award program allows students, fellow teachers, and other supporters to nominate their favorite agricultural teacher and summarize what makes them the best in their state. Nominees can win the distinction of being their state's Agricultural Educator of the Year.

Trent Taber was chosen as the 2023 Illinois Agricultural Educator of the year for his extraordinary work as an agriculture teacher and FFA advisor at Cambridge High School. One colleague describes him, as "nothing short of spectacular! His commitment to the betterment of Agricultural Education is next level. Not only this, but he serves as a mentor to many Ag Teachers (young and old)." Congratulations, Mr. Taber!

District I Winner

**Trent Taber, Cambridge (state winner)**

District II Winner

**Riley Hintzsche, Streator**

District III Winner

**Jody Heavner, Pittsfield**

District IV Winner

**Cassie Crouch, Maroa-Forsyth**

District V Winner

**Tamra Gerstenecker, Carlyle**

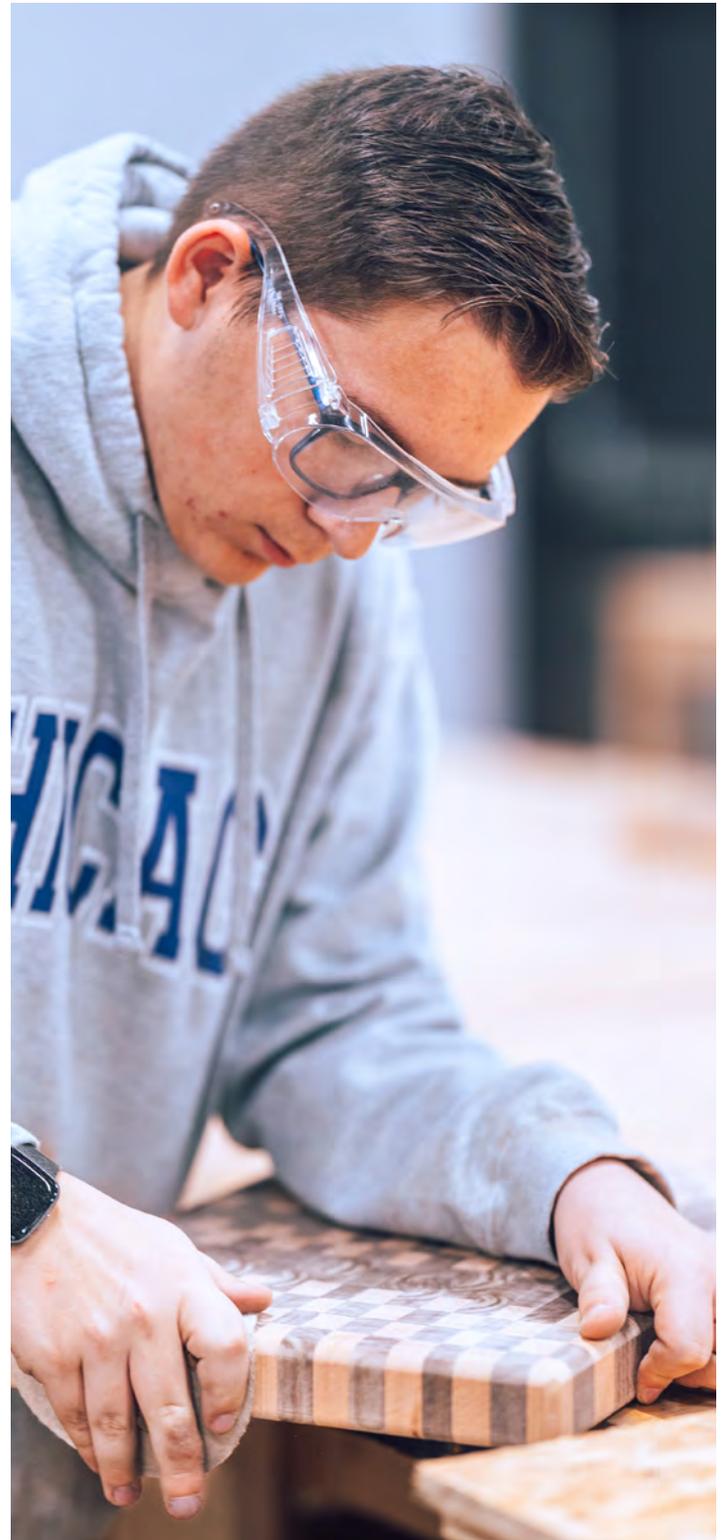


Instructors of agriculture at Illinois' **community colleges** and **universities** are eligible for membership in the **Illinois Association of Community College Agriculture Instructors (IACCAI)**. IACCAI provides **members** with opportunities for **professional learning, networking,** and **advocacy** for community college agricultural education programs.



Community College Enrollment Data	
Total Enrollment	2,668
Male	1,474
Female	1,180
Gender Withheld	14
Ag Ed in High School	1,475
FFA in High School	1,032
Transfer Program	669
Associate in Applied Science Program	1,520
Certificate Program	695
Community College Data	
Programs in AFNR	28
Full-Time Faculty in AFNR	99
Part-Time Faculty in AFNR	138
Average Full-Time Salary	\$64,042
Average Faculty Age	41
Early College Credit Data	
Students Offered Articulated Credit in FY 2023	852
Students Received Dual Credit in FY 2023	1,827

\*Data is self-reported



### Agriculture Enrollment Data by University

University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign	1,969
Loyola University Chicago	432
Southern Illinois University Carbondale	425
Illinois State University	390
Western Illinois University	228
Illinois College	67
Greenville University	25
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS</b>	<b>3,536</b>

### Additional Enrollment Data

Freshman Students	779
Transfer Students	356
Graduate Students	905
University Faculty	355

## Universities Offering Ag Education Teacher Preparation Courses



Western Illinois University



Illinois State University



University of Illinois



Southern Illinois University

## Colleges and Universities with AFNR Programs

- Black Hawk College
- Carl Sandburg College
- College of DuPage
- College of Lake County
- Danville Area Community College
- Greenville University
- Heartland Community College
- Highland Community College
- Illinois Central College
- Illinois College
- Illinois State University
- Illinois Valley Community College
- John A. Logan College
- John Wood Community College
- Joliet Junior College
- Kaskaskia College
- Lake Land College
- Lincoln Land Community College
- Loyola University
- McHenry County College
- Moraine Valley Community College
- Oakton Community College
- Parkland College
- Rend Lake College
- Richland Community College
- Sauk Valley Community College
- Shawnee Community College
- Southeastern Illinois College
- Southern Illinois University
- Southern Illinois University Carbondale
- Southwestern Illinois College
- Spoon River College
- University of Illinois
- Wabash Valley College
- Western Illinois University
- Wilbur Wright College

The **Professional Agricultural Students (PAS)** organization prepares students from two- and four-year colleges for the workplace by **building student skills** through **annual competitions** and **real-life learning** applications.



Public Speaking	Name and College	
Prepared Public Speaking	Lauren Mohr - ICC	
Impromptu Speaking	Delaine Enloe, KC	
Special Events	Individual and College	Team
Agribusiness Sales	Hattie Koeller, ISU	N/A
Agricultural Education	Sara Johnson, Highland	N/A
Beef Cattle	Brooke Tompkins, KC	LLC
Crop	Cole Repscher, LLCC	LLCC
Dairy	Nick Hammer, KC	KC
Equine	Kaili Weiner, BHC	BHC
Floriculture	Sarah Weber, LLC	LLC
Landscape Horticulture	Sarah Weber, LLC	LLC
Overall Livestock	Luke Brinkensnider, LLC	ICC
Sheep	Elyse Dyson, ICC	ICC
Soil	Adam Currie, IVCC	KC
Swine	MacKenzie Hodupp, JJC	JJC
Employment Interview State Winners		
Agricultural Equipment Service	Brock Heimann, KC	
Agribusiness Administration	Luke Jesgarz, WIU	
Agricultural Education	Rodney Billerbeck, Heartland	
Agricultural Sales	Cheyanne Montano, BHC	
Crop Production	Ray Duncan, ICC	
Dairy Production	Magen Busker, Highland	
Feeds and Animal Health	Makenna Konvicka, BHC	
Fertilizers and Agricultural Chemicals	Brooke Tompkins, KC	
Forestry and Natural Resources	Audrey Ondek, JJC	
Floriculture	Jimisha Burnside, ICC	
Fruit and Vegetable Production	Elizabeth Lee, LLCC	
Landscaping and Nursery	Emily Egli, ICC	
Livestock Production	Anna Johnson, Highland	



Career Planning		
Agribusiness Management & Marketing Systems	Bailey Pelka	KC
Agricultural Processing & Biotechnology	Hayden Torrence	KC
Horticulture, Environment, & Natural Resource Systems	Corrin Heilig	KC
Plant Systems	Joey VonBokel	KC
Power, Structural, and Technical Systems	Brock Heimann	KC
Retail Agribusiness Systems	Adriana Anderson	Highland

Career Progress		
Agricultural Education Systems	Alyssa Miller	Highland
Agribusiness Management & Marketing Systems	Sam Britt	KC
Agricultural Processing & Biotechnology	Brooke Tompkins	KC
Plant Systems	Matthew Grab	KC
Power, Structural, and Technical Systems	Katie May	KC
Retail Agribusiness Systems	Dee Boeing	KC
Ruminant Animal Systems	Faith Prather	KC

College Bowl Winning Team
Lake Land



**237** PAS Chapters  
**16** PAS Members

**PAS Student Officers**

**President**

**Keely Wixted**, Joliet

**1st VP**

**Lauren Mohr**, Illinois Central

**2nd VP**

**Kara Freebairn**, Lake Land

**3rd VP**

**Ben Bremmer**, Highland Community



## Belonging & Engaging

"Belonging is important. Brené Brown author of *"The Gifts of Imperfection"*, writes, 'Of this, I am actually certain. After collecting thousands of stories I'm willing to call this a fact: A deep sense of love and belonging is an irreducible need of all women, men and children. We are biologically, cognitively, physically and spiritually wired to love, to be loved and to belong. When those needs are not met we don't function as we are meant to. We break, we fall apart, we numb, we ache, we hurt others. The absence of love and belonging will always lead to suffering.' Reading this passage resonated with me as the core goal of the EDI Task Force to further develop the sense of belonging for all FFA members and in any instance where it does not, help to create belonging."

- Mindy Bunselmeyer, Illinois FFA Center Executive Director

Illinois FFA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Task Force is a group formally organized in the Fall of 2020 with the purpose of focusing on the sense of belonging within Illinois FFA and continuing to focus on making events and activities within FFA engaging for all of our members. The Illinois FFA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Task Force has two subcommittees, consisting of **Breaking Down Barriers** and **Education and Advocacy**.

**Breaking Down Barriers** will focus on the **policies, procedures, and logistical** barriers to access and **equity** within Illinois Agricultural Education. This subcommittee will look at each event/conference for what content it contains and how it is or could be more **inclusive** and **valuing** of all FFA members.

**Education and Advocacy** will **research** and provide recommendations for stakeholder **learning opportunities**. This subcommittee will provide **workshops** and **professional development** opportunities to teachers and FFA members.

Both subcommittees worked together to coordinate efforts at the 95th Annual Illinois FFA State Convention developing the Cultivating Conversations room for FFA members to experience. In the Cultivating Conversations Room, FFA members can discover opportunities to enhance their personal growth and have authentic conversations with other FFA members, all the while embracing differences and discovering similarities. It was created with the purpose of bringing members together through kindness, empathy and love for one another. There were four Engagement Areas;

Students were greeted and given a task card to guide them through the room.

At **BE THE CHANGE**, members were to learn about how you can make a difference and ideas others have to practice inclusive mindsets and take action in their own chapter. FFA members completed a post-it note to share ideas, thoughts and inspiration.

The **NEW FARMERS SPOTLIGHT**: A NFA Spotlight/mini Museum that highlighted the history of the NFA. FFA members from Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences coordinated this experience. This was one of the highlights of the room featuring NFA artifacts and photos that were on display and a TV looping through pictures with a voiceover of the NFA creed.

**CONVERSATION CORNER**: A location in the room where Student-led Conversations about topics that were a priority to youth today, including the following topics: Bullying, Building Up Your Confidence, Inclusivity In Your Chapter, Mental Health in Agriculture, Initiating Your Future, New Farmers of America, Learning to Be Vulnerable, Speaking Up, and Learning From Mistakes. Between conversations, students added post-its to a topic board.



## Belonging & Engagement

**FINDING SIMILARITIES:** An area where Chapters could check in add a push pin to an Illinois State Map. By pinning your town or school FFA chapters were indicating their interest in doing a chapter exchange with another FFA chapter around the state.

As we focus on belonging, I think of the joy I and others experience when we sense the joy of someone we help belong; seeing a smile develop on their face, to sense their joy, their being overwhelmed because fellow FFA members care enough to embrace them. That is when we know we have completed our inspiring task.

From Opening Ceremonies to the FFA Creed, Illinois FFA is intentional in its purpose and passion to bring FFA members together to provide an environment and opportunity for FFA members to grow personally as leaders and members within our communities statewide while uniting around agriculture.

**Other notable accomplishments of this committee include:**

- 2** teacher-oriented professional development workshops on equity, diversity, and inclusion
- 67** unique teachers engaged in professional learning opportunities focused on EDI
- 9** meetings of the EDI Task Force throughout the year
- 621** different students engaged in EDI focused activities at State FFA Convention



**Junior MANRRS Chapters**

Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS) is the leading collegiate organization for underrepresented high school students engaged in AFNR-career oriented academic programs. MANRRS also conducts a Junior MANRRS program designed to stimulate interest in science, technology, engineering, agricultural, and mathematics fields (STEAM). Illinois Agricultural Education has worked to grow Junior MANRRS in Illinois over the past year.

**Other notable accomplishments of this committee include:**

- 9** Junior MANRRS Chapters across Illinois reaching from Carbondale to Chicago
- 175** Junior MANRRS members in Illinois
- 1** Recruitment Exhibit
- 1** Illinois Junior MANRRS Institute at the University of Illinois

Junior MANRRS Chapters	Collegiate MANRRS Chapters
Cahokia High School	Illinois State University
Carbondale High School	Sauk Valley Community College
Chicago High School for Ag Science	Southern Illinois University
Freeport High School	University of Illinois
Galena High School	
Gary Comer College Prep High School	
Lovejoy Academy	
Eisenhower/MacArthur High School	
Prosser Academy	



**Collegiate Farm Bureau** provides involvement **opportunities** for students interested in agriculture at **12 chapters throughout Illinois**. The purpose of the **Collegiate Farm Bureau program** is to **bridge the gap** between participation in high school agriculture programs, such as 4-H and FFA, and future involvement as an Illinois Farm Bureau member. Collegiate members are offered **plentiful opportunities** for **leadership, professional development, and networking** through experiences in **agriculture education, legislation, advocacy, and community service**.

### Emma Kuhns, University of Illinois Discussion Meet Winner 2023

Emma Kuhns, University of Illinois, is the state winner for Illinois' collegiate discussion meet. This competition is evaluated on an exchange of ideas and information on a pre-determined topic. Participants build basic discussion skills, develop a keen understanding of important agricultural issues, and explore how groups can pool knowledge to reach consensus and solve problems.



#### Chapters

- Black Hawk College – East Campus, Galva
- Highland Community College, Freeport
- Illinois Central College, East Peoria
- Illinois State University, Normal
- Joliet Junior College, Joliet
- Kaskaskia College, Centralia
- Lake Land College, Mattoon
- Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield
- Southern Illinois University, Carbondale
- University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
- Wabash Valley College, Mount Carmel
- Western Illinois University, Macomb

2023 COLLEGIATE DISCUSSION MEET



CONGRATULATIONS!



STATE WINNER:

EMMA KUHNS

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS



RUNNER UP:

HALEY BODE

S.I.U. - CARBONDALE



HONORABLE MENTIONS:

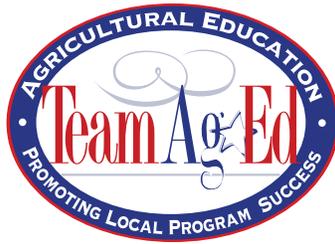
KEELY WIXTED

JOLIET JUNIOR COLLEGE



EMMA SMITH

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY



Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is the state agency responsible for preK-12 education, including career and technical education. Principal consultants serve in a supervisory, administrative capacity related to program approval, funding, and regulatory requirements.

**Board Chair, Dr. Steven Isoye**  
**State Superintendent, Dr. Tony Sanders**



University Council consists of the agricultural teacher education faculty from the four Illinois universities offering teacher education programs in agriculture, ISBE, FCAE, FFA, and IAVAT. The focus of this group is to maintain high-quality preservice agricultural education programs and to identify research priorities.

**Chair, Dr. Jay Solomonson**



Illinois Department of Agriculture is the state agency responsible for advocating for Illinois' agricultural industry and providing the necessary regulatory functions to benefit consumers, agriculturalists, and the state's natural resources. The agency also promotes agribusiness in Illinois and throughout the world.

**Director, Jerry Costello II**



Illinois Association of Community College Agriculture Instructors is a professional organization for postsecondary agricultural education teachers at all levels.

**President, Ryan Wildman**



Illinois Committee for Agricultural Education is a 13-member committee established by legislation and appointed by the Governor to advise both the Governor and State Board of Education concerning agricultural education for K-12 students.

**Chair, Erika Allen**



Illinois Professional Agriculture Students organization is a career and technical student organization for students enrolled in agricultural programs at the postsecondary level. PAS provides students with professional development opportunities, helping students get an edge in today's job market.

**President, Keely Wixted**



Illinois Leadership Council for Agricultural Education is a voluntary, grassroots agricultural industry group focused on the expansion and improvement of agricultural education programs at all levels. ILCAE is primarily an advocacy group focused on legislation that impacts agricultural education.

**Chair, Allyn Buhrow**



Illinois Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers is a grassroots professional organization for agriculture, food, and natural resource education teachers at all levels.

**President, Josh Berg**



Illinois Farm Bureau is a grassroots, statewide organization of farmers and agricultural professionals dedicated to enhancing the people, progress, and pride of Illinois and its farming community.

**President, Brian Duncan**



Illinois Association FFA is a career and technical student organization for students enrolled in agricultural education programs at the middle, high school, and collegiate levels. This organization promotes premier leadership, personal growth, and career success for all agricultural education student members.

**President, Thaddeus Bergschneider**



Facilitating Coordination in Agricultural Education (FCAE) is a state project administered through the ISBE in cooperation with and advised by the Illinois Committee for Agricultural Education. FCAE addresses the aims of Public Act 84-1452 involving the implementation of identified goals for improving education in and about agriculture in Illinois.

**Coordinator, Jennifer Waters**



Illinois FFA Alumni Association supports and promotes the FFA organization and its activities and agricultural education at every level. The focus of the association is the local chapter affiliate.

**President, Bill Kittinger**



Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom program combines the efforts of the Illinois Farm Bureau, FCAE, University of Illinois Extension, Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Illinois Agricultural Commodity organizations, various agribusinesses, and others to provide agricultural literacy for all students at level preK-8. Education

**Director, Kevin Daugherty**



Illinois Foundation FFA is a foundation established to receive and disburse funds to support quality agricultural education programs and FFA chapters across Illinois.

**Chair, Karen Schieler**



Booth 2  
**LINCOLN**  
ELECTRIC

