

SUMMER RECAP

SUMMER 2019 IS THE BEST ONE YET!

- EMMA FREEBAIRN, STATE TREASURER



The Major State Officers and Section Presidents had a busy July full of training and team building. Training kicked-off at Southern Illinois University Carbondale from July 9-12. While in Carbondale, the Major State Officers and Section Presidents received training from National FFA facilitators. These facilitators versed the state officer team on workshop planning and management, as well as facilitation and presentation skills. The team of 30 was able to bond and grow closer through team building activities and challenges. The officers went on tours of the college led by SIUC students and staff.

SIUC also hosted the site for the July State Officer Meeting where the team prepared for chapter visits, worked on committees and selected District directors. The Illinois FFA Officer team would like to thank SIUC and their incredible staff for their hospitality while hosting the meeting.

Two weeks later, the five Major State

Officers traveled to Washington, D.C. for the State Officer Summit. State Associations from across the nation sent officer teams and representatives to this week-long conference where they learned how to better advocate for the agriculture industry and the National FFA Organization. They met with members of Congress and senators to discuss issues that are facing the National FFA Organization today. Additionally, each State Association chose two officers to serve as Committee Delegates at the National FFA Convention. These committees are formed to evaluate and improve different areas of the National FFA Organization.

The skills obtained while the team attended these training sessions will be extremely beneficial to their success over the next year. The team improved their leadership skills and will implement what they learned into their time as Section Presidents and Major State Officers!

STATE PREMIER CHAPTER AWARD

CAMBRIDGE FFA



BY: GAGE MILLER, STATE PRESIDENT

The State Premier Chapter Award is awarded to the FFA chapter with the highest overall score on the National Chapter Award application. This year's recipient is the Cambridge FFA Chapter from Section 3. The Cambridge FFA Chapter's National Chapter Award is made up of 15 different activities that show the FFA chapter's dedication to Growing Leaders, Building Communities, and Strengthening Agriculture. The officer team is responsible for planning and implementing the events throughout the year and showcasing nine of them on the application.

Some of the most essential activities within the Cambridge FFA chapter include:

- **Greenhand Orientation Day**- A day-long program for freshman FFA members organized to encourage them to become involved in the FFA. They experience many types of team building activities, Agricultural Olympics, and then close the day with reflections and a "letter to me."
- **Used Oil Drive**- A community waste oil collection that helps protect the environment and keep the community clean. The chapter was able to collect over 3,500 gallons of oil this past spring and recycle it through Future Environmental.
- **Farm to Fork Dinner**- A partnership program with the County Farm Bureau designed to bring awareness to locally grown agricultural products. Farmers from the local area sit down with those not as familiar with ag to explain where their food comes from and answer any questions they may have related to agriculture.
- **Ag in the AM** is a local news segment that broadcasts a variety of agriculture in the classroom activities to showcase the many fields in the industry. This also allows the Blue and Gold jacket to be on thousands of TV screens in our community.

Other events included in the application were chapter officer training, a school greenhouse business, homeless night fundraiser, ice cream social recruitment event, and elementary agricultural literacy day. "Being selected as the Premier Chapter in the state of Illinois is one of the highest honors that a chapter can receive," said Trent Taber, Cambridge FFA Advisor. "It is a direct result of the students hard work and dedication."

A huge congratulations goes to the Cambridge FFA Chapter for all of their hard work and dedication to their chapter, community, and state association.



FFA CAMP 2019

-Lane Harvey, State Vice President



FFA Leadership Camp is always a fantastic experience for Illinois FFA members!

One of the defining moments of the FFA camp experience is when you meet your group members for the first time. To be honest, for most people, it's pretty awkward. But, the great thing about camp is how you soon become a close family with your group members. The first opportunity for team building was "Leadership Loop." During Leadership Loop campers participate in name-games and team exercises, such as the marble run, an activity where teams have to communicate with linked arms and stand up together. These activities established a foundation for the rest of FFA camp.



On the second day, groups took on the challenge course - a series of team-building obstacles that forces your team to get up close and personal to succeed. The highlight of this course is always the "Tall Wall," a 12-foot wall that your group helps each other over. It is satisfying for your team to get over the wall and across the tire bridge. Through the challenge course, groups become much closer as a team.



In between main activities, campers competed in volleyball, Quiz Bowl, played “Ga-Ga Ball,” mingled and talked, or wrote “Happy Grams,” messages to tell other campers what they thought was great about each other. This year, 300 campers sent over 4,500 Happy Grams to each other. That’s a lot of kindness!

After having a blast at the dance, campers woke up for the “Early Morning Radio Show,” this is an opportunity for campers to get up, get excited, and get ready for camp. A classic at FFA camp, this radio show is an opportunity to meet other campers and have fun before the activities begin.

On Thursday, groups competed in “Ag Olympics.” Ag Olympics consists of different events where groups compete against each other, trying to win as many as possible. These events range from playing rugby in the pond with an oiled watermelon to dodgeball, to trying to knock a poker chip off everyone else’s hand with a pool noodle. These are the final events that bring groups together. Through the struggles and triumphs, groups learn to communicate, lead, and work as a team.

After getting cleaned up and dried off, campers heard from the Illinois Association FFA National Officer Candidate, past State Secretary Miriam Hoffman, who gave remarks on getting out of your comfort zone. Many members got out of their comfort zone on that Thursday night, doing their best to show off their talents in the Talent Show. From many musical talents to dad jokes and juggling, there was a considerable variety of abilities at FFA camp.

At nighttime on Wednesday and Thursday, the Section Presidents held a reflection activity, talking about their core values and its importance. Through showcasing their core values, the team hoped to inspire the campers to identify their core values and use them to serve others.

The last day of camp came, and it was a full mixture of emotions. After cleaning up and talking with our groups for the final time, it was time to go home. There were many tears around the campground, but friendships will expand beyond the confines of FFA Camp 2019.

The emotions at the end of camp show the impact that this annual experience has on the members of Illinois FFA. Families formed in small groups, in cabins, and across camp. Campers leave with the sadness of separation, but with a new motivation to serve their communities and FFA chapters - with the lessons they learned at FFA camp.



SPOTLIGHT ON SERVICE

TREMONT FFA

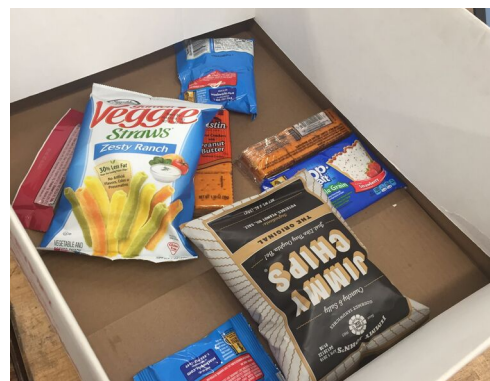


-Collin White, State Secretary

This year, Spotlight on Service took the place of the Illinois FFA state service project. The Spotlight on Service project highlights the community service events that different chapters do all across the state of Illinois! This showcase event allows for chapters around Illinois to highlight their program engagement in the community on the local and state level. At State Convention last June, chapters from around the state made a poster highlighting various service projects.. Members from across the state evaluated each program that submitted a poster and voted for the project by making a cash donation. The chapter that ended the convention with the highest amount of donations won the contest. The winner received all of the cash donations , along with a \$250 prize to help promote their community efforts.

This year's Spotlight on Service winner was the Tremont FFA Chapter in Section 9. Their project was called "Time to Face the Waste." For this project, FFA members manned boxes set out during the middle and high school lunch periods, and collected unopened or uneaten food items. Food products, such as fresh fruit, milk cartons, frozen fruit cups, granola bars, and Teddy Grahams, were collected over six months. Every week, the members received the donated food and delivered it to the local Tremont Food Pantry. "We did this because we saw a huge waste of food in our trash cans after lunch," said Jenna Goeken, a Tremont FFA Chapter Officer. "On average, we served 25 families and wanted to help our community by giving it back locally."

Congratulations to the Tremont FFA Chapter! We look forward to seeing your chapters service project next year at the 92nd Illinois FFA State Convention!



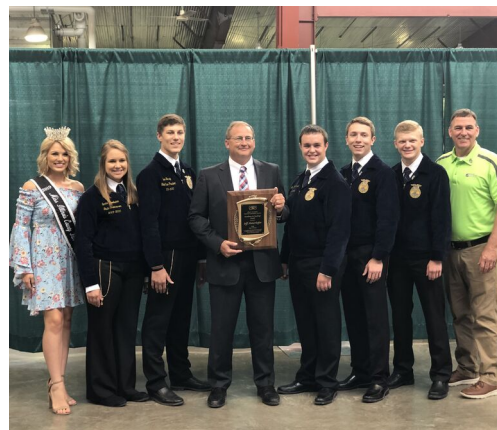
THE GOLDEN OWL

BY: GAGE MILLER, STATE PRESIDENT

The 2018-2019 recipient of the IAVAT Excellence in Teaching Award is Jeff Maierhofer, Seneca FFA Chapter Advisor and Agriculture Education Teacher. Maierhofer has dedicated the past 30 years to teaching and ensuring his students are reaching their full potential both in the classroom and in their FFA careers. “Mr. Maierhofer’s teaching does not begin and end at the classroom door,” said Kent Weber, a co-agriculture instructor at Seneca High School. “The essence of Jeff’s educational philosophy is for his students to apply what they have learned to the real world.” A huge congratulations goes to Maierhofer for all of his hard work and constant dedication to his chapter and community.

Maierhofer will be the last teacher to receive this specific IAVAT Excellence in Teaching Award, the award will be replaced by The Golden Owl Award. The Golden Owl Award program is awarded to the best agriculture educators throughout the state and is sponsored by Nationwide Insurance. Following the same criteria, the program was created to honor and award the hard-working agriculture teachers who put endless amounts of time into their career. Any individual is allowed to nominate an agriculture teacher that has impacted their life. To nominate a teacher, entries must contain a summary of why the nominee is the best qualified throughout the state in various categories.

Once selected for this award, teachers compete at the section, district, and state level. Those educators who have been nominated and chosen as district winners are awarded a monetary award of \$500 and an engraved plaque honoring their dedication to agricultural education and their students. The state winner, who goes above and beyond all set expectations, will be awarded \$3,000, presented with the Golden Owl Award trophy, and named the Illinois Agricultural Educator of the Year.



Do you know an agriculture teacher who leaves a positive impact on the lives of their students? Nominate them for this distinguished award. The final day for nominations is Saturday, November 16, 2019.



NATIONAL OFFICER CANDIDATE

The Illinois Association FFA is thrilled to have Miriam Hoffman, 2018-2019 State FFA Secretary serving as a 2019 National Officer Candidate. After a rigorous interview process on the state level, she is prepped and ready for National Convention!

Each year, Illinois Association FFA holds a selection process to pick an individual to represent the state as a National FFA Officer. This year Miriam Hoffman will represent Illinois as a National Officer Candidate. Raised on a dairy farm in Earlville, Illinois, Hoffman has spent the past year traveling and serving as the 2018-2019 Illinois FFA State Secretary.

This year at the 92nd National FFA Convention and Expo, 44 candidates are running for National Office, making this the largest group of candidates in over 15 years. Hoffman, along with the other candidates, will compete for six officer positions at the National FFA Convention this October. The candidates will be evaluated on their character, influence, areas of knowledge, communication, and overall team skills. Candidates will also showcase their facilitation and workshop planning skills, advocacy, and public speaking.

Hoffman is a highly motivated member who is passionate about the National FFA Organization. She decided to run for National office because she believes God's purpose in her life is to serve people. "I am humbled to be able to represent Illinois on the National level," said Hoffman. "I'm so grateful for the incredible support of all my teammates from this past year, the Illinois FFA center staff, my home chapter and section, and all the kind-hearted people from across the state."

Illinois FFA wishes Hoffman the best of luck as she prepares for National Convention and the officer selection process!



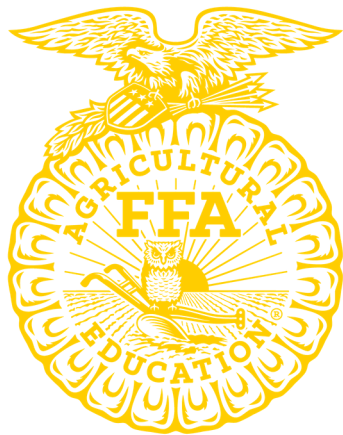
- Emma Freebairn, State Treasurer



2019 ILLINOIS STATE FAIR



BY: BRODEE MCCORMICK, STATE REPORTER



Over 45,000 individuals visited the Illinois FFA Barnyard at the 2019 Illinois State Fair, with a peak attendance of 800 individuals per hour. The State Fair started on Thursday, August 8, 2019. Meanwhile, the Major State Officers and Section Presidents gathered for their monthly state officer meeting. While at the meeting, the team wrote 150 thank you notes, discussed STAR Conferences, chapter visits, and Leadership Training Schools, set up the Barnyard at the fairgrounds, and had animal ethics training to get us better prepared for the upcoming days of the fair.



On the first day of the fair, the Majors participated in the State Fair Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. The officers led the Pledge of Allegiance and were a part of the ceremony with Governor JB Pritzker; Director of Agriculture, John Sullivan; Miss Illinois County Fair Queen, Alexi Bladel; and 4-H representatives. Once the ribbon cutting was complete, the Majors, Section Presidents, and other section officers walked together in the Twilight Parade sporting matching themed shirts.



More than 45,000 attendees visited the Illinois FFA Barnyard this year!

During the 10 days of the fair, attendees visited the Barnyard to engage with Officers and to learn about the animals raised by FFA members and friends. Along with working the Barnyard every day of the fair, the State Officer team was able to lead and emcee the Agriculture Tours with the Illinois Department of Agriculture. During the tours, officers gathered groups of people on the trolley and traveled across the fairgrounds showcasing various aspects of Illinois agriculture.

One other major event that took place during the State Fair was “Ag Day.” On Ag Day, the Officer Team attended the Ag Day Breakfast where Director Sullivan spoke and the IAVAT Agriculture Teacher of the Year, Jeff Maierhofer, was recognized. Later that evening, the team attended the Sale of Champions where they got to show their appreciation to the livestock investors and help model the commodities that were being auctioned off. Illinois FFA President, Gage Miller, also gave remarks on behalf of Illinois Association FFA.

After a fun-filled 11 days at the Illinois State Fair, the Officer Team left happy knowing they were able to provide a fun family experience to fairgoers in the FFA Barnyard, while educating the public on farm animals and where their food comes from.



**Attendance peaked at
nearly 800 visitors per
hour!**

ENVISION 2019-2020

-Lane Harvey, State Vice President

The 2020 Illinois Association FFA theme encourages members to look to the future and pushed the Majors and Section Presidents to think about how their core values are incorporated into this years state theme.

The Decatur Conference Center was a perfect place for the newly elected Illinois FFA State Officer Team, to hold the June State Officer Meeting. This meeting was the first official event the team hosted since being elected. We were prepared to dive into the planning of the upcoming year! During the two short days, we overflowed the conference center with energy, creative ideas, and enthusiasm while proudly wearing our blue jackets.

Reflections are an essential part of every Illinois FFA Officer Meeting as it allows us to look back on something that we can contribute to our team or that has led us to be the person we are today. Our first reflection focused on a factor that is not only important to every team but top every person as well. Each of us shared our core values. While some of our core values were similar, others were completely different. Each individual contributes an essential role to our officer team, and we would not be complete if one person were taken out of the group.

One of the most critical tasks we completed during the crazy two days in Decatur was picking our 2019-2020 Illinois FFA State theme **Envision**. Do not be fooled; it was not as simple as choosing a word and deciding to go with it for an entire year. We evaluated every aspect behind the word and how we could use it. “The process took great consideration,” said Section 8 President, Lilliana Romero. “It involved the participation of all the section presidents and major state officers.”

We had to take into consideration workshop themes, t-shirt designs, and social media posts when choosing the theme; a theme that members all over Illinois would use during the year. We knew we had to select **Envision** as the upcoming year’s theme. “**Envision**” allows members to look toward the future, see what where they want to get, what they want to achieve, and be able to **Envision** getting there. Also, the consideration of the 92nd Illinois FFA State Convention being held during the year 2020 was thrown into the mix as a neat coincidence. “**Envision** embodies the outlook for the year,” said Emma Kuhns, Section 20 President. “As everyone should envision success for the Illinois FFA this upcoming year!”



CORN CONGRESS

Q & A with Corn Growers

- Brodee McCormick, State Reporter



On July 15, the 25 section presidents and five major state officers boarded a plane and took off to Washington D.C. While there, the state officer team had the opportunity to watch the National Corn Growers business session, visit with representatives at the USDA, US Grains Council, the EPA, and many agricultural lobbyists to learn about the current issues facing the agricultural industry. The state officers worked alongside the Illinois Corn Growers and Illinois Corn Marketing Board to advocate on the Hill for infrastructure, trade agreements, and ethanol.

While there, we interviewed some of the Corn Growers and Corn Marketing Board Members to understand why they are genuinely passionate about what they do.

- **Ted Mottaz** from Elmwood, IL is currently serving as the Illinois Corn Growers President, and he has been a member for nine years.
- **Don Duvall** from Carmi, Illinois is currently serving as the chairman of the Illinois Corn Marketing Board.
- **Rodney Weinzierl** from Stanford, Illinois is currently the Executive Director of the Illinois Corn Growers and has been a member of the Illinois Corn Growers Association for 31 years.
- **Paul Jeschke**, from Mazon, Illinois, has been an Illinois Corn Grower member for decades.
- **Kenneth Hartman**, from Waterloo, Illinois, is currently serving as a board member of the National Corn Growers. He has been a member of the association for 20 years.
- **Matt Rush** from Fairfield, Illinois is currently serving as the Illinois Corn Growers Treasurer.

What inspired you to be an IL Corn Grower/Corn Marketing Board Member?

- *Jeschke*: I wanted to be part of a group that had more of an effect than I could have as an individual. The collectiveness of farmers has a lot more strength, a lot more influence, a lot more opportunity to change things than working on legislative issues by ourselves.
- *Rush*: I was Chairman of Young Leaders, and after that, I wanted to stay involved in agriculture. Then the spot for district director opened up for Illinois Corn, and I applied.

What do you hope to achieve while in your position?

- *Mottaz*: I want to establish a good “corn reputation” with the general society. The public seems to have a lot of ideas about what corn is, and they don’t understand what it’s actually used for; when you see the Nike swoosh, you know what they are and what they do. I want an ear of corn to have the same effect.
- *Jeschke*: I want to be a part of a group that holds some sort of influence on a national level. I want to be able to handle any sort of government issues that may come up because an organization like this can carry a lot more weight.



What advice would you give to the next generation of agriculturists?

- *Weinzierl*: Stay involved and meet people. It’s all about relationships. You may have heard somebody say something similar to this, but it is 100% true. The people you know and you try to educate are really important whether it’s when you need help or in the Corn Growers perspective when you are working issues. If you know people who can also benefit from a topic or are even in the decision-making process of the issue, it provides an advantage, so stay connected.
- *Hartman*: We’ve got to keep working hard and supporting our products and our farmers. Also, remember to stay involved; people have to be involved to make sure that there is someone representing farmers in politics and the media.

How do you approach or handle the situation when someone disagrees with you on an agricultural issue?

- *Duvall*: Be sure to communicate your issues and be willing to listen to other people’s positions because inevitably, there will be times where they have some things that are maybe better than your position.
- *Weinzierl*: Somebody will always disagree with you, no matter what. Farmers are a small group of people and frankly, aren’t too good at talking about what they truly do. Stop talking about facts and science and start talking about WHY things are done. Take it down to basics. You will never come out an argument all right or all wrong. There is an in-between where we normally stay, but all you can do is help the opposing side see WHY you believe what you believe.

We want to thank the Illinois Corn Growers Association for making this trip possible! It truly is an amazing eye-opening experience and it wouldn’t be possible without them!

NATIONAL FINALISTS



-Collin White, State Secretary

It's that time of the year again! It's time for the 2019 National FFA Convention and Expo in Indianapolis, the largest high school student gathering in the nation! This year the Illinois Association FFA will be well represented at the Convention with five National Proficiency finalists, four premier Chapter Finalists, two Model of Excellence Finalists, 29 3-star Chapters, and 15 Agriscience Fair Finalists.

National Proficiency finalists have put countless hours into their projects and their record books to make it this far. This year, Illinois is represented by members from all over the state with a wide variety of projects. Illinois Proficiency finalists are:

- Braylee Finck, Maria-Forsyth FFA Chapter - Agricultural Sales Entrepreneurship
- Lance T. Moritz, Streator FFA Chapter - Diversified Horticulture
- Tara Hummel, Tri-Point FFA Chapter - Goat Production
- Joey Allison, Cisne FFA Chapter - Turf Grass Management
- Amanda Voss, Carlyle FFA Chapter - Wildlife Production and Management.

During National Convention, these members will go into intense interviews against four other members in their area to crown the National Champion. Good luck to all of our finalists!

The Premier Chapter Finalists, 3-star Chapters, and Model of Excellence Finalists are some of the best when it comes to programs statewide. All of these awards come from the National Chapter Award that chapters fill out to show their activities throughout the year and how they fit into one of three areas: Strengthening Agriculture, Building Communities, and Growing Leaders. The Premier Chapters are the programs that excelled in those respective areas. This year's Premier Chapters are:

- Flanagan-Cornell FFA Chapter - Growing Leaders with "Rake and Dash."
- Waterloo FFA Chapter in the area of Growing Leaders with the activity "Fun Fitness in Ag."
- The Normal FFA Chapter in the area of Building Communities "TOWELS 4 HOWLS."
- Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences in the area of Strengthening Agriculture with "12 Days of Christmas."



Three Star Chapters are chapters that scored an “excellent” on their National Chapter Award.

Illinois 3-Star Chapters are:

- Altamont
- Athens
- Bureau Valley
- Cambridge
- Carlyle
- Central Burlington
- Chicago Ag Sciences
- Decatur-MacArthur
- Andreas Ag Academy
- Eastland
- Edwards County
- Flanagan-Cornell
- Goreville
- Grayville
- Iroquois West
- Mount Vernon
- Nashville
- Newark
- Normal
- Olney
- Orion
- Pittsfield
- Pontiac
- Scales Mound
- Seneca
- St. Anne
- Streator
- Tremont
- Tri-Point
- Waterloo

The Model of Excellence finalists are the top-rated chapters with the highest National Chapter Award scores. Representing Illinois are Central Burlington and Normal FFA! Good luck to all of these schools as they compete at National FFA Convention!

The National Agriscience Fair brings FFA’s most scientific minds together in one convention hall. Members can compete in the areas of Animal Systems; Environmental Services/Natural Resource Systems; Food Products and Processing Systems; Plant Systems; Power, Structural, and Technical Systems, and Social Systems. This year Illinois is represented in the area of Animal Systems by:

- Delana Erbsen and Alyssa Miller from Eastland,
- Bailee Fanning from Milford, and
- Eric Schafer and Lizzie Schafer from Taylorville.

In the area of Environmental Services/ Natural Resource Systems, we have:

- Grace Hester from Southeastern and
- Josh Kaltenbach and Daniel Stephens from Southeastern.

In Food Products and Processing Systems is:

- Macenzie Ratliff from Orion.

In Plant Systems is:

- Kristen Mascher from Nokomis,
- Summer Ramsey and Brooke Lockwood from Southeastern,
- Jady Henry from Southeastern,
- Cullen Covlin and Matthew Grab from Freeburg, and
- Elizabeth Reutter and Autumn Lynn Bruens from Paxton Buckley Loda.

In Power, Structural, and Technical Systems are:

- Nora Patton from Nokomis,
- Abbey McMillen and Jacob Kane from Southeastern,
- Brooke Miller from Southeastern, and
- Katherine Baker from Neoga.

Congratulations to all of our national finalists as they prepare for National Convention this fall!

