

The Michigan FFA Creed

January/February



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The Michigan FFA Creed



Issue 3 Volume 8

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I believe in...

confidence.

It is said that no matter where we are as members of the FFA, the blue corduroy is recognized as a symbol of leadership and integrity. However, to those who are not members it may appear to be a silly uniform.

As a first year FFA member, I did not look forward to putting on those black nylons and wearing them all day in the middle of February. I wasn't fond of the black heels that I slid my feet into and I certainly didn't think an oversized national blue corduroy jacket was very fashionable. As a newcomer, I thought about how ridiculous I was going to look. However, when I met my Greenhand Conduct of Meetings team at the entrance of my high school, all looking a little out of place, we walked into the school together. As I saw the jackets on the other members of my team, I felt more confident in myself. I was not going to be embarrassed by the looks from students in the hallway; the same looks that would normally make me feel like I had forgotten to put pants on that morning.

For the first time, I felt confident in myself, not because I had the most fashionable outfit on that day, but because I was part of something greater than myself. I was more than part of a team or a club. I forgot about what I was wearing and I stopped noticing the crazy looks others gave me. I didn't care about what they thought about me because I was concentrated on the feeling that this new FFA jacket had given me. I was confident in myself because I stood out from the crowd.

Now, every time I put on my FFA jacket and the nylons, that are still uncomfortable, and slide my feet into that same pair of black heels, I feel the confidence of that day overwhelm me all over again. I feel proud of this organization that I have grown to love. When I see members wearing the blue jackets, I recognize the symbol of leadership and integrity that I once didn't understand.

FFA members, be confident in who you are. Let the jacket stand as a symbol for leadership and integrity. Know that when you zip up your national blue corduroy jacket, you are part of something great. You are part of the future of agriculture in this nation and around the world.

Dates to Remember...

January

- 6 Star Candidate Interviews
- 9 Regional Update
- 22 District Leadership Contests
- 25 The following are due to the State FFA Office:
National Chapter Award & Agriscience Student Recognition Application
(Must be in the office by this date as late applications will not be accepted!)

February

- 1 The following items are due to the State FFA Office: Superior Chapter Award Applications, Academic Excellence, Food For America, BOMC, and H.O. Sargent Diversity Award
- 3-4 District Regional Contests
- 11 State Officer Interviews-Regional Level
- 17-18 Regional Leadership Contest
- 19 State Convention Registration Due
- 19-21 State Officer Interviews-State Level

Chapter Chatter



By: Meghan Bonthuis
MSU Agriscience Education Sophomore



Region I

Homer FFA-Lora Finch, advisor

“As a part of the new Nutrition Program at Homer Schools, the Homer FFA Chapter held a Summer Gardening Program for elementary and middle school students. During this time, high school Agriscience students/FFA members were trained as ‘Certified Nutrition Trainers’ to lead and assist with the sessions that were presented to elementary and middle school students. Mrs. Finch, Homer FFA advisor said, ‘It was great for the FFA members to work with the younger students in a non-traditional classroom setting and they served as role models.’ They also spent some time playing games, working in the garden and discussing healthy food choices. This was the first summer for this program and because of the response we will be doing it again next summer.”

Region II

Waldron FFA-Margo Fether, advisor

“The Waldron FFA Chapter knows how to stay busy. Our members will soon be exhibiting the chickens they have been raising in the Poultry Contest. Also, planning is well underway for the Lock-In that our chapter is hosting. Preparations for this event are very time consuming, but the product is worth every second of work. We invite every chapter in Region II as well as a few of our neighbors in Ohio. One of our Jr. High members said it was “...the best way to meet other members.” The Regional Officer Team is usually joining in on the fun as well, so it’s a great time to get to know members from across the region! This is our main recreational activity for the year. We hold it towards the beginning of the year to get everyone acquainted so we can work well together for the duration of the year!”



Region III

Alma FFA-Burt Henry, advisor

“The middle of the mitten is home to many things, including the Alma FFA Chapter. The Alma FFA was established in 1927, and to this day has been very successful. Currently, the chapter is being advised by Mr. Burt Henry, who was recognized with the Outstanding Educator Award in 2009. The Alma chapter has been recognized at the national level many times, including receiving a three star rating in the National Chapter Award program. Besides being recognized at the national level Alma has many annual activities that take place within their home community. Some of these events include the Fruit and Nut Sales, Chapter exchange with the Ionia FFA Chapter, and seasonal activities such as ice skating. Alma is also called home by the 2009-2010 National Eastern Region Vice President Alex Henry.”





Region IV Ovid-Elsie FFA-Tracey Hoffman, advisor

“September 16, 2009, members from the Ovid-Elsie FFA chapter traveled to Perry High School to participate in the Region IV POA Workshop. The night started off with opening ceremonies conducted by the 2009-2010 Region IV officer team followed by an icebreaker to get the FFA members there to loosen up and have some fun.

Soon following, members paired up and went through three sessions together. The sessions included: building a “Superhero Getaway Vehicle”, “Creating a Superhero”, and “The Human Table”, incorporating Region IV’s theme “Superheroes...Come to Region IV Camp and unleash your inner super power.”

The sessions wrapped up with closing ceremonies from the Regional Officers, and the Ovid-Elsie members got to wrap up the night enjoying ice cream with their chapter and friends from around the region.”

Region V Ionia FFA-Jason Griffith, advisor

“The Ionia FFA Chapter is currently raising hogs to show at the Green and White hog show. The hogs were purchased in mid-October and are being housed in the school’s FFA barn. Members of the chapter are responsible for feeding the animals and cleaning their pens, as well as provide any medical treatments they may need such as de-worming. This project gives members an opportunity to care for and learn about pigs and be exposed to a state level hog show. After the show the hogs will be sold as a fundraiser for the chapter. We have done this project for many years and hope to continue it in the future.”



Region VI Ogemaw Heights FFA-Michael Eagan, advisor

“Every year a tradition is carried out that draws community members of every age to the Ogemaw Heights High School gymnasium, for over thirty years now the West Branch community has gathered to support a good cause, socialize, and of course, to be entertained! This tradition is widely known as Donkey Basketball. The Ogemaw Heights FFA Chapter holds its annual Donkey Basketball tournament to fundraise and to provide entertainment to the community. The money that the chapter earns goes towards funding for future FFA activities like National Convention, State Convention and district and regional competition for leadership contests. According to Chase Wiltse, “Donkey Basketball gives everyone a laugh and it’s a lot of fun for the riders too.”

It should come as no surprise that not only FFA members participate in the basketball game. This year teams consisted of the Ogemaw Heights FFA Chapter, West Branch Regional Medical Center, Ogemaw Heights National Honor Society, and the Ogemaw Heights FFA Alumni.

And what would any basketball game be without concessions? The Ogemaw Heights FFA Alumni hosts a bake sale that includes a plethora of tasty treats as well as a bountiful concession stand. This money also goes towards the chapter’s general fund All in all this annual game is definitely worth the drive to Region VI.”



Advisors and students: Do you want to see YOUR chapter highlighted here? Now you can! E-mail your State Reporter Meghan Bonthuis at bonthuis@anr.msu.edu

Our Motto in Motion



Learning to Do

By: Haley Schulz
Lansing Community College Biology Major
&
Elizabeth Hager
MSU Engineering Major

In the Montcalm Career Center animal science/veterinary medicine class the students are learning more than just the anatomy of animals. They are learning the complex working of public relations. This newly formed chapter is working hand in hand with a local farmer to renovate a chicken house for the students to use. The students are very excited to learn what it takes to renovate an older structure to make it usable today. This project offers great hands-on learning opportunities for structure renovation and in the poultry industry future.

The original land-owner that the school is now located on is very willing to help them get this project underway. She has offered her chicken house to the class while asking nothing in return. She is very excited to see the students have this opportunity to learn and gain life experiences from something that would just be going to waste otherwise. It is rare to see, in these economic times, such a willing and helpful person. The relations that these chapter members are forming with this local farmer are a critical part of a growing agricultural education program. They are creating an invaluable network of individuals that will help them in the future.

The completion of this project will open many doors to the members of this chapter. "It would allow us to compete in more contests," said one student who seemed very excited to see this project completed. Not only will this project open the door to more contests as a chapter, but it will also strengthen the chapter as a whole by giving them a goal to work towards. The veterinary medicine class is not only working with the landowner but they are also working alongside the plant science class. They hope to make

this project a usable part of both courses. The classes have recently finished a joint project that all of the students are very proud of, they worked together to build a self-contained pond inside their greenhouse complete with a filter, waterfalls, plants and even a turtle.

The students have been busy making plans and drawing up possible design options to the new addition to their class. Seth Wolfe, the veterinary medicine class President has been busy measuring out possible pen locations and assessing the needs of the class. In order to get this project underway, the classes have worked together along with their advisor Ms. Merry Kim Meyers, to fill out the application for the Glassbrook Endowment. This newly formed chapter is looking forward to being able to raise money in order for their chapter to complete more projects in the future, such as being able to get chapter paraphernalia, compete in more contests and even attend state and national convention. The chapter members also hope to be able to use this project as a way to recruit more members and to keep current members involved.

The students have a lot of big plans for this small chicken house, some of which include raising chicks for the state Broiler Contest or using the knowledge they have learned to compete in the poultry contest. Some of the other students are seeing this project as a way for them to get more involved in the areas that interest them. They hope to use this project as a way to get involved in the area of small animal SAE. Some students were interested in getting rabbits or even pigs in the future. Their advisor has been very supportive of all of their ideas, helping them to determine which route to take.

This project is the driving force for this chapter. It motivates the students to stay involved in the classroom in order to gain the skills needed to finish their project. The completion of this project keeps the members willing to participate in other projects that will make this chapter successful. The dedication of the members, local farmers and advisor are all important to the success of this project.



Doing to Learn

By: Jeff Schmitt
MSU Agribusiness Major
&
Beth Oliver
MSU Agribusiness Major

Doing to Learn—the second line of the FFA Motto is a phrase all FFA members are familiar with, but to some like Brittany Bommarito of the Springport FFA chapter, it is much more than an expression... it's a lifestyle.

From a young age, Brittany has always loved animals. When most girls her age played with Barbies, Brittany spent hours pretending to be the “dog doctor” with her sisters, Andrea and Emily, who would take their sick pets to her “clinic,” located in the girls’ bathroom. There, Bommarito would diagnose the patients, prescribe medicine (usually Kibble or Beggin’ Strips) and send them on their way. In this manner, her childhood dream of being a veterinarian was formed.



Brittany joined her local 4-H club, enjoying making crafts and other activities until she reached the anticipated age when she could finally start showing hogs just like her big sister. Thus her first SAE, Swine Production, was born. Brittany started out by buying two Hampshire hogs and worked with them all summer to prepare for her county fair. As her fair approached she worked, washed and clipped them until they were ready to strut their stuff in the show ring. Brittany credits that first pair of market hogs with sparking her passion for the learning and responsibility her various SAE's require.

Naturally, the first step for Bommarito when she entered high school was to join FFA, thanks to the influence of her older sister. The Springport FFA is where her next two SAE's (Diversified Livestock Production and Sheep Production) originated. The Springport FFA owns a ten-acre land lab that is located next to the school. A few years before Brittany entered the program, they began a project called the Pasture Cooperative. A group of ten to fifteen students worked

together to raise 2,000 broilers, 10 heifers, 10 ewes and 5-10 lambs from March to October. Brittany was a member of the 'Pasture Co-op' for two years. She was given a partner and assigned days for chores. Expectations of the students included moving all seven chicken pens, feeding and watering the broilers, checking the water lines and buckets for both the heifers and ewes and finally moving them each to a new section of the pasture. Brittany's favorite part about the group was that the students were the managers of the project. They had weekly meetings to go over the marketing and maintenance issues that they were having, and learned teamwork, cooperation, marketing and people skills through involvement in the program.

The Pasture Co-op also benefited Brittany by enabling her third livestock SAE – Sheep Production. The Co-op members sold the lambs to students to raise and show at the county fair through the Springport FFA. Brittany decided to expand her SAE by buying lambs to exhibit. With the help of her father she built another pen next to her pigs for the lambs. With the assistance of an older member who had experience in the project, Bommarito tackled the challenge of an SAE that her family had no knowledge of. She recognizes her sheep project for teaching her the value of hard work and dedication to her projects, even when they are new experiences.

During Brittany's sophomore year of high school, the Springport FFA started another project called the Springport Youth Farm Stand (SYFS). With this new development, her final SAE of Vegetable Production was born. As a chapter, Springport wanted to focus more on healthy and local eating, so members began growing produce at their homes. They cared for and harvested the produce in



order to supply the brand-new farm stand located in town. Like her sheep project, Vegetable Production required the Bommarito family to start from scratch. The sisters borrowed a roto-tiller from their grandfather and dug up a 35'x14' section of their yard. They measured the necessary seed spacing and planted, watered, and harvested their garden, taking their crops to the market to sell. Brittany and her sister were able to collect all the money from what they sold and put it in their savings. She refers to this SAE as, “a great learning experience because not only did I become healthier by eating my own grown produce, but I also helped stimulate my local economy by keeping money local”.

Brittany is currently a senior at Springport High School, and believes that her involvement in the FFA and her various SAE's has impacted her life in many ways. Her future plans include a bid for State Office, and eventually receiving a degree in either Veterinary Medicine or Nursing from Michigan State University. As an active Michigan FFA member, Brittany Bommarito truly understands the value of Doing to Learn.

Earning to Live

By: Amanda Sumerix
MSU Environmental Studies and Agriscience
Major

Who would have ever guessed that this once “city girl” would ever have been promoting agriculture as a profession?

Jill Corrin grew up in Swartz Creek, Michigan which is a small town consisting of about 5,000 people just outside of Flint. Jill grew up with ZERO agriculture background. There were no agriculture classes offered at her high school nor was there an FFA program. Back then agriculture was not heavily influenced in Genesee County. Corrin graduated from Michigan State University in 1995 with a degree in Journalism. She said she knew of MSU’s history with agriculture but didn’t even realize that a major in Agriculture Communications was possible. “Ag was the furthest thing from my mind,” she said.

Jill’s first job was located in Grand Haven. She was the city hall reporter for the Grand Haven Tribune. After that she went to work for the Bay City Times as a business writer. Here, she was in charge of the Sunday section of the paper that consisted of writing about the agriculture industry in the Thumb. She wrote about everything from sugar beets to the price of corn. Out of all of her jobs, this one has a special place in her heart. While working in Bay City she got the opportunity to meet farming families and actually learn about farming. Before this job, Jill was the typical consumer. She didn’t know how food got to the grocery store, nor did she really care. As long as the food was there when she went shopping, she was happy.

She never really realized all of the hard work that went into producing the food that she enjoyed ever so much until then. It was here where she became an amazing advocate and developed a huge appreciation for agriculture industry. Her job in Bay City then

led her to work for the Flint Journal as a business writer, reporting on similar topics as in Bay City. It was there that her current boss recruited her for the job she has now and has had for the past nine years.

Jill currently works for the Michigan Farm Bureau as a Media Relations Manager. From the time she was in kindergarten she knew she wanted to be a newspaper reporter! Her freshman year in college she declared a major in Journalism and never looked back. Along the way she thought a few times about transferring to Public Relations but she never in her wildest imagination thought that she would be writing about agriculture. Some say she was “brainwashed” by the agriculture industry but she doesn’t think of it that way. She says it’s more like, “I was accepted and adopted. I love being able to give an outsiders perspective. It makes me happy.” Each week the Michigan Farm Bureau provides the public with a collection of news releases entitled AgriNotes. AgriNotes consists of popular agriculture issues in the State Legislature, Congress, Farm Bureau programs like “Farmers Care”, food prices and other information that the consumers might be interested in. This information is then sent to TV stations, radio stations and magazines all over the state, where they then distribute the information to the public. It is Jill’s job to put together all of this information and distribute it to the different media forms. She has also helped promote media campaigns through Farm Bureau, helped members write letters to the editor, informed members on state and national policy issues and helped members get media training and coaching. Specifically she deals with the statewide media needs and not so much on a county Farm Bureau level. To Corrin agriculture is never boring. “It certainly keeps me busy and stressed to the maximum. There is so much out there that affects the agriculture industry and there are so many things that involve agriculture i.e., environmental issues, tax laws, etc.” She says that even though she no longer works for a newspaper she still feels like a newspaper reporter. “There are always new issues, and new things to write about,” Jill claims. “There is no time for boredom... this is not a stagnant job by any means.”

Throughout her involvement in the Farm Bureau, Jill has received the Bay County Farm Bureau Agriculture Communicator of the Year Award and the Michigan Farm Bureau State Award for Agriculture Communicator of the Year. She is very humbled to be honored in such a way that most other reporters don’t get from other industries. She says it is really inspiring. From her start in this career back in Bay City she has met a lot of people with a lot of work ethic to look up to, especially all of the talented and hard working people that work at Farm Bureau. She said she is also blown away by the hardworking students in the agriculture field and FFA. She was really impressed with the different leadership programs and competitions that students are involved in and would’ve liked to have been in the FFA. However, Jill has dabbled in FFA by critiquing a few CDE teams. Let’s not forget, she married into a family with a strong FFA background. Jill’s husband Scott, whom she met while working for Farm Bureau, was active in the FFA. He showed animals and participated in CDE contests and received a degree in Agribusiness from Michigan State University. If that isn’t enough, Jill’s father-in-law Frank Corrin was the long time FFA Advisor from Corunna.

Who would’ve guessed that this “city girl” from Swartz Creek would’ve lived up to the town’s motto: “Where Town and Country Shake Hands?” She has helped merge the city with the country and it is people like Jill who bring a fresh perspective to the agriculture industry while at the same time honoring our ways of tradition.



Living to Serve

By: Kelli Fulkerson
MSU Animal Science Pre-Veterinary Major
&
Jonathon Brewer
St. Clair Community College Computer Science Major

As a small town farm girl growing up in Coldwater, Michigan, Samantha Brock had a love and passion for animals. She was raised on a small farm where her family raises sheep and cattle. Sam was a tremendous help around the farm. Whatever her parents asked of her she would do because Sam was determined that one day she would have a flock of sheep that she could call her own. About five years ago Sam's hard work and determination paid off. Sam was able to buy her first lamb and that is where her Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) began.



At the time that Sam began her SAE she decided to buy a lamb that was part of a fascinating breed. Sam chose the Katahdin sheep breed because she knew that the lambs had good dispositions, were low maintenance due to the fact that they shed their own

hair and were a fast growth and development breed in the United States today. Sam also chose this breed because this is what her family was already raising at the time of her purchase. Sam's flock currently consists of seven breeding ewes and two breeding rams. Sam markets her animals to other Katahdin sheep breeders and youth that are looking for animals to raise and take to their county fairs. She plans to start a line of her own genetics here in the future.

Sam joined the Branch Area Career Center FFA Chapter her sophomore year of high school. Sam said she was destined to join a FFA chapter due to her love and passion for agriculture. When she saw all the fun that her classmates were having that made her decision all that much easier. Sam was like any other chapter member and was required to work in the BACC FFA greenhouse during the winter and spring semesters. One day as Sam was working, she identified some of the chapter's greenhouse plants as having a disease called

thrift. Sam went to her advisors, Mr. Bill Earl and Mrs. Carrie Preston, to report the problem. Sam began to think that she could possibly create an agricultural research project out of her discovery. Sam went back to her advisors to propose the idea that she thought would help create a solution. Sam thought that if she was to use her Katahdin sheep's wool that she may be able to repel or kill the thrift that was attacking these greenhouse plants. Sam's hypothesis was that "Katahdin sheep's hair will repel or kill the greenhouse disease called thrift that attacks most greenhouse plants." Sam is currently working on this two year agricultural research project to see if her hypothesis will come true. Sam also plans to take part in the Agri-Science Research Fair that takes place every year at State Convention in East Lansing, MI as well as apply for State Star in Agri-Science.

During Sam's FFA career she has also been involved in many different Career Development Events and Skill Contests. She has participated in the Prepared Public Speaking contest, Vet Science Contest and Dairy Showmanship. This year she also plans to compete in the Michigan Farm Bureau Discussion Meet and she is applying for a proficiency in the area of entrepreneurial sheep production. Sam currently plans on attending Kellogg Community College in Coldwater, to major in business management. After her completion of two years there she plans to transfer to a major college or university to further her education. Sam would also like to continue to keep expanding her sheep flock to around eighty breeding ewes and five rams as well as start to raise Angus and Hereford beef cattle. Sam would like to thank her parents, Mitch and Patty Brock, for allowing her this opportunity to develop such a wonderful SAE. Sam would also like to thank her FFA advisors Mr. Bill Earl and Mrs. Carrie Preston, saying, "Without your continued support and resources that you have made available to me, I would not be able to take the SAE as far as I have, thank you." Finally Sam would like to thank the support from her fellow FFA members and friends.



Sustainability

Down

Under



By: Jason Koning
MSU Agriscience Education Senior

When you think of Australia, what is the first thing that comes to mind?

Most of you probably would think of some form of wildlife like the kangaroo. I certainly do not blame you. I think it is pretty cool that they carry their young around in a pouch and I know you do too.

During May and June 2009, I had the amazing opportunity to spend part of my summer studying abroad in Australia with eight other students from Michigan State University, including three Michigan FFA state officers from 2006-2007. Of course we got to tour the Sydney Opera House, feed kangaroos out of our hands, drive on the “wrong” side of the road and snorkel in the Great Barrier Reef, but that wasn’t the reason we were there.

I bet that you never would have thought of the word “sustainable” in your descriptions of the island continent. To be honest, before studying abroad in Australia with a focus on sustainability, I didn’t really know what the word meant.



Students discussed kangaroo populations Emu Ridge Eucalyptus Farm owner Larry Turner

The most accepted definition of sustainability defines sustainable developments as those that “meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.” To be truly sustainable, something must be economically, environmentally and socially sustainable. Australia provides many great examples of what it means to be sustainable.

During our study abroad trip, we visited the large cities of Sydney, Canberra and Adelaide. A large part of our studies was looking at urban sustainability in Australia. Despite a population of over 4 million people, Sydney’s urban sustainability has helped make it one of the top 10 most livable cities in the world by magazines such as *The Economist*. What makes Australian cities sustainable, you ask?

One of the first things that I was forced into noticing is that in any restroom in Australia there are two buttons to flush the toilet – half flush and full flush. This, as well as water restrictions, help conserve Australia’s most delicate resource – water. Sydney’s transportation is also noteworthy. Many residents don’t even own a vehicle and either walk, bicycle or utilize the vast public transportation system that includes a monorail, trolley, water taxis, an extensive train system and one of the world’s largest bus systems.

Perhaps the biggest concern regarding sustainability in Australia is water. Australia has innumerable water problems and concerns as the driest inhabited continent in the world. Australia has been going through a severe drought across the entire country for the last ten or more years. The Murray River, the largest in Australia, is currently in serious trouble, not just from drought but many human-caused problems. Due to a combination of drought, agricultural irrigation and the withdrawal of basic drinking water for the Adelaide metropolitan area, the water level is so low that the river cannot even empty itself into the ocean. As a result, the river remains severely polluted. The river also is plagued by invasive species such as Asian Carp, which destroy native fish populations and uproot vegetation.

Agriculture in Australia is also threatened by water sustainability concerns. Irrigation is often considered not to be sustainable in

Australia for a variety of reasons. Finding a reliable water source is rare since many aquifers simply don't exist, resulting in many producers drawing water directly from rivers like the Murray. Irrigation also causes the water tables to rise. Once water tables are raised, water will evaporate, leaving salt in the soil where eventually, nothing will be able to grow and the land becomes useless.

What some Australian farmers are doing is taking advantage of native species for agricultural purposes. On Kangaroo Island, we visited Emu Ridge Eucalyptus Farm. The owner, Larry Turner, took us on a tour of his operation, which specialized in distilling eucalyptus oil from leaves that he harvested. He also raises emus, which can be raised for their meat, leather and oil. Their oil has been used to treat victims in the Australian bush fires. Mr. Turner stressed the importance of conserving our natural resources and it was obvious how proud he was to be a farmer of some of Australia's native flora and fauna.



Past Michigan FFA State Officer and MSU senior Henry Reinart feeding kangaroos at Urimbirra Wildlife Park

One of the major sustainability issues that we discussed with Mr. Turner is the burgeoning population of kangaroos. Once controlled by the native Aboriginal people, kangaroos thrive on the grass planted by early European settlers for pasture on deforested land. However, kangaroos have proved to be devastating to the environment in large numbers. Their feet destroy the soil, causing massive erosion problems while trampling out plants. They also devour rare wildflowers and have no natural predators to help control them.

There is public controversy over the kangaroo population since in some areas there are yearly controlled hunts that shoot thousands of kangaroos. Some argue that the kangaroos could be harvested for human consumption instead of burying the bodies, while others argue that the controlled hunts are inhumane and should never even take place. These hunts are sustainable in nature in the fact that they keep a steady kangaroo population while maintaining the environment at the same time. We studied this problem outside Canberra in Namadgi National Park as well as on Kangaroo Island. Kangaroos are so numerous in Namadgi's deforested valleys that literally every footstep I took was on kangaroo droppings.

Maintaining Australia's narrow rainforest was also a topic of study. While Australia's rainforest in Far North Queensland



MSU students snorkeling in Australia's Great Barrier Reef

comprises less than 0.1% of its total land area, it includes 36% of its mammals, 50% of its birds and 23% of its freshwater fish. This biodiversity is important in the rainforest because it ensures natural sustainability for all life forms. Every species in the rainforest plays a role in the ecosystem. Rainforests also have medicinal benefits, store carbon, control the climate and are important for tourism. However, the rainforest climate provides an excellent location for many crops such as sugarcane, coffee and tea. We found out that over 90% of the Australian rainforest has been cleared for crops and pastureland. This continues to be a huge topic of interest among Aussies in terms of environmental sustainability versus food.

Sustainability is just as much a part of Australia as the native koalas, the Sydney Opera House or even the famous Steve Irwin phrase, "Aw, crikey!" It is everywhere and affects every resident everyday. Water is by far the most limiting resource. Farmers Down Under recognize that if they are unable to cooperate with and sustain the environment, then they will not succeed in agricultural production. It sure has made me think about how wasteful we are of our natural resources here in the United States and how I personally can be more sustainable. So next time you talk to someone about Australia, talk to them about sustainability Down Under!



View of the Sydney Opera House from the Sydney Harbour Bridge

Lead out Loud!

By : Marie Hruby
MSU Agriscience Education Major



0.000012 percent; the number of FFA members that have served as National Officers! When looking at this number, one might say that the odds aren't good, to say the least. Yet, this very small percentage never let Alexandria Henry get in the way of her desire to be a National FFA Officer.

Alex Henry is a past Alma FFA member, 2007-2008 State President, junior at Michigan State University holding a 3.9 grade point average and in May was named as Michigan's National Officer Candidate. Since that day in May, Alex has been feverishly preparing by practicing speeches, workshops and studying for the FFA knowledge test.

When Henry arrived in Indianapolis during the week of convention, she and the other 39 National Officer candidates went through one "cut" (an elimination of over half of the

candidates) before the gavel was even tapped as the start of convention. Over the course of the week Alex was interviewed nearly two dozen times, stood and delivered a speech on a topic that she wasn't aware of ahead of time, wrote an essay on the future of agricultural education and the American educational system and finally developed and presented a 10 minute workshop when given a box of random props.

When asked what having a National Office means to her she said, "Being a National Officer isn't about me. It's about the students who wear the blue and gold jackets," said Henry. "My vision is to serve FFA members by helping them discover the courage and confidence to pursue dreams beyond their boundaries."

On the Friday of convention, Alex's vision to serve came to pass when she was elected as the 2009-2010 National FFA Eastern Region Vice President! When she heard her name she could not believe her ears. "I can't believe this is happening," Henry said. "This is a huge goal and achievement. I was geeked, to say the least."

During the announcement, Alex's family and friends were at the convention cheering her on. Her parents Burton and Cheryl Henry later told the Michigan State News that they "are ecstatic because she's worked hard over the years to put herself in the position to do it. When you get the chance to see your child achieve their dream, it's fulfilling."

Over the course of the next year, Henry will be required to travel more than 100,000 miles, meet top leaders in business, government and education; visit approximately 40 states and participate in an international experience in Japan. Her





responsibilities will include providing personal growth and leadership training for students, setting policies that shape the future of the organization and promoting agricultural literacy. Alex was elected on the 40th anniversary of women being allowed into the National FFA Organization. She is also the sixth member and first female from Michigan to hold a national office.

is just a stepping stone of my life’s mission and my life’s hard work. “I’m just taking advantage of all the open doors that come my way.”

Congratulations Alexandria Henry, 2009-2010 National Eastern Region Vice President

During her year of service Alex will is required to take a year off from school to fulfill her position. Alex said that she will use this opportunity to help her decide which direction to take after she graduates from MSU following her year of service. “This



2009-2010 National FFA Officer Team

The Rest of the Story...



HALEY SCHULZ
STATE TREASURER

Chapter: Laker FFA

SAE: Swine Production

College: Lansing Community College

Major: Biology

Favorite Sport: Softball

Favorite FFA Activity: State FFA Convention

High school activities: Student council, softball

Favorite Quote : “To accomplish great things we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe.” -Anatole

Favorite thing to do with friends: Bonfires and movie nights

Lifes theme song: Wild at Heart by Gloriana

Person looked to for strength and guidance: Mother-Jackie Heiden



ELIZABETH OLIVER
REGION IV STATE VP

Chapter: Byron FFA

SAE: Beef Production

College: MSU

Major: Agribusiness Management

High School Activities: National Honors Society, softball, student council

Word used to describe self: Driven

Favorite Movie: Remember the Titans

Personal Hobby: Showing cattle, reading, softball

Favorite FFA Activity: Leadership and Skills Contests

Favorite Quote: “Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.” - Confucious

Favorite Homemade Meal: Lasagna



BRITTANY PARKHURST
STATE SECRETARY

Chapter: Breckenridge FFA

SAE: Crop Pollination, Aquaponics, Greenhouse Production and Water Quality

College: Kettering University

Major: Biochemistry

Personal Hooby: Taking care of my goldfish Marshall and doing crafts

Word used describe self: ELECTRIC

Message to members: Believe in yourself

High school activities: Band, Volleyball, Cross Country, Youth Advisory Council

Favorite Candy: Seasonal Reeses

People looked to for strength and guidance: Mother, best friend Keisha and brother Dan

Campbell's and FFA: Reviving American Icons



By: Marie C. Hruby
MSU Agriscience Education Major

The National FFA Organization along with Campbell's soup are partnering to revive five barns across the nation. From October to January, people from across the nation have the opportunity to

vote one of the ten barns which they wish to be restored. For every vote, Campbell's is going to donate one dollar to the National FFA Organization. Amongst the ten barns chosen as finalists to be restored are The



The Augie Fudala Barn, Bark River MI

Augie Fudala Barn in Bark River, Michigan, submitted by the Stephenson FFA Chapter and the Bowers School Farm in Bloomfield Hills Michigan, submitted by the Bloomfield Hills FFA Chapter.

The Augie Fudala Barn sits on 160-acres and was originally a dairy farm. It is now called the 'Fudala Farm' in honor of Barbara Atencio's parents. The Farm was homesteaded sometime around the early 1900s by the Konkle family, and a barn and matching chicken coop were erected shortly after (1910-1920). Over the years the barn has been used to house livestock, horses, and more. The Atencio's hope is to see the barn revived and preserved for future generations to enjoy as well as to stand as a symbol of the American Farm.

According to Holly Glomski, The Bowers School Barn "was built in the 1920s. It was built as an agricultural dream of a businessman who had planned



The Augie Fudala Barn

to work a small dairy herd in his retirement years. He started the barn first so he could begin adding dairy cattle but passed



The Bowers School Barn, Bloomfield Hills MI

away before the barn was completed. In 1966 the land and barns were sold to the Bloomfield School District as a building site for the school. The barn is a Bloomfield Hills landmark and the identifying component of the farm to the school district's students and the surrounding community. Preserving its function and aesthetic beauty ensures that the farm will attract audiences and be available to future generations of students and community, especially the neighboring 'city dwellers' who want to better understand the farm's historic presence, agricultural roots, history and practices."



The Bowers School Barn

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