Rock County FFA Chapter Handbook
Rock County High School
Bassett, NE

Learning to Do,
Doing to Learn,
Earning to Live,
Living to Serve.

2019-2020
Welcome to the Rock County FFA Handbook

Welcome to the Rock County FFA Parent-Student Handbook. You’ll notice this is not just a handbook for the FFA, but for the entire Agriculture Education Program, including Ag Ed Classes, FFA, and Supervised Agricultural Experience – these are integral components of the program, which really can’t be separated.

This handbook, should answer any questions you have about our program and all of the opportunities we have planned for the coming school year. If you have any questions that are not addressed in the handbook, always feel free to contact our FFA Advisors Mrs. Ann Dvorak by phone at (402) 925-8432 or by email at advorak@rockcountyschools.org or Mrs. Kara Sybrant at (402) 841-0275 or by email at karasybrant@rockcountyschools.org.

Get involved, participate, and have a great year!

Program Description

The Agricultural Education Program is much more than a class. Classroom instruction gives students the knowledge and skills they need for success in today’s world, and students get a chance to practice and apply these knowledge and skills in their Supervised Agricultural Experience Projects (SAE) and through the National FFA Organization. When the three parts are properly integrated, student education is maximized. Students learn important academic, career, technical, and life skills when all types of instruction are used.

To make the most of the Agricultural Education Program, all students should participate in FFA and have an SAE project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAE (Supervised Agricultural Experience)</th>
<th>Ag Ed Classes</th>
<th>FFA (formerly Future Farmers of America, now known as the “National FFA Organization”).</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An SAE project is any experience outside of regularly scheduled class time in which the student gains new skills or practices skills in agriculture. Students could hold an ag related job, job shadow an ag professional, or own any agribusiness enterprise such as an animal or plant project or agriculture service business.</td>
<td>7th Grade Exploratory 8th Grade Exploratory Introduction to AFNR Animal Anatomy and Physiology Animal Biology Nursery and Landscape Plant Science/Horticulture Power, Structure and Technical Foundations Power, Structure and Technical Systems Welding Metals and Fabrication Precision Agriculture and Engineering Biotechnology Entrepreneurship Ag Leadership and Career Readiness Agribusiness Food Science and Safety Natural Resources Wildlife Management Public Law 740 defines SAE and FFA as integral parts of Agricultural Education classes...</td>
<td>The Rock County FFA Chapter offers a multitude of opportunities to get involved in leadership projects, community service, recreation, competitive events, scholarships, and skills development. This handbook explains many of the opportunities available this school year. Students do not have to participate in all FFA activities – they can pick the activities that they want to get involved in. Student involvement will be tracked using our points system, and students must maintain a 70% to be considered active and eligible to attend events.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The student should select their project based on their career and interests, as well as the amount of time they are willing to spend. The type of project and duration of the project is up to the student.</td>
<td>For course descriptions and content, see page 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students should have at least one SAE project each year that they are enrolled in the Ag Ed/FFA program. This can be the same or different projects.</td>
<td>Students are required to keep records on their SAE projects – the records are graded and included in their class grades. See page 4 for more information on SAE.</td>
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What is SAE?

Supervised Agricultural Experience

An SAE program is the actual, hands-on application of agricultural skills outside the classroom. Students are supervised by agricultural education teachers, parents, employers and other adults who assist them in the development and achievement of their educational and career goals.

SAE is a time-honored and tested form of work-based learning. An SAE program can be whatever the student wants it to be—an agricultural business of his/her own, a job shadowing experience, or placement in a paid or unpaid job using agriculturally-related skills and competencies. It is a program designed cooperatively by the student, advisor and parents.

Some examples of recent SAE projects conducted by Nebraska FFA Members:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unpaid Internships</th>
<th>Job-Shadowing an Ag Career</th>
<th>Managing irrigation pivots</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raising &amp; Selling Vegetables</td>
<td>Working at a Floral Shop</td>
<td>Serving as a docent at a museum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working in a Greenhouse</td>
<td>Raising a Garden</td>
<td>Serving as a Teachers Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raising &amp; Selling Game birds</td>
<td>Working at a Fertilizer Plant</td>
<td>Implementing the PALS Program</td>
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<td>Custom horse training business</td>
<td>Grocery Store Produce Dept.</td>
<td>Growing and Marketing Asparagus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breeding &amp; Selling Purebred Dogs</td>
<td>Hunting &amp; trapping (wildlife mgt.)</td>
<td>Restoring a Tractor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Service projects</td>
<td>Work at a welding shop</td>
<td>Clearing a vacant lot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lawn Mowing Business</td>
<td>Working on a Dairy Farm</td>
<td>Painting houses, sheds, and barns</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteering within the community</td>
<td>Selling Pumpkins</td>
<td>Mentoring youth at summer camps</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working at locker during deer season</td>
<td>Turf Care at a Golf Course</td>
<td>Growing and Selling Sweet Corn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Landscaping Projects at Home</td>
<td>Raising bucket calves</td>
<td>Raising Sheep, Cattle, Chickens,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working in the hayfield</td>
<td>Hogs or even Butterflies</td>
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</table>

Students keep records (including pictures) for each SAE project, and these records are submitted each semester to the Ag Ed instructor as part of the Ag Education class grade.

Livestock-based projects may be entered and exhibited at the county and state fairs, but this is not required. (See “individual opportunities for FFA members” section).

Students are rewarded for successful SAE projects through the FFA’s Proficiency Award Program. (See “Proficiency Awards” section)

SAE’s are also one component of selection to the various levels of FFA membership, also known as Degrees. (See “Degrees of Membership” Section)
Ag Ed Courses Offered

Introduction to Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
Grade Level: 9-10  Prerequisite: None
Full Year  Course #815
This introductory course provides a brief knowledge base and technical skills of several topics within the agricultural industry, including production agriculture, food and natural resources, cluster foundation knowledge and skills, leadership development, the National FFA organization and career exploration. Topics within this course are intended to spark interest in future courses and careers for students. Classroom and laboratory activities are supplemented through supervised agricultural experiences and leadership programs and activities.

Animal Biology
Grade Level: 10-12  Prerequisite: Intro to AFNR
Full Year  Course #812
A course focusing on the basic scientific principles and processes that are involved in animal physiology, breeding, nutrition, and care in preparation for an animal systems career. Topics include animal diseases, introduction to animal science, animal nutrition, animal science issues, career opportunities and animal evaluation. Classroom and laboratory activities are supplemented through supervised agricultural experiences and leadership programs and activities.

Animal Anatomy & Physiology (Veterinary Science)
Grade Level 11-12  Prerequisite: Animal Biology
Full Year  Course #840
Students will gain knowledge of skeletal, muscular, respiratory, digestive, and circulatory systems of animals. Students will identify methods of disease control, treatment and prevention. Finally, the course will explore the advancements that are being made with genetics and biotechnology in the animal industry. Classroom and laboratory activities are supplemented through supervised agricultural experiences and leadership programs and activities of the FFA.

Agricultural Leadership and Career Readiness
Grade Level 10-12  Prerequisite: Intro to AFNR
Full Year  Course #802
This course will help prepare students for their futures by introducing and elaborating on leadership concepts and application, leadership in a community, characteristics of an effective leader, characteristics of an effective manager, individual personality traits, job applications and interviews, resumes, scholarship applications, and more. Classroom and laboratory activities are supplemented through supervised agricultural experiences and leadership programs and activities.

Agribusiness (combined with Entrepreneurship)
Grade Level: 10-12  Prerequisite: Intro to AFNR
Fall Semester  Course #805
This course covers skills necessary for entry into employment or furthering education in an agriculture business. The course includes the study of business organizations, business structures, job responsibilities, human relations, marketing, selling, displaying, using business machines, management and entrepreneurship skills. Classroom and laboratory activities are supplemented through supervised agricultural experiences and leadership programs and activities.

Entrepreneurship (combined with Agribusiness)
Grade Level: 10-12  Prerequisite: Intro to AFNR
Spring Semester  Course
This course covers skills necessary for creating and managing an agricultural business. The course includes the study of business planning, creating and analyzing financial information, developing business plans, and applying sales and marketing principles. Classroom and
laboratory activities are supplemented through supervised agricultural experiences and leadership programs and activities.

**Plant Science/Horticulture**  
*Grade Level: 10-12*  
*Prerequisite: Intro to AFNR*  
*Full Year*  
*Course #825*  
This course focuses on knowledge, information, and skills related to the science of plant production and agronomy and provides the necessary skills for careers in horticulture, agricultural production and management, and science. The content includes plant growth and reproduction, fertilizers, plant and tree identification, controlling weeds and pests, and proper use of agricultural chemicals. Classroom and laboratory activities are supplemented through supervised agricultural experiences and leadership programs and activities.

**Nursery and Landscape**  
*Grade Level: 11-12*  
*Prerequisite: Plant Science/Horticulture*  
*Full Year*  
*Course #828*  
Introduces students to the principles of design, methods of establishing and maintaining landscapes, and landscape business management procedures. Includes arranging plants, objects, and earth in the landscape; covers culture and maintenance of plants. Classroom and laboratory activities are supplemented through supervised agricultural experiences and leadership programs and activities.

**Natural Resources-combined with Wildlife Management**  
*Grade Level 10-12*  
*Prerequisite: Intro to AFNR*  
*Fall Semester*  
*Course #834*  
Introduces conservation management and maintenance of natural resources and good stewardship of air, soil, water, land, fish, and wildlife resources for economic, recreation, and health purposes. Classroom and laboratory activities are supplemented through supervised agricultural experiences and leadership programs and activities.

**Wildlife Management-combined with Natural Resources**  
*Grade Level 10-12*  
*Prerequisite: Intro to AFNR*  
*Spring Semester*  
*Course #830*  
Introduces management practices for the several Nebraska game animals such as deer, pheasants, coyotes, and many more. Students will learn about proper habitat management as well as explore the management practice of hunting. Classroom and laboratory activities are supplemented through supervised agricultural experiences and leadership programs and activities.

**Food Science and Safety**  
*Grade Level: 10-12*  
*Prerequisite: Intro to AFNR*  
*Full Year*  
*Course #837*  
This course focuses on the importance of a safe, sanitary and reliable food supply for human consumption. Topics explored include food safety regulations and requirements in processing facilities and food service establishments, along with home-handling of foods. Students will also learn to identify pathogenic foodborne illnesses and identify methods to prevent and control those illnesses in various types of food products. Classroom and laboratory activities are supplemented through supervised agricultural experiences and leadership programs and activities.

**Power, Structure and Technical Systems Fundamentals**  
*Grade Level 10-11*  
*Prerequisite: Intro to AFNR*  
*Full Year*  
*Course #833*  
*Class Limit: 8 students*  
This course introduces selected major areas of agricultural mechanics and technology including small engine operation and repair, metal fabrication, wood working, and electrical wiring. Learning
activities include basic understanding, skill development and problem-solving. Classroom and laboratory activities are supplemented through supervised agricultural experiences and leadership programs and activities.

Welding
Grade Level 10-11
Prerequisite: Intro to AFNR
Full Year
Course #820
Class Limit: 8 students
This class will introduce shop rules and safety procedures. Students will learn how to perform the following welds: shielded arc welding, oxy-fuel welding, and gas metal arc welding (MIG or wire welding). They will become proficient at welding the following welds: beads, butt welds, t-welds, lap welds, corner welds, and pipe welds. They will perform these welds in several positions including flat, horizontal, vertical, and overhead. Students will also learn how to cut metal with a gas torch and plasma cutter. Classroom and laboratory activities are supplemented through supervised agricultural experiences and leadership programs and activities of the FFA.

Metals and Fabrication
Grade Level 11-12
Prerequisite: Welding
Full Year
Course
Class Limit: 8 students
Metals and fabrication is an advanced welding course that will require students to take what they learned in welding and apply that to a manufacturing process. The class will work on a final project that will be sold to the public. Students will also have the opportunity to work towards welding certifications. Classroom and laboratory activities are supplemented through supervised agricultural experiences and leadership programs and activities of the FFA.

Advanced Power, Structure and Technology Systems
Grade Level 11-12
Prerequisite: Power, Structure and Technical Systems Fundamentals
Full Year
Course
Class Limit: 8 students
Provides advanced-level experiences in selected major areas of agricultural mechanics technology; includes small engine maintenance and repair, metal fabrication, concrete construction, building construction, plumbing, electrical wiring, maintenance of agricultural machinery, equipment and tractors, and soil and water conservation. Learning activities include basic understanding, skill development and problem-solving. Classroom and laboratory activities are supplemented through supervised agricultural experiences and leadership programs and activities.

Precision Agriculture and Engineering-combined with Biotechnology
Grade Level 10-12
Prerequisite: Intro to AFNR
Fall Semester
Course
This course provides a general study of precision agriculture and the related engineering. It also provides the opportunity to explore the careers in agricultural related to precision agriculture. Topics include, but are not limited to, hydraulics, John Deere online operations, irrigation technology, GPS and drones. Classroom and laboratory activities are supplemented through supervised agricultural experiences and leadership programs and activities.

Biotechnology-combined with Precision Agriculture and Engineering
Grade Level 10-12
Prerequisite: Intro to AFNR
Spring Semester
Course
This course provides students with experiences in industry appropriate applications of biotechnology related to plant and animal agriculture. Students will complete hands-on activities, projects, and problems designed to build content knowledge and technical skills in the field of biotechnology. Students will maintain a research level Laboratory Notebook throughout the course documenting their experiences in the laboratory to highlight the application of the scientific method and investigation practices. Classroom and laboratory activities are supplemented through supervised agricultural experiences and leadership programs and activities.
FFA Participation

FFA is an INTRA-curricular activity - not extracurricular like football, basketball, band, or speech. This means it is a part of the class you are taking and you must maintain membership to be in the class. Here is an analogy: being in Agricultural Education and not joining FFA would be similar to going out for football, volleyball, or basketball, attend practices, but on game night not participate because you have chosen not to be part of the team. The expectation of FFA membership is similar to what is expected of students enrolled in vocal or instrumental music classes -- participation in performances is required and sometimes is a part of the students’ grades. The difference is that in Ag Ed classes you aren’t required to participate in all activities, just certain activities that are assigned as a component of the agricultural education class you are enrolled in.

SAE or Experiential Learning Project

All students are required to have at least one Supervised Agricultural Experience/Experiential Learning project and maintain records on this project. Records will be graded periodically and will be used in some class-related projects.

Proficiency Award Applications and State Degrees

The Rock County FFA Chapter has been very successful in “reaping the rewards” of maintaining and building outstanding supervised agricultural experience programs of its members. The members of our chapter have maintained and built strong, creative, and unique SAE projects and programs and used the competence acquired to complete proficiency award applications, which are submitted at the district level for review and recognition. The proficiency award program allows FFA members to document the skills they have gained, state their goals and progress towards theirs goals, as well as numerate the profits from the SAE program. Our chapter has been a leader both at the district and state level in terms of competitiveness and recognition.

In addition to proficiency success, Rock County FFA members have also been recognized in the Stars over Nebraska Pageant for their outstanding SAE programs following four years of comprehensive SAE records and extensive growth within their individualized programs.

All of these awards and recognition are the direct result of keeping and maintaining outstanding records to help students build recordkeeping skills, manage resources, and function in the real world environment of 21st century agriculture. Skills learned from SAE allow students to gain problem solving skills, as well as other important competence such as teamwork, time management, program marketing and promotion. SAE’s are also an opportunity for students to enhance their skills through experiential learning and develop a program that interests them, is unique to their resources and needs, and can capitalize on career interests. Lately, we are seeing more and more unique SAE programs that are following the lead of the changing face of agriculture. See page 3 for more information.
Eligibility for FFA Membership

FFA membership is limited to students who are enrolled in Agricultural Education courses and certain graduates. Because FFA is an intra-curricular activity (not extra-curricular) it is considered part of a class. If a student wants to join FFA, they must enroll in at least one Ag Ed class during the school year. There is no “way around” this policy – it is federal law.

The “FFA Year” begins on the first day of school and ends on the last day of summer vacation. Therefore, a student enrolled in any Ag Ed class for the 2019-2020 school year (regardless of which semester or quarter) is eligible for FFA membership beginning on the first day of school and lasting throughout the entire school year and the following summer.

Graduates who were FFA members during their senior year and participated in FFA for two years during high school may continue to be members of FFA. If graduate students elect to retain membership, he or she must pay their dues by the established deadline, which is generally by the first meeting of the year. Graduate membership must be continuous membership; therefore, if a graduate decides not to retain membership, he or she may not change their mind later and re-join. Again, there is no “way around” this policy – it is federal law.

Periods of Ineligibility

The Rock County Public School District’s ineligibility rules apply to FFA. This is true even though FFA is not an extra-curricular activity. If a student has been declared ineligible for extra-curricular activities due to conduct violation, for academic reasons, or any other reason, this period of ineligibility applies to FFA as well. The exception to this is if the activity is for a grade in a class. If this is the case, the student does not have to be eligible to attend the activity.
FFA Activities that Everyone Should Attend

FFA is different from other intra-curricular activities that are part of a class such as Band or Choir because members of FFA get to select what activities, performances, competitions, and projects they become involved in. FFA members are not expected to do everything – you decide what to do based upon your interests.

However, there are a couple of things every FFA member should plan to do. They are:

1) Attend the Annual FFA Banquet, with their family; and
2) Attend the FFA Meetings.

An explanation of each follows. Please consult the FFA activity calendar for the dates of these events, and write these dates on your family calendar and make plans to attend:

1) Annual FFA Banquet

The annual FFA banquet is the highlight of the year for the FFA – all members, families, Alumni, and supporters should plan to attend.

Following the meal, we will move to the evening's program, which generally includes the following presentations:

- Greenhand Degrees
- Star Greenhand
- Chapter Degrees
- Star Farmer
- District/State Recognition
- Chapter Proficiency Awards
- Leadership Awards
- Scholarship Awards
- Dekalb Award
- Senior Gifts and Comments
- Installation of new FFA Chapter Officers

*** Note: Applications for most of these awards are available from the advisor – the deadline to turn them in will be announced in the school announcements. Generally officer applications are available the week following State FFA Convention.

Visitors from other FFA chapters often comment how professional and organized our banquet seems compared to other chapters – this is because we place a special emphasis on making our banquet informative, inclusive, and fun. Our banquet represents all members and rewards those who have gone “above and beyond” with their efforts in the past year. Our goal is to maximize the recognition our students receive while keeping the presentations pertinent, informative, and fun.
2) FFA Meetings

Every FFA member should attend the chapter meetings. In an effort to avoid conflicts and provide for maximum participation, meetings are not held on a particular day of the week or month. Our meetings for the year are scheduled before the first day of school and we try to avoid any extra-curricular conflicts if possible in any way. Check the FFA Activity Calendar for the dates and times of this year’s meetings.

Appropriate dress is required at FFA meetings, meaning that the school’s code of dress is in force. Many students choose to wear FFA T-shirts, and some even wear their FFA jackets to meetings. However, this is not required for attendance.

Meetings are conducted using official FFA opening and closing ceremonies and correct parliamentary procedure. The agenda may include new and old business, guest speakers, activities and fun competitions, the formation of committees, and announcements of upcoming opportunities.

Typically, deadlines for various FFA award applications, convention applications, sign-ups for trips, and other due dates will be at the time of a FFA meeting. If an application is due at a meeting and a student is not able to attend that meeting, then they should plan ahead and turn those materials in to the Advisors sometime before the meeting. Please understand: If the deadline states “at the meeting” and you turn it in the following morning, IT IS TOO LATE, you have missed the deadline.

If a student knows in advance that they cannot attend a meeting, they can see one of the advisors during the day of the meeting to get a copy of the agenda and find out what items will be discussed as well as any deadlines, or upcoming activity dates.

All FFA meetings are listed in the school calendar as well as the FFA Activity calendar, which is provided to each FFA family. Parents and guests are always invited to attend FFA meetings, although they may not participate in discussion unless called upon by a member, and may not vote.

Keep in mind that this could change and most certainly will be added to as the year progresses. We suggest that you write all of these dates on your calendar early in the school year in order to schedule other obligations around the chapter meetings.
**FFA Point System**

To reward FFA members for participating in FFA activities, they are awarded points on the FFA point system. These points will determine certain FFA awards and will be a determining factor in some FFA trip selections. The point system also encourages members to become involved in all aspects of the chapter’s activities, not just the “fun” events. Points vary for each activity and are determined by the Advisors. An Excel Spreadsheet is used to keep points current. A member has a column for earned points and possible points. A percentage is then figured and member must have a 70% to be considered in good standing and eligible to attend events. If a member cannot attend an event, and he or she communicates the excused absence with an advisor, he or she will be awarded half points for the event.

**Leadership Skills Events**

To find out more about each event, please visit [www.neaged.org](http://www.neaged.org). Click on FFA on the side margin and go to LSE. The LSE webpage will provide objectives and rules for each contest.

These contests are all state qualifying contests.

- **Ag Demonstration**
- **Cooperative Speaking**
- **Creed Speaking**
- **Extemporaneous Speaking**
- **Junior Public Speaking**
- **Job Interview**
- **Chapter Conduct of Meetings**
- **Natural Resources Speaking**
- **Senior Parliamentary Law**
- **Discovery Speaking**
- **Ag Literacy**
Career Development Events

To find out more about each event, go to www.neaged.org

Ag Issues
Ag Communication
Marketing Plan
Ag Mechanics
Ag Sales
Agriscience
Agronomy
Envirothon
Farm Management
Floriculture
Food Science
Livestock Management
Livestock Selection
Meats
Natural Resources
Nursery and Landscape
Welding

FFA Fund Raisers

The need to raise funds is a reality for all student organizations. We would not be able to provide so many great opportunities for our students if it were not for our fund raising activities. Here is a summary of what our FFA chapter does to raise funds for our programs:

Annual FFA Fruit and Candy Sales – *Money goes to the General Chapter Account*
Our largest annual fundraiser includes boxes of Oranges, Grapefruit, Apples, Pears, and Mixed Fruit Boxes, along with Amish candy. Members will receive a price list and brochures in Mid-October and will be able to sell door-to-door or over the phone until late November. Our truck-load of fruit and other items arrives during the 1st or 2nd week of December, and FFA members have a few days to deliver these items to their customers.

This is our only door-to-door fundraiser, and it is vitally important for everyone to participate so the FFA chapter can continue to offer so many great programs for its members. The FFA has developed a great reputation in the community for selling quality fruit at reasonable prices – it is one of the few fundraisers where people actually will call us if we don’t call them.

Hired Hand Auction
The hired hand auction is held in conjunction with our end of year banquet. Members are each auctioned off for 8 hours of labor. If a member is not present at the banquet, he/she is still auctioned off. Furthermore, a member can choose not to be sold, but by doing so, agrees to pay the average of the sale.
Soup Supper
At our Greenhand Jacket Ceremony, we host a soup supper. A free will donation is taken and officers bring pie to go with the soup supper.

Fundraising Philosophy
Other chapters often question us on why we only have three fundraisers per year. And our response is generally that we do not want to add more burden to the parents of our members and other community supporters. We realize we could hold more fundraisers, but we would rather focus on two major fundraisers and allow our members to be very successful at these two activities and reduce the encumbrance upon our member parents and other supporters of our program.

Proficiency Awards
The Agricultural Proficiency Awards program like the FFA motto helps you set goals and learn practical skills. The program rewards FFA members at the local, state and national levels for exceptional accomplishments and excellence in a Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program.

What are the proficiency award areas? Awards are available to all FFA members enrolled in high school agriculture, including special needs students. There are 47 Award areas.

For more information and applications log on www.ffa.org

Proficiency awards are given in the following areas:

- Ag Communications
- Ag Mechanics Design & Fabrication
- Ag. Mechanics Repair & Maintenance
- Ag Mechanics Energy Systems
- Ag Processing
- Ag Sales
- Ag Services
- Beef Production
- Dairy Production
- Diversified Ag Production
- Diversified Crop Prod.
- Diversified Horticulture
- Diversified Livestock Production
- Emerging Ag Technology
- Environ. Sci. & Nat. Resource
- Equine Science
- Fiber and/or Oil Crop Prod
- Floriculture
- Food Science & Tech
- Forage Production
- Forest Mgt. & Products
- Fruit Production
- Grain Production
- Home or Community Development
- Landscape Management
- Nursery Operations
- Outdoor Recreation
- Poultry Production
- Sheep Production
- Small Animal Production & Care
- Specialty Animal Prod.
- Specialty Crop Prod.
- Swine Production
- Turf Grass Management
- Vegetable Production
- Veterinary Science
- Wildlife Management
See the following two pages for more detailed descriptions of what types of projects fit into each one of the above award areas.

Agricultural Proficiency Awards are available to all FFA members enrolled in high school agriculture. Students must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Must apply while in high school or within 1 year after graduation from high school.
- If a high school graduate you must have completed at least 3 full years of instruction in agricultural education or program of agricultural education offered in school last attended.
- At minimum, must have kept 1 full calendar year's worth of records as an FFA member to apply for a district, state, or national level proficiency award. This does not apply to local awards.

**FFA Degrees**

**Greenhand FFA Degree**

As a high school member of the FFA, receiving the Greenhand FFA Degree shows that you have opened the door to the many exciting opportunities that the National FFA Organization has to offer. When you qualify for the Greenhand FFA Degree, you have earned the first of four degrees that build on each other leading the way to the highest degree achievable in the FFA, the American FFA Degree.

**Application: April**

Do you qualify?

- I am a FFA member enrolled in agricultural education class.
- I have satisfactory plans for a supervised agricultural experience (SAE) program.
- I learned and can explain the FFA creed, motto, salute, and FFA mission statement.
- I can describe and explain the meaning of the FFA emblem and colors.
- I can demonstrate knowledge of the FFA Code of Ethics and proper use of the FFA jacket.
- I can demonstrate knowledge of the history of the organization, the chapter constitution and bylaws and the chapter Program of Activities
- I personally own or have access to the Official FFA Manual and the FFA Student Handbook.
- I submitted a written application for the Greenhand FFA Degree.

**Chapter FFA Degree**

Whether it is helping plan your chapter's next activity, working hard on your SAE or discussing a motion during a chapter meeting, chapter involvement is vital to your future successes in FFA. The root of the National FFA Organization is its chapters. By receiving the Chapter FFA Degree, you demonstrate your role in your chapter's growth and development.

**Application: April, 2\textsuperscript{nd} or 3\textsuperscript{rd} year of FFA membership**

Do you qualify?

- Must have received the Greenhand FFA Degree.
o Must have satisfactorily completed the equivalent of at least 180 hours of systematic school instruction in agricultural education at or above the ninth grade level, have in operation an approved supervised agricultural experience program, and be enrolled in an agricultural education course.

o Have participated in the planning and conducting of at least three official functions in the chapter Program of Activities.

o Have earned and productively invested at least $150 by the member's own efforts or worked at least forty-five hours in excess of scheduled class time, or a combination thereof, and have developed plans for continued growth and improvement in a supervised agricultural experience program.

o Have effectively led a group discussion for 15 minutes.

o Have demonstrated five procedures of parliamentary law.

o Have a satisfactory scholastic record.

o Submit a written application for the Chapter FFA Degree.

State FFA Degree

Like a high school diploma, the State FFA Degree celebrates your high school FFA career. Awarded by your state FFA association, this degree is a symbol to the members of your entire state FFA association that you are chapter leaders. As a State FFA Degree recipient, you have taken your FFA involvement beyond the chapter level and have a successful supervised agricultural experience (SAE) program. With your State FFA Degree, you are one step away from achieving the highest degree attainable in the FFA, the American FFA Degree.

Application: January, seniors or 4th year of FFA Membership

Do I qualify?

o Have received the Chapter FFA Degree.

o Have been an active FFA member for at least two years (24 months) at the time of receiving the State FFA Degree.

o While in school, have completed the equivalent of at least two years (360 hours) of systematic school instruction in agricultural education at or above the ninth grade level, which includes a supervised agricultural experience program.

o Have earned and productively invested at least $1,000, or worked at least 300 hours in excess of scheduled class time, or a combination thereof, in a supervised agricultural experience program.

o Demonstrate leadership ability by:
  *Performing 10 procedures of parliamentary law.
  *Giving a six-minute speech on a topic relating to agriculture or the FFA.
  *Serving as an officer, committee chairperson, or participating member of a chapter committee.

o Have a satisfactory scholastic record as certified by the local agricultural education instructor and the principal or superintendent.

o Have participated in the planning and completion of the chapter Program of Activities.

o Have participated in at least five different FFA activities above the chapter level. The percentage of the total state membership which may receive the State FFA Degree and other requirements may be established by the state FFA association.

American FFA Degree
As the highest degree achievable in the National FFA Organization, receiving the American FFA Degree shows an FFA member’s dedication to his or her chapter and state FFA associations. It demonstrates the effort FFA members apply toward their supervised agricultural experience (SAE) program and the outstanding leadership abilities and community involvement they experienced throughout their FFA career. American FFA Degree recipients show promise for their future and have above and beyond to achieve excellence.

**Application:** May 1st during the 1st, 2nd, 3rd year following high school graduation.

Do I qualify?

- Have received the State FFA Degree, have been an active member for the past three years (36 months) and have a record of satisfactory participation in the activities on the chapter and state levels.
- Have satisfactorily completed the equivalent of at least three years (540 hours) of systematic secondary school instruction in an agricultural education program or have completed the program of agricultural education offered in the school last attended.
- Have graduated from high school at least 12 months prior to the national convention at which the degree is to be granted.
- Have in operation and have maintained records to substantiate an outstanding supervised agricultural experience program through which a member has exhibited comprehensive planning, managerial and financial expertise.
- Have earned and productively invested at least $7,500 or have earned and productively invested at least $1,500 and worked 2,250 hours in excess of scheduled class time. Any combination of hours times a factor of $3.33 plus dollars must be equal to, or greater than the number 9,000. Hours used for the purpose of producing earnings reported as productively invested income shall not be duplicated as hours of credit to meet the minimum requirements for the degree.
- Have a record of outstanding leadership abilities and community involvement and have achieved a high school scholastic record of C or better as certified by the principal or superintendent.
FFA Conferences and Camps

The Rock County FFA takes multiple trips to leadership conferences, conventions, and competitions throughout the year. As a rule, high school students must be eligible to participate in these trips.

On all FFA trips, students pay for their own meals and incidental costs such as souvenirs. On some trips, FFA members are asked to pay a fee to the chapter to cover a portion of the expenses. The rule of thumb is: If it is a trip that ALL FFA MEMBERS can participate in, the chapter pays the registration, entry fee, etc. for everyone. If it is a trip that ONLY SOME FFA MEMBERS are selected to participate in, then a fee is charged to the student for a portion of the total expenses. Certain trips have specific policies that have been adopted by the chapter members. They are as follows:

District Leadership Skills Events

District Leadership Skills Events are held annually in January. Members compete in areas such as Public Speaking, Creed Speaking, Parliamentary Procedure, Job Interview, and Extemporaneous Speaking.

At Districts, Rock County competes against the other chapters in the FFA District: Ainsworth, Burwell, Chambers, Elgin, Elkhorn Valley, O’Neill, Rock County, Ord, Sargent, Loup County, West Boyd, West Holt, and Wheeler Central. Generally, the top two teams/individuals in each area of competition advance to state. However, if there aren’t enough participants, only the district champion will qualify.

Students will miss a day of school, so they must get assignments in advance from their teachers.

All students participating in a contest may attend. The chapter pays for all entry fees. Parents are invited to come and watch the students in competition.

State FFA Convention

Most years, a large number of students have “earned their way” to the State FFA Convention in Lincoln by earning awards or competing in contests. These students have first priority. Once we have determined how many students have “earned their way” we will know how many other students we will be able to take, based on chapter budget and the number of hotel rooms allocated to our chapter.

There is no limit to the number of times a student may attend state convention. However, in order to make sure that only active and dedicated FFA members attend the convention, the chapter has the following restrictions: 1) participated in at least half of the “BIG 4” (Range Judging, Livestock Selection, District LSE, District CDE, AND 2) must have attended at least 50% of FFA meetings/activities during current school year AND 3) must have submitted a proficiency application for district review. This information will be verified by the advisor.
Students will miss up to 3 days of school, so they must get assignments in advance from their teachers. All students attending the State Convention (including those who have “earned their way”) may be required to pay a minimal fee based upon our chapter budget, level of qualification, application, and FFA points.

National FFA Convention

Students who have “earned their way” to the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, IN by earning awards or competing in contests have first priority. Once we have determined how many students have “earned their way” we will know how many other students we will be able to take, based on chapter budget, transportation available, and the number of hotel rooms allocated to our chapter.

Highlights of the convention may include the Convention Sessions, the National FFA Career Show; National Contests; Leadership Workshops; Field Trips to area attractions. Visit the FFA web site at http://www.ffa.org/convention/ for more information.

Students will miss five days of school to attend the National Convention, so they must get assignments in advance from their teachers. Students attending the National FFA Convention may be asked to pay a fee in the range of $100-$250 depending on the total cost of the trip.

Chapter Officer Leadership Training (COLT)

Each year, the newly elected FFA officers travel to Aurora, Nebraska to attend COLT. The purpose of this conference is to spend a few days sharpening their leadership skills, planning for the coming year, and learning to work as a team. The date of this trip varies based on the schedules of the new officer team. All officers are expected to participate. The FFA Chapter will pay for all registration fees associated with COLT.

P2C Leadership/Career Exploration Workshops

The Nebraska State FFA in conjunction with Nebraska Department of Education, Ag Ed Division, and stakeholders of FFA throughout Nebraska hold integrated workshops each fall to help members develop and set goals, enhance leadership skills, explore career opportunities, and network with members from around the state. Members may attend these conferences if it fits into their schedules, however it will conflict with sports and after school practices.

Activate and Leverage (Formerly MFE/ALD)
Junior High-Seniors

If personal growth interests you, then Activate and Leverage may be the conference for you. Focused on building your confidence and competence, you have the opportunity to build a foundation of excellence through your own talents, skills and will power. A&L helps you grow personally and realize what it takes to be a premier leader. Additionally, you will have the opportunity to learn about a wide variety of careers available in the field of agriculture. By polishing your leadership and communication skills, you will learn how to best prepare for your future career.
From your local FFA chapter to the nation’s capital, that’s where you’ll be headed if you join hundreds of other FFA members at the Washington Leadership Conference. Set in Washington D.C., this week-long summer conference takes your leadership skills to their highest level. Focusing on problem-solving, relationship building, and character and serving others, WLC teaches you how to have a positive impact on your school, chapter, community, state, and country. While you are practicing all these skills, you will also take in such historical sites as the Jefferson Memorial, Vietnam Memorial, and World War II Memorial. Plus, you’ll meet lots of new friends from around the country.

**Individual Opportunities for FFA Members**

**Agriscience Fair**
Individually or with a partner, members may conduct an experiment related to agriculture. They must create a display and must also write a written report. The Agriscience Fair takes place at the state convention in April.

**Exhibiting at the Nebraska State Fair**
Members of the Rock County FFA may exhibit Beef, Dairy Cattle, Dairy Goats, Rabbits, Horse, Mechanics/Technology, Display Boards, Horticulture, Floriculture, Photography, Sheep, and Swine projects at the Nebraska State Fair in August/September. With the exception of Mechanics/Technology, Display Board, and Photography exhibits, all entries must be a part of the student’s Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program and students must have record books on the projects exhibited.

Because the Nebraska State Fair is an Individual FFA Activity, all FFA members under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or a responsible adult designated by the parent. The chapter encourages participation, but does not provide financial support, transportation of livestock, or supervision of students. There are a few exceptions to this: 1) The chapter will provide exhibitors with a reasonable and adequate number of “chapter stalls” at the chapter’s expense, at the request of the exhibitors, if the exhibitors plan to have some sort of display to promote the chapter. 2) The chapter will provide reasonable supplies for students to build their display boards at the chapter’s expense, as this is often a required activity in plant science class (range board display) and welding class (welding board display).

For more information go to [www.neaged.org](http://www.neaged.org)

**State FFA Chorus**

The State FFA Chorus provides entertainment at sessions and other events associated with the State FFA Convention. These very skilled musicians are selected through a highly competitive process that includes a recommendation from the local music instructors, the state FFA band or
chorus directors, and an audition tape. Application materials can be downloaded from www.neaged.org. The deadline is typically December 1.

National FFA Band and National FFA Chorus

The National FFA Band and Chorus provide entertainment at sessions, workshops, meal functions, and other events associated with the National FFA Convention. These very skilled musicians are selected through a highly competitive process that includes a recommendation from the local music instructors, the state FFA band or chorus directors, and an audition tape. Application materials can be downloaded from http://www.ffa.org/convention/. The deadline is typically in late April or early May.

Members selected for the National Band or Chorus will travel to the convention site several days earlier than the rest of the chapter in order to practice. Because this is an individual activity, the chapter encourages students to participate, but does not provide financial support or supervision. Chaperones are provided by the National FFA Organization. Because it is a great honor for the chapter to have a member selected to the band or chorus, the chapter will pay for the cost of transporting band or chorus members to and from the convention in a way that is most cost effective for the chapter. The individual member is responsible for transporting instruments, paying any fees to the National FFA for music, hotel, etc. and for their meals.
FFA Official Dress

Female

- Black skirt - Skirt is to be at least knee length, hemmed evenly across the bottom, with a slit no longer than 2 inches above the knee, excluding the kick pleat
- White collared blouse & Official FFA blue scarf
- Black dress shoes with a closed heel and toe (no boots, sandals, open-toed shoes, tennis shoes,)
- Black nylon hosiery
- Official FFA jacket zipped to the top.
- Black Slacks may be appropriate for traveling and outdoor activities.

Male

- Black dress pants (no jeans - blue or black, leather, pleather, etc.)
- White dress shirt & Official FFA tie
- Black dress shoes with a closed heel and toe. (no boots, sandals, open-toed shoes, tennis shoes,)
- Black socks
- Official FFA jacket zipped to the top

Wearing Awards on Your Jacket

- Chapter degree, officer and award medals should be worn beneath the name of the right side of the jacket.
- State FFA Degree or American Degree key should be worn above the name or attached to a standard key chain.
- No more than 3 medals should be worn on the jacket. These should represent highest degree earned, highest office held and the highest award earned.