

**Rock County Agricultural Education Handbook**  
**Rock County High School**  
**Bassett, NE**



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

**2020-2021**

# Rock County Agricultural Education Handbook

Welcome to the Rock County FFA Parent-Student Handbook. You will notice this it 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](mailto:advorak@rockcountyschools.org) or Mrs. Kara Sybrant at (402) 841-0275 or by email at [karasybrant@rockcountyschools.org](mailto:karasybrant@rockcountyschools.org)

Agricultural Education has endless opportunities, so get involved 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 will participate in FFA and have an SAE project.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SAE</b> <i>(Supervised Agricultural Experience)</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Classroom</b> <i>(See course descriptions below.)</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FFA</b> <i>(formerly Future Farmers of America, now known as the "National FFA Organization").</i></p>
<p>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, conduct research, or own any agribusiness enterprise such as an animal or plant project or agriculture service business.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>7<sup>th</sup> Grade Exploratory 8<sup>th</sup> 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</p> <p><b>Public Law 740 defines SAE and FFA as integral parts of Agricultural Education classes..</b></p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

# Section 1: Classroom

## 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 and dual credit. 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  
Spring Semester**

**Prerequisite: Intro to AFNR  
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.

## **Classroom Requirements**

When a student enrolls in an agricultural education course, they are agreeing to become an active member of the **agricultural education program**. This includes:

1. Maintaining a Foundational SAE and participating in an Immersion SAE (optional for 7 & 8; required for 9-12). See Section 2 for details on SAE requirements.
2. Becoming an active member of the Rock County FFA Chapter. Rock County is an affiliate chapter, which means that chapter dues are paid for students by the school district. When a student enrolls in a course, they automatically receive the full benefits of being an FFA member. See Section 3 for details on what Active membership requires.
3. Acknowledging that SAE and FFA are graded components of all agricultural education courses. See appendix for the grading policy.

## **Section 2: Supervised Agricultural Experience**

Supervised Agricultural Experiences are truly endless and entirely based on students exploring their passions and career interests. SAEs are 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. There are two types of SAE:

**Foundational:** The foundational SAE is conducted by all students in the agricultural education program. There are five components to the Foundational SAE: Career Exploration and Planning, Employability Skills for College and Career Readiness, Personal Financial Management and Planning, Workplace Safety, and Agricultural Literacy.

**Immersion:** Students will advance their skills and experience through an immersion SAE. This is optional for 7th and 8th graders, but is required for 9-12 graders. There are five Immersion SAE types to choose from: Placement/Internship, Ownership/Entrepreneurship, Research, School Based Enterprise, and Service Learning.

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

Unpaid Internships  
Raising & Selling Vegetables  
Working in a Greenhouse  
Raising & Selling Game birds

Custom horse training business  
Breeding & Selling Purebred Dogs  
Lawn Mowing Business  
Volunteering within the community

Working at a locker during deer season.  
Landscaping Projects at Home  
Job-Shadowing an Ag Career

Working at a Floral Shop  
Raising a Garden  
Working at a Fertilizer Plant  
Grocery Store Produce Dept.  
Hunting & trapping (wildlife mgt.)  
Work at a welding shop  
Working on a Dairy Farm  
Selling Pumpkins  
Turf Care at a Golf Course  
Raising bucket calves

Working in the hayfield  
Managing irrigation pivots  
Serving as a docent at a museum  
Serving as a Teachers Assistant  
Implementing the PALS Program  
Growing and Marketing Asparagus  
Restoring a Tractor  
Clearing a vacant lot  
Painting houses, sheds, and barns  
Mentoring youth at summer camps

Growing and Selling Sweet Corn  
Raising Sheep, Cattle, Chickens,  
Hogs or even Butterflies  
Running a business out of the  
school's shop or kitchen  
Planning and conducting a  
community service project  
Conducting research

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. Students are rewarded for successful SAE projects through the FFA's Proficiency Award Program. SAEs are also one component of selection to the various levels of FFA membership, also known as Degrees.

## **Proficiency Award Applications**

The Rock County FFA Chapter has been very successful in "reaping the rewards" of maintaining and building outstanding supervised agricultural experience programs. 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 their 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. Proficiency awards rewards FFA members at the local, state and national levels for exceptional accomplishments and excellence in their individual Supervised Agricultural Experience.

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 up to six 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 competencies 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.

For more information on proficiency awards, visit:  
<https://www.ffa.org/participate/awards/proficiencies/>



## **Section 3: FFA**

FFA is an INTRA-curricular activity - not extracurricular like football, basketball, or speech. This means it is a part of the class you are taking and you must maintain active 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, attending practices, but choosing not to participate in competitions 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. See more details throughout Section 3.

### **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 semester of Ag Ed class during the school year. There is no "way around" this policy – it is federal law. Students who are enrolled in an agricultural education course are automatically members as Rock County is an affiliate chapter in the National FFA.

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 at least two years during high school may continue to be members of FFA. Graduate membership must be continuous; therefore, if a graduate decides not to retain membership during their first year out of high school, he or she may not change their mind and rejoin later. 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 Official Dress**

As FFA members, students are given the opportunity to sport what is called FFA Official Dress. The details of this attire is explained below. Students are expected to wear official dress during contests, banquet and other professional events. There are opportunities available for students to

receive funding to cover their jackets and the program has a small collection of white shirts, black bottoms and black shoes for students who may need them.

## **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
  - Black slacks may be appropriate for traveling and outdoor activities.
- White collared blouse & official FFA blue scarf
- Black dress shoes with a closed heel and toe
  - No boots, sandals, open-toed shoes, tennis shoes, etc.
- Black nylon hosiery
- Official FFA jacket zipped to the top

## **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, etc.
- Black socks
- Official FFA jacket zipped to the top

## **Wearing Awards (Pins) on Your Jacket**

- Chapter degree, officer and award medals should be worn beneath the name on 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 the highest degree earned, highest office held and the highest award earned.

## **FFA Activity Attendance**

FFA is different from other intra-curricular activities that are part of a class, such as Band or Choir, because members of FFA get some choice in what activities, performances, competitions, and projects they become involved in. However, there are some FFA events and activities that may be required based upon the course in which you are enrolled. For example, if you are enrolled in Animal Science, you may be required to participate in Livestock Judging as part of your grade for the class.

Furthermore, there are a few things every FFA member should plan to do. They are:

- 1) Attend the Annual **FFA Banquet**, with their family
- 2) Attend the **FFA Meetings**.
- 3) **Fundraise**

An explanation of each follows. Please consult the FFA activity calendar for the dates of these events, 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 Awards, District/State Recognition, Chapter Proficiency Awards, Leadership Awards, Scholarship Awards, Retiring of Senior Jackets, Retiring of Past FFA Officer Teams, Installation of New FFA Officer Teams.

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 Rock County Public Schools 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 and coordination of committees, and announcements of upcoming opportunities.

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. If a member notifies an advisor of their absence ahead of the meeting and it is an excused absence, they will not be penalized for missing the meeting. Excused absences may include, but are not limited to, work, illness, emergencies and family engagements.

All FFA meetings are listed in the school calendar. 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.

### **3) Fundraisers**

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 fundraising activities. Because of our fundraising efforts, many of the events that we attend throughout the year are offered free of charge to members. Here is a summary of what our FFA chapter does to raise funds for our programs:

#### **a) Annual FFA Fruit and Candy Sales (ALL members)**

Our largest annual fundraiser includes boxes of Oranges, Grapefruit, Apples, Pears, and Mixed Fruit Boxes, along with Amish candy and jellies. This fundraiser takes place in a virtual format that will be explained to members before sales begin in mid-October. Members are able to sell door-to-door or over the phone until late November. Our fruit and other items arrive during the first or second week of December, and FFA members have a few days to deliver these items to their customers. We plan to have a pick-up option for customers as well.

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. Members gain interpersonal and organizational skills through this fundraiser, so there are indirect benefits to the fundraiser, as well. For this reason, we highly encourage parents to allow your member to do the work. 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.

Members are required to sell a minimum of \$100 worth of fruit during this fundraiser. Failure to do so will impact student eligibility for State FFA Convention, regardless of their qualification in any contest or award area. Attending State FFA Convention is expensive and this fundraiser plays a great role in offsetting those costs. Families with more than one FFA member are allowed to work together in selling fruit, but still need to meet the \$100 per member requirement. We will not accept monetary donations from families to "cover" this \$100 requirement, partially or in full. If a member is struggling to meet this requirement, please have a conversation with an advisor.

#### **b) Hired Hand Auction (9-12 Grade members)**

The hired hand auction is held in conjunction with the new member recognition ceremony in November. 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.

#### **c) Brisket Feed**

During basketball season, we host a brisket supper during a home game. Members donate ingredients for sides as well as desserts to go with the brisket feed.

#### **d) Concession Stands**

The FFA likes to help our school operations run smoothly, while also making some money. For these reasons, we agree to host concessions stands throughout the year. We ask that students who are available, volunteer to help with this activity.

#### **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. The points are tracked using The Agriculture Experience Tracker (AET) and these points are used for end of year awards and are a factor in determining officer candidates as well as National and State Convention eligibility.

#### **Chapter Expectations**

The Rock County FFA chapter has an outstanding record of students competing in district, state and national events. The students who compete well are the students who prepare well. Practices for events are scheduled before and after school, working around students' schedules as much as possible. It is important for members to be in attendance and on time for these practices to utilize the time best. Keep in mind, the advisors understand that life happens and people are late or cannot be in attendance for things occasionally. We want to stress that communication is key in these scenarios so that the student's whereabouts and safety are not in question. If a member fails to communicate that they will be late or will not be in attendance one time, a conversation will be held between the member and an advisor. If a member fails to communicate in this situation more than once, the member will be cut from the team.

If a member registers for a paid contest or event and fails to attend because of an unexcused absence, the member will be expected to refund the chapter for the registration cost. Again, communication is key in these situations. If a member is registered to attend an event and an excused absence is needed, an advisor needs to be notified before the chapter leaves, at the absolute latest.

Many of the contests that our chapter participates in require an early leave time. As a safety measure, if we have not heard from a student after attempting to contact them twice, we will call his or her parents or guardian. Again, this is a safety protocol because we want to be confident in their location, especially during those early times of day.

#### **Leadership Development Events**

District Leadership Development Events are held annually in January. Members compete in areas such as Ag Demonstration, Cooperative Speaking, Chapter Conduct of Meetings, Natural Resources Speaking, Discovery Speaking, Ag Literacy, Public Speaking, Creed Speaking, Parliamentary Procedure, Job Interview, and Extemporaneous Speaking.

At District LDEs, Rock County competes against the other chapters in the FFA District: Ainsworth, Burwell, Chambers, Elgin, Elkhorn Valley, O'Neill, 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 to participate, 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.

To find out more about each event, please visit:

<https://neaged.org/recognition-programs/leadership-development-events/>

### **Career Development Events**

District Career Development Events are held in early March in Norfolk. Members compete in areas such as Ag Biotechnology, Ag Technology and Mechanics, Ag Sales, Agriscience, Agronomy, Environmental and Natural Resources (Envirothon), Farm and Agribusiness Management, Floriculture, Livestock Management, Meats Evaluation, Veterinary Science, Welding, Nursery and Landscape, and Food Science.

Meats Evaluation and Veterinary Science are held on a different day at a different location in March. Livestock Evaluation takes place in November in Ord. Ag Issues, Ag Communications, and Marketing Plan do not require district competition for advancement to State FFA.

At District CDEs, we compete against the other chapters in our FFA District. Generally, the top two teams advance to state. However, there are some contests that allow more teams to advance to state. Students will miss a day of school to participate, 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.

To find out more about each event, go to <https://alec.unl.edu/agedcde>

### **Range Judging**

Range judging is an event hosted by the NRCS and NRD offices in the state of Nebraska. The purpose of the contest is to increase knowledge in the management of the rangeland ecosystem - a very important concept in Nebraska. In the fall we attend a District X competition at West Holt, an Area contest (location rotates) and State contest (location rotates). To qualify for state, members must finish as one of the top four competitors in either the junior division or senior division.

### **State FFA Convention**

A large number of students each year "earn their way" to attend the State FFA Convention in Lincoln by earning awards or competing in contests. These students have first priority when considering travel capacity. Whether a student has "earned their way" by qualifying in a contest or not, all State Convention attendees must meet the following requirements:

1. Must have participated in at least three separate district-level competitive events during that school year (Range Judging, Livestock Judging, LDE, CDE, Proficiency Application, State FFA Chorus, and/or Agriscience Fair).
2. Must have sold a minimum of \$100 during the chapter's annual fruit sale.
3. Must have participated in at least one FFA-organized community service activity within the past year.

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**

We only attend National Convention every other year and are currently attending on odd numbered years. The exception is if students earn their way by qualifying for National FFA. In this case, the students who qualify will be able to attend - even if it is an even numbered year.

In odd numbered years, 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, and Field Trips to area attractions. Visit <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.

### **EDGE Conference (7-12 Grades)**

Each year in August/September, the Nebraska State Officer Team conducts a leadership workshop for members. FFA members are encouraged to attend EDGE Conference to learn more about what is possible through FFA & Agricultural Education and to begin growing as leaders in the agriculture industry.

### **Pathways 2 Careers (P2C) Conference (10-12 Grades)**

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 sign up to attend this conference that typically takes place in November.

### **212/360 Conference (7-12 Grades)**

If personal growth interests you, then 212/360 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. 212/360 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. Members may sign up to attend this conference that typically takes place in February.

### **Washington Leadership Conference (WLC) (9-11 Grades)**

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.

### **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.

For more information, visit <https://neaged.org/recognition-programs/agriscience-fair/>

### **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 Boards 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.

For more information go to [https://neaged.org/ffa\\_events/ffa-state-fair/](https://neaged.org/ffa_events/ffa-state-fair/)

## **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. The deadline for application is typically December 1, and materials can be downloaded from:

<https://neaged.org/recognition-programs/state-convention-opportunities/>

## **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 Degrees**

Discovery FFA Degree

**Application: November, 7th or 8th grade**

This degree is awarded to students who are in seventh or eighth grade and are enrolled in agricultural classes as well as are members of the FFA Chapter. This degree is not needed in order to pursue a Greenhand degree, but if it is offered in your chapter, it is a great way to jumpstart your FFA career. The purpose of this degree is to recognize students who are working to become successful members of their FFA chapter. The requirements to apply for this degree are:

- Enroll in an agriculture class for at least a portion of a school year while in grades seven and eight.
- Become a dues-paying FFA member at the chapter, state and national levels.
- Participate in at least one FFA chapter activity outside of scheduled class time.

- Have an understanding of agriculture-related careers and entrepreneurship opportunities.
- Become familiar with the local FFA chapter's Program of Activities (POA).
- Submit a written application for the degree.

### Greenhand FFA Degree

#### **Application: April, first year in high school FFA**

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. The requirements to apply for this degree are:

- 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

#### **Application: April, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year of high school FFA membership**

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. The requirements to apply for this degree are:

- Must have received the Greenhand FFA Degree.
- 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.
- Have participated in the planning and conducting of at least three official functions in the chapter Program of Activities.
- 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.
- Have effectively led a group discussion for 15 minutes.
- Have demonstrated five procedures of parliamentary law.
- Show progress toward individual achievement in the FFA award programs.
- Have a satisfactory scholastic record.
- Submit a written application for the Chapter FFA Degree.

### State FFA Degree

**Application: January, seniors or 4<sup>th</sup> year of FFA Membership**

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. The requirements to apply for this degree are:

- 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

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

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. The requirements to apply for this degree are:

- o 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.
- o 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.
- o Have graduated from high school at least 12 months prior to the national convention at which the degree is to be granted.

- o 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.
- o 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.
- o 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.

# Appendix

## Rock County Agricultural Education Grading Policy

2020-2021

The Agricultural Education Program is meant to help students prepare for life after high school, no matter what path they choose. This academic program will incorporate agricultural and natural resource studies, supervised agricultural experiences, and leadership development through the FFA into AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION. The success of the program depends upon you, the student. We personally challenge **you** to become actively involved in the program and in the activities that are offered. The more you put in, the more you get out. Please feel free to visit us about your progress, assignments, grades, missed days, career plans, college options, SAE projects, and leadership activities. Good luck in the upcoming year!

### **GRADING SYSTEM**

Grades are based on three areas each nine weeks:

70% Classroom and Laboratory Performance

15% Supervised Agricultural Experience Program (SAEs)

15% FFA Leadership Involvement

- **Classroom and Laboratory Grade**

Seventy percent of the nine weeks grade is based on grades from class assignments, quizzes, unit tests, laboratories, shop work, and participation in class activities.

- **Supervised Agricultural Experience Program (SAEs)**

Fifteen percent of the nine weeks grade is based upon a student's supervised agricultural experience program. In our Agricultural Education Handbook, we go into great detail about SAE's. Students will be graded each quarter on their progression through their Foundational SAE Program. Furthermore, students in the 9-12 grades will receive a grade each quarter over the completion of their Immersion SAE records in AET.

- **Leadership Involvement - FFA**

Fifteen percent of the nine weeks grade is based upon a student's leadership involvement in FFA. Because Rock County is an affiliate chapter of the National FFA, students enrolled in an Agricultural Education class are automatically members of the FFA. As members, the FFA offers many opportunities for involvement. The minimum requirements are to participate in fundraising, attend meetings, and attend the end of the year banquet. Depending on classroom enrollment, members may also be required to attend certain events for a grade in the class (see the Agricultural Education Handbook for more information). A grade will be given each nine weeks based on a minimum

amount of FFA participation above the classroom level. See the minimum requirements below:

- **FFA FUNDRAISING**  
In order to fully operate, the FFA must raise money through fundraisers scheduled throughout the year. The four main fundraisers that are being planned (but are subject to change), are the fall hired hand auction, fruit sales, concession stands, and a brisket feed. More information about fundraising can be found in the Agricultural Education Handbook.
- **FFA MEETINGS**  
The FFA Chapter will hold at minimum one meeting each quarter. It is expected that members be in attendance as this is when the business of the organization is conducted. More information about meetings and attendance can be found in the Agricultural Education Handbook.
- **END OF YEAR BANQUET**  
The annual FFA banquet is the highlight of the year for the FFA – all members, families, Alumni, and supporters should plan to attend. The banquet is our opportunity to celebrate the successes of the members as well as thank our supporters. More information about the banquet can be found in the Agricultural Education Handbook.

**SPECIAL NOTE:**

Agricultural education is comprised of the three areas: classroom, FFA, and SAE. Students should be involved in all three areas to gain the most from an experience in agricultural education. If a student is not fully committed to the three areas, we ask that they find other electives to fill their schedule.

*I have read and understand the Rock County Agricultural Education policy.*

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(STUDENT)

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(PARENT/GUARDIAN)

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(INSTRUCTOR)