87th National FFA Convention & Expo

Contributed by Keith Cox

A record number of FFA members attended the 87th National FFA Convention & Expo in Louisville, KY. In fact, 64,409 FFA members and registered guests attended. This new record is a 1,421-member jump in convention attendance from last year when 62,988 members attended. Current membership in the National FFA stands at 610,240 members, which is up from 579,678 members in 2013. This increase of 30,562 members was accompanied by growth of new, local FFA chapters to 7,665.

This year’s convention theme — “Go All Out!” — asks members to take action, give their all, and put everything they have into everything they do.

Convention events took place primarily at Kentucky Exposition Center (KEC) and also downtown at the Kentucky International Convention Center and KFC Yum! Center.

Outside of the National FFA Organization’s events, FFA members visited such attractions as the Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory, Churchill Downs and the Kentucky Derby Museum.

Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer was ecstatic about what FFA members bring to the area. “This is a gathering of more than 60,000 of our future leaders, young people who will shape the kind of society we will be — the entrepreneurs, the problem solvers, the care givers and educators.”

The convention is in the second year of a three-year stint with Louisville as the host city. It returns to Indianapolis in 2016.
Record Membership!

The South Carolina FFA Association received an increase in membership award again this year. This is a 36-year high for our state and the Association would like to thank all the teachers for their hard work to make this honor possible. National FFA set a new record with 610,240 members nationally. State Officer Paul Dolan served as our state flag bearer.
Record Number Of American Degree Recipients
Contributed by Keith Cox

Each year, the National FFA honors FFA members who show the utmost dedication to the organization through their desire to develop their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. This year the SC FFA Association had a record number of recipients.

Those pictured below are (L to R) Manning Taylor and Thomas Bailey, from the Andrew Jackson Chapter, Johnathon Finch, from the Aynor Chapter, Perry Loftis, from the Crestview Chapter, James Daniel Chaplin, from the Darlington CIT Chapter, Heather Timmerman, from the Dixie / PTC Collegiate Chapter, Savannah Vickery, Adam Willey and Josh Yeargin, from the Pendleton Chapter.

Those absent from pictures are Matthew Scott Finch, from the Aynor Chapter, Eric Richardson and Mikael Duncan, from the Lexington TC Chapter, Ryan Heath Thurmond and Robert Louis Guess III, from the Strom Thurmond Chapter, and Bradley Mitchell, from the York Chapter.

National Officer Candidate
Contributed by Keith Cox

Logan Layne of the Manning Chapter and former 2011-12 State FFA Vice President served as our National Officer candidate where he advanced to the second phase of the election process. The SC FFA is honored to have someone like Logan represent them at the National level. The SC FFA can’t wait to see what the future holds for Logan as he works on his degree in Agriculture Education at Clemson University.

Bill Parker Receives The Honorary American FFA Degree
Contributed by Keith Cox

The SC FFA is proud to announce that William “Bill” Parker, traveled to Louisville, KY to receive his degree on stage at the National FFA Convention. Mr. Parker has been the advisor of the Blacksburg FFA Chapter for the past 32 years. Over the years, the BHS chapter has participated in a number of National FFA activities.

The Honorary American FFA Degree is awarded to individuals who have provided exceptional service to agriculture, agricultural education or the FFA are eligible for this degree.
Humorist, professional singer and Amazon bestselling author are only a few of the titles that Jane Herlong has held. The South Carolina native and former Miss America contestant motivated thousands of FFA members when she filled Freedom Hall with laughter at the 87th National FFA Convention & Expo on Friday.

Her speech, titled “Don’t Throw Tomatoes at My Field of Dreams”, had the audience on their feet in applause and in the back of their seats with laughter as Herlong told students the importance of personal accountability and life-balance. Herlong laughed, “When life hands you tomatoes, just make ketchup, salsa or spaghetti.”

Herlong told FFA members not to let the words of others get them down. In the first grade, Herlong remembered being laughed at because of her appearance, but a visit with the area beauty queens quickly made her set lofty goals for herself. “It was like a divine spirit said, ‘You’re gonna do that one day.'”

And she did. Starting with local pageants, Herlong made her way to the top, so far as being named Miss South Carolina and representing the state in the Miss America pageant. She reminded FFA members that in order to get where you want to go, you have to find a place to start.

“You gotta start somewhere. You might not have it all, but make a contribution to where you want to go!” Herlong reminds everyone that their future is in their control: “The future belongs to you, FFA!”

A major point that Herlong made was the value of authenticity. She recalls the shadowing image of the pageant circuit.

“I became the generic beauty queen. I lost me.”

The key, says Herlong, comes from being your best self.

“Be the best person God made you to be and you will go all the way. That’s all going out means. That’s the spirit of FFA.”

Herlong finished by rounding back to the title of her speech.

“When those tomatoes come, you can be frozen with fears,” Herlong said. “Instead of being frozen, tell them you’re chosen. You can’t have a positive life contaminated with negative thoughts.”

As a gift of gratitude for her time with FFA, a digital copy of Jane Herlong’s first book, Bare Feet to High Heels, is available for FFA members free of charge at jancherlong.com/ffa. Herlong is impressed with what the success the FFA prepares its members for.

“FFA is just amazing!”

The Nation Ford FFA Chapter was named the national Model of Innovation winner in chapter development at the 87th National FFA Convention & Expo in Louisville, KY.

The nation’s top 10 three-star chapters in the chapter development division competed at the convention and expo. Nation Ford FFA was awarded a plaque in an onstage ceremony during the convention and expo’s second general session on Thursday, Oct. 30. Top chapters were also selected from the middle school, student and community development divisions.

Members of Nation Ford FFA participated in the South Carolina Strawberry Festival in Fort Mill to help advocate, raise awareness and funds for the South Carolina Multiple Sclerosis Society. They achieved this by hosting pig races in the children’s area of the festival. Along with raising funds and awareness, the event allowed chapter members to gain the skills necessary to raise and train the pigs for the races.

The Models of Innovation awards are sponsored by John Deere as a special project of the National FFA Foundation. It is one of the many ways FFA members accomplish the FFA mission and succeed in making a difference in their communities and the lives of others.
Hundreds Of SC FFA Members Attend CAFLS Alumni Tailgate
Contributed by Kirby Player and Sennah Honea, CAFLS Clemson University

The 22nd Annual CAFLS Alumni Tailgate took place on Saturday, October 4th before the Clemson/NC State football game. The State FFA Officer assisted in the day’s activities.

The attendance at the event continues to grow with over 2,300 alumni, friends, students, staff and faculty attending. Thirty-nine different organizations and departments were represented at displays and interactive booths both in and outside of Fike Field House. In addition, a SC Tasty Tailgate of SC Certified food samples was served. A thank you recognition for the South Carolina Rural Rehabilitation Corporation (SCRRC) was the highlight of a brief onstage program that included Clemson’s new President Jim Clements along with other key Clemson and agriculture officials. The SCRRC has given a total of $2,302,044 to agricultural scholarships since the late seventies. In addition, SCRRC supports the South Carolina FFA with annual donations to our outstanding chapter awards.

The SC Farm Bureau serves as the naming sponsor. Other sponsors included:
- South Carolina Farm Bureau
- AgSouth Farm Credit, ACA
- Arbor One Farm Credit
- McLeod’s Farms of McBee, SC
- SC Soybean Board
- Southern States Cooperative
- Specialty Fertilizer Products

This multidimensional event continues to be the largest annual, non-athletic gathering of Clemson alumni on the main campus.

ArborOne “Shoots” For Record Day At Annual Aim-At-Ag Fundraiser
Contributed by Keith Cox

The Aim-At-Ag Tournament had a great turn out for the fourth year. Participants had the opportunity to test their shooting skills on the challenging 12-station course, win door prizes, and purchase raffle tickets throughout the day. The event concluded with lunch and an awards ceremony. It was a family event to help promote gun safety and usage, outdoor appreciation and fellowship.

The tournament was a huge success last year with the proceeds being split between the South Carolina 4-H and South Carolina FFA Association. Each group received nearly $40,000 in the last three years.

Black River Sporting Clays in Kingstree was the location of the Aim-at-Ag fundraiser conducted by ArborOne Farm Credit of Florence.

Special thanks to the Crestwood, Latta, East Clarendon, Manning, Cane Bay, Darlington IT, McBee, North Central and Barnwell CCC for participating and helping with the event. Members of the South Carolina FFA State Officer team also participated in the event and expressed their sincere gratitude to ArborOne from the SC FFA Association.
FFA Day at the State Fair
Contributed by Keith Cox

On October 14th hundreds of FFA members, Agricultural Teachers and guests gathered at the Nutt Livestock Arena to be welcomed to the fair by Gary Goodman, General Manager and Ms. Nancy Smith, Associate General Manager of the South Carolina State Fair.

After the ceremony the members had a chance to participate or watch the State Tractor Operation and Safety Career Development Event, study the livestock, tour the many display’s throughout the fair buildings and of course enjoy the rides and food that the State Fair offers.

The S.C. State Fair has a long-standing tradition of successfully promoting the FFA. The S.C. State Fair hosted the organizational meeting of the Future Palmetto Farmers at the 1927 fair. This was a forerunner of the South Carolina Association of Future Farmers of America, known today as the South Carolina FFA Association.

The SC FFA and the State Fair would like to give the Aiken FFA a special thank you for providing mums and pumpkins that decorated the Nutt Livestock Arena.

Four FFA Members presented a SC Association of Fairs Scholarship
Contributed by Keith Cox

SC Association of Fairs presented four Agricultural Education students a $500 scholarship for their excellence in Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE), FFA Leadership, School and Community Activities, and Scholastic Ability.

The students were presented with the award Oct. 14 by Nancy Smith, President of the SCAF, during the 2014 South Carolina FFA Day at the State Fair in Columbia before a statewide audience of FFA members, agricultural educators, and agricultural industry leaders.

Lower State Region winner is Kelly Coons. Kelly is a member of the Aiken FFA Chapter. Kelly will be pursuing a major in Agriculture Education and minor in animal science at Piedmont Tech and Clemson University. Her advisor is Mr. Waylon Priester.

Pee Dee Region winner is Caitlin Sanderson from the Lakewood FFA Chapter. Caitlin’s a high school sophomore that plans on using the scholarship to improve her SAE in poultry and vegetable production. Caitlin’s advisors are Jillian Lash and Steve Sanderson.

Mid State Region winner is Ronald Berry. Ron is a member of the Pelion FFA Chapter. Ron would like to major in Agriculture Mechanization & Business at Piedmont Tech and Clemson. His advisors are Mr. Frank Stover and Mr. Tommy Harmon

Piedmont Region winner is Candace Clinkscales. Candace is a member of the Benton – Honea Path FFA Chapter. Candace plans to obtain a degree in Animal and Veterinary Science at Clemson. Her advisors are Mr. Glenn Stevens and Mr. Ben Woody.

National FFA President Brian Walsh Visits
Contributed by Keith Cox

Brian Walsh, a native of Virginia, had the opportunity to visit several schools while in SC. Brian had lunch and visited an outdoor lab at Pendleton High. At BHP, he joined the members in the cafeteria for lunch and spoke with the agriculture classes.

After finding his reserved parking spot, Brian was the speaker at a luncheon with Manning FFA. A meal with the FFA officers started the visit at Strom Thurmond. Brian spoke with the agriculture classes and had the good fortune of getting in the yearbook picture.

Brian was also thrilled to be introduced to Jane Herlong, a keynote speaker at the National FFA Convention, by Strom Thurmond President Leigh Northrop. Brian and Mrs. Herlong had a chance to talk about the upcoming convention.

We also would like to thank Pickens County CC, Pelion High, Crestwood High and Aiken High for providing the location for the workshops that Brian presented concurrently with the Chapter Opportunity Workshops
Kentucky Hosts 2014 NYFEA Institute  

Contributed by Tim Keown

The South Carolina Young Farmer and Agribusiness Association (SCYFAA) was represented by nineteen members at the National Young Farmer Educational Association (NYFEA) Institute held in Louisville, KY. The five voting delegates for South Carolina were: Tripp Kemp, Frank McLeod, Jay Fanning, John Weathers, and Steve Sanderson. Tim Keown made a presentation on behalf of the 2015 Charleston, SC Institute Planning Committee.

The Institute had two days of non-stop tours of the Bluegrass State. On Thursday, we headed to the western part of the state where we toured the Corvette Museum and the Corvette Assembly Plant. We then toured the Balle Tobacco Marketing warehouse where we learned about the burley tobacco industry. From there, we stopped at Triple Oaks Farm near Bowling Green, KY. Triple Oaks Farm is a 10,000 acre general row crop farm with some of the nicest facilities and equipment in the nation. The entire group was treated to a pork chop lunch that our delegation is still talking about. While there, the KY Farm Safety Program Coordinator had a tractor safety demonstration set up for attendees to see. We ended the day with dinner at Churchill Downs Millionaire’s Row.

The Friday tour began by driving to Lexington where we toured the Four Roses Distillery. Attendees then toured Big Ass Fan Company and were treated to lunch there. The world-renowned Keeneland Horse Park was next on our stops where we sat through a mock Thoroughbred auction. The tour guides then took us to the University of Kentucky’s Research Beef Farm.

The Institute ended on Saturday with a busy day of delegate meetings, an Agriculture Decision Makers College, the Agriculture Communications contest, a Salute to Kentucky lunch, a live auction, and finally the banquet that evening.

Tim Kelley, a SCYFAA member from the Crescent chapter, located in Iva, SC, served as the President of the NYFEA for the 2014 year. He gave his retiring address in Louisville and will now be serving as the Past President/Treasurer for the 2015 year. Tim represented our state on the national stage and made the great state of South Carolina proud of his accomplishments while he served.

Charleston, South Carolina is the host city for the NYFEA Institute in 2015. Please make plans now to attend and help us show South Carolina hospitality to the rest of the country!
South Carolina Agricultural Educators Attend National Agricultural Education Convention In Nashville, Tennessee

Contributed by Tim Keown

South Carolina agricultural educators attended the 66th annual convention of the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE), November 18-22, 2014. The educators who participated in the conference included: Troy Helms, James Roberts, Jason Gore, Mindy Sandifer, Robert Bollier, Derrick Cooper, and Nate Bellamy. Dr. Phil Fravel, Professor of Agricultural Education at Clemson University was also in attendance along with nine Clemson University Agricultural Education Seniors and Graduate Students.

Those students in attendance were: Deion Latimer, MacKenzie Mullikin, Chelsey Francis, Julia Miller, Callen Bethea, Holly Benenhaley, Jesse McGee, Ethan Busbee, and Casey-Anne Attaway. These students will be student teaching in the spring semester of 2015.

SCAAE attendees spent time working with other agricultural educator associations in their region, learning about initiatives that have had success in other states, and collaborating to shape the direction of the national association for the upcoming year. They also participated in professional development focused on agriculture, sessions on building partnerships between agricultural educators, agribusiness leaders, and policy makers, and professional recognition awards.

The NAAE recognized the Colleton-Bamberg-Barnwell Young Farmer Chapter as the Outstanding Postsecondary/Adult Program for NAAE Region V. Mindy Sandifer, advisor to this group, was there to receive the award.

The NAAE recognized Robert Bollier, agricultural educator at Lexington Technology Center, as one of only six individuals nationwide who received the 2014 NAAE Ideas Unlimited Award.

Jason Gore, agricultural educator at Crestwood High School, is one of a select group of agriculture teachers nationwide who received the 2014 Teachers Turn the Key professional development scholarship.

Several SCAAE members presented workshops while in Nashville. Troy Helms, Jason Gore, Robert Bollier, and Dr. Phil Fravel, represented SCAAE as they presented their instructional ideas to other agricultural educators.

www.scaged.org
Chapter Opportunity Workshops celebrated its 10th anniversary with another increase in numbers, 759 students participated in the workshops this year. This was a significant growth from the 43 students that attended in the fall of 2005.

At these workshops, chapters from across the state took part in leadership training and were informed of the many opportunities afforded them through membership in the FFA.

A special thank you to Pickens County Career Center, Pelion High School, Crestwood High School, and Aiken High School for serving as host schools for the workshops.
Layne Recipient Of Parris Endowment Scholarship

Logan Layne, a sophomore at Clemson University majoring in Agricultural Education and an alumnus of the Manning High School FFA Chapter, has been named recipient of a $1000 scholarship from the John W. Parris Agricultural Leadership Endowment by the Clemson University Foundation.

A former officer of the Manning FFA Chapter, Logan served as State FFA Vice President in 2011-12 and was a finalist in his quest for a national officer position during the 2014 National FFA Convention. Logan was also a member of the 2009 state winning FFA Parliamentary Procedure team which went on to compete at the national level. He is currently a member of the Clemson Collegiate FFA and an active member of the Clemson Collegiate Farm Bureau. Before attending Clemson University, Logan was a student at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in Tifton, Georgia where he graduated with an associate degree in Agricultural Education.

Logan’s parents are Aaron and Scarlet Layne of Manning, SC. Agri-science instructor Michael Haynes served as his FFA advisor while he was a student at Manning High School.

The Parris Agricultural Leadership Endowment at Clemson University is named for John W. Parris of Columbia, SC, a 1958 graduate of Clemson University with a BS degree in Agricultural Education. Mr. Parris served as an Agri-Science instructor in Chester and Anderson for a total of eight years before being named associate director of the SC Soil and Water Conservation Commission, a position he held for 5 ½ years. He was appointed executive director of the agency in 1972 when it became the SC Land Resources Commission and held that position of leadership for 22 years.

Upon retirement from state government, Mr. Parris was employed as state director of public affairs for Agricultural Education and the FFA in South Carolina and edited the SC Agricultural Education magazine, AGRI BIZ. He held that position for 16 years and now serves as director of the SC Agri-News Service.

The first South Carolinian named to the National Conservation Hall of Fame, Parris was recipient of the National FFA VIP Award, the National Professional Conservatorism Award, named Man of the Year in SC Agriculture by the Progressive Farmer magazine, and honored as a Centennial Distinguished Agricultural alumnus and an Alumni Fellow by Clemson University.

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Pickens County CTC FFA Chapter Is Awarded National Grant To Develop Student Supervised Agricultural Experience Project

Contributed by Ashley Granata, Advisor, Pickens FFA Chapter

The Pickens County Career & Technology Center FFA Chapter has been selected to receive the 2014 Program Improvement Grant awarded by The Agricultural Experience Tracker (AET). The FFA chapter was selected as one of the top 20 agricultural programs nationwide and received $2000 for increasing student Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) projects in the animal science area.

The purpose of the Program Improvement Grant is to invest in FFA programs developing SAE opportunities for its members. An SAE is a “learning by doing” tool in agricultural education. All students are required to conduct and maintain an SAE which reflects their agricultural interests and career goals. Through these individual projects, some paid and some unpaid, members receive hands-on training in industry related fields, goal setting, planning, and record keeping.

The Pickens County CTC FFA chapter was selected for the grant based on the innovative plans to develop a Goat Chain project giving FFA members experience in livestock management, nutrition, health care, and marketing. Young female goats will be placed with and cared for by the FFA members. During the project the FFA members will maintain records using the AET system. The member will “pay off” their goat by replacing two female offspring back into the chain. Students selected to participate in this program will commit to fulfilling the obligations of the chain, while completing a program of study in the Pickens County CTC Agricultural Education program.

AET or The Agricultural Experience Tracker is the premiere personalized online system for tracking experiences in agricultural education. The AET summarized student experiences into standard FFA award applications enabling members gain FFA scholarships, awards, and grants. The vision of The AET is to become an educational tool that brings good record keeping practices back into the classroom.

The mission of the FFA is to make a positive difference in the living of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.
Colleton FFA Members Use Pumpkins to Teach Elementary Students

Contributed by Robin Lutton, Advisor Colleton FFA Chapter

Agriculture students from Thunderbolt Career and Technology Center and the Colleton County FFA recently invited students from Northside Elementary to their pumpkin patch at the TCTC Community Garden.

Northside students picked pumpkins to take home, toured the garden and enjoyed climbing on the school’s tractor, according to Robin Lutton, agriculture teacher and FFA advisor at TCTC.

The agriculture students assisted the Northside children with pumpkin carving. While carving them, the older students explained to the youngsters how pumpkins grow and how they’re used as food.

Aiken FFA Presents Wreaths

Contributed by Waylon Priester, Advisor Aiken FFA Chapter

The Aiken High School FFA recently went to Clemson to present Christmas wreaths to President Jim Clemets, Provost Bob Jones, Interim Dean Dr. Askew, and Head Football Coach Dabo Swinney. The Aiken High Chapter does this each year to show appreciation to these people for the continued support of our organization and Agriculture. Students presented each with a live handmade wreath and a Poinsettia grown in their greenhouse.

Pictured from left to right: Chapter Vice President Derrick Emerson, Chapter Parliamentarian Jessica Letbetter, President Jim Clemets, Chapter Treasurer Katelynn Cook, Chapter President Kelly Coons and Advisor Waylon Priester

Calhoun Falls FFA Cleans Up Shorelines On Lake Russell

Contributed by Nancy McCannon, Advisor Calhoun Falls FFA Chapter

A successful day for Calhoun Falls FFA chapter, 2014 Lake Clean-Up was a part of National Public Lands Day and Beach Sweep. This is the 3rd year in a row that this program has been conducted here in Calhoun Falls. This year 23 FFA members showed up to clean four of the boat ramps on Lake Russell. In all 27 bags of trash were gathered, as well as 4 tires and a muffler, within 3 hours. After Lake Clean-Up students gathered at the Blue Hole. They celebrated a successful event by grilling hotdogs and spending time in kayaks. In all the day was a huge success for the chapter.

Barnwell FFA Participates in Christmas Parade

Contributed by Mindy Sandifer, Advisor Barnwell CCC FFA Chapter

As most SC FFA Chapters do during this time of year, the Barnwell CCC members created a homemade float for the City of Barnwell’s Annual Christmas Parade. The chapter’s officers and additional members sat patiently in the rain awaiting the start of the parade on the borrowed farm trailer complete with hay bales, personal pets, Christmas decor, and a giant FFA banner. A smaller group of BCCC FFA Chapter officers also followed behind on their own personal horses.

Chapter officer, Bailee Bolen, and her horse, Slider, were presented with the “Excellent Equine” Award by the judges. Bailee will ride Slider for her 2nd year in her FFA chapter’s 8th Annual Rodeo this spring.
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