

The Michigan FFA Creed

May/June 2007



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Issue 5 Volume 5

The State FFA Office
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The Michigan FFA will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, age, gender, marital status, weight, sexual orientation or disability. Any student requiring an accommodation as a result of a disability should contact the chapter advisor to arrange such accommodation.

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I believe in...

Thank you to all of the Michigan FFA members, advisors and supporters for making this past year truly amazing. From the moment that the aliens and “Boys in Blue” invaded SLCCO and SLCRO, to the disco party on the stage of the Wharton Center, we hope that this year allowed each and every member to exemplify those qualities that make each of us unique.

On behalf of the entire 2006-2007 Michigan FFA State Officer team, we would like to congratulate all of you who competed, earned degrees and awards and attended the State Convention this past March. The Wharton Center was jammed packed with enthusiastic members from the north to the south, and the east and the west. Our officer team had a great time planning the excitement and we loved watching this domino effect throughout the three days of convention.

As our year of service dwindles down, we would like to remind everyone that no matter how you placed in a contest, if you were elected to be the president of your chapter or not, or if you accidentally skipped a line when you recited the

FFA Creed, without a doubt you have broken the mold. The mere fact that you took charge, found confidence, and stepped beyond the norm is something to be proud of.

Michigan FFA, as summer nears, we challenge you to embrace those opportunities that allow you to “Break the Mold.” Be proud of who you are and don’t conform to the image or ways that so many others have mirrored. Push the clouds away and allow yourself to shine to the world around you.

“Let the world know you as you are, not as you think you should be, because sooner or later, if you are posing, you will forget the pose, and then where are you?”

*- Fanny Brice
American Actress*

Dates to Remember...

May

- 11 Lansing Lugnuts Game
- 30 Applications due to the State FFA Office (for full list of what’s due, check out www.michiganffa.com)

June

- 18 SLCCO/SLCRO Registration Due
- 25-1 WLC
- 29 Dairy Showmanship/Dairy Judging/
Tractor Driving Registrations Due

79th Michigan FFA State Convention

After three days of competition, leadership and brotherhood, nearly 2,000 Michigan FFA members departed from the Wharton Center in East Lansing with a renewed feeling of belonging - belonging to the greatest youth organization in the world. Over those three days, our association made many strides of progression. We saw the establishment of a State FFA Choir, the impact a river of blue corduroy can have on a lawmaking body and the election of future leaders. We saw the best our generation has to offer.



New Leadership



The 2007-2008 Michigan FFA State Officer team

Back row (L-R): Wade Shields of Saranac, Sentinel; Andrew Walker of Ogemaw Heights, Region VI State VP; Dustin Grezeszak of Whittemore-Prescott, Reporter; Nate Deschepper of Byron, Region IV State VP; Kate Krepps of Ravenna, Treasurer; Demitria Gavit of Belding, Region V State VP

Front row (L-R): Brittany Armbruster of Laker, Region III State VP; Amanda Sollman of Sanilac, Secretary; Matt Hensley of Lenawee Vo-Tech, Region II State VP; Cally Hass of Cassopolis, Vice President; Alexandria Henry of Alma, President; Bailey Albright of Branch Area Career Center, Region I State VP

Stars Over Michigan



**Ben Emens
Waldron
Star Farmer**



**Andy Hruby
Fremont
Star in Placement**



**Matt Hensley
Lenawee Vo-Tech
Star in Agribusiness**



**Amanda Earl
Branch Area CC
Star in Agriscience**

Chapter Chatter

By: **Emily Ries**
State Reporter



Region I Maple Valley FFA - Aaron Saari, advisor

“The Maple Valley FFA chapter is preparing for the annual Vermontville Maple Syrup Festival. Each year, the chapter builds a float for the Grand Parade. They compete against 4-H clubs and other non-profit organizations for cash prizes. This year, members are hard at work cutting out cardboard clouds and painting pig gates metallic gold in order to adhere to the parade’s theme; ‘Maple Syrup a Little Bit of Heaven in 2007.’ During the parade, April 28, members will ride on the float and wave to the crowds. Regardless of the float’s placing, the float building gives members a chance to exercise their creative talent and bond with fellow chapter members.”

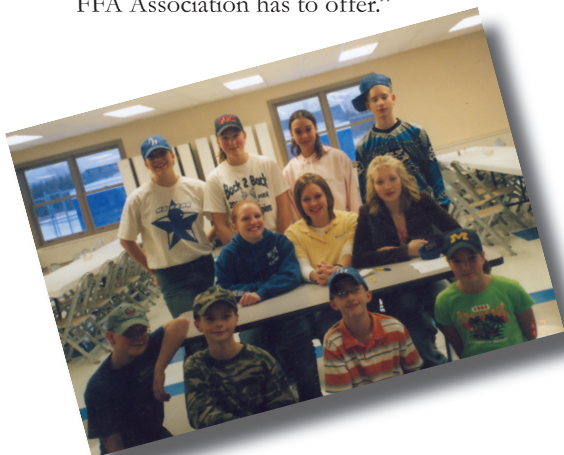
Region II Jonesville - Amanda Stemme, advisor

“This year was a year of changes for the Jonesville FFA Chapter. After 26 years as the Agriscience Instructor and FFA Advisor, Mr. Bill Fowler has retired. Mrs. Amanda Stemme has signed on as the new instructor and advisor. The Jonesville Chapter enjoys participating in State and National Convention as well as doing projects in the community. Several members own livestock and show at the famous Hillsdale County Fair, while others come from non-farm backgrounds. Everyone looks forward to getting involved in all of the leadership opportunities that the Michigan FFA Association has to offer.”



Region III Port Hope - Marv Koglin, advisor

“The Port Hope FFA Chapter is a small chapter of 11 members belonging to a school of less than 100 students K-12 grades. In the past six years, the Chapter has had two State Officers, two American Degree Recipients, and a state winner in Prepared Public Speaking, and an average of 3-4 State Degree recipients per year. The Chapter’s primary fund raiser is a Fish Fry which is held twice a year, once in December and once in March. In the past, the chapter raised tilapia fish that were used for the Fish Fry. Although the Chapter no longer raises fish, the Fish Fry continues to be a popular activity for the FFA and the community.”





Region IV Roosevelt FFA - Bob Johnson, advisor

“At the end of March, the Roosevelt FFA chapter participated in the 2007 Business Lifestyle Exposition at Yack Arena in Wyandotte. We designed an interior landscape for the entrance to the expo and over 3000 people passed through our gardens. Students operated a booth at the expo promoting flowers and our FFA program by making and passing out corsages. Students were sponsored by local businesses to make floral pieces and enter a Student Floral Contest. Students worked with local florists to create floral pieces for the expo business booths. The floral pieces were judged by experts from Nordlie, Inc. a floral wholesale supply company. We learned a lot about working with businesses and we hope to continue this project in the future.”

Region V Saranac FFA - Susann Young, advisor

“The Saranac FFA decided to take a new approach to National FFA week this year. Their main focus was to educate younger students about the FFA, and help keep their interest throughout elementary and middle school. The Saranac FFA decided to hold a movie night at the end of FFA week, inviting grades 1-12 to participate. The response to the activity was overwhelming, having over 150 students attending. They were able to watch the movie *Flicka* and become educated about the FFA and what it has to offer to their future.”



Region VI Alcona FFA - Brian Matchett, advisor

“Alcona FFA has an exciting program. One of the most recent to come together is the ‘Sugar Shack’ -- Making Maple Syrup in the classroom. During the first season of maple syrup production, the chapter collected enough sap to bottle seven gallons of syrup. However, this year, members look forward to a number in the hundreds. A goal is to give tours of the production facility to the public. The Sugar Shack has created a great fundraiser for the chapter. After three years of planning, the members of the Alcona FFA chapter have produced one sweet idea. For further details, contact the Alcona FFA at 1-989-335-0345.”



Advisors and students: do you want to see YOUR chapter highlighted here? It's easy! Email State Reporter Emily Ries at riesemil@carrs.msu.edu for more information.



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inner-city agriculture and the FFA

By: Brooke Rockentine
Region IV State Vice President

Growing up, I never experienced the long-established ideals most others found in rural agricultural settings. I didn't have a large backyard with a barn. Instead, I had a cat with an attitude problem. There were no crops in my backyard – except for that time I tried planting pumpkin seeds from Halloween in December. I am not conventional and have not experienced many traditional encounters in the agricultural field. I appreciate those who do farm, but where I come from is much different. I feel that Michigan FFA members should know about the other part of agriculture in this great state: urban agriculture.

Urban agriculture is an up and coming issue that is making its way to the headlines. Urban agriculture is defined as the acts of producing, supplying and servicing in an urban area, meaning city or metropolis, involving agriculture and natural resources as your source. In the United States of America, there are FFA chapters in 15 out of the 20 largest cities including New York City, Chicago, and your very own Detroit. There are currently about a dozen FFA chapters in the greater metropolitan Detroit area.

Most agriscience students in Michigan who are a part of urban agriculture and FFA attend a technical school, which not only prepares students for college but also the professional world. Unlike most Michigan FFA members, urban agriscience students first learn about the organization when they begin their junior year of high school. Imagine going to an agriscience class and having FFA thrown at you, along with everything that goes with the organization. It is pretty intense, especially if you want to succeed in the FFA.

Urban agriculture gives students different opportunities to learn about a variety of careers by building skills with the newest technology in the industry. Students have

the option to learn skills in many different areas, including landscape, floriculture, and veterinary technology. With these skills, qualified young adults can go out into the professional world and work in their desired industry. They often make more money than those who do not have these previous experiences or skills. Some may even venture out and start their own business. Before students can venture out with their new knowledge, they must learn the basics of agriscience and, most importantly, the self-confidence that every young adult obtains within FFA.

Every year, urban agriscience students bring forth new ideas, technologies and industries to the FFA. This, in turn, makes the FFA more diverse.

When I visited Golightly Career Center in Detroit, students created butterfly gardens and brought them to competition in the demonstration leadership contest. Students from Roosevelt High



Photo Courtesy of the Roosevelt FFA Chapter

School in Wyandotte strongly urge parents, employers and teachers to attend any FFA event just so they can learn about agriculture. Most Michigan FFA members have grown up around agriculture in one form or another. Urban students enroll in agriscience class through their local technical school, where they spend part of the day away from their regular high school to earn credits. These students spend about two and a half hours a day in their agriscience class, five days a week. That is twelve and a half hours of agriscience class! Students earn credits in math, science, and some electives. During class, students learn about botany, biology, zoology and the career area that they personally want to expand upon. Most areas include a certification of some sort, which is proof that the student is trained to the professional level. This certification is accepted by the agricultural industry. There are about ten different certifications a student can choose from, such as becoming a veterinary assistant, pet groomer or landscaper.

As more and more urban agriscience students join the FFA, many unexpected issues arise. As a chapter, you must unify and become a team. Each team member is different. Therefore, accommodations must be made to ensure that each member feels comfortable.

For example, when I served as chapter president my senior year, a member of my chapter did not believe in saying the Pledge of Allegiance because of religious views. I respected how he felt. I did not make him say the pledge of allegiance, but he did choose to stand in respect of the FFA. Urban agriscience students deal with others who are different from themselves everyday, a very important skill to possess.

Chapter recruitment is always a challenge, but with urban agriscience students, it is a much more difficult task. Most FFA chapters have resources like past alumni, parents and supporters. Students who live in an urban area deal with the issues of no one knowing what FFA is, trying to explain the benefits, and, of course, getting kids interested in FFA without making it sound lame. Word of mouth is the most powerful recruitment for urban students, talking about how much fun the organization is and how much they learn. It can be discouraging because FFA is so unknown in the urban areas that many students do not want to join.

Everyone in FFA learns many of the same lessons in agriscience classes—whether it is a lifelong skill, like public speaking, or just a topic area that ones feels passionate about. Another thing all FFA members have in common is having that one agriscience teacher that pushes students to come out of their shell, learn through agriscience, and succeed in something that they care about. Although FFA members live in different areas, we all learn how to write a speech and deliver it in front of a group of people, write a proper resume to get a job, and gain the confidence to walk up to any stranger with the intensions of striking up a conversation. Both urban and rural members share the familiarity



Photo Courtesy of the Roosevelt FFA Chapter

to the Supervised Agriculture Experience (SAE) project. Students from both areas can succeed in many of the same areas including landscaping, small animals care and production, and aquaculture. With all the opportunities within the organization, there are still specific areas that those in urban chapters are unable to study, including crop and soil sciences and large animal production. Most students have an SAE whether they know it or not and it doesn't matter where you live because anyone can involve themselves in an SAE. FFA members may seem different, but they are really quite similar!

The FFA organization teaches us to become leaders in any situation. The organization incorporates everything in agriculture and natural resources and lets people know that FFA is not just about farming anymore. Kids from urban areas are getting involved. They are expanding the organization, not only in membership, but also by diversifying the careers that are considered agricultural. Urban agriculture is now being accepted as a career path and these students are extremely successful! At the next state convention, I challenge you to reach out and learn more about your fellow FFA members in urban areas. Urban agriculture is part of the future and so are the members who are part of it!

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The Rest of the Story...



Alyn Kiel **State President**

From the magnificent chapter of Montague in Region V comes a girl of many achievements, not only within FFA but all other paths of life. Her place is beneath the rising sun. Meet your 2006-2007 Michigan FFA State President, Miss Alyn Kiel.

Currently a sophomore at Michigan State University, majoring in Agricultural and Natural Resources Communications and Interdisciplinary Studies in Social Science, our State President has set goals for her life and no doubt, she will follow through with them. Looking at her personal history with the Michigan FFA – from winning the title of Agriscience Student of the Year to performing a piano duet on stage at National Convention, Kiel is very talented.

Kiel's Supervised Agricultural Experience included training horses at Emerald Acres located in Montague. The name of her own horse, Private Journey, gives hint to how adventurous she is.

"I hope to maintain this sense of adventure and zest for life until the day I die," she said.

Kiel's favorite breakfast includes eggs in a basket, grits, sliced tomatoes and fresh squeezed orange juice. She enjoys studying with her friends at Denny's at 2 am. Her hobbies include drawing, writing and of course, horseback riding.

With the members of the Michigan FFA, Kiel would like to share this thought: "Imagination was given to man to compensate for what he is not; humor to console him for what he is."

Brooke Rockentine **Region IV State Vice President**

Just like her name describes, your Region IV State Vice-President likes to have a rocking good time. With a smile on her face and service in her heart she has enjoyed meeting members from across the state over this past year. From the Oakland Technical Career Center Southeast, meet Miss Brooke Rockentine.

Joining the FFA during her junior year of high school, Rockentine has taken every opportunity possible, including Ag Skills, Extemporaneous Public Speaking, Small Animal Care Production, as well as numerous accounts of community service. She was also awarded the Senior DEKALB award in 2005.

Rockentine describes herself as unique, as she comes from a "City FFA Chapter." "The closest rural area to me is an hour away," she said. Rockentine took this unique aspect of her FFA career and ran with it. She has played a major role in promoting that "City Kids Can Do Ag Too."

Her favorite quote is "Real success is finding your lifework in the work that you love" which David McCullough said.

In her spare time Rockentine enjoys sewing while listening to music, and dancing at none other than the famous FFA Dances.



The MYTH of the Rich Farmer



By: **Kirk Yackle**
Region III State Vice President

There's a steep urban legend, call it a myth, that's been leaving a filthy tarnished residue on the surface of America's first profession. A dangerous myth that ironically is a long running joke among employees of the profession. The myth is that America is being covered and overly populated with rich farmers who make fat profits by forcing its essential product on America. Anyone associated with the industry can attest to the absurdity of such a myth. Yet, as farming becomes a diminishing scene in the portrait of America, a small seamlessly ridiculous myth like this can have devastating effects on America's view of the farming industry.

I recently sat down with my dad to better grasp an understanding of the situation. My family's farm is perhaps one of the smallest still operating in Michigan, as we farm only about 250 acres a year. Once we got talking, my dad pulled out his record books to give me a better perspective. This past year, I was genuinely surprised to find that our little farm made about \$104,000! I thought such a big number was good for such a little farm. Then he showed me the next line on the tax return slip that showed his expenses were around \$112,000. This number blew me away even more. As we went back even further in the years, the difference kept getting wider and wider. According to the records, losing about \$8,000 after all those hours was a record year for my dad! How ridiculous.

One of the ways most farmers stay in business, is finding a job in the winter to help pay for the bills that the farming can't cover. According to the USDA, 42% of all farming incomes come from a source completely outside of the farm. In addition to off-season jobs found by farmers, part of this 42 % are the wives or yes sometimes husbands, who find jobs off the farm to help fund their spouses dream. Another part would be any son or daughter, such as my brother, who works another job to help fund the farm because he too has a little dream like his dad to

carry on the farming legacy. While my farm is small, I know that my family isn't the only one that does this to get by. Even some farmers who seem to be swimming in a money paradise, have the same setup to ensure they can plant crops the next year.

Recently you may have seen an article in your local or state papers dealing another blow to farmers everywhere. An aspect of the new Farm Bill, farmers who make over \$200,000 will be cut off from government support and subsidies. The bill is actually designed against those who tend to own farms as businesses and then contract all of the labor out. Yet, that still doesn't stop the Farm Bill from working against farmer's whose yearly net is over the \$200,000 limit. The limit is only placed on net worth and not the actually gross. If a small farm like mine can net over \$100,000, almost every farm in America is going to be hurt.

If the public wants to think that farmers are rich, well I say let them think it. No matter what the public thought is, or how many times citizens will swear at farming who's plugging up Main Street with his brand new combine, there will always be farming. No matter how many government restriction acts are passed against them or how much foreign food is imported, there will always be farming. Even if some dark day comes when all American food becomes imported, you know there will still be farming. Those that are passionate enough about it, will revert back to the old days and grow just enough food to feed their family.

Sure money pays for bills, but when it comes to farming, the only green that really matters is in the field. Take everything from a farmer; his equipment, his body, his chemicals, his help, or anything a modern farmer uses, and you know he or she would still find a way to farm. You could even take away his money and make him completely broke and there would still be farmers. Wait, that's true already. Well, I guess that proves it.

YOUR JOURNEY STARTS AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY!



Get where you're going with one of the two new majors from the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources CARRS (Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resource Studies) Department!

In the Fall of 2008, two new majors will be revealed within the CARRS Department: Environmental Studies and Agriscience & Park Recreation and Tourism Resources.

In the Environmental Studies and Agriscience major, options will include: Communication, Community Engagement and Education, Science and Policy, as well as Agriscience and Natural Resources Teacher Education.

In the Park Recreation and Tourism Resources major, options will include: Community Engagement and Education, Commercial Recreation and Tourism, Community Recreation and Zoo and Aquarium Sciences.

For more information please contact: Dr. Randy Showerman (showerma@msu.edu), Dr. David Krueger (kruege20@msu.edu) or Dr. Jen0 Rivera (jeno@msu.edu).



Alumni in Action

Annual State Alumni Banquet Held

On February 17, the Michigan FFA Alumni held its annual banquet in Breckenridge. At that time, new officers were elected for the 2007-2008 State Alumni Council. New additions to the team were: Michelle Stealy of Marshall (Region I VP), Royce Humm of Breckenridge (Region III VP), Sherry Kiel of Montague (Region V VP) and Bob Zapolnik of Hopkins (Delegate-At-Large).

Pictured at the right are (L to R) Steve Beattie, Burt Henry and Nikki Dotson, State FFA Alumni Secretary. Beattie and Henry, of the B & S Nut Company presented a check to support the Michigan FFA Alumni Scholarship Fund. This fund provides scholarships to FFA members studying in the MSU College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the College of Veterinary Medicine.



Ag Day at the Capitol!



On March 21, FFA members from across the country joined forces with farmers and other supporters of agriculture to celebrate National Agricultural Day and raise awareness of agricultural issues.

To commemorate this event, Michigan Farm Bureau representatives as well as members of the State FFA officer team visited the State Capitol in Lansing, Michigan. The annual "Ag Day at the Capitol" included booths from over thirty different commodity groups within the state, including the Michigan Milk Producers and the Michigan Pork Producers Association. To grab the attention of everyone, two pieces of shining farm equipment occupied the front lawn of the capitol.

Throughout the day, citizens delivered baskets overflowing with Michigan produced goods to the offices of legislative leaders.

Raising agricultural awareness is important year round. To contact your legislator please visit: <http://capwiz.com/naec/dbq/officials/>

FFA RACE DAY 2007

Michigan International Speedway



FFA has developed a fun-filled hospitality day for everyone during the NASCAR Busch Series race

Saturday August 18

Brooklyn, MI • Event & pit tours begin at 9 a.m.* • Race time 3:30 p.m.*

HOSPITALITY PACKAGE INCLUDES

- Reserved grandstand seating in Turn 4
- FREE pit passes: 18 and older (appropriate attire only)**
- Access to FFA hospitality tent in North Village
- Continental Breakfast and lunch (served before the race in the FFA hospitality tent)
- Meet NASCAR personalities at hospitality tent
- Prizes and give-aways all day long (grand prize: portable welder donated by Lincoln Electric)

All for \$75 per person***

(Estimated value of package \$180)

Tickets available until Aug. 10 • Race fans call

(517) 592-6666

Just say, "I'm with the FFA" to receive this amazing package!

You do not have to be a member to attend.



LINCOLN
WELDERS

NASCAR
PERFORMANCE.



Proceeds support the Michigan and Ohio FFA Foundations.

*Time subject to change. ** No sleeveless shirts/tank tops, shorts or open-toed shoes.
***\$9 shipping & handling added to all orders.

Find your fit in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources!

You're already part of it!

From the food you eat to the home you live in; from the water you drink to the recreational activities you enjoy, professionals educated in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources make your life better every day.

The College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at Michigan State University offers Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, and Bachelor of Landscape Architecture degrees, certificate programs, and graduate programs leading to the master's degree and Ph.D.



We're more than you imagine....