

# The Michigan FFA Creed



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# Aim to be MORE.



We face opportunities and challenges everyday of our lives. Those who are able to seize these opportunities and overcome the challenges are the ones who truly understand the meaning of aiming to be more.

Don't just sit back and watch life fly by, but instead take action. Winning or losing is not what matters. What matters is that we do not give up, and that we continue to always give more. We all give more in different ways, and together that is what makes us great as not only individuals, but also as an organization.

Some of us give more through serving our communities, some of us give more by being a listening ear to everybody around us, some of us give more by being a positive role model to our peers. There is no right or wrong answer. We each can aim to be more in our own individual way.

Michigan FFA, it is always our own decision on what we want to aim to be in life, but together we can all aim to be more.

*-2015-2016 Michigan FFA State Officer Team*

## DID YOU KNOW

The average American farmer feeds 155 people.



In 2014 Michigan Farmers harvested 2.2 million acres of corn.



One acre of soybeans can produce 82,368 crayons.



# Check This Out!

## Saddle Cattle - Man's *Oldest Best Friend*?

By: Paula Blough

Cattle have been working alongside man since 4,000 BC before horses were even domesticated. In fact there are more working cattle in the world today than total horses. It's only natural that humans would take this partnership to more than just pulling things.

In the early 1900s, an ox-back cavalry existed on the island of Madagascar. News articles from that time state that for some unknown reason, horses kept on the island became too weak to use. A 1904 article in the Pittsburgh Press reads, "The oxen are neither slow nor easily frightened and they have proved most intelligent, learning their part of army life with remarkable rapidity and taking to it as naturally as a regular veteran charger. They are powerful beasts and possess great fortitude and endurance." It goes on to say that cavalymen start each morning with drills on their oxen. "[The oxen] soon learn to respond of their own accord to bugle call, and it is not unusual for a well-trained ox to trot off to roll call unmounted if its owner happens to be oversleeping."

the herd on pasture for a year, and training can resume right where you left off.

Around the world, "riding steers" or "saddle cattle" are gaining popularity. Some people just think cows are cute, which they are, but reasons people have given for preferring riding cattle over horses are that cattle are less flighty, more affectionate, less maintenance, hardier, unique, and safer. Safer because cows rarely bite, do not rear, and are less likely to kick. They also prefer to stay in one place when spooked, so there is less likelihood of the rider falling off.

Despite what it would seem, cattle are actually a smooth ride. People that have ridden both cattle and horses have found cattle to feel more like a gaited horse. They describe it as "more comfortable than most of the horses I've ridden."

This intelligence is one thing that draws people to cattle. People with riding cattle do not understand the phrase "as

It is important to keep in mind that cattle are not horses. Horses have long, thin heads; ears that stick up, and lips. Bridles and bits do not fit properly on cattle. Many cow riders just use a halter and attach reins. Some riders use a nose bit, but it is a controversial topic in the small world of cattle riding. Cattle have straighter, shorter backs than horses which makes them more suited structurally for riding than horses, but it is a controversial topic in the small

dumb as an ox." Cattle catch on to things quickly and retain it. A cow can be left with



world of cattle riding. Cattle have straighter, shorter backs than horses which makes them more suited structurally for riding than horses, but it does trying to find a saddle that will fit a cow. Just like horses,



cattle come in all shapes and sizes. There are miniature cattle, and there are Italian-style Chianina oxen that regularly get over 19 hands and 3,000 pounds. There is not one style of saddle that will fit all cows. Treeless and English saddles seem to be the easiest to find to fit a cow, but they are also comfortable to ride bareback. Britchen and cruppers are types of saddles often used because cattle do not have high withers to keep the saddle from sliding forward.

Pretty much any breed of cattle can or has been used as a riding animal, but there are a few breeds that are the most commonly ridden. The Texas Longhorn is a popular choice in the United States. This breed is a rarity in other countries. Their massive horns, array of coat colors and patterns, and temperament have led to their popularity. Holsteins are another common breed. They have high availability, are easily trained, and have a good disposition. Jerseys and other dairy breeds are common too.

As noted in the term “riding steers,” most

cattle kept for riding are steers. Steers are popular because they are less valued in the dairy industry and do not have the issues that

heifers and bulls do. Bulls are too unpredictable for riding. Many deaths by bull attacks are from someone’s pet who just turned on its owner one day without any warning. Cows and heifers can get a little crazy when they are in heat and are often more valuable producing a calf or milk. These cows are ridden too, but will need a maternity leave at some point if bred.

Saddle cattle can already be found doing many traditionally equine tasks. Many people ride in parades or perform at rodeos.



Trail riding is a popular leisure activity for owners of riding cattle. They are involved in ranch work such as checking fences, herding sheep, sorting cattle, and roping. They have competed in jumping contests and cart contests. The potential uses for saddle cattle are almost limitless, but most of all owners of these cattle enjoy their companionship.

Check out Riding Cows on Facebook for more pictures of saddle cattle in action. †

# Say What?

By: Tyra Jonas  
State Reporter



**Loren King**  
Branch Area Career Center

Loren believes that biotechnology is something that benefits today's agriculture. Without biotechnology the world wouldn't be advancing as fast. "I'm really passionate about biotechnology because I saw how much it helped my family improve their business and how it helps feed the world."

Austin believes there are tons of benefits to biotechnology, but the largest benefit is that it allows us to produce food more efficiently. "We are able to produce more food with less land." The farmer is able to produce more, higher quality produce for the consumer."

**Austin Haywood**  
Hastings



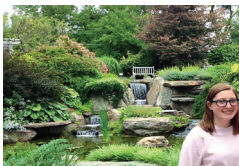
**Seth Randall**  
Laker

Seth says that biotechnology has come a long way because it now includes many different things. "Advancement is happening, and will continue to happen in biotechnology" He thinks it will help improve agricultural products.

## The question: What are your thoughts on biotechnology?

He believes that use of biotechnology is good. "By the year 2044 the world population is estimated to be 9 billion people. In order to feed all those people we need to find innovative ways to feed the population on the land that we have."

**Kyle Markley**  
Byron



**Emma Snook**  
Ravenna

"It's really cool that we can improve plants with biotechnology" She thinks why it is viewed in a bad way is because of the amount of false information we release. As FFA members it is our job to spread positive things about this topic.

Brett thinks that biotechnology will always be improving. Biotechnology is helping the farmer produce more and in an efficient way. It is manipulating products to make them last longer and add nutrients.

**Brett Windemuller**  
Carleerline Tech Center



# 12 years ago, FFA members answered this exact question with these responses:

## **Brent Warner**

Homer

Further studies and tests should occur prior to the wide-spread use of biotechnology. For example, we need to make sure it is not linked to certain health risks. Once tested and proven safe, I think biotechnology should be used.

## **Kristen Dunham**

Chesaning

I think biotechnology is creating extensive problems for producers. We don't know what effect certain chemicals will have or how genetically modified crops will affect consumers. Ideally we would stick to traditional production methods.

## **Landon Church**

Byron

I feel biotechnology is good in many ways, such as helping crops gain resistance against insects. On the flip side, it might also cause harm to people who consume genetically modified crops.

## **Janice Foor**

Alpena

I think it's wrong to use genetically modified plants. We should just produce crops the traditional way. I believe it would be a lot healthier. It's been tested, and it works.

# Our Motto

## Learning to Do

By: Connor Ewald  
State President

Our advisors are individuals that we hold to extremely high standards. They hold special places in our hearts, and we look up to them for support and guidance. It is never easy to say goodbye to an advisor, especially when that advisor taught and lead that chapter for forty-two years. The Laker FFA had to do just that



this past spring. Don Wheeler, a man known throughout the state as a legend in the FFA, stepped down after this past school year, leaving Laker with countless state championships, degree winners, and of course - leaders.

I remember my first time ever giving a speech for Mr. Wheeler. I was a freshman and my topic was wind turbines. After I was finished giving it to the entire class Mr. Wheeler just stared at me for what seemed like forever before bluntly stating, "that was stupid, but in a good way". That was one thing about Mr. Wheeler; he never gave up on a student who truly wanted to succeed. It was also well known that if he picked on you it meant you were doing something right.

Saying goodbye to someone like Mr. Wheeler is never easy.



At the Laker FFA Spring Banquet, Mr. Wheeler and his wife Donna were greeted with two standing ovations by a crowd of nearly six hundred. As a surprise, it

was announced that night that Mr. Wheeler was finally going to have his chance to graduate as a Laker student, since he was not originally from the area. In June, Mr. Wheeler walked across the stage at the Laker High School Commencement Ceremony, receiving a diploma and finally completely the journey of becoming a member of the Laker family.

Mr. Wheeler had the chance to impact the lives



of thousands of individuals over his forty-two year reign as Laker FFA Advisor. While it is very certain that he will always be welcome in the ag room back at Laker he will be missed greatly.

I would like to take the time to say congratulations to Mr. Wheeler from the entire Michigan FFA Association. Something will be missing at future FFA contests, conferences and conventions. He had the unique ability to touch the lives of every single person he came in contact with, and that is the legacy that he now leaves in FFA members across the state. †



# In Motion

## Doing to Learn

By: Dustin Dufort Petty  
Michigan FFA Alumni President

At this year's Fall Leadership Conference, six students had the opportunity to further develop their potential for premier leadership.

On October 15th, the first Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (AFNR) Education Career Development Event (CDE) was held in Lansing.

FFA members from throughout the state created and submitted lesson plans and videos of their classroom execution to a panel of judges in September. The top six were invited to present their lesson plans to judges and a mock set of students at the Fall Professional Development Institute.

The winning member received a trophy to keep, that will travel each year to the winning AFNRE program, and a \$2,500 scholarship provided by the Michigan FFA Foundation to support the winning participant in becoming an AFNRE teacher. Michigan is one of the first states to host an AFNR Education CDE.

This CDE was yet another move by the stakeholders of Michigan AFNR Education to educate and inform students about careers teaching secondary agriculture, food, and natural resources.



“Nationally and within Michigan, the numbers of students taking up the profession of AFNRE teaching continues to decrease,” said Dr. Michael Everett, a member

of the MSU AFNR Education team and the academic adviser for AFNRE students at the University. “All states are facing the same dilemma and we need to find passionate young people to meet the needs for the classroom.”

During the summer, nine Michigan FFA members participated in the Challenge 24 Teacher Academy and Scholarship Program at MSU. For two days in July, the students met with the MSU AFNRE team, toured campus, and learned about developing lesson plans in the context of agriculture, food, and natural resources.

Students who participated in the Challenge 24 event are guaranteed scholarship money when they attend MSU and study AFNRE.

Katie Hill, AFNR educator and FFA advisor at Careerline Tech Center in Holland, said “What we’re seeing is a concerted effort to change the trend of decreasing numbers in AFNR education. Being a teacher is hard work but it’s rewarding, too. I think the more we talk to students about how rewarding this profession is, the more new teachers we’ll see.”

If you’re interested in becoming an AFNR educator, speak to your chapter advisor and reach out to Dr. Michael Everett at [everettm@msu.edu](mailto:everettm@msu.edu). ‡



# Earning to Live

By: Alexandria Schnabelrauch  
Michigan Farm Bureau

When Emily Erffmeyer first called for a clay pigeon while shooting trap at the age of 9, she had no idea the one-time outing with her dad would turn into an FFA Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE), lifelong passion, and potential Olympic bid. In fact, she couldn't even keep her eyes open while pulling the trigger.

"I shut my eyes and prayed I'd hit it," Emily remembered. "Even though I couldn't hit the broad side of a barn at first, I absolutely loved shooting! Every Thursday night, I'd slip on an oversized hot pink shooting vest and head to the local shooting club to try again."

After that first outing, Emily shot diligently every week, hitting only two clay pigeons

her first year. But with a lot of practice and a new gun, by the age of 11 she had drummed up the confidence



to shoot competitively. In the height of her preparations, she spent over 30 hours a week perfecting her craft—eight hours practicing and 25 hours loading shells.

In 2012, Emily competed in the 10-day Grand American, shooting trap with competitors from Brazil to England. After breaking 24 of the 25 clay pigeons in the first round of a nine-person shootout, only two competitors remained. Shot after shot, Emily broke clay after clay, hitting 25 consecutive targets and earning second overall in the all-ages, ladies division. What followed was a seemingly endless stream of radio and TV interviews

accompanying a \$15,000 check. While earning the title took immense shooting prowess, the interviews put another set of skills to the test – skills Emily attests came not from her pink shooting vest, but her blue corduroy jacket.

"Serving as my FFA chapter's secretary and competing in contests helped me transform from a shy girl into a professional young woman, able to articulate my thoughts with poise in front of reporters," she explained. "FFA helped push me outside of my comfort zone. My Outdoor Recreation SAE helped me discover opportunities to turn my passion for shooting into a potential career path."

In 2013, the same year she was named Michigan FFA state winner in the Outdoor Recreation Proficiency, Emily earned the chance to compete for a spot on the U.S. Olympic Team. Unfortunately, she took eighth, two places shy of the Olympics. Far from discouraged, Emily still manages to make time to shoot trap as a sophomore at Grand Valley State University. She plans to utilize her FFA experiences to help coach kids with diabetes as a registered dietician.

Each year, thousands of FFA members, like Emily, earn \$4 billion while discovering their passions through SAEs. Thanks to generous support from individuals, businesses, and stakeholders investing in agriculture's future, the Michigan FFA Foundation is able to bestow proficiency awards to these high achieving students. ‡



# Living to Serve

By: Kyle Forbush  
Region IV State Vice President

Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live, Living to Serve. We live this motto every time we participate in FFA events. But does our time of service end when we hang up our blue jacket?



Hantz Group was started by John Hantz 14 years ago when Detroit was booming economically. Since the auto

industry almost crashed in 2008, Detroit has not been the same. People started leaving, houses were sold to buyers who didn't show up, and houses for sale remained vacant. These vacant houses attract crime, fire, and can be eyesores with weedy front yards. Burnt or old houses sit and age while vines grow all around. Detroit owns about one-third of the city's lots through foreclosure. These lots cost the city of Detroit 9 million dollars per square mile each year due to lost taxes and house maintenance. A sum that Detroit can't afford.

Hantz Farms started when John Hantz joined with Mike Score to carry out Hantz's dream of beautifying the city. Hantz was once quoted saying, "Instead of being part of the problem, I want to be part of the solution. I'm going to try to make a better situation in a little part of the world."

Hantz farms started lobbying for Detroit to sell vacant land to them in 2009 and finally received a yes in February 2014 with the conditions of tearing down 50 homes, regularly mowing, and planting 5000 trees. This was all required to be completed in 2 years starting in February 2014. The 3.5 acres

in a 5 acre block sold to Hantz Farm was cleared in May with over 400 tires and



150 cubic yards of trash cleared out all thanks to the help of volunteers coming from as far as Boston. By November 2014, 15,000 trees were planted and 50 homes were removed. This was one year and three months ahead of schedule. Mike Score is the president of Hantz Farms and when asked about service, he said this:

"I enjoy serving others. In fact, if I cannot clearly see how benefits will flow through me to meet the needs of others I restructure the way I am doing my work or I pass the work on to someone for whom the work will be an act of service. Service is the foundation of human experience."

Just recently, Hantz Farms purchased more vacant land from the city of Detroit. They have also started working with local schools such as Southeastern High School for more ideas on using new land. Land has turned from useless, weedy, run down lots to neatly mowed lines of healthy trees. Hantz Farms also helps neighbors maintain yards to create large healthy areas of Detroit suburbs where crime can't hide and kids can safely walk to school. This past May 2,200 volunteers planted 5,000 trees on more land acquired from the city. Hantz Woodlands recently purchased 150 acres from Detroit.

Our time to serve never truly ends even if our time in the blue and gold does. We have the power to positively impact others no matter where we live. †

impact  
lead  
volunteer  
advocacy  
education  
agriculture  
mentor  
support  
service  
youth  
development  
community  
success



Michigan  
FFA  
Alumni

In communities across the state, FFA alumni members are coaching, mentoring, fundraising and preparing the next generation of leaders and agriculturalists.

Join them. No jacket required.

For more information on creating your own alumni affiliate or to join one already established, contact [alumni@michiganffa.org](mailto:alumni@michiganffa.org).



# WHAT'S ON YOUR PLATE?

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**by buying**  
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# Member Highlights

By: Tyra Jonas  
State Reporter



## Cailyn Hines

Diversified Livestock

Branch Area Career Center FFA Chapter

Cailyn is known for having many different kinds of animals. She owns goats, sheep, ducks, steers, feeder steers, and her all-time favorite - swine. Throughout her town, she is known for competing nationally with her pigs. She began her journey of showing animals when she was four years old. The reason she continues to show pigs and raise other animals is because she enjoys the challenge and the self-discipline that she gains from it. One of Cailyn's biggest challenges is finding more time to work with her pigs during basketball and soccer season.

## Sidney Linck

Landscape Management

Ravenna FFA Chapter

Sidney owns a business called Leaf It to Us. In the business, she manages small home gardens for people who do not have the time, skill, or knowledge to do so. She got involved with this after taking an interest in plants. Linck began to landscape after receiving a \$1000 grant from the FFA. She plants flowers, fruits, and vegetables. Sidney is in charge of weeding, fertilizing, rototilling, and harvesting them. Her biggest challenges are remembering the amount of shade the plants need and measuring distance between plants so they do not overbear each other.



# State Officer Stats



**Connor Ewald**  
State President

## Favorites

Chapter: Laker

Sport: Baseball

College: Central Michigan University

Movie: Anything Disney

SAE: Vegetable Production

T.V. Show: *Castle*

Theme Song: "I Feel Good"

Candy: M&M's



**Tyra Jonas**  
State Reporter

## Favorites

Chapter: Ravenna

Sport: Softball

College: Michigan State University

Movie: *The Maze Runner*

SAE: Vegetable Production

T.V. Show: *Empire*

Theme Song: "I Hold On"

Candy: Sweet Tarts



**Kelly Elsass**

Region II State Vice President

## Favorites

Chapter: Jackson Area Career Center

Sport: Baseball

College: Michigan State University

Movie: *Charlotte's Web*

SAE: Viticulture

Book: *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Theme Song: "The Eye of the Tiger"

Candy: Reese's



# BRILLIANT MAJORS

In the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, students are learning to use principles of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, business and creative design in tackling some of the world's big problems related to food, energy and the environment.

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Connections to campus through activities and clubs ensure that our students have opportunities to grow, excel and have fun too.

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Biosystems Engineering  
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