

The Michigan FFA Creed



Winter 2016



**Meet Haley from the
Harbor Beach FFA Chapter,
our Student Spotlight!**

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Summer EXPECTATIONS



Shatter Expectations BOLDLY

Each and every one of us have certain expectations that surround us in our daily lives. Those that go beyond the expectations set for them are the ones that gain the most out of each opportunity that is presented to them. By going above and beyond we are not only able to find success for ourselves, we are able to influence others and help them grow their own hearts of service. We become influential and memorable, and we can be depended upon to get every job done that is added to our plate, no matter how full it already is.

It's often easy to achieve the expectations set for you, however, those who have made a difference in

the world never stopped there. They went far beyond what was expected of them. We all have the opportunity to do the same, to exceed expectations, whether it's by being a positive mentor to a younger student, giving back to our communities in our free time, or placing in the top ten in the state livestock judging contest.

Michigan FFA, as a part of the greatest youth organization in the nation, we can all go above and beyond, and it is up to each of us to shatter expectations and make a bold difference.

*-Maddy Meyer
Region V State Vice President*

CAREERS IN AGRICULTURE

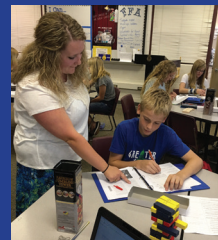
Plant Geneticist - improving plants through their genetic code.



Food Product Development - creating new, innovative food products.



Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources Educator - educating the next generation of ag students.



Check This Out!

FFA Member Doesn't Let Disability Define Her

By: Bev Berens

Fifteen year-old Samantha Modreske of Wayland likes to hang out with her FFA friends. She enjoys helping others and one of her favorite FFA activities is working with the many service projects the Hopkins FFA chapter completes each year. She is working towards the same things most



teenagers are - a driver's license, a satisfying career, a happily ever-after. However, Sam's pathway to reaching her goals may look a little different, might be a little slower, than some fifteen year-old freshman.

Sam was born with spina bifida. She walks with the help of braces on both legs and one crutch. She has little feeling from the waist down. Her range of motion is limited; stepping sideways requires whole body movement, balance is tricky, and she walks slower than her classmates. "It's like you or I walking around on stilts all the time," said her step-mom, Laura.

She has the Myelomeningocele (my-low-ma-nin-jo-seal) variety of the birth defect, the most severe form. This type of spina bifida causes moderate to severe disabilities such as kidney and colon issues, loss of feeling in the person's legs and feet, and not being able to move the legs. She had surgery shortly after she was born and

another surgery a few years ago to improve other issues brought on by spina bifida

She does not let her disability define her.

She has also broken all the rules of a person born with this birth defect. Many spina bifida peers are wheel chair bound, Sam shows pigs. While she has to be cautious around the hogs, learning to anticipate the hogs' movements has taught her a lot about handling livestock and animal husbandry. Achieving the slow paced walk required in the swine show ring takes months of practice and is done in stages. Laura and her sister McKenna work with Sam's show pigs until they have mastered the gait. Next, Sam



works the hogs into adjusting to her pace and acclimates them to the noise her braces make. "Some hogs are afraid of the noise so it takes longer to train them," she added.

Show pigs are chosen from litters born to the five registered sows she owns with McKenna as part of her SAE. She shows at the Allegan County Fair, the Michigan Livestock Expo, Van Buren Fair, the Green and White Show, Spartan Classic, and several jackpot shows.

One of her most satisfying accomplishments

was winning the Reserve Champion Spot at the 2012 Michigan Livestock Expo with their home-bred animal. “It was great to have a home bred and owned pig win that honor. I am really proud of raising a great pig even if it didn’t make the sale,” Sam said.

When packing the trailer for a show, there are the usual items to take along - bedding, grooming supplies, feed. There is one item the family won’t leave at home; an extra set of leg braces. “It seems like every time we go to a show they would break,” Laura laughs. “One time we literally duct-taped them to her pants to make them work.” Sam has a set for the barn and another set for school. “So I don’t have to wear the ones that smell like the barn when I go to school,” Sam adds.

Sam’s parents have bought and paid for five brace designs to find the right combination that will keep her knees from rotating too far in as she walks. Reducing the torsion on her knees keeps the possibility of knee surgery at bay.



Daily pen cleaning requires Sam and McKenna to haul manure to the main farm around the corner. Sam had been using a quad to haul away manure, a dangerous option for someone with balance issues. Michigan AgrAbility stepped in and provided some financial assistance for the Modreske family to outfit a Ranger with hand controls. Now Sam can safely transport waste away once she has cleaned all her pens.

Michigan AgrAbility is a partnership between Michigan State University, USDA, and the Easter Seals organization. AgrAbility’s

purpose is to help farmers with disabilities keep doing the work they love. AgrAbility can help any member of a farming family perform normal farm work more easily.

State FFA Convention has been one of Sam’s favorite FFA opportunities thus far. She has competed at state in junior high and greenhand public speaking contests. She also had the opportunity to represent Easter Seals of Michigan as the 2016



ambassador at their annual Walk With Me fundraising events, and her photo and story will be displayed at other Easter Seals events throughout the state this year.

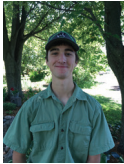
“Sam is hardworking and dedicated. She has a true passion for agriculture and is always excited to be at FFA events, showing up with a smile on her face and a willingness to help others,” said Hopkins FFA Advisor Jessica Couch/

Sam’s advice to others with a disability? “You need to work hard, set goals and not be afraid to sacrifice to achieve them. Don’t let others decide what you can and can’t do. Without the support of my dad, sister, and Laura, I wouldn’t be where I am today. I wouldn’t be confident in public speaking and I wouldn’t believe in myself. Agriculture has just been the playing field where I learned to live life just like the football field is to a football player. But I get to play in the world’s biggest sandbox and my family is bigger than my dad, step mom, and sister. My family is agriculture.” ‡

Say What?

By:
Lauren Heberling
State Reporter

How are producers taking steps towards sustainable agriculture?



Dillon Terpening
Maple Valley

“Producers are taking steps towards sustainable agriculture through improved genetics and management practices. In terms of genetics I am seeing an increase in high producing cattle that perform better on less feed. As far as management, I see many producers turning to low impact practices like no-till planting and using more efficient technology.”



Colten Aikens
Dundee

“Sustainable agriculture has been on the rise for a while and there are a handful of reasons why. I’d have to say the most important being genetically modified crops and irrigation systems. These can both help the industry when a species of weed is flourishing in an area or when there is a lack of rainfall.”



Allison Romzek
Ubley

“Producers are taking steps toward sustainable agriculture by using more environmentally friendly practices. They are incorporating safer practices for the producer and the consumer. Newer technologies are also allowing producers copious amounts of goods from less land.”

“Producers are taking steps to create more wholesome products while using less resources. Our population is growing, and we have to keep the earth healthy, while still getting the resources we need to sustain life. We came up with more and more technology, to get more products, with less toll or demand from the area the farming is being done on.”

Jessie Nash
Ovid-Elsie



“Some producers are taking steps towards sustainability by getting more yield out of each animal or harvest. Whether it is through breeding or technology, producers are trying to make sure that a virus isn’t going to wipe out their work.”

Joseph Sieradzki
Cass City



It is important to be aware of sustainable ag in the dairy industry. I get to be a part of herd health checks. Every 2 weeks, a vet comes and determines if a cow is pregnant, can be bred, or is able to be bred. Open cows may be a waste of money and resources. Finding a way to have less open cows means more cows calving and increasing the potential to produce milk.”

Kylie Sperow
Ogemaw Heights



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

Adam Gaulke

Allegan Area Tech Center FFA

“Producers can continue to plant more crops to improve the habitat and provide cover for wildlife. Conservation can be simple if everyone helps and pitches in some way.”

Jacob Goetz

Blissfield FFA

“The first critical step is education. It is essential for producers to be aware of conservation methods. The final step is action, which involves cooperation between state officials, producers, communities, and the agricultural industry.”

Baylee Drown

Cedar Springs FFA

“I think there are two parts of conservation, prevention and treatment. Prevention encourages practices like using non-hazardous pesticides. Treatment can be as simple as rotating crops. Everyone can be a part of conservation.”

Hannah Chisholm

Standish Sterling FFA

“Producers can use technology to control erosion. They can also try to not use products that can potentially poison the soil, water, and other resources.”

#Teacher Tuesday - Miss Casie Forbush

By: Lauren Heberling
State Reporter

Quick Facts

FFA Chapter:

Corunna

Years Teaching:

1

College Attended:

Michigan State
University

Most Memorable FFA Experience:

Washington Leadership
Conference (WLC)

Favorite part of being an Ag Teacher:

“Watching kids grow and accomplish things they never thought were possible. Being able to start with 8th grade students and see them transform and succeed throughout their high school years is amazing. That’s a cool and unique aspect about being an ag teacher.”



Even though this is her first official year as an agricultural education teacher, for Corunna advisor Casie Forbush, teaching ag is nothing new. Casie grew

up involved in FFA as a member in Corunna, where her father was the advisor. She had always known she wanted to become a teacher because of her passion for working with kids, but it was confirmed her sophomore year at Michigan State University that agricultural education was absolutely the right path for her. Being a first year teacher can be summed up in one word for Casie: “Busy. I’ve always watched how busy my dad was for FFA events, but you never truly realize how much time is spent planning, preparing and grading until you do it.” However for Casie, all the hard works pays off: “I am a ‘Lifelong

Learner’, constantly learning and improving. This year, it has been so cool to go from Casie Forbush to Miss Forbush, establishing myself as an ag advisor; making my own mark.” The transition period from member to advisor has been challenging, but it has been made easier from both the overwhelming support of the school and the community for the Corunna FFA chapter, and also the support and guidance of other ag teachers, including Corunna’s other advisor, Brian Kiesling. With all this support and encouragement standing behind them, Casie is excited to see “what the chapter can accomplish next.” †

Q: Why would you recommend students consider agriculture as a career path?

A: “I always go back to the basic, ‘I farm-you eat’ concept. People will always need food so there will always be a demand for people in the agricultural industry. And there are so many more careers than just farming: there’s everything from research to packaging, and it’s my job to show students that.”

Q: What are the biggest things students can gain out of being an FFA member?

A: “There are three big things students can gain out of the FFA. One of the biggest is self-confidence. Also learning how to work with others. Lastly, they acquire real life skills: instead of just reading about something in a book, students get to go out and learn things in a more hands-on way.”

Q: What is one of the most rewarding parts of being an ag teacher?

A: “It’s fun to work with students who know what the FFA is, but I absolutely love seeing students come in not exactly knowing what FFA is and then see that light in their eyes when it clicks; when they realize all that they can gain from FFA. My advice for all ag students is to meet new people and push yourself to grow; that is where the most learning happens.”

Living to Serve

By:
Aimee Crist
Region II State Vice President

The FFA Mission Statement asserts that “FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.” There are many ways to embrace our mission statement and take advantage of our short time to live to serve. As state officers, we hope to help you shatter your expectations and get the most out of your FFA experience.



To help us as members live out this statement, FFA promotes cooperation among all people, builds character and promotes citizenship, volunteerism, and patriotism, and finally develops interpersonal skills in teamwork, communication, human relations, and social interaction. This year, we have been instilling these concepts to members across the state, through our chapter visits, fall leadership conference, and travels to National Convention!

September marks the beginning of Chapter Breakouts, and they last until the beginning of December. Traveling pairs embarked on their way to visit chapters from around the state and present workshops. The sole purpose of these workshops was to help the members of our association grow themselves individually while coming together as a chapter. Through these workshops, we hoped to allow each member to develop interpersonal skills in teamwork, communication, human relations, and social interaction. It was incredible visiting chapters, seeing outstanding programs, and meeting diverse members!

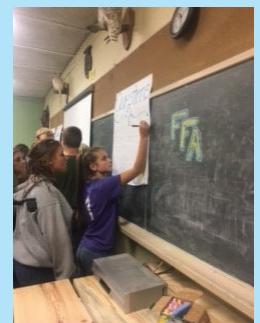
Another opportunity for growth was the Fall Leadership Conference. This conference may only be two days long, but is packed with information and lessons that will last a lifetime.

Through the 212 and 360 workshops, members had the opportunity to learn many valuable lessons that not only helped achieve personal growth, but also helped us learn to cooperate and develop others in the process. Conferences like this allowed us to meet members that have similar backgrounds or interests, but also encouraged us to mingle with other members from across our great state.



Finally, the one event that members look forward to from their greenhand year - National Convention & Expo! In late October, the streets of Indianapolis were filled with our blue jackets as we came together as a nationwide organization to celebrate, compete, volunteer, and embrace the impact of the FFA. Walking around the streets of Indy, we experienced a new found pride in our blue jackets and met other members from across the nation. The events and opportunities at national convention were endless, from building character to promoting citizenship, volunteerism, and patriotism. One opportunity we were able to experience at convention was the National Day of Service. Members came together to work as one and improve a local area. Being surrounded by other members who share our passions was truly a life changing experience.

I hope that you take every chance available to you through our amazing organization and live to serve other members, your chapter, and community. These are only a few of the events that give us all the tools needed to become a servant leader. ‡



AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCE TRACKER: WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

The screenshot shows the web application interface for 'The Agricultural Experience Tracker'. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the title 'The Agricultural Experience Tracker' and four menu items: 'Accounts', 'Reports', 'Calendar', and 'Learn'. Below the navigation bar, the Michigan Farm Bureau logo is prominently displayed. To the left of the main content area, there is a sidebar with the text 'Michigan FFA Learning Resources', 'Ask AET a Question', and 'Sign Off'. The main content area contains several sections: a Q&A section with a question about ag careers and a link to the 'Agricultural Education and Leadership' tab; a list of features including 'Accounts', 'Reports', 'Calendar', and 'Degree/Application Manager', each with a brief description; three search fields for 'Chapters', 'Teachers', and 'Students'; and a 'Settings' link. The date 'Friday, September 16, 2016' is visible in the bottom right corner of the interface.

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TESTIMONIALS

HEAR WHAT YOUR PEERS HAVE TO SAY

Visiting with any successful farmer, one would learn that the most critical component is their records. Knowing what has been ordered, what is being grown or raised, what has been harvested, and obviously, the bottom line. Michigan Farm Bureau and the Foundation for Agriculture see the value in quality record keeping and believes this skill should be taught at a young age. For this reason, MFB and the Foundation for Agriculture have chosen to sponsor the Agricultural Experience Tracker (AET) for the past four years, providing a function for FFA members to record, maintain, and strengthen their record keeping skills and Supervised Agricultural Experiences.

Other benefits of AET include populating numerous applications, including scholarships, proficiency awards, and the Michigan and American FFA Degrees. Michigan Farm Bureau urges FFA members to take full advantage of this opportunity and use the values and skills taught through the Agricultural Experience Tracker in their future careers.



TY FINEGAN

Jackson Area Career Center FFA | SAE: Diversified Livestock Production

“The AET program is very important to students who need to keep track of their Supervised Agricultural Experience. Students can fill out proficiency awards based on their SAE and win awards at State Convention. It has been very helpful to me because it helps me keep good records of what I have done, and it gives me the chance to win awards for doing something that I enjoy doing.”



ACHSAH BUTCHART

Newago County Career-Tech Center FFA | SAE: Beef Production

“The AET website has helped me with my SAE because it has made it a simpler process to track my SAE in beef production. Because I own a herd of purebred polled Herefords, the AET website has made it easier for me to track the money and time investment in my project.”



TAMMY KESSEL

North Huron FFA | SAE: Diversified Livestock Production

“The Agricultural Experience Tracker has helped me keep accurate records of the many different animal species that I raise. I began using AET during my freshman year by simply recording my five cows. I then started using it to also record information for my sow, laying hens, rabbits, market hogs, steers and broiler chickens. It has helped keep my records straight, and I can also record FFA stuff such as officer positions held. Using the AET has made filling out applications much easier.”



CAITLIN LUCK

Sand Creek FFA | SAE: Diversified Livestock Production Entrepreneurship and Forest Management Entrepreneurship

“The AET has greatly improved my organizational skills when it comes to entering information for various tasks. It has made the entire SAE and application process a lot easier and more efficient.”

JOIN MICHIGAN FFA ALUMNI

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STATE, FFA ALUMNI MEMBERS
ARE COACHING, MENTORING,
FUNDRAISING & PREPARING THE
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FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT MICHIGANFFA.COM/ALUMNI



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Quick Facts

Grade:
12th

FFA Chapter:
Harbor Beach

SAE's:
-Floriculture
-Beef Production

Current Office:
Harbor Beach
President

Favorite Quote:
"The future belongs
to those who believe
in the beauty of their
dreams."
~Eleanor Roosevelt

Workplace:
Flower Boutique by
Joann

Best FFA Memory:
-First National
Convention

"It's overwhelming,
but amazing, seeing
all of these members.
There's no other way
to describe it."



Student Spotlight

Haley Talaski Harbor Beach FFA

By:
Lauren Heberling
State Reporter

Haley Talaski is currently a senior at Harbor Beach High School, serving as the Harbor Beach FFA President this year. Since the beginning of her freshman year, Haley's older sister, who is the advisor for the Bad Axe FFA Chapter, has been pushing her to join. "I wasn't sure I wanted to, but I decided to join at second semester and I fell in love with FFA."



Haley has continued to excel within her chapter and this year being her fourth year in FFA, she has high goals set for both herself and her chapter. Currently, she is employed at her mother's flower shop in Harbor Beach. This, along with her continued learning and passion, has developed into her S.A.E. of floriculture. Additionally, Haley shows goats and steers at the local 4-H fair, leading into her other S.A.E., beef production.

In the past, Haley has competed in Job Interview, Creed Speaking, Agricultural Communications, and the Floriculture contest. This year, however, being her last year, she wants to compete in Job Interview at the state level. At State Convention next

year, Haley also hopes to be running for State Office. After high school, she wants to further her passion for agriculture by attending Michigan State University. "Agricultural



Education or Agribusiness is what I have it narrowed down to. I just know for certain whatever I decide, I want it to be in the ag field." Haley's ultimate career goal is to own her own horse ranch.

Ask Haley what her biggest accomplishment is and she'll be sure to respond, "being able to serve my chapter as President not only this year, but last year as well." In addition to her involvement in FFA, she also serves as the reporter for her D.E.C.A. chapter and is in NHS and 4-H. Being where she is today would not have

been possible without her biggest role model, Victoria Yackle, "She's my big sister," Haley said, "she has always, always been there for me." †



Q: From FFA member to FFA member, why would you suggest going into an agricultural career?

A: "Agriculture is a huge industry to go into. But the outcome is even bigger. I would say agriculture opens doors for everyone. You don't have to be a farmer necessarily to be part of agriculture. There is also business, communication, and much more. Being in agriculture is something you have to be very dedicated to and have a passion for. Most agriculturalists have this and that is the reason agriculture continues to grow."

Q: What is your advice to any incoming FFA/agricultural education students?

A: "Step out of your comfort zone and don't be afraid to try new things. High school flies by, so enjoy every minute you have!"

State Officer Stats



Loren King
State President

Favorites

Chapter: Branch Area Career Center Sport: Running
College: Michigan State University Movie: *The Lego Movie*
SAE: Emerging Agricultural Technology Hobby: Reading & Cooking
Theme Song: "Good to be Alive" Candy: Reese's Pieces



Josephine Forbush
Region I State Vice President

Favorites

Chapter: Byron Sport: Cross Country
College: Michigan State University T.V. Show: *Scorpion*
SAE: Swine & Sheep Production Musician: Garth Brooks
Theme Song: "The River" Book: *A Walk to Remember*



Courtney Wangler
Region VI State Vice President

Favorites

Chapter: Ogemaw Heights Sport: Equestrian
College: Saginaw Valley State University Candy: Airheads
SAE: Dairy Management T.V. Show: *Big Bang Theory*
Hobby: Horseback Riding Musician: Evanescence



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