



# THE MICHIGAN FFA

# Creed

## Winter 2018

## FEATURED

### *inside*

DISCOVER AND LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR #STUDENTSATURDAY AND #TEACHERTUESDAY!

MEMBERS GIVE INSIGHT ON HOW FARMING HAS CHANGED IN THE PAST 20 YEARS.

MEET MICHIGAN FFA'S SIX REGIONAL OFFICER TEAMS.

### MICHIGAN FFA ASSOCIATION

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**FIND OUT HOW THE NORTH HURON FFA CHAPTER IS WORKING TO COMBAT HUNGER IN THEIR COMMUNITY.**



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# UPCOMING *events*

**JANUARY 9-12.** Regional Update Meetings

**JANUARY 10.** Star Candidate Interviews

**JANUARY 30-31.** District Leadership Contests

**FEBRUARY 13-14.** Regional Leadership Contests

**MARCH 6-8.** Michigan FFA State Convention

**MARCH 24.** State FFA/4-H Horse Judging Contest at the MSU Livestock Pavilion.

## UPCOMING *deadlines*

### December 3rd

The following are due to the State FFA Office:

- #SpeakAgMichigan Applications
- Regional Grant Applications
- Star Candidate Applications (Star Battery & State Degree Application)
- Academic Excellence Applications

NOTE: Star Candidate Applications and #SpeakAgMichigan Applications must be in the state office by Dec. 3 at 5:00 p.m. Those received after this date will not be considered.

### JANUARY 9TH- 12TH

The following are due at the regional update:

- State FFA Degree Applications
- Outstanding Junior Applications
- Agriculture Proficiency Award Applications
- State Officer Applications
- Courtesy Corps Certification Form
- State FFA Band, Choir & Talent Applications

NOTE: Proficiency Award Applications received after January 14 will not be considered.

### January 18th

The following items are due to the State FFA Office:

- National Chapter Award Applications Form I and II
- Chapter Program of Activities

The following is due online via the CANR online submission process:

- Arthur Berkey Agriscience Fair Applications

NOTE: National Chapter Award Applications must be in the state office by January 18th at 5:00 p.m. as late applications will not be accepted.

### FEBRUARY 1ST

The following items are due to the State FFA Office:

- BOMC Applications

### February 15th

- State Convention Registrations Due

# MEET THE 2018-19 Regional Officer Teams

I

**CAMP DATE:**

April 25–26, 2019

**ADVISOR:**

Abby Asmus, Cassopolis

**PRESIDENT:**

Hannah Harris, Cassopolis

**VICE PRESIDENT:**

Shelby Souva, BACC

**SECRETARY:**

Nick Prestly, Cassopolis

**TREASURER:**

Marcus Pennington, Olivet

**REPORTER:**

Ben Brown, Olivet

**SENTINEL:**

Devin Haywood, Hastings

II

**CAMP DATE:**

April 28–29, 2019

**ADVISOR:**

Jennifer Wheeler, Sand Creek

**PRESIDENT:**

Luke Wheeler, Sand Creek

**VICE PRESIDENT:**

Anna Baker, Waldron

**SECRETARY:**

Cassidy Bowerman, Milan

**TREASURER:**

Jon Kantz, Dundee

**REPORTER:**

Matisyn Howell, Jonesville

**SENTINEL:**

Harlie Logan, Lenawee

III

**CAMP DATE:**

June 13–14, 2019

**ADVISOR:**

Haley Schulz, Laker

**PRESIDENT:**

Andrew Davis, Laker

**VICE PRESIDENT:**

Haili Gusa, Ubly

**SECRETARY:**

Andrew Smith, Laker

**TREASURER:**

Bethany Gornowicz, Ubly

**REPORTER:**Madisen Sigafoose,  
Breckenridge**SENTINEL:**

Hayley Williams, Ithaca

**REGIONAL REP:**

Clara Tait, Laker

**REGIONAL REP:**

Addy Battel, Cass City

**REGIONAL REP:**

Sarah Laurenz, Breckenridge

V

**CAMP DATE:**

April 24, 2019

**ADVISOR:**

Melanie Block, Ravenna

**PRESIDENT:**

Bethany McCullough, Ravenna

**VICE PRESIDENT:**

Tyler Rozema, Coopersville

**SECRETARY:**

Bailey Walker, Ravenna

**TREASURER:**

Miriam Cook, Ionia

**REPORTER:**

Amiya Twork, Coopersville

**SENTINEL:**

Kyle Stack, Fremont

**DISTRICT I VICE PRESIDENT:**

Bailey Hoppa, Fremont

**DISTRICT II VICE PRESIDENT:**

Emily Unger, Montague

**DISTRICT III VICE PRESIDENT:**

Abigail Webster, Lowell

IV

**CAMP DATE:**

April 15–16, 2019

**ADVISOR:**Colleen Scott-Keiser,  
Webberville**PRESIDENT:**

Skylar Byrne, Webberville

**VICE PRESIDENT:**

Alex Scovill, Perry

**SECRETARY:**

Dylan Baker, Byron

**TREASURER:**

Sarah Albrecht, Mason

**REPORTER:**

Reanna Byrnes, Laingsburg

**SENTINEL:**

Lexi Bukovick, Corunna

VI

**CAMP DATE:**

May 16–17, 2019

**ADVISOR:**

Ron Worth, Alpena

**PRESIDENT:**

Lindsey Hoppe, Alpena

**VICE PRESIDENT:**

Connor Morgan, Alcona

**SECRETARY:**Maggie Staub, Wexford-  
Missaukee**TREASURER:**

Nelson French, Alcona

**REPORTER:**

Sarah Sitzema, Ellsworth

**SENTINEL:**Stuart Limbaugh,  
Whittemore-Prescott

# FFA NEEDS YOU!

Did you know that your everyday job involves skills that could benefit an unlimited number of youth today? Adult volunteers are an asset to local youth as supporters and mentors. Invest in the future of agriculture – join the Michigan FFA Alumni & Friends today!



To learn more about the Michigan FFA Alumni & Friends, visit [MichiganFFA.com/Alumni](https://MichiganFFA.com/Alumni)

# Who came to your chapter?

FIND THE 2018-2019 STATE OFFICER TRAVELING PAIRS THAT VISITED YOUR CHAPTER!



**CARSON EVANS & JESSIE NASH**

Alpena  
 Benzie Central  
 Bloomfield Hills  
 Caledonia  
 Capac  
 Chesaning  
 Coleman  
 Durand  
 Eaton ISD Potter Park Zoo  
 Fowlerville  
 Ithaca  
 Kent Career Tech Center  
 Maple Valley  
 Ogemaw Heights  
 Saline  
 West Shore  
 Vicksburg/Kalamazoo RESA



**RAEGAN GEMBARSKI & ABBY PUSKALA**

Airport  
 Alcona  
 Allegan Area Tech Center  
 Anchor Bay  
 Branch Area Career Center  
 Byron  
 Cass City  
 Cedar Springs  
 Eau Claire  
 Ionia  
 Jackson Area Career Center  
 Marshall  
 Oakland Tech Center NW  
 Perry  
 St. Louis  
 USA  
 Wexford-Missaukee



**BEN BUTCHER & AUTUMN LOSS**

Beal City  
 Calhoun Area Tech Center  
 Camden-Frontier  
 Eaton Rapids  
 Laker  
 Lapeer County Tech Center  
 Lincoln Park  
 Newyago Tech Center  
 Olivet  
 Petoskey  
 Saranac  
 Tuscola Tech Center  
 Ubly  
 Webberville  
 Whiteford  
 Whittemore-Prescott  
 Wilson Talent Center



**GRACE PLATTE & NATE SCOVILL**

Bad Axe  
 Breckenridge  
 Cassopolis  
 Charlotte  
 Coopersville  
 Ellsworth  
 Hopkins  
 Jonesville  
 Laingsburg  
 Lenawee Vo-Tech Center  
 Montcalm Area Career Center  
 Muskegon Tech Center  
 Ovid-Elsie  
 Owosso  
 Roosevelt  
 Sanilac Career Center  
 Standish-Sterling



**SAM WORTZ & KYLIE SPEROW**

Alanson  
 Alma  
 Centreville  
 Chippewa Hills  
 Dansville  
 Dundee/Milan  
 Gaylord  
 Homer  
 Lowell  
 New Lothrop  
 North Huron  
 Pankow Vo-Tech Center  
 Ravenna  
 Springport  
 Van Buren Tech Center  
 Waldron



**CAITLIN HENNE & KYLE MCFARREN**

Bay Arenac Career Center  
 Careerline Tech Center  
 Corunna  
 Countryside  
 Fremont  
 Genesee Career Institute  
 Harbor Beach  
 Hastings  
 Kalamazoo Nature Center  
 Manchester  
 Mason  
 Niles  
 Oakland Tech Center SW  
 Saginaw Career Center  
 Sand Creek  
 Traverse Bay Area Career Center

## #TEACHERTUESDAY

*Mrs. Katie Wagar*

Coming to us from the city of Lawrence, this edition's #TeacherTuesday is an amazing, well-deserving agriscience educator. Mrs. Wagar is the current agriscience instructor and FFA advisor for the Van Buren Technology Center, a chapter of approximately 50 members, where she has been teaching for 17 years.

Mrs. Wagar's involvement in FFA began while she was a member of the Ithaca FFA Chapter. During her FFA career, Mrs. Wagar served as a chapter officer for two years and also as the Michigan FFA Region III State Vice President. Outside of her leadership positions, Mrs. Wagar was involved with multiple contests such as Greenhand Conduct of Meetings, Job Interview, Extemporaneous Public Speaking, Livestock Judging, and Horse Judging. Additionally, Mrs. Wagar attended the Washington Leadership Conference, received her Outstanding Junior Award,

State Degree, American Degree, and a Proficiency Award in Equine Science.

"I loved FFA and the educational journey," states Mrs. Wagar. This love is what inspired her to become an FFA advisor and attend Michigan State University (MSU) to pursue her Bachelor's Degree in Agriscience and Extension Education. In addition to her education at MSU, she also attended Western Michigan University, receiving her Master's Degree in Career and Technical Education. Today, all of her hard work has paid off and she is an agriscience educator students describe as "enthusiastic, caring, supportive, inspiring, and helpful."

When asked what her favorite memory as an advisor has been, Mrs. Wagar replied excitedly, "I have a LOT. One that's a bit comical includes a couple of my young men who "escorted" me during State Convention, including carrying my very purple purse, as a result of them finding out that ordering pizza at 2 a.m. was a no-no". All jokes aside, Mrs.

**"LOVE YOUR KIDS.  
REMEMBER THAT YOU  
MAY BE THE ONLY ONE  
THAT TOLD THEM GOOD  
MORNING AND ASKED  
HOW THEIR DAY WENT.  
WHEN STUDENTS  
KNOW YOU CARE, THEY  
CARE BACK."**

**-MRS. KATIE WAGAR**

Wagar follows up, "Love your kids. Remember that you may be the only one that told them good morning and asked how their day went. When students know you care, they care back." To capture students' attention and set them on a path of sincere involvement in the FFA Organization, Mrs. Wagar always shares her experience at the Washington Leadership Conference from over twenty years



ago. Explaining just how impactful this story is, she recaps, "After sharing my WLC experience with my students, a young lady shared that I gave her goosebumps. Keep in mind, my WLC experience was over 20 years before that day."

Outside of FFA, Mrs. Wagar enjoys reading, doing a little camping, and showing horses with her daughters. Thank you, Mrs. Wagar, for your amazing contributions to agricultural education, the Van Buren Technology Center and the Michigan FFA Association!

By: Sam Wortz  
State Reporter

# Bailey Schierbeek



Bailey Schierbeek, our winning #StudentSaturday, is from the Wexford-Missaukee FFA Chapter, where she graduated last spring. “My FFA journey began when I enrolled into an Agriculture and Natural Resource Program at the Wexford-Missaukee Career Technical Center. I took the class because I had a huge interest in natural resources. I didn’t know much about FFA or even that there was a chapter near where I lived. After the first day of class and learning about FFA and what it was, I was instantly hooked.” Since that day, Bailey has been actively involved in FFA for the past two years.

Bailey has competed in many FFA contests such as the Broiler Contest, Region VI’s Decathlon, and the Job Interview Contest. Of all of these contests, Bailey says, “Job Interview would have to be my favorite because there were so many different aspects to it. I learned how to write a really detailed resume and a strong cover letter, how to better my communication skills, and how to dress professionally when meeting with possible employers. I also liked participating in Job Interview because it pushed me out of my comfort zone,

which in turn helped me become even more independent and confident in myself.” In addition to contests, Bailey has earned her Greenhand, Chapter, and State Degrees and has served as Wexford-Missaukee’s Chapter Vice President and President.

Bailey’s SAEs included both dairy placement and specialty crop production, as she worked on a dairy farm and her family’s strawberry farm. With both SAEs being small, family-owned operations, Bailey learned that hard work and the dedication of employees are what make a company run smoothly. While her passion for her SAEs was incredibly apparent, Bailey’s work ethic reached much further than just her SAE.

When asked to describe Bailey, her advisor Mr. Mark Johnson said, “Bailey was an outstanding student leader and chapter president. She was always willing to do the extra things that make a meeting, banquet, or event come together. As her advisor, I always felt like she was trying to make the chapter better, even after she was graduated. We miss her leadership and positive attitude, and we will call upon her in the future to help mentor new students in the program!”



Outside of FFA, Bailey was very active in her high school and continues to live a busy lifestyle. When Bailey was asked what she enjoys outside of FFA, she stated, “I enjoy anything and everything that involves nature! I am very involved with my family’s strawberry farm. I enjoy getting to know more members of the community and seeing young kids learn about agriculture and where their food comes from.



“I spend a great amount of time with my pets at home. I work at our local Family Farm and Home where I stock shelves, interact with customers, and take full responsibility of taking care of our baby chicks. I love spending time with my best friend, Taylor, who is one of the many friends I’ve met through my FFA journey. I also really enjoy taking trips to Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, where I can hike the trails in Munising and find breathtaking views!”

Congratulations, Bailey, on all of your hard work and dedication!

By: Sam Wortz  
State Reporter



IT TAKES A SPECIAL PERSON TO TAKE ON THE CHALLENGES  
IN **FOOD, HEALTH** AND THE **ENVIRONMENT**.

## IT TAKES A SPARTAN.

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Biosystems Engineering  
Construction Management  
Crop and Soil Sciences  
Dietetics  
Entomology  
Environmental Economics and Management  
Environmental Studies and Sustainability

Fisheries and Wildlife  
Food Industry Management  
Food Science  
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Packaging  
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**MICHIGAN STATE**  
**UNIVERSITY**

College of Agriculture  
and Natural Resources



# Living to Serve: THE LIFE OF A STATE OFFICER

It is crazy for me to think that our year of service is approaching its halfway point. I am also very grateful for all of the amazing experiences our team has been able to be a part of thus far. Our year of service began with training in April as our team participated in "Base Camp." During Base Camp, our facilitator, Jason, lead us through a series of team-building exercises to help us get to know one another but also to begin learning how to make an impact on the members that we serve. Whether writing speeches or learning how to effectively hold a conversation with another person, our characters were molded and transformed into open-minded individuals ready and excited to begin getting to know the most important people in the whole world, the members of the Michigan FFA Association.



With the knowledge and guidance we gained from Base Camp, we began preparing for our first real encounter with FFA members, the State Leadership Conference for Chapter Officers (SLCCO). The State Officer Team had a fantastic time presenting workshops to the chapter officers at

this event. Some of the topics covered in our workshops ranged from goal setting and strategic planning to how to begin thinking about the three main categories of the National Chapter Award Application. We had so much fun meeting the chapter and regional officers during the conference, at mealtimes, at the euchre tournament, and, as always, at the grooving dance.



Not long after SLCCO, State Officers found themselves hopping on a tour bus and heading to the southwest region of Michigan for the 2018 Michigan FFA Good Will Business and Industry Tour. This tour took us to 13 different agricultural businesses. We toured potato farms, hog farms, manufacturing facilities, ethanol production plants, and many other unique businesses in the agricultural industry. Our team learned not only what each of these businesses does, but also the amazing job and internship opportunities that the



agricultural industry can offer to you, FFA members. We had such an amazing time on this tour and throughout this year, we hope to share with you the jobs and opportunities available to you that we learned about while touring these businesses.

The state officer team has had so much fun at all of these events; however, we are even more thrilled to have the opportunity to get to know the members of the Michigan FFA throughout our chapter visits and events so far. We can't wait to see you guys at some of the upcoming events such as leadership contests, skills contests, and even State Convention. Our team strives toward being the reason every day for the advancement of the Michigan FFA and we hope that you strive to "Be the Reason" in everything that you do as well.

By: Benjamin Butcher  
State Treasurer



# Member TO Member

**“HOW DO YOU THINK AGRICULTURE AS A WHOLE HAS CHANGED IN THE LAST 20 YEARS?”**

“In the past 20 years, I think agriculture has evolved into a more efficient and sustainable practice that has become capable of feeding people all over the world. Agriculture has also become more inclusive with the addition of more female farmers than there have ever been before and I think that this is encouraging more people to pursue a career related to agriculture. Through the introduction of new technology, agriculture has become more time-efficient and more productive. In addition, through the use of social networking, members of the agricultural community are able to spread their knowledge and increase awareness as to the benefits of agriculture.”

–Madison Suseland, Cassopolis



“I think agriculture has changed exponentially for the better in the past 20 years. We have become more efficient in our use of land and production of crops using new technologies such as drones, genetic modification, and precision agriculture. Also, as the use of artificial insemination for the breeding of most livestock has become more mainstream, the quality of animals in the show circuit and in feed lots has increased as well.”

–Megan Lopresto, Jonesville

“With a diminishing amount of land used for agricultural practices, changes in agriculture over the last 20 years have increased yields. These changes can be found throughout the field in the form of advancements in technology, consumer concerns, and new market niches. Agriculture has been differentiating due to the expansion of a variety of markets including organic, dairy-free, vegetarian, and alternative vehicle fuels. New products are being developed, and their usage is increasing as consumers become more knowledgeable about them. The most amazing changes in agriculture stem from technologies such as drones, automated steering and biotechnologies that are helping agriculture’s efficiency. Agriculture has been experiencing more judgement and examination than in previous years with consumers being more concerned with where their food comes from than ever before. As the field experiences rapid change, consumer education will grow in importance right along with it. Agriculture is constantly changing and evolving as new technologies and ideas become interwoven with this diverse and expanding industry.”

–Haili Gusa, Ubly





“Agriculture has changed for the better in the past twenty years. So many amazing things have happened in this growing industry that I am so humbled to be a part of. From urban agriculture, hydroponic systems, genetic modification and new machinery, farmers are able to be more efficient while producing.”

–Sarah Albrecht, Mason

“20 years ago, my grandparents put hours upon hours of work into planting and harvesting. Now, my grandpa and my dad can put in hours of work and still have time to spend with their families because of the advancements in equipment. We now have larger planters, larger drills, larger balers, larger rakes, larger tractors, larger grain and corn heads, and more horsepower. This makes life just a little bit easier on hardworking farmers. The widespread use of GMOs came about just over 20 years ago and they keep on improving with time. I personally love GMOs. I could talk about them for hours on end. I want to work on genetic modification of plants in the future, so that in the next 20 years, we can feed more people faster and easier. The one thing that I absolutely love seeing is the change in the community. I’m not sure if it is just me growing up, but over the last year I have watched a love for farming grow. When I talk to people about what I do, they are genuinely interested in what I have to say. I know for a fact, in the past few years, there was not a lot of respect for farmers when it came to using GMOs, pesticides, and other advancements. Even now, it is something that I think all of us need to keep working on by providing people the truth straight from the source—the farmers.”

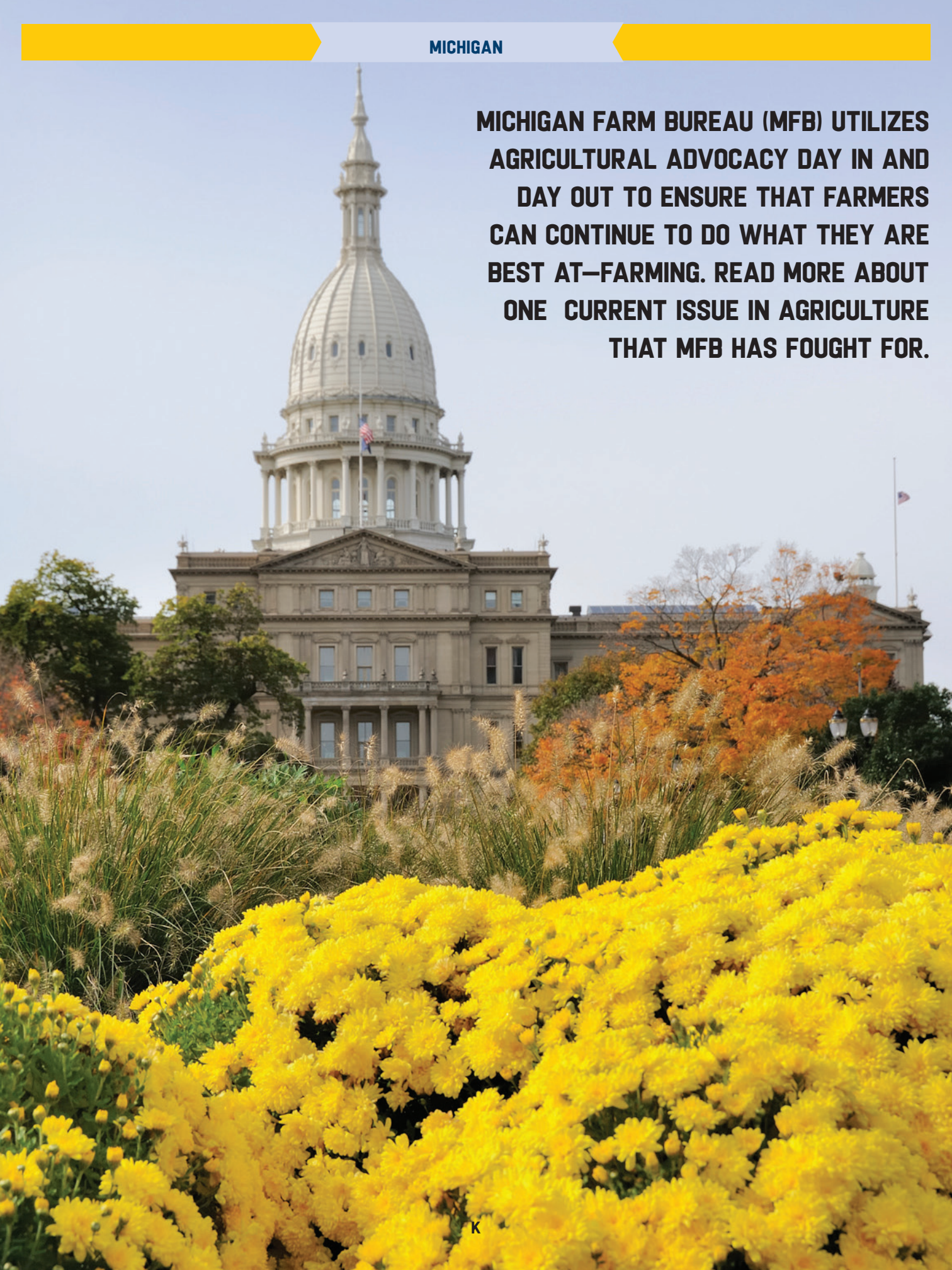
–Abigail Webster, Lowell



“With computer technology and increased knowledge of the science of farming such as the proper use of fertilization, soil rotation, herbicides, and animal husbandry, agriculture has jumped leaps and bounds over the last 20 years. Computerized farm equipment has made the process of farming and raising animals much easier, safer, and more efficient.”

–Elizabeth Henderson, Alcona

**MICHIGAN FARM BUREAU (MFB) UTILIZES AGRICULTURAL ADVOCACY DAY IN AND DAY OUT TO ENSURE THAT FARMERS CAN CONTINUE TO DO WHAT THEY ARE BEST AT—FARMING. READ MORE ABOUT ONE CURRENT ISSUE IN AGRICULTURE THAT MFB HAS FOUGHT FOR.**



# Agricultural Advocacy IN ACTION:

## FARMERS PROTECT AGRICULTURE'S SALE AND USE TAX EXEMPTION

When you purchase goods or services in Michigan—with a few exceptions—you pay a 6 percent sales and use tax. Whether it's buying clothes at Meijer or ordering a pair of shoes online through Amazon, you'll see the 6 percent of the purchase price reflected in your receipt's total.

While there's always political debate surrounding who or what gets taxed, and how much, there's a basic reason we have a sales and use tax: The revenue generated ensures that state government is funded to operate the programs and services Michigan offers us (its residents). The sales and use tax provides approximately one-third of the state's tax revenue, with the remainder coming from personal income tax, property tax, motor vehicle and fuel tax, and others.

Now, recall where I said there are few exceptions. Purchases for agricultural production is one of them. For the better part of a century, Michigan farmers have been able to make tax-exempt purchases for goods or services used in tilling, planting, caring for or harvesting things of the soil, in the breeding, raising, or caring of livestock, poultry, or horticultural products for further growth.

Why are farmers exempt? For starters, they have a pretty unique job: providing safe and affordable food for, well, the world. There are also a lot of uncontrollable variables: namely, the weather. And whether it's feed, seed, or fertilizer, there are a lot of "things" involved in growing plants and raising animals that you must purchase regardless of how well (or not) your crops do.

Farming is risky business and farmers are price takers, not price makers. So, when they take products to market, they get what the market is paying on that given day. Tax is not added to the price they're paid and there is no way for the farmer to recover the sales taxes they paid on inputs. Hence the need for farmers to be exempt; there's no way to pass it on to the consumer.

In every other business, goods and services have a price tag the consumer pays. Along the way the manufacturer pays sales tax on the inputs and then collects the sales tax from the consumer or retailer to offset the taxes they originally paid on inputs. By providing farmers an exemption, they're able to instead use the money they'd otherwise be paying to reinvest in their farm's buildings, equipment, and land to keep growing the food our state, nation, and world needs.

From time to time individuals—usually not familiar with farming—question the legitimacy and necessity of agriculture's exemption. Sparing all the details, that's exactly what happened in 2018. In response, nearly 600 farmers sent more than 1,800 emails to state representatives, senators and the governor urging them to pass legislation to clarify and protect agriculture's sales and use tax exemption. This was in addition to dozens of phone calls and in-person meetings where the issue was discussed with elected officials. In the end the bills were approved, but only because farmers were at the table and the agriculture industry had a voice.

**"IN THE END THE BILLS WERE APPROVED, BUT ONLY BECAUSE FARMERS WERE AT THE TABLE AND THE AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY HAD A VOICE."**

As a student, and if you're interested in pursuing an agricultural career, keep yourself up-to-date on current issues and how they're affecting farmers. Being engaged in conversations with influencers and elected officials is the only way our industry can continue to be successful. Some ways you can do that are by checking out Michigan Farm Bureau's Michigan Farm News website, following us on social media, and connecting with your county Farm Bureau to become involved in their local programs and eventually perhaps joining a collegiate Farm Bureau chapter.

Michigan Farm Bureau is the state's largest general farm organization, serving to represent, protect and enhance the business, economic, social and educational interest of our more than 42,000 members. Learn more about our organization and youth programs at [www.michfb.com](http://www.michfb.com).

By: Nicole Sevrey, Michigan Farm Bureau



[www.michfb.com](http://www.michfb.com)

# State Officer FEATURE

SEE WHAT THE STATE OFFICERS  
HAVE IN COMMON WITH YOU!



**RAEGAN GEMBARSKI**  
STATE SECRETARY

Home Chapter: North Huron

Favorite Movie: "The Greatest Showman"

Favorite Sport: Volleyball

Personal Goal: "I just want to be happy. If I can wake up every morning and be excited for the upcoming day, that means I am doing something right."



**ABIGAIL PUSKALA**  
REGION I STATE VICE  
PRESIDENT

Home Chapter: Olivet

Favorite Hobby: Working with fair steers

Favorite Restaurant: Olive Garden

Your goal for your team: "I want each and every one of my team members to realize the volume of the impact they are going to have this next year."



**KYLE MCFARREN**  
REGION V STATE VICE  
PRESIDENT

Home Chapter: Ravenna

Favorite FFA Activity: State Convention

Favorite Athletic Team: The Detroit Lions

Favorite Quote: "Courage isn't a matter of not being frightened, you know. It's being afraid and doing what you have to do anyway."  
- Jon Pertwee

# FIGHTING HUNGER: North Huron FFA



The words “food insecurity” and “hunger” are often associated with third-world countries thousands of miles away from us. Sometimes, these words are also used to describe problems in our countries’ big cities. These traditional associations are why when a conversation includes hunger, rural America is often absent. However, according to Feeding America, 2.4 million rural households face hunger and 75 percent of the counties with the highest rates of food insecurity are in rural areas. Based on these figures, it can be seen that even though it is not traditionally thought that rural areas—areas with farms and strong communities—could be the ones whose residents are struggling with hunger, they are actually the group that is most affected.

The North Huron FFA Chapter located in Kinde, Michigan, has recognized this need in their own rural community and has bonded together as a chapter to help combat hunger with a community garden. When looking at the students of North Huron, approximately 57

percent receive free or reduced lunch. This fact, along with the fact that a majority of secondary (Gr. 6-12) students are FFA members, shows just how important of an issue hunger is and how important the North Huron FFA chapter’s work is.

The North Huron FFA Community Garden consists of 16 raised-bed gardens and a half acre of donated crop land in Kinde. This year, two raised beds were added in the neighboring village of Port Austin. All produce grown by the chapter members is either donated to the Kinde Food Pantry or used by the school for their lunches. In 2017, over 850 pounds of produce was donated to the Kinde Food Pantry alone.



In North Huron FFA’s raised beds there is a huge variety of produce grown, from tomatoes, green beans, peppers, squash, and cucumbers to a whole bed dedicated to herbs, including rosemary and thyme. The donated plot of land is used by the chapter to grow potatoes and sweet corn. These potatoes are one example of produce that is grown to be used for both the school’s lunch program

and donations to the food pantry. This year, members also took sweet corn from their sweet corn patch and husked the corn, cut it, and then boiled and froze it for the school to use throughout the school year in students’ lunches.

While the garden does great things for the community, it is also a great learning experience for students in elementary school all the way to students in the advanced ag class. Elementary students have the opportunity to visit the garden, see what the plants look like, and even pick and eat different produce. In the high school, all FFA members are responsible for taking care of the garden, learning more about plants and how to care for a garden. In the advanced ag classes, members take a few of the tomatoes and peppers grown in the garden and have a competition making salsa, also learning how to properly prepare food along the way.

This community garden serves more than one purpose and is now a huge part of who the North Huron FFA Chapter is. Members identified a problem in their community and found a way to combine learning with service. Speaking to the awesome opportunities a community garden can provide for an ag program, North Huron FFA Vice President Nick Craig says, “With the garden, we can provide healthy food for free to the community, learn how to take care of vegetables and produce more off of each plant, and also see how impactful it is to give back.”



# WHAT'S ON YOUR PLATE?

**Fill**  
*dinner plates*  
**by buying**  
**license plates.**

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