



CONTACT

Scott Johnson
Executive Secretary
Iowa FFA Association
scott.johnson@iowaffa.com
515-965-7376
www.iowaffa.com

News Release

2025 Stars Over Iowa Winners Announced

AMES, IOWA—The 2025 Stars Over Iowa Winners were announced at the 97th Iowa FFA State Leadership Conference at Iowa State University on April 15, 2025. A Star Over Iowa was selected in each of the four different areas: Agricultural Placement, Agribusiness, Agriscience, and Agricultural Production.

The 2025 Star in Ag Placement Winner is Cael Daufeldt of the West Liberty FFA Chapter. Cael Daufeldt is a member of the West Liberty FFA Chapter. He is currently an assistant greenskeeper at West Liberty Golf and Country Club, where his responsibilities include managing two types of turf grasses using techniques such as seeding, fertilizing, verticutting, and weed control. Additionally, he assists with preparing for over 40 tournament events annually. Cael's second SAE project involves working as a farm hand for BKBE Farms. His responsibilities include providing biosecurity oversight, assisting with flock health, learning business and industry trends, and supporting the row crop operation. Between both SAE projects, Cael has productively invested 2,913 hours. He currently serves as the chapter president and was recently named the state winner in the Poultry Production Proficiency award area.

After graduation, Cael plans to attend Iowa State University to major in Agricultural Business. He is the son of Brent and Kelly Daufeldt. His chapter advisors are Zachary Morris, Elyse Buysse, and Michele McMichael. His high school principal is Brenda Arthur-Miller, and his superintendent is Shaun Kruger.

Charlie Lane of the Easton Valley FFA Chapter is the 2025 Star in Ag Production winner. His primary SAE program is Diversified Livestock, where he raises cattle, Berkshire pigs, and meat goats. Charlie started raising livestock as a first-year 4-H member with a bucket bottle calf and five pigs. When he joined FFA, he decided to further invest in livestock to help earn money for college. His SAE began with two steers and ten pigs, and he has since expanded his program to include seven steers, 50 purebred Berkshire pigs, and ten nanny goats. As his program grew, Charlie began marketing finished cattle and pigs to local customers as locker meat. This success would not have been possible without the support of his family's operation. Charlie plans to continue raising livestock and contributing to his family's farming operation while attending college. He currently serves as the vice president of his chapter and is involved in the greenhouse and alumni committees. He also won the first-place Diversified Livestock Proficiency award this year and will be competing at the national level this fall.

After graduation in May, Charlie plans to attend Iowa State University to major in agricultural business with a minor in animal science. He looks forward to being involved in the Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity, the Ag Business Club, and Block and Bridle. Charlie is the son of Mark and Brianna Lane. His FFA advisor is Mr. Steven Eskildsen, and his high school principal is Mr. Geoffrey Kaiser.

Andrew Pingenot of the Vinton-Shellsburg FFA Chapter is the 2025 Star in Agribusiness winner. He is a livestock equipment dealer for "Best Livestock Equipment," a business he started during his freshman year under his family farm and Black Oak Farms. Andrew got started by purchasing a product for his beef operation and was later approached by the owner, who asked if he would be interested in becoming a dealer for the company in Eastern Iowa. In the beginning, Andrew relied on his parents to help purchase equipment, but over time, he has grown his business to the point where he can independently purchase entire semi loads and improve his marketing strategies. His parents, along with local alumni and supporters, have played a significant role in his success by introducing him to new customers and building his confidence. Through FFA, Andrew was awarded a National Silver in the Proficiency area of Ag Sales Entrepreneurship in 2024. He also served as the 2024-2025 Northeast District Secretary.

After graduation, Andrew plans to attend Iowa State University and double major in agricultural business and either accounting or agronomy. He is the son of Mark and Carrie Pingenot. His chapter advisors are Gabby Power, Louise Fleming, and Wyatt Samuelson. His high school principal is Matt Kingsbury, and his superintendent is Kyle Koeppen.



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The Star in Agriscience Winner is Valerie Rahe of the Beckman Catholic FFA Chapter at Dyersville. Throughout her involvement in FFA, she has researched various agricultural issues and presented her findings at both the State and National Agriscience Fairs. Her interest in agriscience was sparked when she had the unique opportunity to hand-plant corn at the Field of Dreams during the MLB game. This experience piqued her curiosity about the impact of fertilizers on soil organisms and microorganisms, leading her to investigate the effects of fertilizer concentrations on earthworms and soil microorganisms. Currently, Valerie's research focuses on biosecurity methods related to the PRRS virus in swine facilities. Through this work, she has developed strong skills in statistical analysis, data interpretation, laboratory protocols, and effective communication. The goal of her research is to contribute to the agricultural industry by improving sustainability, strengthening the global food supply, and ensuring long-term food security. Valerie is honored to have earned the title of National Agriscience Champion and to be the 2025 Agriscience Integrated Systems Proficiency Runner-Up. Additionally, she will serve as the President of her FFA chapter for the upcoming year. Upon her high school graduation in 2026, Valerie plans to pursue a degree in Microbiology at a four-year university.

Valerie is the daughter of Andy and Vickie Rahe and is grateful for the guidance and support of her chapter advisor, Mrs. Dawn Mausser. Her high school principal is Mr. Marcel Kielkicki, the school chaplain is Father Tyler Raymond, and her superintendent is Mrs. Cathy Walz.

The Stars Over Iowa program is made possible with support from Beck's Hybrids through the Iowa FFA Foundation. The National FFA Foundation sponsors cash awards for the overall star winners.

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About Iowa FFA Association

The Iowa FFA Association is a youth organization of more than 20,300 student members as part of 270 local FFA chapters across Iowa. The FFA mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. The Iowa FFA Association was organized by delegates from 23 schools at Iowa State College on May 17, 1929 and is an integral part of public instruction in agriculture. The Iowa Department of Education provides leadership and helps set direction for FFA as a service to local agricultural education programs. For more, visit the Iowa FFA Association online at IowaFFA.com and on social media.