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News Release

West Liberty FFA Wins Iowa FFA Ag Biotechnology CDE

AMES, Iowa--The West Liberty FFA Chapter from West Liberty was named the Champion Team in the annual Iowa FFA Biotechnology Career Development Event held at Iowa State University, Ames on April 20, 2026. Members of the first place team included: Hayden Berry, Matthew Martinez, William Palma, and Theo Solomon. Their agriculture education instructors and FFA advisors are Mr. Zach Morris, Ms. Elyse Buysse, and Ms. Michele McMichael. The Mid-Prairie FFA Chapter from Wellman was named the Reserve Champion Team. Members of the second place team included: Allie Whetstine, Harlee West, Ellie Callahan, and Caedyn Huston. Their agriculture education instructor and FFA advisor is Mrs. Elsa Schmidt. Theo Solomon, West Liberty FFA, was named the High Individual Overall in the competition.

FFA teams from 65 chapters participated in this year's Career Development Event designed to provide the student an opportunity to display their agricultural knowledge and skills in the area of Biotechnology. The 249 individuals who participated in the event completed several activities including a general knowledge exam and an identification activity. The team members also collaborated in a team activity relating to biotechnology principles.

The Iowa FFA Ag Biotechnology Career Development Event was made possible with support from Iowa FFA Gold Standard Partners. The Ag Biotechnology Career Development Event was coordinated by Andrea Rouse and Julie Gonzalez of Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC), Renee Thompson of West Branch, and Mary Lyon of the Iowa Biotechnology Association.

Top 10 Teams

- 1 West Liberty FFA
- 2 Mid-Prairie FFA, Wellman
- 3 Grinnell FFA
- 4 Louisa-Muscatine FFA
- 5 Midland FFA, Wyoming
- 6 Denison FFA, Denison
- 7 Waterloo FFA
- 8 Roland-Story FFA, Story City
- 9 West Dubuque FFA, Epworth
- 10 Carroll Area FFA, Carroll

Top 10 Individuals

- Theo Solomon, West Liberty FFA
- Allie Whetstine, Mid-Prairie FFA, Wellman
- Miley Ossian, Louisa-Muscatine FFA
- Hayden Berry, West Liberty FFA
- Carter Willms, Midland FFA, Wyoming
- William Schalmo, Grinnell FFA
- Matthew Martinez, West Liberty FFA
- Isabel Rubendall, Grinnell FFA
- Milee Streets, Midland FFA, Wyoming
- William Palma, West Liberty FFA

Specialty Areas -- Top Team/ Top Individual:

Team Practicum

Team: Mid-Prairie FFA, Wellman

General Knowledge Examination

Team: Osage FFA, Osage **Individual:** Melani Ellis, Alburnett FFA, Alburnett

Identification

Team: West Liberty FFA **Individual:** Hayden Berry, West Liberty FFA

Gold Teams (15)

Score Range (781 to 635)

West Liberty FFA
Mid-Prairie FFA, Wellman
Grinnell FFA
Louisa-Muscatine FFA
Midland FFA, Wyoming
Denison FFA, Denison
Waterloo FFA
Roland-Story FFA, Story City
West Dubuque FFA, Epworth
Carroll Area FFA, Carroll
Linn-Mar FFA
West Lyon FFA, Inwood
Benton Community FFA, Van Horne
Little Switzerland FFA, Waukon
Osage FFA, Osage

Bronze Teams (18)

Score Range (439 to 227)

MMCRU FFA
Bellevue FFA, Bellevue
Dallas Center-Grimes FFA, Grimes
Maquoketa FFA, Maquoketa
Agri-Power FFA
Independence FFA, Independence
Riceville FFA, Riceville
Winterset FFA
Starmont FFA, Arlington
Williamsburg FFA, Williamsburg
South Central Calhoun FFA, Lake City
Seymour FFA
South O'Brien FFA
Sioux Central FFA at Sioux Rapids
Central Springs
Hartley-Melvin-Sanborn FFA
East Buchanan FFA at Winthrop

Silver Teams (32)

Score Range (604 to 446)

Wapsie Valley FFA, Fairbank
Sioux Center FFA, Sioux Center
Dunkerton FFA
Nashua Plainfield FFA, Nashua
Albia FFA Chapter, Albia
Davis County FFA, Bloomfield
Vinton-Shellsburg FFA, Vinton
South Winneshiek FFA, Calmar
North Butler FFA, Greene
Belle Plaine FFA
North Scott FFA at Eldridge
St. Ansgar FFA
North Union FFA, Armstrong
Marshalltown FFA
Dike-New Hartford FFA
Le Mars FFA Chapter, Le Mars
OABCIG
North Scott Jr. High FFA at Eldridge
Keokuk FFA
Central Lee FFA, Donnellson
Alburnett FFA, Alburnett
Muscatine FFA, Muscatine
Cascade FFA
Hinton FFA Chapter
Rock Valley FFA
Spencer FFA, Spencer
Monticello FFA
Clear Creek Amana
MFL MarMac FFA, Monona
WACO FFA
West Fork FFA
Wilton FFA, Wilton

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About Iowa FFA Association

The Iowa FFA Association is a youth organization of more 20,500 student members as part of 273 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 and on social media.