



## **Iowa FFA Association**

### **The FFA Mission**

*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.*

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**NEWS RELEASE**  
For Immediate Release

### **2009 Stars Over Iowa Winners** 81<sup>st</sup> Iowa FFA Leadership Conference

The 2009 Stars Over Iowa were announced at Veterans Memorial Auditorium, Des Moines, on Friday, April 17, 2009. Twenty-four finalists were introduced in four different areas: Agricultural Placement, Agriscience, Agribusiness, and Agricultural Production. The members were selected as a result of receiving the Iowa FFA Degree. The Iowa FFA Degree is the highest honor that can be bestowed on an FFA member by the state association. Five hundred twelve members received the Iowa FFA Degree in 2009 and twenty-four of those members were selected for outstanding recognition in the Stars Over Iowa ceremony.

Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc., through the Iowa FFA Foundation, sponsors plaques for each of the twenty-four finalists and for each area winner. The Iowa Farmer Today, through the Iowa FFA Foundation, sponsored cash awards for each of the Star finalists.

### **Stars in Ag Placement Finalists**

- Grant Hibbing – South O’Brien FFA Chapter @ Paullina
- Amanda Folkmann – Marengo FFA Chapter
- Kirk Hatfield – Central Trail FFA Chapter @ Leon
- Jordan Vande Vorde – Oelwein FFA Chapter
- Aron Kipfer – Albia FFA Chapter
- Colton Dunphy – Creston FFA Chapter

The 2009 winner in Ag Placement was Amanda Folkmann from the Marengo FFA Chapter. As a freshman, Folkmann began working at Big “G” Food Store for her SAE. Over the past three years, Folkmann has worked almost 3,000 hours with gross pay approaching \$20,000. Folkmann has also gained extensive knowledge of merchandising, human relations, food safety, and record keeping. Upon graduation, Folkmann plans to attend Iowa State University to major in pre-veterinary medicine.

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### **Stars in Ag Production Finalists**

- Ben Zelle – Waverly-Shell Rock FFA Chapter
- Kam Hartstack – Brokaw FFA Chapter @ Clarinda
- John Gustafson – Laurens-Marathon Tall Corn FFA Chapter @ Laurens
- Russell Boles – Central Trail FFA Chapter @ Leon
- Dan Stewart – Oelwein FFA Chapter
- Lora Luitjens – Sibley-Ocheyedan FFA Chapter

The 2009 winner in the area of Ag Production was Ben Zelle of the Waverly-Shell Rock FFA Chapter. Zelle began his SAE program with a wide spectrum of projects including sheep production, corn, soybeans, hay, oats, and a shared sweet corn plot. Zelle is responsible for all aspects of raising sheep; developing his sweet corn business; production of his corn, soybeans, oats, and hay enterprises; and the hiring out of his labor services to area farmers. Upon graduation, Zelle plans to attend Iowa State University to major in Agriculture Business, Computer Science, and Mathematics.

### **Stars in Agribusiness Finalists**

- Lance Sedlacek – Rockwell City-Lytton FFA Chapter
- Tiff Blevins – Atlantic FFA Chapter
- Brandon Friedlein – Tri-Star FFA Chapter
- Braden Bormann – Hawkeye FFA Chapter @ West Bend
- Mitchell Habeger – Algona FFA Chapter
- Morgan Aalgaard – Lake Mills FFA Chapter

The 2009 winner in the area of Agribusiness was Brandon Friedlein of the Tri-Star FFA Chapter. As a freshman, Friedlein started his own fresh vegetable business on his family's farm. Friedlein has gained extensive knowledge about greenhouse construction and management, seed production, record keeping, and marketing. Upon graduation, Friedlein plans to attend Northeast Iowa Community College and later transfer to Iowa State University to major in Agricultural Business and Real Estate Development.

### **Stars in Agriscience Finalists**

- Shelby Burdette – Central Lee FFA Chapter @ Donnellson
- Zach Boss – West Delaware FFA Chapter @ Manchester
- Nick Kleese – Washington FFA Chapter
- Ethan Erickson – West Central Valley FFA Chapter @ Stuart
- Brittney Clinton – Algona FFA Chapter
- Ray Wedeking – Schaller-Crestland FFA Chapter @ Early

The 2009 winner in the area of Agriscience was Ethan Erickson from the West Central Valley FFA Chapter at Stuart. As a freshman, Erickson studied the effects of tire pressure, weight load, and speed on fuel economy. Since then, Erickson has researched and tested different methods of producing biodiesel such as using cooking oil from a local fast food chain to growing algae and using the extracted oil to make biodiesel. Upon graduation, Erickson plans to attend either Iowa State University or Massachusetts Institute of Technology to major in Chemical Engineering.

The Iowa FFA Association has 230 local chapters with over 12,000 FFA members. FFA is a national organization of more than 500,000 members preparing for leadership and careers in science, business and technology of agriculture. Local, state and national programs provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge and skills learned in the classroom. FFA's 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.

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