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News Release

2026 Iowa FFA Proficiency Award Results

ANKENY, Iowa--FFA members have Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAEs) as part of school-based agricultural education. These proficiencies range in the areas of Agricultural Communications to Service Learning and from Diversified Agricultural Production to Swine Production. Proficiency Award winners have excelled in their SAE Programs. These awards encourage members to develop specialized skills that will apply toward a future career.

State winners will advance to the National FFA competition where they will compete against winners from the other State FFA Associations. The four national finalists that are selected from each area will be recognized at the National FFA Convention and Expo in October.

The Iowa FFA Proficiency Awards program is possible with support from the many partners of the Iowa FFA Foundation. The specific partner for each area is identified in our summary of results.

Listed below are the results from the 2026 Iowa Proficiency Awards program.

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About Iowa FFA Association

The Iowa FFA Association is a youth organization of more than 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 at IowaFFA.com and on social media.

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Proficiency Area: Agricultural Communications

State Winner: Natalie Schroeder

FFA Chapter: Calamus-Wheatland FFA Chapter

Description: Natalie Schroeder, of the Calamus-Wheatland FFA Chapter, is the first-place winner in the area of Agricultural Communications, sponsored by Iowa FFA Gold Standard Partners. Schroeder writes, directs, and produces her own educational videos about agriculture in a web series called "Chat with Nat" which currently reaches over 1,000 elementary students annually across Iowa and Illinois. The runner up in this area is McKayla Weber from Maquoketa Valley.

Proficiency Area: Agricultural Education

State Winner: Caden Bernauer

FFA Chapter: Central Dewitt FFA Chapter

Description: Caden Bernauer, of the Central Dewitt FFA Chapter is the first-place winner in the area of Ag Education endowed by the Jim Hamilton Memorial. Caden has invested over 564 hours teaching ag and developing his approach to engaging with students through numerous experiences in his home chapter and visiting other chapters. Upon graduation, Caden plans to major in Ag Education. The runner up in this area is Seeri Smith, from Dike-New Hartford.

Proficiency Area: Agricultural Mechanics Design and Fabrication

State Winner: Jayden Schmalzried

FFA Chapter: Nevada FFA Chapter

Description: Winning in the Ag Mechanics Design and Fabrication area, sponsored by Iowa FFA Gold Standard Partners, is Jayden Schmalzried from Nevada. Jayden developed his welding and metal fabrication skills working at P&D Welding. Along with mig and stick welding skills, he learned to operate a telehandler, and keep safety as a priority. Jayden hopes to continue his welding career as he starts at DMACC next year. Runner-up in this area is Blake Moore from Rock Valley.

Proficiency Area: Agricultural Mechanics Repair and Maintenance - Entrepreneurship

State Winner: Wyatt Kissling

FFA Chapter: Alburnett FFA Chapter

Description: Wyatt Kissling of the Alburnett FFA chapter is this year's winner of the Ag Mechanics Repair and Maintenance Entrepreneurship award, sponsored by Iowa FFA Gold Standard Partners. Wyatt started Big Foot's Lawn Equipment in 2022 by acquiring, repairing, and reselling lawn mowers through skills he learned from his dad. Wyatt changed his niche by turning his business mobile through building a service trailer that allows him to go to customer locations to service lawn mowers. He has now sold over 225 lawn mowers and serviced over 200 small engines through his business. Wyatt plans to continue growing his business and making it his full-time career upon graduation. Shannahan Smith from Maquoketa Valley is the runner-up.

Proficiency Area: Agricultural Mechanics Repair and Maintenance - Placement

State Winner: Dylan Mulder

FFA Chapter: Rock Valley FFA Chapter

Description: Dylan Mulder of the Rock Valley FFA Chapter is the first-place winner of the Agricultural Mechanics Repair and Maintenance - Placement area, sponsored by Iowa FFA Gold Standard Partners. Dylan has over 1300 hours of experience working on tractors and farm equipment at Justin Dickman Repair. Dylan began his experience assisting mechanics with repairs, and he has grown in responsibility to diagnosing and repairing issues independently. Dylan's biggest accomplishments thus far was splitting and repairing tractor clutches and transmissions on his own. Upon graduation, Dylan plans to attend the John Deere Tech program and become a technician. The runner up is Peter Ludwig from Cascade.

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Proficiency Area: **Agricultural Processing**

State Winner: Caleb Shirbroun

FFA Chapter: Central Plains FFA Chapter, Gowrie

Description: Caleb Shirbroun, from Central Plains FFA at Gowrie, is the winner in Ag Processing, sponsored by Iowa Biotechnology Association. He is employed at his family's game processing business. He assists in all parts of the business, from hunting and fishing to processing carcasses. He also helps market the meat. In the future, Caleb hopes to become employed at the DNR. The runner-up in this category is Belle Werner from Benton Community at Van Horne.

Proficiency Area: **Agricultural Sales - Entrepreneurship**

State Winner: Katelyn Schaul

FFA Chapter: Springville-Lisbon FFA

Description: Katelyn Schaul from the Springville-Lisbon FFA Chapter is the first-place winner in the area of Agricultural Sales Entrepreneurship, sponsored by Titan Machinery. Katelyn owns her own small business, Katelyn's Sweet Treats. She creates cake balls, chocolate-covered strawberries, and hot cocoa bombs, which she sells at vendor shows and online. Since starting her business in 2022, she has earned over \$11,500 in net income. Katelyn's goal is to become a professional baker with nationwide bakery stores. Second place in this area is Cole Walmsley from Lone Tree.

Proficiency Area: **Agricultural Sales - Placement**

State Winner: Rowdy Campfield

FFA Chapter: Pleasantville FFA Chapter

Description: Rowdy Campfield of the Pleasantville FFA Chapter is the first-place winner in the area of Ag Sales Placement, sponsored by Titan Machinery. Campfield has spent over 2,500 hours working at Farmboy Market LLC. He oversees the daily sales and operations of the business alongside his parents. Some of Campfield's daily tasks include managing plant health, equipment maintenance, and procuring products from wholesale markets. After graduation, Rowdy plans to continue working at Farmboy Market and plans to take over the business by the time he is 26 years old. The runner up in this area is Derek Chipp from Chariton.

Proficiency Area: **Agricultural Services**

State Winner: Lexi Henning

FFA Chapter: Wilton FFA Chapter

Description: Sponsored by Iowa FFA Gold Standard Partners, Lexi Henning of the Wilton FFA Chapter is the first-place winner of the Ag Services. Lexi has developed the art of taxidermy with Wingman Taxidermy. She has skinned, fleshed, mounted, tanned, and airbrushed many birds, deer, raccoon, and small game. One unique skill she has developed is using dermestid beetles to clean skulls. After graduation, Lexi plans to run her own taxidermy business to follow her passion of the outdoors, hunting, fishing, and trapping. The second-place winner is Alexis Clark of the Brokaw FFA Chapter at Clarinda.

Proficiency Area: **Agriscience Research – Animal Systems**

State Winner: Brianna Pirc

FFA Chapter: Beckman Catholic FFA Chapter, Dyersville

Description: Brianna Pirc, of the Beckman Catholic FFA Chapter at Dyersville, is the first-place winner in the area of Agriscience Research - Animal Systems, sponsored by Christensen Farms. Pirc focused research studies on the swine industry studying swine confinement and biosafety protocols. Upon graduation, Pirc plans to attend college majoring in Marketing and Agribusiness.

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Proficiency Area: Agriscience Research – Integrated Systems

State Winner: Valerie Rahe

FFA Chapter: Beckman Catholic FFA Chapter, Dyersville

Description: Valerie Rahe, of the Beckman Catholic FFA Chapter at Dyersville, is the first-place winner in the area of Agriscience Research - Integrated Systems, sponsored by CHS Foundation. Rahe has invested over 300 hours in researching crop production and animal health focusing on fertilization methods and biosecurity. Rahe plans to attend the University of Iowa and major in finance and political science.

Proficiency Area: Agriscience Research – Plant Systems

State Winner: Natalie Besler

School: Beckman Catholic FFA Chapter, Dyersville

Description: Natalie Besler, of the Beckman Catholic FFA Chapter at Dyersville is the first-place winner in the area of Agriscience Research - Plant Systems, sponsored by MinnTex Citrus, Inc. Besler has invested time in researching seed storage in various environmental conditions. Besler's future objective is to continue in education and environmental science.

Proficiency Area: Beef Production - Entrepreneurship

State Winner: Rhianna Murty

FFA Chapter: GMG FFA Chapter, Garwin

Description: Sponsored by the Iowa Cattlemen's Foundation, the winner in Beef Production Entrepreneurship is Rhianna Murty of the GMG FFA Chapter at Garwin. She started her project in 2017 when she bought her first cow, and now she's grown her herd to 20 head. Through her SAE project, she developed her passion for the cattle industry by interacting with local professionals. These interactions help her expand her knowledge of high-quality breeding stock which allows her to grow her herd. She plans on attending Iowa State University to study animal science. The runner-up in the area of beef production entrepreneurship is Lauren Comes from the Atlantic FFA chapter.

Proficiency Area: Beef Production - Placement

State Winner: Maddie Deutmeyer

FFA Chapter: West Delaware FFA Chapter, Manchester

Description: Maddie Deutmeyer of the West Delaware FFA Chapter at Manchester is the first-place winner in the area of Beef Production Placement, sponsored by Iowa Cattlemen's Foundation. Maddie has over 2300 hours working on her family's Angus Beef Farm. The farm has 32 cow/calf pairs and 250 head of feedlot steers. She helps to vaccinate cattle, purchase new cattle, make hay, and haul manure. This SAE helped to deepen her knowledge about beef production. After graduation, Maddie plans to pursue a career in ag finance. The runner up in this area is Cole Van Meter from the AC/GC FFA Chapter.

Proficiency Area: Dairy Production - Entrepreneurship

State Winner: Erica Knapp

FFA Chapter: West Lyon FFA Chapter, Inwood

Description: Erica Knapp, of the West Lyon FFA Chapter at Inwood, is the first-place winner in the area of Dairy Production Entrepreneurship, sponsored by Iowa State University Dairy Science Club. Knapp began her herd of dairy cattle with one heifer, and has since expanded her inventory every year. She has applied advanced genetic selection to improve the quality of her herd, while helping to integrate new technology on her family's farm. After graduation, Erica plans to pursue a career in nursing, while continuing to be involved with the family farm, Knapp Time Dairy. The runner up in this area is Ford Domeyer from the Maquoketa Valley FFA Chapter.

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Proficiency Area: Dairy Production - Placement

State Winner: Gretchyn Kane

FFA Chapter: North Linn FFA Chapter, Troy Mills

Description: In the area of Dairy Production - Placement, sponsored by the Iowa State University Dairy Science Club, first place goes to Gretchyn Kane from the North Linn FFA Chapter at Troy Mills. Since starting her freshman year, she has expanded from 130 hours to 11,560 hours in unpaid placement on her family's dairy farm outside of Coggon. She manages the operation by milking cows, feeding the dairy herd, and keeping facilities cleaned and sanitized. She spent time making sure the bacteria count in the milk never exceeded 26,000 parts per million. After graduation, she plans to continue working on the family farm and pursuing a degree in business. The second-place winner is Mae Wedemeier from the Wapsie Valley FFA Chapter at Fairbank.

Proficiency Area: Diversified Agricultural Production

State Winner: Gage Maurer

FFA Chapter: Wilton FFA Chapter

Description: Endowed by Hertz Farm Management, Gage Maurer of the Wilton FFA Chapter is the winner in the area of Diversified Ag Production. Gage has invested 600 hours at Maurer Grain & Livestock. He is the 4th generation on his family farm, has been raising his own angus cattle herd, and has doubled his herd in the past year while also increasing his herd's average daily gain by .65 pounds per day. Gage plans to keep expanding his herd and return to the family farm after college. The second-place winner is Tyce Van Beek from the Rock Valley FFA Chapter.

Proficiency Area: Diversified Crop Production - Entrepreneurship

State Winner: Chris Gebhardt

FFA Chapter: Clayton Ridge FFA Chapter

Description: Chris Gebhardt of the Clayton Ridge FFA chapter is the first-place winner for the Diversified Crop Production - Entrepreneurship area, endowed by Robert and Charlotte Tannreuther. Chris focused on playing an active role in his family's alfalfa hay operation. He learned firsthand how to manage, operate and juggle the farming markets and work demands. The runner up in this area is Blake Sheetz of the Washington FFA chapter.

Proficiency Area: Diversified Crop Production - Placement

State Winner: Caleb Marr

FFA Chapter: Riceville FFA Chapter

Description: Caleb Marr, of the Riceville FFA Chapter, is the first-place winner of the area of Diversified Crop Production - Placement, sponsored by CHS Foundation. Marr works at the family farm cutting, raking and baling hay along with planting and harvesting corn and beans. Marr's career objective is to operate the family farm someday.

Proficiency Area: Diversified Horticulture

State Winner: Jillian Clayton

FFA Chapter: Denver FFA Chapter

Description: Jillian Clayton of the Denver FFA is the first-place winner in the area of Diversified Horticulture, sponsored by Iowa FFA Gold Standard Partners. Jillian has invested countless hours working at a flower farm and shop to expand her knowledge of horticultural practices from seed to finish. She has worked in different business scenarios to develop financial planning, customer communication skills, and plant process knowledge. The runner-up in this area is Landon Bloomquist of the Central Plains FFA Chapter at Gowrie.

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Proficiency Area: Diversified Livestock Production

State Winner: Madalynn Johnson

FFA Chapter: Denver FFA Chapter

Description: In the area of Diversified Livestock Production, endowed by Milt Luckstead Sr., first place is Madalynn Johnson of the Denver FFA Chapter. She raises 25 head of Southdown sheep in her project along with her other livestock. She is very involved in FFA and other county fair activities. She showed great knowledge of industry tools and data. Her plans for the future are to major in criminology with a minor in psychology. The runner up in this area is Kayla Hoeger from Maquoketa Valley.

Proficiency Area: Environmental Science and Natural Resources Management

State Winner: Tucker Olsen

FFA Chapter: Tri-Center FFA Chapter, Neola

Description: Tucker Olsen of the Tri-Center FFA Chapter at Neola is the first-place winner in the area of Environmental Science and Natural Resources Management, sponsored by Iowa FFA Gold Standard Partners. Olsen has invested over 470 hours in his role at Fireball Construction, where he is a machinery operator, mechanic, laborer, snow removal executive, and project supervisor. Upon graduation, Tucker plans to join the military. Shelby Eberhart of the Maquoketa FFA Chapter is the runner-up in this area.

Proficiency Area: Equine Science - Entrepreneurship

State Winner: Shelby Lee Sorenson

FFA Chapter: Central Plains FFA Chapter, Gowrie

Description: Shelby Sorenson of the Central Plains FFA Chapter at Gowrie is the first-place winner in the area of Equine Science - Entrepreneurship, sponsored by Iowa State University Block and Bridle Club. In addition to caring for her five horses, Shelby trains horses and participates in judging. Her future plans include becoming an ag teacher. Runner up is Tracy Reth from the Maquoketa Valley FFA Chapter.

Proficiency Area: Equine Science - Placement

State Winner: Jameson Demuth

School: Vinton-Shellsburg FFA Chapter

Description: Jameson Demuth of the Vinton-Shellsburg FFA Chapter is the winner in the area of Equine Science - Placement, sponsored by Iowa FFA Gold Standard Partners. Jameson has invested over 1444 hours working for Rockin' Spots Ranch. He has helped raise 13 national and international horses. Through Jameson's SAE, he has identified a career goal as an equine veterinarian, specializing in equine reproduction and embryology. The second-place winner is Breanna Thielen from the North Linn FFA Chapter at Troy Mills.

Proficiency Area: Fiber and/or Oil Crop Production

State Winner: Houston Holdgrafer

School: Easton Valley FFA Chapter, Preston

Description: Sponsored by Iowa Soybean Association, Houston Holdgrafer of the Easton Valley FFA Chapter at Preston is the first-place winner in the area of Fiber and/or Oil Crop Production. Holdgrafer's soybean project started with 15 acres in 2024 and has grown to 61 acres for the 2026 season. He has expanded his knowledge to better market the soybeans and to navigate the recent foreign soybean trade practices. Holdgrafer plans to attend Iowa State University and major in Ag Studies.

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Proficiency Area:

Forage Production

State Winner: Clay Lambert
School: Central Plains FFA Chapter, Gowrie
Description: Clay Lambert of the Central Plains FFA chapter at Gowrie is the first-place winner in the area of Forage Production, sponsored by 4 Seasons Fundraising. Clay focused on baling hay and learning how to market his hay to customers. He also worked to maintain his farm equipment to ensure efficient and sustainable practices. The runner up in this area is Caden Wittrock of the South O'Brien FFA chapter.

Proficiency Area: **Forest Management and Products**

State Winner: Cole Barton
School: Maquoketa FFA Chapter
Description: The first-place winner in Forest Management and Products, sponsored by myfruitsales.com, is Cole Barton of the Maquoketa FFA Chapter. His project focused on helping with forest management projects while working at Woodland Forestry. Projects included environmental improvement, tree planting, plant identification, and equipment maintenance. Using problem solving skills, he helped improve tree populations by pruning and thinning stands. He plans to pursue a career that allows outdoor and hands-on work. The second-place winner is Bryce Walker of Charles City.

Proficiency Area: **Fruit and Nut Production**

State Winner: Isaac Geistkemper
School: Beckman Catholic FFA Chapter, Dyersville
Description: Isaac Geistkemper from Beckman Catholic at Dyersville is the first-place winner in the Fruit and Nut Production category, sponsored by 4 Seasons Fundraising. Isaac is the owner of Ike's acres strawberries, a business he founded. Geistkemper sells his strawberries locally and has developed his own computer program for his customers to use to order his berries. Aiden Anderson from Central Plains at Gowrie is the second-place winner.

Proficiency Area: **Goat Production**

State Winner: Kierstyn Ebbers
School: Hartley-Melvin-Sanborn FFA Chapter
Description: Kierstyn Ebbers of the Hartley-Melvin-Sanborn FFA chapter is the winner in the area of Goat Production, sponsored by Iowa FFA Gold Standard Partners. Kierstyn owns and operates Ebbers's goats where she focuses on marketing and breeding quality. Through her SAE, she shows her passion for the Boer goat breed. After graduation, Kierstyn wants to pursue a career in the medical field. The runner up in this area of is Joanna Cook from the Tri-Center FFA chapter at Neola.

Proficiency Area: **Grain Production**

State Winner: Tyler Hoeger
FFA Chapter: Maquoketa Valley FFA Chapter
Description: Tyler Hoeger of the Maquoketa Valley FFA chapter is the first-place winner in the area of Grain Production, sponsored by Iowa FFA Gold Standard Partners. Over the past four years, Tyler has invested nearly 5000 hours of work in his SAE. He works on his farm where he planted the majority of the soybean acres as well as helping with harvest and other fieldwork. Hoeger also grows his own 11 acre corn crop. Over the past four years, he has increased his corn yield by 30 bushels per acre. After graduation, Tyler plans to return to the family farm and continue to grow his operation. The runner up in this area is Jaivyn Van Grootheest of the Rock Valley FFA chapter.

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Proficiency Area: Landscape Installation

State Winner: Chance Hoyt

FFA Chapter: Marengo FFA Chapter

Description: Chance Hoyt of the Marengo FFA Chapter is the first-place winner in the area of Landscape Installation, sponsored by Iowa FFA Gold Standard Partners. Hoyt has been working for Outdoor Creations for three years, earning over \$8000. He has learned how to design landscapes, train new employees, and problem solving with soil and plants. Hoyt plans to continue working in landscaping after graduating high school. The runner up in this area is Rowdy Loy from Williamsburg.

Proficiency Area: Nursery Operations

State Winner: Morgan Manes

FFA Chapter: Brokaw FFA Chapter, Clarinda

Description: Morgan Manes from the Brokaw FFA Chapter at Clarinda is the first-place winner in the area of Nursery Operations, sponsored by Iowa FFA Gold Standard Partners. Manes has invested over 500 hours throughout his four years. He works for his family tree farm by working with nursery trees. Morgan helps care for, prune, water, and sell the trees. Upon graduation he plans to study political science and environmental studies. The runner up in this area is Clara Schneider from Wilton.

Proficiency Area: Organic Agriculture

State Winner: Macoy Winn

FFA Chapter: North Linn FFA Chapter, Troy Mills

Description: Sponsored by Iowa FFA Gold Standard Partners, the winner of the Organic agriculture award is Macoy Winn of the North Linn FFA Chapter at Troy Mills. Macoy played an instrumental role in reconstructing an aeroponic chamber for growing organic plants. The system was mobile, so he was able to travel to community events and demonstrate sustainable food production. He developed expertise in preparation of nutrient solutions to optimize plant growth. His career aspirations are to pursue a role in a sports-related field.

Proficiency Area: Outdoor Recreation

State Winner: Morgan Bryan

FFA Chapter: Roland-Story FFA Chapter, Story City

Description: Morgan Bryan of the Roland Story FFA Chapter at Story City is the first-place winner in the area of Outdoor Recreation, sponsored by Iowa Trappers Association. Bryan has invested more than 165 hours into her SAE of outdoor property maintenance. She tracks animals on the property, clears ATV trails, manages and plants food plots, and preps game for consumption. Upon graduation, Morgan hopes to start a faith-based outdoor education center. The runner-up in this area is Nancy Van De Walle from Denver.

Proficiency Area: Poultry Production

State Winner: Luke Boyle

FFA Chapter: West Dubuque FFA Chapter, Epworth

Description: Sponsored by Rose Acre Farms, Luke Boyle of the West Dubuque FFA Chapter at Epworth is the first-place winner in the area of Poultry Production. Luke has profited over \$1,105 from his poultry entrepreneurship. Luke's duties have grown over his three years with his chickens. He is responsible for feeding and management, daily chores, pre-processing marketing, housing management, and business record keeping with the 118-bird operation. This year, he sold all of his chickens in 53 hours while retaining 97% of his previous year's customers. Luke's future plans are to obtain a degree in Data Science with a minor in Agricultural Systems Technology to one day work in the precision agriculture field. The runner up in this area is Lilah Heinz from the AC/GC FFA Chapter.

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Proficiency Area: **Service Learning**

State Winner: Lauren Schroeder

FFA Chapter: Calamus-Wheatland FFA Chapter

Description: Lauren Schroeder, of the Calamus-Wheatland FFA Chapter is the first-place winner in the area of Service Learning, endowed by Iowa Institute for Cooperatives. Schroeder serves her community through a 1.5 acre garden, harvesting over 18,030 pounds of produce in the past four years, worth \$37,234. All produce is donated to 13 non-profit organizations in Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois, including soup kitchens, food pantries, and women’s shelters. Lauren has been recognized for her work on a national level and continues to expand her impact locally. The second-place winner is Lillie Curry of the Mount Ayr FFA chapter.

Proficiency Area: **Sheep Production**

State Winner: Caden Spetman

FFA Chapter: OABCIG FFA Chapter

Description: The winner in the area of Sheep Production, sponsored by Iowa Club Lamb Association, is Caden Spetman of the OABCIG FFA chapter. Caden started his project in fourth grade with four bred ewes. Throughout his high school career, he grew his flock to 20 pregnant ewes. Using selective breeding, Caden was able to improve his flock and prepare for a future raising sheep. After graduation, he plans to grow his flock and continue raising sheep. The runner up in this area is Alice Nicklaus of the Calamus-Wheatland FFA chapter.

Proficiency Area: **Small Animal Production and Care**

State Winner: Makenze Riedel

FFA Chapter: Williamsburg FFA Chapter

Description: The winner in the area of Small Animal Production and Sare, sponsored by Iowa FFA Gold Standard Partners, is Makenze Riedel of the Williamsburg FFA Chapter. Riedel has an SAE involved in both placement and entrepreneurship where she has put in 47 hours at Rabbits Rodeo Rabbitry and owns 56 rabbits as of 2025. Through her SAE, she has learned proper handling, management practices, and showing on a national scale. After graduation, Riedel plans on becoming an actress. The runner up in this area is Autumn Domeyer from Beckman Catholic at Dyersville.

Proficiency Area: **Specialty Animal Production and Care**

State Winner: Emilia Bloomquist

FFA Chapter: Central Plains FFA Chapter, Gowrie

Description: Emilia Bloomquist, of the Central Plains FFA chapter at Gowrie, is the first-place winner in the area of Specialty Animal Production, sponsored by Iowa FFA Gold Standard Partners. Bloomquist provided care, feeding, and training for her family’s donkey enterprise. Her hours increased from 234 in year one to 410 in year two. Upon graduation, Bloomquist plans to pursue an education to become a large animal veterinarian.

Proficiency Area: **Specialty Crop Production and Care**

State Winner: Avery Kaster

FFA Chapter: Albia FFA Chapter

Description: Avery Kaster from the Albia FFA Chapter is the first-place winner in the area of Specialty Crop Production, sponsored by Iowa FFA Gold Standard Partners. Kaster invested over 250 hours working on a local flower farm. Her work included planting, maintaining, and harvesting flowers. Kaster’s career objective is to work in the floriculture industry.

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Proficiency Area: Swine Production - Entrepreneurship

State Winner: Ben Buhr

FFA Chapter: Vinton-Shellsburg FFA Chapter

Description: Ben Buhr from the Vinton-Shellsburg FFA Chapter is the first-place winner in Swine Production - Entrepreneurship, sponsored by Iowa Pork Producers Association. Ben has grown his market pig SAE from 33 head to 312 head in three years. Ben has increased the efficiency of his operation by grinding his own feed and managing other production expenses through careful financial management. Buhr has increased his carcass cut out value to 74 while reducing death loss and overall health expenses. After graduation, Ben plans to attend Iowa State University to major in Ag Business. Second place in this area is Alison Schulte from the Maquoketa Valley FFA Chapter.

Proficiency Area: Swine Production - Placement

State Winner: Hannah Hicks

FFA Chapter: Central Plains FFA Chapter, Gowrie

Description: The winner in the area of Swine Production - Placement, sponsored by Hog Slat – Midwest Division, is Hannah Hicks of the Central Plains FFA chapter at Gowrie. Hicks started her SAE in 2020 when she got involved in her family's swine operation with over 13,000 head of nursing to finish hogs. She has put in over 2,400 hours through performing daily maintenance of health, vaccinations, feed distributing, and loading trucks for sale. Hicks plans to attend Iowa State University in the fall to become an agricultural teacher and FFA Advisor. The runner up in this area is Kahle Weber from the Rock Valley FFA Chapter.

Proficiency Area: Turf and Landscape Maintenance

State Winner: Carter Michels

FFA Chapter: Bellevue FFA Chapter

Description: Carter Michels of the Bellevue FFA Chapter is the first-place winner in the area of Turf and Landscape Maintenance, sponsored by Iowa Turfgrass Institute. Carter owns and operates his own lawncare business taking care of over 70 lawns. He is in charge of business decisions, mowing, trimming, mulching, and so much more. Carter plans to become a maintenance technician using his experiences along the way. The runner up in this area is Abigail McKenna from Vinton-Shellsburg.

Proficiency Area: Vegetable Production

State Winner: Aiden Anderson

FFA Chapter: Central Plains FFA Chapter, Gowrie

Description: Aiden Anderson, of the Central Plains FFA Chapter at Gowrie, is the first-place winner in the category of Vegetable Production, sponsored by Iowa FFA Gold Standard Partners. Aiden has invested over 1600 hours into D7D Anderson Farms raising vegetables while also operating the School Hydroponic system. Through both experiences, he gained valuable skills in plant production, tillage and soil preparation and fertilization, as well as operating and maintaining equipment. Aiden is currently studying Ag Studies at Iowa State University, with plans to return to the family farm. The runner up in this area is Rylee Pulliam from the Brokaw FFA Chapter at Clarinda.

Proficiency Area: Veterinary Science

State Winner: Kelsie Thompson

FFA Chapter: Easton Valley FFA Chapter, Preston

Description: Kelsie Thompson of the Easton Valley FFA chapter at Preston is the first-place winner in the area of Veterinary Science, sponsored by Christensen Farms. Kelsie has recorded almost 900 hours at her local veterinary clinic, becoming proficient in small and large animal practices. She also helps on her family's cow calf operation. This fall Kelsie plans to attend Iowa State University to major in animal science on the pre-Vet track and earn a beef cattle production certificate. The runner up in this area is Mikenzi Davis of the North Butler FFA Chapter at Greene.