



Key Historical Moments

1917

The Smith-Hughes National Vocational Education Act establishes vocational agriculture courses.

1926

Henry Groseclose, an agriculture teacher trainer and former agricultural education instructor, helps organize the Future Farmers of Virginia for boys in agriculture classes. Soon similar groups are established across the country. The FFV would be used as a model for creation of the FFA in 1928.

1926

The American Royal Livestock Show invites vocational agriculture students to participate in National Livestock Judging Contests in Kansas City, Mo.

1928

During the National Livestock Judging Contests, 33 students from 18 states establish the Future Farmers of America to provide leadership training for high school students of vocational agriculture. During this first annual convention, Leslie Applegate of Freehold, N.J., is elected president and dues are set at 10 cents annually. The national convention was held in Kansas City 1928-1998.

1929

The official colors-national blue and corn gold-are adopted. They are still used today.

1930

At the 3rd National FFA Convention, the membership issue is clarified when the all-member, male delegation amend the constitution restricting membership to boys only under Article III, Section B. The official creed is adopted.

1933

Fredericktown, Ohio, FFA members arrive at the national convention in crisp, blue corduroy jackets with the FFA emblem on the back. Official delegates vote to adopt the jacket as the organization's official dress. Members still wear the nationally-recognized jackets today, honoring the tradition and history of FFA. More than 50,000 are manufactured each year.

Members across the country celebrate the first National FFA Day. In 1948, this would be changed to FFA Week and celebrated during George Washington's birthday to recognize his pioneering contributions to American agriculture.

1934

All states except Rhode Island and Alaska have chartered associations. Rhode Island would charter an association in 1950 and Alaska in 1976.

1935

New Farmers of America (NFA), an organization for African-American boys interested in agriculture, is formed and eventually includes 13 states. It is patterned after the New Farmers of Virginia formed in 1927.

1944

The National FFA Foundation, Inc., was established in Washington, D.C., to raise money for FFA programs and activities from business, industry, government, individuals and foundation sponsors. Today, the Foundation is located in Indianapolis, In., and raises more than \$7.3 million annually.



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1948

FFA members participate in the organization's first international exchange program with the Young Farmers Club of Great Britain. By 1996, the FFA would send more than 350 students to more than 25 countries annually.

1950

The U.S. Congress passes Public Law 81-740, which grants the FFA a Federal Charter and stipulates that a U.S. Department of Education staff member be the national FFA advisor. Today FFA continues to be recognized by Congress as an intracurricular part of the educational program.

1953

FFA celebrates its silver anniversary. President Dwight D. Eisenhower is the first sitting president* to address a national FFA convention. The U.S. Post Office issues a special stamp to commemorate the founding of the FFA.

*Future presidents Richard Nixon (1968), Gerald Ford (1974), Jimmy Carter (1978) and George H.W. Bush (1991) would each speak at a national FFA convention and Ronald Reagan (1988) would address the national convention via a pre-recorded message. (Carter would also speak to the national convention in 1975 while governor of Georgia, and Bush would speak to the national convention in 1987 while vice president.) Harry S Truman would address the national convention in 1957, four years after leaving office.

1959

The FFA headquarters is established in Alexandria, Va., on land which was part of George Washington's estate. The FFA had owned the land since 1939 and used it for national camps. During the dedication, members participating in the first National Leadership Conference for State Officers place a hand full of soil from each state around the flagpole.

1965

The New Farmers of America (NFA), the organization for African-American agricultural education students, merges with the FFA, adding 50,000 members.

1966

The FFA National Agricultural Career Show, a trade show especially for students, exposes national convention attendees to educational and career opportunities in agriculture. By 1999, 350 exhibitors participated and occupied 400,000 square feet.

1969

Women are allowed national membership, which made it possible for them to hold office and participate in competitive events at the regional and national level. Prior to this amendment women were permitted membership only at the local and state level. Today, 35% of FFA membership is female, while 47% of state leadership positions are held by women.

The National FFA Foundation hires first full-time staff member in the Madison, Wis. office, the Wisconsin Secretary of Agriculture Donald McDowell.

1971

The National FFA Alumni Association is founded, providing opportunities for former FFA members and other supporters to become involved with their local student chapters. Today, the Alumni Association has 42,000 members.



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1974

Fred McClure of Texas is elected national FFA secretary, becoming the organization's first African-American national officer. McClure would later serve on President George Bush's staff in Washington, D.C.

1982

Jan Eberly is the first female elected National FFA President.

1988

Delegates to the national FFA convention change "Future Farmers of America" to the "National FFA Organization" to recognize the growth of agriculture and agricultural education to encompass the more than 300 careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture. Delegates also opened FFA membership to middle school students.

1991

The Virgin Islands and Guam are granted association charters and five chapters from Micronesia are granted affiliate chapter charters.

1994

Corey Flournoy of Chicago, Ill., is elected national FFA president, becoming the organization's first African-American president and first urban student leader.

1996

FFA announces its move of the national FFA convention from Kansas City, Mo., to Louisville, Ky.

The FFA web site, National FFA Online, goes live. Today, there are more than 35,000 unique visitors per month.

1998

The national convention was held in Kansas City for the last time in November 1998; the convention set an attendance record, drawing 49,240 members, guests and supporters. Additionally, the National FFA Center was moved from Alexandria, Va., to Indianapolis, In. The National FFA Center houses the National FFA Organization, the National FFA Foundation and the National FFA Alumni Association. Approximately 1,000 guests attended the dedication ceremonies on July 20, 1998. And, much like the 1959 dedication, members participating in the State Presidents' Conference placed a cup full of soil from their respective state at the base of the flagpole.

1999

The national FFA convention is held in Louisville, Ky., for the first time and will stay in Louisville through 2005; attendance was 46,918.

2000

FFA continues to expand opportunities for agricultural career preparation by introducing one new career development event and two demonstration events. The National FFA Archives, located at IUPUI in Indianapolis, officially opens.