

## **The American FFA Degree: The Ultimate Challenge**

The American FFA Degree is the highest level of membership you can achieve as an FFA member. This final step in the FFA Degree system encourages you to grow and achieve personally toward establishing yourself in an agricultural career. Before you can submit an application for the American FFA Degree, you must have received the preceding FFA degrees: Greenhand, Chapter FFA Degree and State FFA Degree.

The American FFA Degree is a sign of great accomplishment among FFA members. Only a small percentage of FFA members ever earn the degree (the greatest percentage of members ever to receive the degree in one year was less than one half of one percent).

To advance to this degree requires commitment and a lot of hard work on your part. But you don't have to be a gifted student or live on a large farm or ranch to reach this goal. The FFA degree system is organized so that all FFA members, no matter where you are from, have an equal chance of obtaining the American FFA Degree. However, you must show progress in your Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program to have a realistic chance at attaining this goal. If you are a freshman or sophomore in high school, now is the time to set the goal and create a road map on how you plan to achieve the American FFA Degree. If you are already a junior or senior, you can determine just what you need to do to obtain the degree before your FFA years are completed. To receive the American FFA Degree, you must have maintained your FFA membership and have graduated at least 12 months prior to the national FFA convention at which the degree is to be granted. You may retain your membership in the FFA until November 30, following the fourth national FFA convention after you graduate from high school, but not beyond age 23.

To be eligible to receive the American FFA Degree from the National FFA Organization, the member must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- Have received the State FFA Degree,
- Have been an active member for the past three years (36 months) and have a record of satisfactory participation in the activities on the chapter and state levels.
- Have satisfactorily completed the equivalent of at least three years (540 hours) of systematic secondary school instruction in an agricultural education program, or have completed the equivalent of at least two years of systematic secondary school instruction in an agricultural education program and completed one year of a post secondary education program in an agricultural major or have completed the program of agricultural education offered in the school last attended. NOTE: the hours of instruction do not need to be in three different calendar years).
- Have graduated from high school at least 12 months prior to the national convention at which the degree is to be granted.
- Have in operation and have maintained records to substantiate an outstanding supervised agricultural experience program through which a member has exhibited comprehensive planning, managerial and financial expertise.

- Have earned and productively invested at least \$7,500 or have earned and productively invested at least \$1,500 and worked 2,250 hours in excess of scheduled class time. Any combination of hours times a factor of 3.33 plus dollars must be equal to or greater than the number 9,000. Hours used for the purpose of producing earnings reported as productively invested income shall not be duplicated as hours of credit to meet the minimum requirements for the degree. Important note: The national constitution does not allow you to report hours you invested working on your entrepreneurship enterprise as unpaid hours to meet the minimum requirements for the degree. You can count only unpaid hours (such as in volunteer work, directed lab and/or research and experimentation) toward the 2,250 hours for achieving the degree via the second option.
- Have a record of outstanding leadership abilities and community involvement and have achieved a high school scholastic record of "C" or better as certified by the principal or superintendent.

**(NOTE: Your state association may have higher requirements to achieve the degree. You should review your state constitutions and policies for such differences in American FFA Degree standards within your state.)**