



National FFA Convention
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National FFA Organization
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NEWS RELEASE

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Wisconsin student named Star in Agribusiness Benjamin Alsum receives top honors for his business acumen

INDIANAPOLIS – When you mention business to Benjamin R. Alsum of Randolph, Wis., be sure to be specific. This 21-year-old doesn't have just one area of expertise, he has three—cattle-raising, customized baling and produce. It's this entrepreneurial spirit that has Alsum vying for one of the National FFA Organization's top awards.

He has been named 2009 American Star in Agribusiness, one of the organization's highest honors. Each year at the national FFA convention, 16 national finalists vie for the organization's top awards: American Star Farmer, American Star in Agribusiness, American Star in Agricultural Placement and American Star in Agriscience. These awards honor students who have developed outstanding agricultural skills and competencies through their supervised agricultural experience (SAE); demonstrated outstanding management skills; earned the American FFA Degree – the organization's highest level of accomplishment; and met other agricultural education, scholastic and leadership requirements. Each finalist was interviewed by a panel of judges, who named the top candidate in each area. The winner was announced in an onstage convention ceremony and received a plaque and an award of \$4,000. The runners-up will also receive plaques and \$2,000 each.

Alsum's experience with the produce business began when he was in middle school. His family sold sweet corn, vegetables, pumpkins and Indian corn at various stands across central and southeast Wisconsin. In 2005, Alsum purchased two percent of Alsum Sweet Corn. This endeavor was made possible through his expanding business, Ben's Bovine Beauties. This business—venture, along with a customized baling business— began early in Alsum's FFA career. They taught him the importance of enterprises and allowed him to increase his ownership of Alsum Sweet Corn to 25 percent. He hopes to grow it to 40 percent by the end of the year.

“Much of my success should go to FFA and the experiences I have gained from being an active member,” Alsum said. “Interacting with other FFA members and traveling to FFA events and activities have given me a diverse background in experiences, many of which relate to my SAE and its success.”

Alsum is the son of Scott and Lona Alsum. He is a member of the Randolph Cambria-Friesland FFA and his advisor is Keith Gundlach.

The American FFA Degree recognition programs are co-sponsored by Case IH of Racine, Wis.; Farm Credit Systems of Washington, D.C.; Pioneer Hi-Bred of Des Moines, Iowa; and Syngenta of Greensboro, N.C., as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

The National FFA Organization, formerly known as the Future Farmers of America, is a national youth organization of 507,763 student members – all preparing for leadership and careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture – as part of 7,439 local FFA chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The National FFA Organization changed to its present name in 1988, in recognition of the growth and diversity of agriculture and agricultural education. 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. Visit www.ffa.org for more information.

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