



NATIONAL FFA CONVENTION
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FFA Introduces New Vet Med SAE, Proficiency Award

By Andrew Walker

FFA members interested in pursuing careers in veterinary medicine can now develop the necessary skills through a brand new Veterinary Medicine Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE). Beginning in 2009, FFA members will be able to apply for a Veterinary Medicine Proficiency Award based on their work through that SAE.

A workshop held in the Indiana Convention Center on Thursday informed members and advisors what the new Veterinary Medicine SAE was all about. The workshop specifically focused on the difference between the Veterinary Medicine SAE and the Small Animal Care SAE.

The Small Animal Care SAE encompasses the production, training and sale of small animals, including those found in a pet store. Any veterinary experience on small animals may be included with this award.

The Veterinary Medicine SAE has several fundamental differences. It is primarily a science based proficiency, but includes the business of veterinary services as well. However, a member is not allowed to include the care of small animals into the Vet. Med. SAE, unless directly relating to veterinary medicine. FFA chapters can call the National FFA Center for further information on how to decipher the difference between the awards.

Many students found this workshop a great opportunity to advance their careers. It is yet another great possibility for career success, brought to you by the National FFA Organization.

“We want to go into veterinarian medicine and this is getting us ahead of the game,” said Faith Kinder of Wind River FFA Chapter in Wyoming.

“It breaks out to the fact that there was no proficiency award for you if you worked for a veterinarian. Now the opportunity has expanded,” said national FFA specialist Nina Crutchfield. “The AVMA [American Veterinary Medical Association] needs more vets.”

The students that attended the workshop today were able to get questions answered and points clarified.

“It’s good that they’re opening a new opportunity for us,” said Laura Schweigert of the Wind River FFA.

However, some members still aren’t sure what the new SAE includes.

“I want a career as a small animal vet.,” said Ariel Keller of the Cypress Falls FFA Chapter in Texas. “I don’t know what this proficiency is exactly.”

Chapter award winners in this proficiency area will receive a medal and certificate. Those receiving the award at the state level get \$250 cash as well as a framed certificate. Four national finalists will be chosen, each being awarded \$500 and a plaque. The national winner will be chosen during the national FFA convention and collect another \$500 and a plaque.

The Veterinary Medicine SAE Proficiency Award is sponsored by the American Veterinary Medical Association.

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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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