

# FFA and Agricultural Education Facts



## The FFA Mission

FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. The National FFA Organization motto is: Learning to Do; Doing to Learn; Earning to Live; Living to Serve.



FFA members, who may enter the workforce directly from high school or pursue higher degrees through technical schools and four-year universities, are preparing for careers in agricultural marketing, processing, communications, education, horticulture, production, natural resources, forestry, agribusiness and other diverse agricultural fields.

## Federally Chartered

FFA was organized nationally in 1928 in Kansas City, Missouri. In 1950, Congress granted FFA a federal charter, making it an integral, intracurricular part of public agricultural instruction under the National Vocational Education Acts. FFA receives no federal funding. The U.S. Department of Education provides leadership and helps set direction for FFA as a service to state and local agricultural education programs.

## Structure

FFA operates on local, state and national levels. Student members belong to chapters organized at the local school level. Agriculture educators serve as chapter advisors. Chapters are organized under state associations headed by an advisor and executive secretary, often employees of the state department of education. States conduct programs and host annual conventions. The National FFA Organization, governed by a board of directors, charters state associations; provides direction, program materials and support; and hosts the national FFA convention, which draws more than 50,000 attendees annually. The National FFA Alumni Association, with a membership of more than 47,000, assists students in the continued growth and development of active FFA programs.

## Membership

- Today, there are 506,199 FFA members, aged 12-21, in 7,429 chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.
- 42% of FFA members are female; women hold more than 47% of state leadership positions.
- 79% of FFA membership is Caucasian, 13% is Hispanic, 4% is African-American and 3% is Native American.
- 89% of FFA members are in grades 9-12, 7% are in grades 7-8 and 4% are high school graduates.
- 66% of FFA members live in rural/farm areas, 9% live in urban and suburban areas and 25% live in small towns.
- FFA chapters are in 16 of the 20 largest U.S. cities, including New York, Chicago and Philadelphia.
- The 2008 National FFA Convention was host to more than 54,000 FFA members, advisors and supporters.

## Membership

The FFA membership of 506,199 and 7,429 chapters represents all 50 states, as well as Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. FFA is a diverse organization, operating in rural, urban and suburban schools. Students aged 12-21 enrolled in agricultural education programs are eligible for membership.



## Science, Business and Technology

The organization changed its name in 1988 from Future Farmers of America to the National FFA Organization to reflect its evolution in response to expanded agricultural opportunities encompassing science, business and technology in addition to production farming.



## Education

- More than 10,000 agriculture teachers deliver an innovative, cutting-edge and integrated curriculum to students.
- 92% of agricultural education programs offer agriscience, 71% offer advanced agriscience and biotechnology, 59% offer agricultural mechanics, 49% offer horticulture, 43% offer animal science and 24% offer environment-related courses.
- 23% of agriculture teachers have five or fewer years of teaching experience.
- The shortage of qualified agriculture teachers is the greatest challenge facing FFA and agricultural education.

## Career Preparation

The agricultural education program provides a well-rounded, practical approach to learning through three components: classroom education in agricultural topics such as plant and animal sciences, horticulture, forestry, agrimarketing, etc.; hands-on supervised agricultural experience such as starting a business or working for an established company; and FFA, which provides leadership opportunities and tests students' agricultural skills.

## Programs and Activities

Local, state and national FFA programs and activities help members develop public speaking skills, conduct and participate in meetings, manage financial matters, strengthen problem-solving abilities and assume civic responsibilities. Degrees earned at local, state and national levels recognize members' increasing accomplishments.



## National FFA Foundation

The National FFA Foundation, headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana, works with business and industry, organizations and individuals to raise funds to recognize FFA achievements



## Student Leadership

FFA members elect their own officers and plan and conduct activities with supervision from their chapter advisors. A team of six national officers, typically college students taking a year out of their studies, plays a key role in planning the national convention and other events, traveling more than 100,000 miles during their year of service representing FFA.

## Headquarters

The National FFA Organization is headquartered at the U.S. Department of Education as a part of agricultural, food and natural resources education in the Office of Vocational and Adult Education. The business center of the National FFA Organization is located at the National FFA Center in Indianapolis, Indiana.

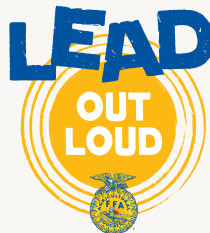


The National FFA Organization affirms its belief in the value of all human beings and seeks diversity in its membership, leadership and staff as an equal opportunity employer. Agricultural Education prepares students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in the global agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems. The National FFA Organization is a resource and support organization that does not select, control or supervise state association, local chapter or individual member activities. Education materials are developed by FFA in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education as a service to state and local agricultural education agencies.

and to support activities at local, state and national levels. The foundation's address is P.O. Box 68960, Indianapolis, IN 46268-0960. Telephone 317-802-6050. Fax 317-802-6051.

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## Career Exploration

- FFA members participate in hands-on work experiences, allowing them to apply knowledge learned in class.
- Collectively, FFA members earn \$4 billion annually through their hands-on work experiences.
- Members participate in and learn advanced career skills in 47 national proficiency areas based on their hands-on work experiences ranging from food science and technology to agricultural communications to wildlife management to production agriculture.
- According to the student magazine readership study, 87% of our students are interested in learning about career exploration, 81% about college preparation and 81% about technology.
- Through 23 national career development events and one activity, FFA members are challenged by real-life, hands-on tests of skills that prepare them for career success.

## Industry Support

- Agriculture is the nation's largest employer, with more than 21 million Americans (20% of the total U.S. workforce) working in some area of the industry. FFA prepares members for more than 300 careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture.
- In 2008, sponsors provided more than \$14.5 million for FFA and agricultural programs, activities and scholarships.
- Nearly 1,500 students of agricultural education benefited from FFA scholarships for the 2008-2009 school year.

## Alumni

Agriculture teachers rely on more than 47,000 FFA Alumni members and countless volunteers to help ease the outside commitments of teaching. FFA relies on alumni members for student recruiting, scholarship money, advocacy for agricultural education, aiding in camps, conferences, national FFA convention and other personal development programs.