



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National FFA membership tops 500,000 Highest level in 29 years!

INDIANAPOLIS – For the first time in 29 years, student membership of the National FFA Organization broke through the half million mark. This year, there are 500,823 members in 7,358 FFA chapters across the United States, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

“We are growing and steadily spreading our membership opportunities to youth not only in rural areas, but urban and suburban towns as well,” said Dr. Larry Case, chief executive officer and national advisor for the National FFA Organization. “Because career opportunities in agriculture and the food and fiber industries are diverse and plentiful, FFA membership is appealing in all geographic areas.”

The last time national FFA membership topped 500,000 was in 1978 with 507,108 members. Since that time, the percentage of members living on farms has decreased. Today, 27 percent of FFA members live in rural farm areas, whereas 40 percent live in rural nonfarm areas and the remaining 33 percent live in urban and suburban areas.

“FFA members are spreading the word at their schools, and new students are becoming members and learning about the great opportunities offered in FFA and agricultural education,” said Beau Williamson, the 2006-2007 national FFA president from Clovis, Calif.

FFA chapters are in 15 of the 20 largest U.S. cities including, New York, Chicago and Philadelphia. And 38 percent of FFA members are female. Women hold more than 47 percent of state leadership positions.

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The National FFA Organization is supporting a strategic goal to have 10,000 quality agricultural education programs with FFA chapters in the nation by the year 2015, and if the membership growth pattern continues, the goal will be reached. FFA membership is open to students aged 12-21 and enrolled in agricultural education programs in public high schools; 6 percent of current members participate in middle school programs and 5 percent are high school graduates or members in Collegiate FFA.

FFA was organized nationally in 1928 in Kansas City, Mo. In 1950, Congress granted FFA a federal charter, making it an integral, intracurricular part of the public agricultural instruction under the National Vocational Education Acts. FFA receives no federal funding.

The National FFA Organization, formerly known as the Future Farmers of America, is a national youth organization of 500,823 student members – all preparing for leadership and careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture – as part of 7,358 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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