

# News Release – 10/26/09



## For Information Contact:

Ben Lastly

Phone: (706) 542-8990

Email: blastly@uga.edu

## Georgia FFA Members & Chapters Earn Top Honors at the 82<sup>nd</sup> National FFA Convention

INDIANAPOLIS – The Georgia FFA Association had 7 national winners, and was recognized for the largest membership growth in the nation at the 82<sup>nd</sup> National FFA Convention last week in Indianapolis.

Audrey Davis of the Bainbridge FFA (Agricultural Education); Bradley Weaver of the Dawson County FFA in Dawsonville (Agriculture Sales - Entrepreneurship); Staten Levings of the Echols County FFA in Statenville (Forest Management & Products) and Courtney Curlin of the Lowndes County FFA in Valdosta (Emerging Agriculture Technology) were each named national proficiency award winners for the success they earned in their Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) programs. Georgia had fourteen national proficiency finalists who competed at the convention. Only four students from across the nation are named National Finalists in each proficiency area.

Newt Gilman of the East Jackson FFA chapter in Commerce was named the national winner in the FFA Creed Career Development Event (CDE). Gilman bested 43 other participants in three rounds of competition to be named the national winner. In each round, Gilman delivered the FFA Creed to a panel of judges, and answered oral questions about the FFA Creed. Gilman's agricultural education teachers are Mr. Greg Gilman, Ms. Taylor Ginn and Mr. Todd Shultz.

Kalie Hall of the Franklin County FFA was named the top individual in the national Livestock Evaluation CDE; and Trevor Correia and Josh Barron, also of the Franklin County FFA, were named the national winners in Division 4 of the Environmental Science category in the National Agriscience Fair. The agricultural education teachers at Franklin County are Mr. Gary Minyard, Mr. Owen Thomason, and Mr. Cale Watkins.

Other CDE highlights from Georgia included the Perry FFA placing 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Nursery/Landscape CDE (Nick Wood, 6<sup>th</sup> place individual; Thomas Burnham, 7<sup>th</sup> place individual; & Spencer Freeman, 8<sup>th</sup> place individual); the West Laurens FFA placing 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Agricultural Sales CDE (Benjamin Woodard, 4<sup>th</sup> place individual); the Franklin County FFA finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Floriculture CDE (Ally Eavenson, 3<sup>rd</sup> place individual); Holly Ward of the Seminole County FFA placed 5<sup>th</sup> in the Job Interview CDE; the Franklin County FFA placed 5<sup>th</sup> in the Livestock Evaluation CDE; Andrea Sweeny (4<sup>th</sup>) and Rachel King (10<sup>th</sup>) of the Putnam County FFA earned individual honors in the Environmental Science & Natural Resources CDE; and the Banks County (Poultry), Franklin County (Dairy Evaluation), Ware County (Forestry) all earned national Gold CDE rankings.

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Twenty-three Georgia FFA chapters received a national 3-Star ranking, the highest ranking offered in the National Chapter Award program. Those chapters included Berrien County (Nashville), Brantley Middle (Nahunta), Cross Creek (Augusta), Early County (Blakely), Etowah (Woodstock), Echols County (Statenville), Effingham County (Springfield), Franklin County Middle (Carnesville), Jackson County (Jefferson), Jasper Middle (Jasper), Jeff Davis High (Hazlehurst), Jeff Davis Middle (Hazlehurst), Loganville, Lowndes County (Valdosta), Montgomery Middle (Mt. Vernon), Murray County (Chatsworth), Oconee County (Watkinsville), Pelham, Screven County (Sylvania), Seminole County (Donalsonville), Southeast Bulloch (Brooklet), Treutlen County (Soperton), and Wayne County (Jesup). Three chapters earned a national 2-Star ranking. Those chapters included Oconee Middle (Watkinsville), Putnam County (Eatonton), and Stephens County (Toccoa). The Lowndes County FFA chapter was named a national finalist in the Models of Innovation program for their creative work in Student Development.

Nine Georgians were recognized for their support of agricultural education and the FFA. Mr. John K. Wilkinson of Toccoa received the VIP award for his more than 30 years of service as an agricultural education teacher, FFA Executive Secretary and State Program Manager. State Senator Jack Hill (Reidsville), Mr. David Turner (Commerce), Mr. Rodney Kellum (Swainsboro), Dr. David Bridges (Tifton), Mrs. Gale Cutler (Tucker), Mr. Jack Barnes (Jasper), Mr. Bill Waldrep (Forsyth), and Mr. Conrad Davidson (Waycross) each received the Honorary American FFA degree for the contribution that they make to the agricultural education program and FFA.

Seventy-one Georgia FFA members received the prestigious American FFA Degree, the highest degree offered to an active FFA member. These students each spent several years developing and growing their Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) programs to reach this honor. Those receiving the degree include: Jacob Allen (Fannin County), Bryan Babcock (Cass), Leigha Beckum (Toombs County), Brantley Bell (Bleckley County), Caroline K. Black (Jackson County), Corey Booth (Jackson County), Brianna Bryant (Jackson County), Katy Burden (Greene County), Lauren Burton (Pelham), David L. Chapman, Jr. (Pickens County), Alan Chavous (Cross Creek), Candace Claxton (Treutlen County), Nicholas Collar (Etowah), Katie E. Collins (Oconee County), Megan Cornelius (Ware Magnet), Austin Crown (Union Grove), Jennifer Dalton (Banks County), Kami Dalton (Banks County), Jacob Daniel (Oconee County), Jake D. Daughtrey (Cook County), Katie Daughtrey (Cook County), Jacob Dungan (Mary Persons), Andrew L. Dunn (Seminole County), Michelle Edge (Treutlen County), Sara C. Ervin (Southeast Bulloch), Dustin Farmer (Franklin County), Hannah Findley (Gilmer County), Hunter Freeman (Treutlen County), Ashleigh Gainer (Jeff Davis), Eli Garrett (North Oconee), Paul Gates (Cook County), Cody Greeson (Cook County), Samantha Grinstead (Treutlen County), Claudia Hagan (Rockdale Career Academy), Trenton W. Hammock (North Oconee), Justin Hand (Tift County), Jessica B. Harston (Winder-Barrow), Ronald Hearn (Bleckley County), Alana Heath (Treutlen County), Jessica Jones (Toombs County), Kella Kicklighter (Ware Magnet), John D. Kimbrell (Colquitt County), Justin Lanier (Eagle's Landing), Michael Leggett (Jeff Davis), Lauren Matthews (Jeff Davis), Matthew Mayhue (Elbert County), Travis McArthur (Gilmer County), Emory McAvoy (Thomson), Samantha Meeks (Swainsboro), Donnie Nash, Jr. (Appling County), Daniel New (Elbert County), Rachel Patrick (Putnam County), Seth Peavy (Bleckley County), Hayden Phipps (Southeast Whitfield), Betsy Pye (Jeff Davis), Donna L. Ramay (Jeff Davis), Kayla-Dale Roberts (Franklin County), Trey Rogers (Treutlen County), Cassidy N. Shields (Fannin County), Brandon L. Smith (Jeff Davis), Tommy D. Spell (Appling County), Andrew J. Strickland (Jackson County), Kalyn Stuart (Screven County), Lottie Thomas (Ware Magnet), Robyn R. Thompson (Franklin County), Layton Tompkins (Lowndes County), Thomas Turcotte (Pickens County), Jacob Williams (Jeff Davis), Katie A. Williams (Morgan County), Chris Wright (Pickens County), and Savannah Wyatt (Gordon Central).

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The Georgia FFA Association was recognized as the state Association with the largest membership growth in 2008-2009, with an increase of over 1,400 members. This marks the 11<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that the Georgia FFA has increased in membership.

The 2008-2009 National FFA Officer team presided over the Convention. Serving as the 2008-2009 National Southern Region Vice-President was Regina Holliday of the East Laurens FFA. Holliday presided over the 2<sup>nd</sup> general session on Thursday, October 22, and presented her retiring officer address, entitled "Something That Matters," on Friday, October 23. Holliday awarded the Honorary American Degree to her parents, and recognized her agricultural education teachers and state staff for their support of her FFA career.

Johnny Jones of the Toombs County FFA Alumni chapter was elected to serve on the National FFA Alumni Council. Jones will serve a 3-year term as the Southern Region Representative on the national Council, representing the states of Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Puerto Rico. Jones currently serves as President-Elect of the Georgia FFA Alumni Council.

Kaitlyn Cass (Gilmer County) performed as part of the National FFA band; and TJ Cochran (Pepperell), Jarrett Fail (Southeast Bulloch) and Debra Smith (Jackson County) each performed in the national FFA talent program.

More than 53,000 attended the 82<sup>nd</sup> National FFA Convention. The theme for the convention was *Lead Out Loud*. A complete set of results and a variety of highlights from the 82<sup>nd</sup> National FFA Convention can be found on the National FFA website at [www.ffa.org/convention/2009/awards.cfm](http://www.ffa.org/convention/2009/awards.cfm).

There are more than 500,000 FFA members nationwide. The Georgia Association has over 29,000 members, making it the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest Association in the nation. The 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.

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