



For Information Contact:

Ben Lastly

Phone: (706) 552-4456

Email: blastly@uga.edu

Georgia FFA Brings Home the Gold with 17 National Winners and a National FFA Officer

INDIANAPOLIS – The Georgia FFA Association had a very successful trip to the 85th National FFA Convention highlighted by 17 national winners and the state's 14th national FFA officer. Georgia brought home the American Star in Agribusiness, 10 national proficiency award winners, the high scoring individual in the national Livestock Evaluation career development event (CDE), four national Agriscience Fair winners, the Outstanding Middle School FFA chapter in the nation and the 2012-2013 National FFA Secretary, Kalie Hall of Franklin County. The 2011-2012 National FFA Officer team presided over the convention, including National FFA Vice President, Cain Thurmond of Jefferson. Thurmond presented his Retiring Address entitled "Home" at the convention's fourth general session.

Bradley Weaver, a member of the Dawson County FFA chapter in Dawsonville, Georgia, was named the 2012 American Star in Agribusiness. Weaver earned this recognition by developing his Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program over the past seven years. *Bradley's Pumpkin Patch* has developed from a roadside stand into a thriving agribusiness that markets not only pumpkins, but Christmas trees, daffodils, peanuts, and daylilies; in addition to providing a landscaping service. From the field of 3,245 American FFA Degree recipients in 2012, Weaver was one of four named as a finalist for American Star in Agribusiness. Weaver is only the fourth Georgian to ever be named an American Star. Bradley's advisor is Mr. Reggie Stowers. In addition to Weaver, two other Georgians were recognized as American Star Finalists. Justin Cochran of the Franklin County FFA chapter was honored as one of four finalists for the American Star in Agricultural Placement. Kaylyn Stout of the Lowndes County FFA chapter was recognized as a finalist for the American Star in Agriscience. Georgia was the only state with three American Star finalists.

Kalie Hall, a member of the Franklin County FFA chapter in Carnesville, Georgia, was elected as one of six student leaders to serve the National FFA Organization in 2012-2013. Hall and her teammates were selected from a field of 41 candidates. As the National FFA Secretary, Hall will take a year of absence from the University of Georgia to travel over 125,000 miles across the United States and Japan representing agricultural education and the FFA. Hall, a junior at UGA majoring in Agricultural Education, is the fourteenth Georgian to be elected to serve as a national FFA officer. Hall's advisors are Mr. Gary Minyard, Mr. Cale Watkins and Mr. Owen Thomason.

Brandon Wiley of the Screven County FFA chapter (Agricultural Mechanics Repair & Maintenance), Jonathan Mobley of the Colquitt County FFA chapter (Agricultural Processing), Ansley Akin of the Franklin County FFA chapter (Agricultural Sales), Steven Cooper of the Jackson County FFA chapter (Diversified Agricultural Production), Kyle Moore of the Early County FFA chapter (Fiber and Oil Crop Production), Kason Lott of the Irwin County FFA (Forest Management), J.W. Oliver of the Wayne County FFA chapter (Fruit Production), Jacob Schindler of the Lowndes County FFA chapter (Agriscience Research – Plant Systems), Candace Barnes of the Franklin County FFA chapter (Poultry Production), and Mary Catherine Cromley of the Southeast Bulloch FFA chapter (Specialty Crop Production) were each named national FFA

-MORE-

proficiency award winners for the success they earned in their Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) programs. Only four students from across the nation are named National Finalists in each of the 49 proficiency areas. Georgia led the nation in number of national proficiency award finalists (24) and national proficiency award winners (10).

Gibson Priest of the Gordon Central FFA was named the top individual in the national Livestock Evaluation CDE. Priest's agricultural education teacher at Gordon Central is Mrs. Melissa Hubbard. Other top five national CDE finishes from Georgia included Perry finishing 3rd in the national Floriculture CDE; North Oconee finished 3rd in the national Nursery/Landscape CDE; and Bleckley County placed 5th in the national Forestry CDE.

Hunter Pruitt of the Sonoraville FFA chapter (Animal Systems – Division 2), Kevin and Lori Edwards of the Sonoraville FFA chapter (Animal Systems – Division 3), Hunter Corbett of the Pine Grove Middle FFA chapter (Environmental/Natural Resource Systems – Division 1), and Reaud Sims of the Lowndes County FFA chapter (Power, Structure, and Technology Systems – Division 2) were each named national winners in the 2012 Agriscience Fair. Georgia had entries in 21 divisions of the Agriscience Fair. Nineteen of Georgia's entries placed in the top ten in the nation.

The Screven County Middle School FFA chapter in Sylvania was named the 2012 Outstanding Middle School chapter in the nation. Based on the success of their National Chapter Award application, the Screven County Middle chapter was named one of five national finalists for the award back in July. At the National Convention, members of the chapter officer team made a presentation to a panel of judges highlighting the many successful Student Development, Chapter Development and Community Development activities that the chapter conducted as part of their Program of Activities. The agricultural education teacher and FFA advisor at Screven County Middle is Ms. Bridget Mixon.

Seven Georgia FFA chapters received a national 3-Star ranking, the highest ranking offered in the National Chapter Award program. Those chapters included Colquitt County (Moultrie), East Jackson (Commerce), Emanuel County Institute (Twin City), Madison County High (Danielsville), Southeast Bulloch (Brooklet), Screven County Middle (Sylvania), and Wayne County (Jesup).

Five Georgians were recognized for their support of agricultural education and the FFA as part of the Convention. State Representative Terry England (Winder) was recognized with the National FFA VIP Citation. Ms. Sara Clark (Calhoun), Mr. David Connell (Cairo), Dr. Larry Guthrie (Watkinsville), and Mr. David Yelton (Elko) each received the Honorary American FFA Degree for the contribution that they make to the agricultural education program and FFA.

Sixty-eight Georgia FFA members received the prestigious American FFA Degree, the highest degree offered to an active FFA member. These students spent years developing their Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) programs to reach this honor. Those receiving the degree include: Eric Allen (Franklin County), Tyler Allen (Franklin County), Benjamin P. Amerson (Hephzibah), Brandon Arnold (Jefferson City), Kadum Aselton (Etowah), Ben Bennett (Lowndes County), Brandi M. Bishop (Pike County), Kathy Brunner (Jeff Davis), Bert Carithers (East Jackson), Michael Carroll (Colquitt County), Jesse D. Chitwood (Madison County), Jackson C. Cloud (Seminole County), Ashley B. Cochran (Northwest Whitfield), Justin Cochran (Franklin County), Jared Corbett (Echols County), Kari Crandall (Putnam County), Josh Daniel (Oconee County), Jamie Davis (Jeff Davis), Tyler Dungan (Mary Persons), Ronald Few (Alcovy), Jessica N. Fife (Jackson County), Katie Garrett (North Oconee), Cody L. Gibbs (Perry), Casey E. Graham

(Jefferson City), John W. Hanna (Seminole County), Gunnar A. Hartley (Elbert County), Beth Hickey (Stephens County), Eric S. Hickox (Ware County), Kendal J. Hickox (Ware County), Kenneth Houseal (Dawson County), Joshua P. James (Elbert County), Rachel Johnson (Mary Persons), Trevor Jones (East Jackson), Eli Kesting (Dawson County), Michelle H. O. Kinsey (LaFayette), Amanda Miller (Jeff Davis), Jennifer A. Mitcham (Rabun County), Jason Neal (Franklin County), Ben Pope (Irwin County), Brandon Porter (Franklin County), James Porter (Echols County), Nick Reynolds (Dawson County), Dustin Rhoden (Brantley County), Brianna Roberts (Madison County), Patrick T. Savelle (Oconee County), Taylor Schieszer (East Jackson), Becky L. Shirley (East Jackson), Daniel Sills (White County), Kendall Singleton (Upson-Lee), Caleb B. Slay (Elbert County), Garrett South (Franklin County), Kaylyn Stout (Lowndes County), Seth Stowers (Dawson County), Katy Summers (Tift County), Jessie K. Sumner (Berrien County), William Z. Taylor (Madison County), Joey Temperly (Berrien County), Chastity Tompkins (Loganville), Courtney R. Wall (West Laurens), Caleb Walston (Mary Persons), Bradley R. Weaver (Dawson County), Brandon Wiley (Screven County), Branden Williams (Montgomery County), Christopher R. Williams (Appling County), Kourtnei Williams (Berrien County), Weslie N. Williford (Perry), Windy E. Williford (Perry), and Thomas Wilson (Jefferson City).

The Georgia FFA Association was recognized as a membership growth state. This marks the 14th consecutive year that the Georgia FFA has increased in FFA membership.

Mr. Luther Wilkes of Jackson County was recognized with the National FFA Alumni Outstanding Achievement award presented during the FFA Alumni Convention.

More than 56,000 attended the 85th National FFA Convention. The theme for the convention was *Grow*. A complete set of results and a variety of highlights from the 85th National FFA Convention can be found by logging on to www.georgiaffa.org and selecting the National Convention tab.

There are more than 540,000 FFA members nationwide. The Georgia Association has over 34,000 members, making it the 3rd 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.

###



Follow us on Twitter @GA_FFA



Facebook.com/GeorgiaFFA