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## Georgia brings home 18 National Winners and new National V.P. from 90<sup>th</sup> National FFA Convention

INDIANAPOLIS – The Georgia FFA Association’s trip to the 90<sup>th</sup> National FFA Convention was highlighted by 18 national winners and the election of Ian Bennett from Valdosta, as National FFA Vice President. Among Georgia’s national winners were two Career Development Event (CDE) winners, six national proficiency award winners, eight national Agriscience Fair winners, the nation’s Outstanding Middle School chapter, and the winner of the National FFA Alumni Outstanding Affiliate.

Ian Bennett, a member of the Lowndes County FFA chapter, was elected to serve as the 2017-2018 National FFA Southern Region Vice President. Bennett will take a one year leave of absence from the University of Georgia, where he is a junior studying Agriscience & Environmental Systems, to travel more than 100,000 miles across the United States and to Japan serving as an ambassador for agricultural education and the FFA. Bennett is the 17<sup>th</sup> Georgian to serve as a National FFA Officer. His agricultural education teachers are Dr. James Corbett and Mr. Quinton Hadsock; and he is the son of Marshall and Marybeth Bennett of Valdosta.

Career Development Events (CDEs) are team and individual competitive events designed to test student’s technical knowledge and ability in a variety of agricultural and leadership areas. Georgia’s national CDE champions include the Cambridge FFA (Agricultural Communications) and Bleckley County FFA (Forestry). Cailey Doyle (4<sup>th</sup> place individual), Aalia Garrett (1<sup>st</sup> place individual), Brittany Breedlove, and Hayley Desandre comprised the team from the Cambridge FFA chapter in Alpharetta that won the national Agricultural Communications CDE by besting 31 other teams from across the nation. The team’s FFA advisor and agricultural education teacher is Mrs. Sarah Nerswick. Blake Bohannon (1<sup>st</sup> place individual), Tucker Felkins (2<sup>nd</sup> place individual), Leann Hearn (7<sup>th</sup> place individual) and Jacob Smith (3<sup>rd</sup> place individual) comprised the team from the Bleckley County chapter that bested 40 other teams to win the national Forestry CDE. The team’s advisor and agricultural education teacher is Mr. Doyle Floyd.

The West Jackson Middle School FFA chapter was named the nation’s Outstanding Middle School chapter as part of the National Chapter Award program. West Jackson Middle was one of five national finalists for the award, including Franklin County Middle, Jefferson Middle, and Northeast Tift all of Georgia. Each finalist chapter had two students make a presentation explaining their chapter’s activities in the Growing Leaders, Building Communities, and Strengthening Agriculture portions of the FFA Program of Activities. The agricultural education teacher and FFA Advisor at West Jackson Middle is Mrs. April Davis.

Garrett Harrell of Colquitt County (Agricultural Processing); Courtney Cameron of Lowndes County (Agriscience Research – Plant Systems); Logan Waldrop of Franklin County (Beef Production); Landon Herring of Lowndes County (Diversified Crop Production); Cody Wofford of Madison County (Equine Science); and Ben Murray of Berrien County (Home & Community Development) were each named national FFA 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 47 proficiency areas. Georgia had a total of 20 national proficiency award finalists.

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Georgia FFA's eight winners in the national Agriscience Fair included Gracy Sexton and Brooklyn Carr of the Sonoraville FFA (Animal Systems – Division 4); as well as Zachary Gay and Cedrick Montgomery (Environmental/Natural Resources – Division 4), Jaylin Johnson and Alexis Herring (Food Products & Processing – Division 4), Gabriella Daugherty and Dawson Peek (Plant Systems – Division 4), and Levi Herring and Shaw Wacter (Plant Systems – Division 6) all of the Lowndes County FFA; Zachary Daw (Food Products & Processing – Division 1) and Ty Parks (Plant Systems – Division 1) both of the Lowndes Middle FFA; and Carol-Ann Worsham and Benjamin Worsham of the Gordon Central FFA (Power, Structure & Technology – Division 6). Georgia had national finalists (top 15) in 27 of 36 divisions of the Agriscience Fair.

The Miller County FFA Alumni affiliate was named the nation's most Outstanding Alumni Affiliate. The Miller County FFA Alumni is a support group for the local FFA chapter in Miller County.

Georgia did earn two additional top-5 finishes in national FFA Career Development Events at the Convention. Georgia's CDE success included the team from Seminole County placing 3<sup>rd</sup> in Floriculture and the team from Pike County placing 5<sup>th</sup> in Farm Business Management.

Seven Georgia FFA chapters received a national 3-Star ranking, the highest ranking offered in the National Chapter Award program. Those chapters included Cambridge (Alpharetta), Franklin County Middle, Jefferson Middle, Northeast Tift, Pike County, Stockbridge and West Jackson Middle. Cambridge was named a National Finalist (top 10) in both the Models of Excellence and Premier Chapter award areas.

Seven Georgians were recognized for their support of agricultural education and the FFA as part of the Convention. Dr. Jerry Baker (Tifton), Lt. Governor Casey Cagle (Atlanta), Dr. Phil Gentry (Perry), Eric Holton (Washington), Todd Hurt (Athens), Farish Mulkey (Bainbridge), Josh Pitts (Perry), and Clyde Snell (Wrightsville) each received the Honorary American FFA Degree for the contribution that they make to the agricultural education program and FFA.

One hundred and thirty two 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. This is the largest class of American Degree recipients in the history of Georgia FFA. Those receiving the honor include Patrick Hunter Anderson (Madison County), Bryce Andrews (Habersham Central), Jackson Armour (Washington-Wilkes), Ransom Arnold (Seminole County), Hunter Aycox (Alcovy), Zackary Bagley (Alcovy), Hayden Bailey (Madison County), Zach Ball (Heard County), Katie Barton (Alcovy), Chelsea Beard (Madison County), Austin Benton (Jefferson), Kylie Biggers (Eastside), MiKayla Black (Etowah), Savannah Brannen (Screven County), Justin Brock (Miller County), Natalie Brooks (Eastside), Jaimee Burt (Colquitt County), Johna Busby (Elbert County), Kali Callaway (Heritage – Catoosa County), Andrew Cape (North Hall), Dawson Carey (Jeff Davis), Joshua Carter (Jefferson), Sarah Chance (Sonoraville), Cody Chapman (Miller County), Jacob Chastain (White County), Tia Chastain (Mary Persons), Makenzie Cioffi (Cross Creek), Jedidiah Clark (Habersham Central), Ethan Cobb (Hart County), Kathrine Cooper (Alcovy), Kelly Cooper (Alcovy), Mikayla Crews (Colquitt County), Benjamin Cunningham (Seminole County), Oksana Daniel (Sonoraville), Zachary Davis (North Oconee), Nicholas Downing (Seminole County), Sydney Dyer (Crawford County), Cora Jade Edwards (White County), Kevin Edwards (Sonoraville), Lori Edwards (Sonoraville), Eryn Elliott



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(Jefferson), Catherine Emery (LaGrange), Jordan Ernst (Jeff Davis), Christen Flowers (Brantley County), Gavin Garrett (Washington-Wilkes), Haley Gibson (Colquitt County), Kevin Gill (Hephzibah), Faith Gilman (East Jackson), Alexander Gilreath (Winder-Barrow), Andrianna Halcomb (Gordon Central), Jessie Hays (Eastside), Sadie Hobbs (White County), Cole Holliday (Heard County), James Holton (Dawson County), Matthew Holton (Dawson County), Alexandra Ikner (Veterans), Jayden Jankiewicz (Irwin County), Caleb Johns (Brantley County), Austin Jordan (Brantley County), Tate Knight (Cass), Chandler Kyle (Madison County), Sadie Lackey (Gilmer County), Normandie Lee (Brantley County), Kailey Lewis (Jeff Davis), Hunter Little (Newton CCA), Cody Lott (Harris County), Bailey Marlowe (Newton CCA), Noah Martin (Habersham Central), Dallas Mathis (Crisp County), Alyssa Maxwell (Madison County), Sarah McDaniel (Jeff Davis), Dustin Meeks (Jeff Davis), Timothy Messer (Fannin County), Kristin Miles (Brantley County), Drew Miller (Jeff Davis), Samantha Neal (Franklin County), Seth Nerowski (Harris County), Katee Newman (Colquitt County), Lauren Page (Brantley County), Marisa Palmer (Oconee County), Madison Parker (Johnson County), Viral Patel (Madison County), Mary Anna Pearson (Dodge County), Serinity Peavey (Alcovy), Cara Pheil (Crisp County), Alyson Pope (Screven County), Emily Pope (Screven County), Joshua Presley (North Hall), Veston Ramay (Jeff Davis), Brandon Reed (Franklin County), James Renshaw (Brantley County), Jocey Ricks (Toombs County), Eric Rivers (Harris County), John Romero (Gordon Central), Jonah Royster (Winder-Barrow), Zach Samples (Dawson County), Benjamin Sanders (Toombs County), Samuel Shattles (Seminole County), Annah Shearouse (Effingham County), Victor Shepherd (Eastside), Matthew Sims (Jefferson), Brady Sluder (North Murray), Brandon Smith (Bleckley County), Ethan Smith (Bleckley County), Ashley Sorrow (Franklin County), Amiee Sosebee (Alcovy), Cole Sosebee (White County), Michael Stanley (Jeff Davis), Joshua Stark (Seminole County), Carl Sticher (Eastside), Hunter Stillwell (Gilmer County), McKennon Strickland (Winder-Barrow), Kelly Sweeney (Habersham Central), Travis Tankersley (Madison County), Thomas Taylor (Hephzibah), Ashton Terry (Harris County), Danyel Tobias (Crisp County), Caleb Trites (Franklin County), Hance Tyson (Crisp County), DeAndre Wallace-Nash (Newton County), Joshua Ward (Hephzibah), Hope Webster (Jeff Davis), Jack Weesner (Eastside), Mary Kaitlyn Wheeler (East Laurens), Taylor Wheless (Oglethorpe County), Haley White (White County), Kylie Wilkes (Colquitt County), Gabriel Wilson (Seminole County), Tyler Wise (Wilcox County), Jenna Wood (Madison County), Claire Woodard (Morgan County), and Jerry Wooten (Jeff Davis).

Six Georgia FFA members earned the opportunity to perform their musical talents at the National FFA Convention. Victoria James (Pataula Charter), Emma Long (Pickens County), and Tayla Scott (Screven County) were each selected to perform in the Talent program; Pierre Johnson (Islands) and Blake Segars (Franklin County) performed in the National FFA Band; and Grace Fabio (Cambridge) performed in the National FFA Chorus.

The Georgia FFA Association was recognized as a membership growth state. This marks the 19<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that the Georgia FFA has increased in FFA membership. Georgia was represented in Indianapolis by 25 official voting delegates, and more than 1,500 local FFA members, advisors and Alumni from across the state.

More than 65,000 FFA members, advisors and guests attended the 90<sup>th</sup> National FFA Convention. The theme for the convention was *I Can, We Will*. A complete set of results and a variety of highlights from the 90<sup>th</sup> National FFA Convention can be found by logging on to <http://www.georgiaffa.org/page.aspx?ID=47>.

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