

THE AG. DEPT. DIGEST

A quarterly newsletter for the Scott Community High School Agricultural Education and FFA Programs

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A LETTER FROM THE OWL...

Reflecting on the last few months, all I can say is "Wow." COVID-19 has continued to affect our community, state, nation, and world. Consequently, it has also played a major role in our FFA career and leadership development events (CDEs and LDEs), or lack-there-of.

Since traveling to Lakin for our dairy contests in early October, we have only been to one other Southwest District FFA event -- Greenhand Conference. While this was a fun event for our first-year members, the chapter was looking forward to several state-qualifying contests this fall/winter. We are hoping that the new year can ensure the opportunity to compete at live events and learn several new skills along the way.

While we have not had the opportunity to show our skills in contests, our students have been hard at work in the classroom learning the basics of agriculture and at practices in the hopes to bring home several trophies in 2021. I am also very proud of our members who took the initiative and sold over 2,000 items in our annual fruit, meat, and cheese sales. We are in good hands with our agriculture students and FFA members!

Ms. Railsback

Ag. Teacher & FFA Advisor



CDE/LDE RESULTS

Practice Hard...Even When Your Event is Cancelled

By: Jade Fischer

The year 2020 has been on a rollercoaster of postponements, cancellations, stricter rules, and more for school activities and sports. While the reasoning behind the “roller coaster” is understandable, it doesn’t make it any less upsetting that our FFA events had to travel on that roller coaster as well.

An event that my agriculture class had been preparing heavily for was one of those postponed in December: Ag Communications. Our class had the goal to win the whole contest, but now we have to gear that mindset to an undetermined date in the future.

Ansley Grothusen, chapter president, had plans on competing in several events this year including job interview, ritual, parliamentary procedure, and meat evaluation.

“I feel as though they made the right decisions for the contests because if not all the schools can’t be there it is not fair for that team.”

All I can say is, while it hurts now to see these events being cancelled and postponed, I am hopeful that we can go back to “normal” in the new year. But for now, it is our duty to do what is best so everyone stays healthy and we can continue having FFA events.

First "Taste" of Livestock Judging

Five FFA members had the opportunity to get the first taste of livestock judging this year at the Kansas Beef Expo Livestock Judging Contest.

The members judged a total of 10 classes and gave reasons on two of the classes; classes judged included breeding heifers, performance bulls, breeding does, market hogs, and weather dams.

Wilkinson came out as the high scorer on the chapter team; a highlight for him was placing 12th individually in the small animal species classes.



Competitors were (from left): Cody Rutherford, Luis Medellin, Madison Miller, Zach Rohrbough, and Corbin Wilkinson

FFA EVENTS

The Future of Our Chapter

By: Shasta Hope

Greenhand Conference is a leadership growth and learning experience for first-year FFA members. This conference is planned annually by districts/regions across the nation. Seventeen FFA members traveled to Garden City on November 4 to experience the event.

This conference is one of the first experiences for first-year FFA members, with the intention to "hook" a student on the ideas and opportunities available in the national organization and agricultural education. The day started with the Southwest District FFA Officer Team presenting opening ceremonies followed by a welcome by the Kansas FFA State President, Elizabeth Sturgis. The chapters were then broken into "pods" and went through several different workshops led by district officers including the state agriscience fair, career and leadership development events (CDEs and LDEs), the benefits of FFA, careers in agriculture, and the power of social media.

"I learned about job opportunities within the agriculture field," said Cally Cramer, a freshman FFA member.

Ivette Fernandez, a sophomore first-year FFA member, told us her favorite part of the event "was meeting new people and learning about opportunities in FFA."

The first individual award available to FFA members is the Greenhand Degree. In order for first year FFA members to earn this degree, they must complete so many requirements, including participating in this conference as it provides a stepping stone to prepare members for their future in the National FFA Organization.

Attendees were (back row, from left): Avry Noll, Tracer Chapman, Collin McDaniel, Erika Felker, Johnna Sowers, Calli France, Ivette Fernandez, Jordis Shaw, Cally Cramer, Julian Labra (front row): Kooper Wright, Houston Frank, Cauly Vance, Kate Rogers, Paige Ryan, Cody Vance



FFA SUCCESSES

Thank You for Future of Our Annual Fruit/Meat/Cheese Sales!

The FFA Chapter would like to thank everyone who supported us this year in our annual fruit, meat, and cheese sales. These funds are used to support our chapter activities including traveling to contests and conventions, providing a meal at chapter meetings, and completing school and community service projects.

Thirty-five FFA members boosted together to sell over 2,000 items. The top three sellers were: Ansley Grothusen, Corbin Wilkinson, and Brooke Strine.

The Scott City FFA Officer Team had created an incentive program for selling so many items; however, because of the uncertainties revolved around COVID-19, the plans have changed several times. Instead of traveling to Denver over winter break, all members that sold items may travel to Parrot Cove in the spring for a "FFA day;" those who sold 50-99 items may choose to receive a free FFA Jacket or attend the Kansas FFA State Convention or Kansas FFA Leader Lab; those who sold over 100 items may receive all incentives.

Supporting Our Community

In October, the FFA and FBLA chapters at SCHS partnered to collect a goal of 125 items to give to Breadbasket in Scott City through our first "Trick-or-Canning" service project. Between the two groups, a total of 150 canned goods and other foods were collected and donated!

Giving Thanks for FFA

In the Scott City FFA chapter, we love to have fun! Our November chapter meeting included spending time with 30 of our closest FFA friends by eating lots of food and having a cornhole tournament. Zach Rohrbough and Madison Miller came home with the title of "champions" that evening, with a great showing from Jeff Nix and Mackayla Miller our runner-ups.

CLASSROOM HAPPENINGS

Mixing it up in AG

By: Ansley Grothusen

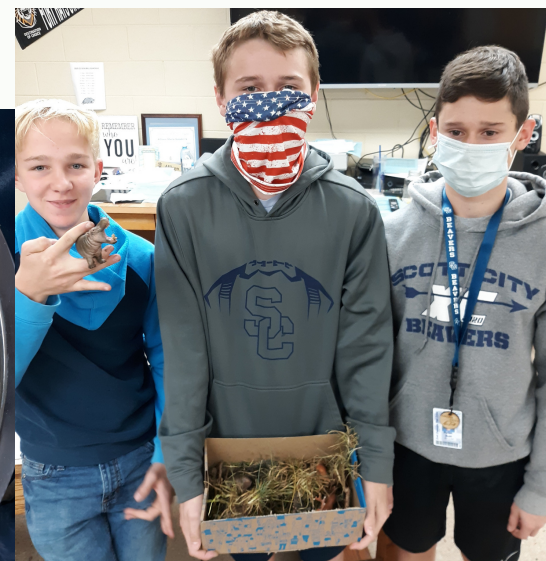
The Introduction to Agriculture class has been hustlin' and bustlin' this quarter. These students have completed many exciting projects this year including learning about parliamentary procedure and creating an "Ecosystem in a Box."

Parliamentary procedure is the written rules that organizations and governing bodies use to ensure that all members have a voice and to vote on matters in a fair and efficient manner. For two weeks, students learned 10 different motions including how to make them and their purpose, along with the steps to having an effective discussion to a motion. To cap off the unit, students put their knowledge into action by creating a "Spooky Halloween Mix" while making motions and amendments to what to put in their mix. One of the classes actually passed the motion to add dry pasta to their mix of marshmallows, cereal, and chocolate chips!

Freshman student, Julian Labra said he learned the proper way to make a motion. When asked what a motion begins with, he was quick to say "I move."

Another fun lesson covered this quarter was learning about environmental systems, including different ecosystems and wildlife habitats. Students were paired up to create a box of an assigned ecosystem ranging from the arctic to the desert.

Students can expect a busy next semester in learning about animal and plant systems, food products and safety, welding, and oral communication skills.



Left picture: The final product of the "Spooky Halloween Mix" -- one class passed the motion to put in dried pasta!

Right picture (from left): Cody Vance, Tracer Chapman and Dylan Duff with their forest ecosystem in a box.

CLASSROOM HAPPENINGS

Creative Minds Excel in Shop

By: Cody Rutherford

With the end of the semester looming, Ag Fabrication student Carson Faurot is working fervently on completing his final welding skills and a unique table for his shop project.

A required welding skill students are to complete is a simple gas tungsten arc welding (GTAW) joint, also known as tungsten inert gas (TIG) welding. This type of welding is where, in the words of Carson, “you hold the arc with one hand and you hold the electrode with the other hand and there's a pedal that controls the arc so you can heat it up or cool it down; you make a puddle with the arc and drag an electrode in the puddle.” Sounds complicated enough!

Students often take this course to learn a new skill that could be applicable to the farm or a career. Faurot chose to take this course because he believes “it's a cool skill to have and it allows me to be artistic and it's fun.” He is currently working on a small side table that he can use in the future.

Many students are in the works on designing projects to build once the new year rolls around including toolboxes, mounts, tables, coat racks, boot scrapers, and more.



Left picture: Blaine Culp practices TIG welding while Gustavo Rivero watches over.

Right picture: Carson Faurot welds on his table project.

THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITORS

“I Can’t Believe It’s Not Meat!”

By: Ansley Grothusen

What happened to going and getting a big, juicy hamburger and not having to worry if the meat was from a beef animal or not? In my house, we always eat hamburgers, and all of it comes directly from the farmer; we know what we are buying and sometimes even the name of the steer! However, that is not always the case in today’s society.

In 2019, Burger King released a commercial having “beef lovers” dig into the Impossible Whopper and “loving it.” As an avid red meat eater from cattle country, I couldn’t believe that some of my friends and family supported this new product. How could they support something that lacked all of the needed nutrients like iron, protein, B vitamins, zinc, and magnesium that red meat offered?

CNBC said it best, “Companies like Impossible Foods and Beyond Meat are using science labs and farms, rather than animal meat, to create products that rival traditional grilling staples like burger and hot dogs.” But agriculturalists are not backing down on this fight.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has fought diligently to see that there be an official definition for the term “beef,” and “meat.” The U.S. Cattlemen’s Association is looking to draw the line and launch what is the first of many long battles ahead against plant-based foods. As I think more and more about the potential of plant based “meat” products, where does that leave the beef industry?

The only conclusion I can imagine is that this new product could be severely detrimental to the agriculture industry. On one hand, it creates a new marketing avenue for soybeans in the creation of vegan burgers, but could drive beef producers to opt out of creating a quality, natural product for the meat-eaters in the world. As a young agriculture education student and FFA member, I hope to be bold and speak up to support the industry that has made me into who I am today.

Ansley Grothusen is a senior and the current president of the FFA chapter; she plans to major a career in nursing.

THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITORS

”It’s Getting in Hot in Here!”

By: Jade Fischer

In 1976, Vice President Al Gore introduced the idea of ‘global warming’ to society and since then, the world has been on its side regarding this topic.

Global warming is the long-term warming of the planet's overall temperature. Scientific research shows that over the last hundred years the temperature has been increasing, especially in the last hundred years. One simple explanation: the growing population of Earth. Have you ever sat on a warm, sunny beach and all of a sudden a cold front comes in out of nowhere? Or experienced a colder and harsher winter season than usual? A possible conclusion to this odd experience could be the changing climate altering the polar jet stream; this is the boundary between the cold air in the North Pole and the warm equatorial air.

The idea of global warming may not seem like a big deal, but if the changes worsen, agricultural systems could likely be dealt with a crippling blow. Growing seasons may expand in some regions; the combined impacts of drought, severe weather, lack of accumulated snowmelt, lower groundwater tables, and loss of arable land could cause severe crop failures and livestock shortages worldwide.

So what can we do about it? Agriculturalists can continue to conserve water via irrigation methods, utilize renewable energy sources, and maximize conservation grazing programs. If affordable, everyone can plant trees, conserve energy with better insulation, and use solar and wind energy to power homes.

Jade Fischer is a senior FFA member with goals to enter the workforce upon graduation.