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To: [AGED-L](#)
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Good Morning,

We are excited to announce that there are over 1700 students, advisors and guests register for the 93rd NYS FFA Convention. With the addition of staff, volunteers and judges we will be close to 2000 participants!

Below are some important updates. Please reach out to us if you have specific questions.

AG ED/Professional Development Updates:

June 17-20th NYAAE conference for all NY Agricultural Educators. **Submit a conference request to your school today to ensure that funds will be available for you in June.** Complete the online registration and an invoice will be provided for you to submit to your school. Cost to attend will \$495/participant. <http://www.nysffa.org/nyaaeconference>

We have an exceptional slate of workshops and activities planned! Come experience the wonderful Oswegatchie Educational Center in the Adirondack State Park and attend workshops on agriculture topics! **For a preview of the workshop descriptions, please visit the updated [conference brochure!](#)**



Oswegatchie's AdironDuck Race is Sunday April 29th 2018! Your chapter can participate in our biggest yearly fundraiser and help send your students to camp.

For every duck your school gets credit for selling, you earn 50% of the profit in the form of "duck bucks". Duck bucks can be used anytime in the next 12 months for purchases and programs at Oswegatchie.

There are two ways you can participate.

1. Commit to selling a “flock” of ducks. This is a traditional method where you commit to a physical batch of tickets which you sell through your students, alumni and community. We do not take ducks back, so the number of ducks you request are yours to keep.
2. Just spread the word for supporters to go online and pick your chapter. This means you do not have to collect any cash or ticket stubs! Just share on social media, send emails, print some postcards.

This is our general duck sales page with every chapter listed.

<http://www.adironduckrace.com/buy-ducks.html>

We are also creating custom chapter web pages, like this

<http://www.adironduckrace.com/beekmantown-ffa.html>

Contact us today if you would like a custom page, or a batch of tickets to sell!

rwaite@oswegatchie.org OR wwaite@oswegatchie.org

New York Association of FFA Updates:

Below are some updates and reminders for the multiple events and activities coming up the next couple of months.

Waivers and Medical forms are required for all events at the state level. Please email them ahead of time to Nancy Grossman.

State Convention: Convention registration has closed. Payments should be postmarked by 4/27/18. Draft schedules, engagement opportunities, competitions and more have all been posted! We have been making updates to this information, so please check the website for the most up to date information. The Rochester Riverside is completely booked, however we have made arrangements at 3 other hotels for overflow rooms. Please visit the lodging page for more information: <http://www.nysffa.org/state-convention-hotels>.

Several of the Day of Service and Tours require additional information from students in order for them to participate. We will be posting this information on our website soon, along with emailing individual chapter advisors based on who signed up. Please be looking for this information to come out in the next week or so.

We are currently working on putting all of the delegate information together and will be sending this information out within the next week or so. If you have not provided us with your chapter delegate names please do so ASAP.

We are still in need of about 20 judges for Thursday, 5/17/18, for CDE's and LDE's. If you know of anyone who would be interested in serving in this capacity please have them sign up by

going to this [link](#).

2018-2019 State FFA Association Program of Activities Calendar: We are working on putting together dates and locations for the upcoming school year. We hope to have this information out by the beginning of May.

State Officer and District President Slates Announced: Congratulations to the 2018-2019 New York State Officer and District President slates! New York has amazing members that are eager to serve our organization. Thank you to all 21 candidates for pushing yourselves out of your comfort zones and showing us the best NY FFA has to offer. Special thanks goes out to the 11 committee members that spent several days learning and gathering information about each one of these candidates, without your willingness to serve we wouldn't be able to offer this opportunity to our members. We would also like to thank Mr. Phelps and Mrs. Fuentes for helping to facilitate this intensive process, you truly set a great example for our members. To see the live announcement please click [here](#).

2018 Tractor Supply Company Grants for Growing Programs Recipients Announced!

Congratulations to all of the chapters that received this grant. Thank you to everyone who participated and to Tractor Supply for facilitating this opportunity! To see all of the results click [here](#).

A blue poster for FFA's Living to Serve initiative. At the top left is the FFA logo with the motto 'INVESTIGATE · PLAN · EVALUATE · SERVE'. The main title reads 'FFA Members Are Living to Serve'. Below the title is a photo of FFA members in green vests working on a service project outdoors. To the right of the photo is a white box with a black header 'DAY OF SERVICE GRANT' and text: 'Day of Service Mini-Grants provide alumni/collegiate or middle/high school chapters with up to \$400 to conduct a one-time service event.' At the bottom, it says 'Day of Service: Rolling deadline last day of each month (up to \$400)', 'Learn more at FFA.org/LivingToServe', and '#LivingToServe'.

“Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve.” ~Martin Luther King Jr.

How is your chapter Living to Serve? FFA offers Day of Service Mini-Grants for \$400 to support chapters in planning community service events. The application is easy, and you can apply for funds to support a one-day service event that focuses on topics such as Community Safety; Hunger, Health and Nutrition; Environmental Responsibility; or Community Engagement.

Find out more at FFA.org/LivingToServe/grants.

If you have questions, the Living to Serve team is here to help. You can email them at LTS@FFA.org

National FFA Updates:

1. Give the Gift of Blue Gifts 6,000 Jacket

Last month, the 6,000 jacket was gifted to a young lady in Springfield, Minnesota, as part of our Give the Gift of Blue program. Since Jan. 1, more than 870 jackets have been gifted. Below is the essay from the recipient.

"This is my first year in FFA, and I already can see how it has impacted my life and given me many opportunities and life lessons. Getting this jacket would mean a lot to me. Having my own jacket with my name on it would be fantastic. I like to say that FFA is a pretty big deal around where I live, so it's important for me to represent my town and my school. I would feel like I'm a part of something great, something bigger than anything I've ever been a part of before. I would like to take it to events like national convention and state convention, but also smaller things like contests. I'm on two CDE teams and I have to use the jacket very often. I will be going to state for BIG and I also hope to go for dairy cattle, so having my jacket would help me a great deal. I'd be so happy to own my own jacket like my other classmates. It would be so much easier than borrowing someone else's jacket every time I need it. I'm the first girl in my family that has joined FFA and it would prove a lot to have my own jacket. I hope to make my family and school proud by further pursuing agriculture through FFA and believe that having my own jacket will help me through the years of FFA to come. I hope you will consider my application, thank you for your time."

2. 212° & 360° Conferences

Conferences are wrapping up for the 212° & 360° 2017-18 conference season, with the last one scheduled for June. Final participation numbers for 212° & 360°, including estimates for the final conference, are more than 9,000 students. This is a 16 percent increase from last year's participation numbers.

3. Washington Leadership Conference Availability

Weeks 1 - 4 of the Washington Leadership Conference (WLC) are sold out, but there is still some availability for week 5 (July 10 - 14), week 6 (July 17 - 21) and week 7 (July 24 - 28). WLC availability is posted at www.FFA.org/wlc. We continue to monitor and maintain waitlists for the sold out weeks. Requests to be added to the waitlist can be emailed to wlc@ffa.org.

4. National Officers Participate in Partnership Visits

National FFA Officers Ian Bennett and Bryce Cluff participated in partnership visits recently in Houston, Texas. Corporate visits were made to Mahindra North America, Citgo and CareerSafe, as well as individual giving visits to Herman and Bobbie Wilson, and Larry Gerdes. The officers also participated in the opening parade at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

5. National FFA Convention & Expo Survey

This week, the convention and events management team sent out a survey to our states and advisors asking for their feedback in regards to purchasing convention concert tickets. It is important that we make this process a seamless and positive experience. The survey will take less than five minutes and will be open through

Wednesday, April 18. All state staff should have received an email about the survey from Mandy Hazlett on Wednesday. Please encourage your chapter advisors to take the survey; their feedback is vital.

6. Find a Living to Serve Grantee Near You

The Living to Serve (LTS) team is pleased to announce that the 2017-18 Living to Serve Grant Projects map is posted and ready to use. You may access the map at FFA.org/LivingToServe.

The interactive map allows users to search by the type of LTS project (yearlong, semester-long, Day of Service Mini-Grant or State Day of Service) as well as the focus area being addressed through the service activities (Hunger, Health and Nutrition; Environmental Responsibility; Community Engagement; and Community Safety). By clicking on any icon, you can see who received a grant, the city and state they reside, chapter type and an overview of their project. If you have questions, email LTS@ffa.org.

As a reminder, the Day of Service Mini-Grants are currently available with a rolling deadline, and the yearlong grant will open in the coming weeks for the next school year. For more information about the various funding opportunities, visit FFA.org/LivingToServe/grants.

7. New Grants to Grow Alumni and Supporters

Give Back to Your Roots Grants, sponsored by Crop Production Services, and Legacy Grants, sponsored by Tractor Supply Company, can be used to create an FFA Alumni and Supporters Chapter, to improve the quality of existing chapters or to provide more opportunities for partnership between FFA chapters and alumni and supporters chapters. 2018 grants will be awarded after the last two grant deadlines: June 1 and Sept. 4. Grant applications are located at FFA.org/alumnigrants.

In addition, the March 2018 legacy grant recipients have been selected. See the list of recipients at FFA.org/alumnigrants. The alumni and supporters division handed out 16 grants in 15 states this period.

8. #NextGenAg in the Farm Bill

On Thursday, Mike Conaway (R-Texas), chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture, introduced H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act – better known as the [2018 Farm Bill](#). The 2014 Farm Bill expires in September, so the Farm Bill's introduction has been widely anticipated among farmers, ranchers, producers, agriculture businesses, schools, and, especially, FFA members.

According to the National Institute of Food and Agriculture at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), there will be 58,000 U.S. agricultural jobs available annually in the next five years but a shortfall of 23,000 new professionals pursuing those careers. FFA members are motivated to encourage more of their peers to pursue production agriculture and other unique careers in the business, science, and technology of agriculture. On National Ag Day in March 2017, National FFA and 82 other agricultural groups penned a letter to Congress to support the next generation of agriculture through the creation of an agricultural youth coordinator, stationed at USDA. Their advocacy efforts did not stop there, however. State FFA officers in six states attended listening sessions across the country to make this ask to members of the House Committee on Agriculture and their staffs. They educated members of Congress on this issue at the 2017 State Presidents' Conference; made it their objective again at this year's National Ag Day in Washington, D.C.; and have joined in on the #NextGenAg movement on social media.

We all know it's hard to tell students, "No." The House version of the Farm Bill includes an agricultural youth organization coordinator in the text they released this week:

"SEC. 11204. AGRICULTURAL YOUTH ORGANIZATION COORDINATOR.

Subtitle A of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 is amended by inserting after section 220 (7 U.S.C. 6920) the following new section:

"SEC. 221. AGRICULTURAL YOUTH ORGANIZATION COORDINATOR.

"(a) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary shall establish in the Department the position of Agricultural Youth Organization Coordinator.

"(b) DUTIES.—The Agricultural Youth Organization Coordinator shall—

"(1) promote the role of youth-serving organizations and school-based agricultural education in motivating and preparing young people to pursue careers in the agriculture, food, and natural resources systems;

"(2) work to help build awareness of the reach and importance of agriculture, across a diversity of fields and disciplines;

"(3) identify short-term and long-term interests of the Department and provide opportunities, resources, input, and coordination with programs and agencies of the Department to youth-serving organizations and school-based agricultural education, including the development of internship opportunities;

"(4) share, internally and externally, the extent to which active steps are being taken to encourage collaboration with, and support of, youth-serving organizations and school-based agricultural education;

"(5) provide information to young farmers concerning the availability of, and eligibility requirements for, participation in agricultural programs, with particular emphasis on beginning farmer and rancher programs;

"(6) serve as a resource for assisting young farmers in applying for participation in agricultural

programs; and

“(7) advocate on behalf of young farmers in interactions with employees of the Department.

“(c) CONTRACTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.

—For purposes of carrying out the duties under subsection (b), the Agricultural Youth Organization Coordinator shall consult with the cooperative extension and the land-grant university systems, and may enter into contracts or cooperative agreements with the research centers of the Agricultural Research Service, cooperative extension and the land-grant university systems, non-land-grant colleges of agriculture, or nonprofit organizations for—

“(1) the conduct of regional research on the profitability of small farms;

“(2) the development of educational materials;

“(3) the conduct of workshops, courses, and certified vocational training;

“(4) the conduct of mentoring activities; or

“(5) the provision of internship opportunities.”

The Farm Bill is expected to be marked up in committee next week, and we will continue to monitor it and this provision. Should you have any questions about the text, the coordinator position, or the Farm Bill process, reach out to Riley Pagett, director of advocacy and government relations, at rpagett@ffa.org.

Count down to convention is on, Only 29 Days until the first student steps into that competition room and that first opening ceremony begins!



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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.