



INDIANA
FFA ASSOCIATION

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Indiana FFA names State Star Finalists

Members from across Indiana compete to be named a State Star for their dedication to their Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAE)

Indianapolis, IN (March 16, 2023) – The Indiana FFA Association named its 2023 State Star Finalists as a part of its preparation for the 94th Indiana FFA State Convention. After submitting an application, FFA members participated in a personal interview. Finalists will now undergo a site visit to determine which members will be deemed State Stars in their respective categories.

Members determined as Star Finalists are interviewed for a chance to be named as a State Star in these four prestigious award areas: Star Farmer, Star in Agricultural Placement, Star in Agribusiness and Star in Agriscience. They will find out the results on June 21, 2023 at 7 pm at the Hoosier Degree Session during the 94th Indiana State FFA Convention at Purdue University. Those determined as State Stars in each of the categories will receive a cash award for \$250 sponsored by The Jeff Lehman Family. Each star will receive a plaque during the State Star Awards Session sponsored by AgReliant Genetics. They will also receive a copy of the Star videos showcasing each candidate's program, which is sponsored by Beck's. Elanco sponsors the State Star Banquet for the Stars and their family which will be held during the 94th Indiana FFA State Convention. Below are the names, chapter, and SAE information of each Finalist.

Finalists in Agricultural Placement –

Thomas Boggs, Warsaw FFA: As the 5th generation on his family's farming operation, Thomas got his start in hay production. He continued to grow in his skills and knowledge, now in charge of most of the day-to-day tasks. This experience helped Thomas to find a passion for plant science.

Abigail Hantz, Prairie Heights FFA: Abby's SAE consists of working on a local dairy farm, while also managing her own dairy herd. She began in May of 2020, milking and feeding calves. Since then, she has expended her responsibilities into operating machinery and administering medication. Abby has gone from a helping hand to active part in the daily management of the farm.

August Whitman, Sullivan FFA: August works under his parents at WNR racing farms with responsibilities of breaking racing quarter horses, working with retired racing horses and maintaining the animals and facilities on a daily basis. In addition to his work at WNR, August also works with Noel Brothers Farms cattle and grain operations. There August can be found doing a variety of tasks such as vaccinating calves to running tillage equipment to prepare for the spring.

Ryan Kihlstrum, Eastern Hancock FFA: He works at B Thompson Associates LLC, as a Field

Tile Technician. Ryan started with no experience or knowledge of field tile. After time Ryan is now able to recognize problems and fix them, complete tasks on his own, and can now think steps ahead. He also analyzes field maps, selecting tile patterns, and installing tile at the correct grade. Ryan has recently started overseeing new hires and assists with their training.

Finalists in Agriscience –

Justin Kilmer, Tri-County FFA: Justin grew lettuce and basil in hydroponic and aquaponic systems to see which would produce the best crop. During his experiment, he would measure the plant's growth, color, and health twice a week. Justin wanted to scale down the experiment to find out which option would be cheap, yet effective for the consumer. This project also required him to feed the beta fish used in the aquaponics system daily and then had to measure the plant growth twice a week.

Matthias Hefty, DeKalb FFA: Matthias wanted to reduce hay waste from his experiences raising sheep and meat goats. By reducing hay waste he could increase the efficiency of the goat enterprise he shared with his sister. He collected 81 data points, from 3 variables and control, and was able to reduce hay waste by 85%. As the responsibility of his goat SAE increased, so did the use of the scientific method to solve problems in the goat herd.

Finalists in Agribusiness –

Cole McCloskey, Lewis Cass FFA: Cole began buying, restoring, and maintaining antique tractors and equipment after watching his dad and grandpa do it for many years. In 2021, he bought 6 tractors and many different implements/machinery. He plans to continue buying by selling some of the pieces. One of the biggest challenges has been finding parts for some of the tractors and has resulted in the need to recreate parts as well. Cole's skills continue to develop as he takes on more advanced and complex tasks to repair and maintain the antique equipment.

Finalists for Farmer –

Mallory Bowers, Tippecanoe Valley FFA: Mallory is an owner of Bowers Southdowns. Starting with her grandfather and moving down the generations to her, this farmer owns a herd of 67 Southdown sheep. Her tasks are feeding, breeding management, health care, environment management, and much more. Mallory faced challenges through her SAE such as housing for her sheep, but thought of innovative ways to overcome this issue.

Paige Jacobs, NorthWood FFA: Paige's earliest memories include caring for poultry production animals at her great grandparent's house. She began with 30 commercial birds, 8 laying hens, and 4 exhibition ducks before expanding to 80 commercial chickens, 15 commercial turkeys, 6 commercial ducks, 9 laying hens, and 16 oriental pigeons over the past 6 years. She feeds and waters her poultry operation, cleans the barn, provides fresh bedding, and completes regular health checks of her flock. Being able to manage all aspects of the operation ensures that Paige knows how much each bird costs from chick to meat on the table.

Lucas Lyons, Jay County FFA: As the seventh generation on his family farm, he has always been deeply immersed in agriculture. He began by helping out with the little tasks around the farm, which has progressed to 5 acres of hay, 65 acres of cash-rent ground, and 30-40 goats he raises for market, all on his own. He manages his operation independently and still offers many hours of assistance to his family's farm.

Stella Freuchtel, Blue River Valley FFA: She started her SAE as a solution to provide her family with safer dairy products. Her SAE has grown from one solitary dairy doe to almost 20 head of national show quality Nubians, Alpines, Sables and Recorded Grades. Over the past several years she

has learned how to improve the quality, production, and consistency of her herd.

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About the Indiana FFA Association - The Indiana FFA is the largest Career and Technical Student Organization in Indiana with over 13,000 members as part of 219 local FFA chapters across the state. The FFA mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success. The Indiana State Department of Agriculture provides leadership and direction for the Indiana FFA as a service to local agricultural education programs. For more information, visit the Indiana FFA webpage at inffa.org, or follow the conversation on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and BlogSpot.

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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.