



# WYOMING FFA TIMES

Winter 2014 Edition

## Lyman FFA entrepreneurs launch 'Sassy Brass'

By Trinity Lewis, Wyoming FFA Foundation

**Lyman, Wyo.** — It all began as a country Christmas gift.

Shaun and Briar Harris have a Christmas tradition of giving jewelry to their daughters, Shaunte, Rachele and Madison. While cleaning cupboards, Briar came upon numerous bullets and bullet shells, a somewhat regular occurrence in most Wyoming homes, but the idea Briar had wasn't just a regular idea. When her husband

returned home from a hunting trip that evening she shared the idea of using the ends of the shells to make earrings for their daughters' Christmas presents. Being a capable craftsman, Shaun agreed that the idea was good and their construction of the earrings began.



On Christmas morning the girls ripped open their gifts and fell in love with what they found inside. They put the earrings on and wore them through the duration of Christmas break and to school the first day it was back in session. Upon their return from school that January day, the girls had already received several orders for the glitzy ammunition earrings. Now almost a year later, the orders are still coming in!

With a solid knowledge for good business, which they credit to their Lyman, Wyoming FFA chapter, the girls began Sassy Brass. Every day after school they were cutting empty casings with tin snips, grinding them with a belt sander and placing crystals in the center. Of course they didn't do it alone. Their youngest sister Madison, age 13, and little brother Jason, age 7, help, too.

In March the older of the two sisters, Rachele, age 17 at the time, decided it was time to introduce their

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## FFA MEMBERS TOUR FAMILY DAIRY



### Y-Text and Wyoming Gourmet Beef also among stops

By Jennifer Womack, Wyoming FFA Foundation

**Cody, Wyo.** — Nearly 200 FFA members joined the Wyoming FFA Foundation mid-November for a tour of agriculture in Northwest Wyoming.

The day's travels began at the George Family's dairy farm, located between Cody and Powell. For many Wyoming FFA members the visit marked their first time at a dairy farm. Members split into five groups for lessons in feed production, agribusiness, dairy production and milk marketing. From visiting with the operation's veterinarian to a hands-on lesson in the milking parlor, students explored the dairy from top to bottom.

Family member Seth George, himself an alumni of the FFA, worked with the Western Dairy Association to organize the tour. The Western Dairy Association is a three-state, farmer-funded non-profit organization focused on increasing sales of and demand for dairy products and ingredients, in Colorado, Wyoming and Montana. It is centered on educating communities about the local value and contributions of dairy farms, and about the health, nutrition and wellness benefits of dairy products within schools, health professionals, retailers, dairy processors and consumers.

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## Former Wyoming FFA President leads Lummis campaign

By Trinity Lewis, Wyoming FFA Foundation

**Cheyenne, Wyo.** — Red, white and blue campaign signs dotted many horizons and Wyoming lawns this past summer. This is encouraging evidence to many that the Equality State remains very involved in choosing those who represent them. Behind one set of blue signs is a unique story that

showcases none other than Wyoming FFA.

Thermopolis born and Cheyenne raised, Micah Christensen has always been somewhat interested in politics. The 2010-2011 Wyoming FFA State President recalls, "...running back and forth from the TV to update my dad on the Presidential vote in 2004." He became more involved with politics during high school and his fascination has since escalated. "Throughout college I competed in debate where I was tasked to create policies for the Federal Government to implement. This opportunity fueled my desire to understand how policies are created both theoretically and practically."

Christensen held a

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Micah Christensen and his fiancée Erin during a stop along the campaign trail.

## Passions, purpose ignited at Wyo FFA leadership conferences

By Teresa Milner, Wyoming FFA Association

**Cody, Wyo.** — More than 400 FFA members worked on developing their leadership and advocacy skills as part of the 2014 Wyoming FFA fall leadership conferences, FIRE and CPC, held Nov. 21-22, 2014 in Cody.

The two concurrent conferences included an optional agricultural tour, keynote speaker presentation, leadership workshops and networking time, all designed to develop the FFA members' critical thinking and interpersonal communication skills. With an all-time high in participation numbers, one of every five Wyoming FFA members participated in the event.

### Finding Inspiration

Younger members attended the FFA's Finding Inspiration and Reaching Excellence Conference, or FIRE. The conference focuses on student growth and themes like virtues, growth and collaboration.

Past state officers and college-age

members served as presenters for FIRE, and shared their experiences in FFA with the newer members of the organization.

"The most important message that I wanted them to take home was that when you consider all of your passions, you probably have more things on your plate than you can eat in a lifetime," said Lauren Hedges, FIRE presenter and past state FFA reporter.

FIRE is also an opportunity to show what FFA and agriculture education have to offer those who choose to participate.

"I think that sometimes we forget about what the most important things in our lives are; we get distracted by texting, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social medias every day," Hedges explained. "In turn, what are we losing? Time we could spend with family, friends, studying, being physical, or having a good time doing something with a purpose. This is also brought back to

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Let's Talk

**PREZ SAYS****Merry Christmas**

(A warning to the reader: I just reread this. If you're not up for a verbal ramble, you may want to skip this column...)

Merry Christmas! I've been waiting almost a year to say that to you.

Just kind of want to shout it, MERRY CHRISTMAS!! (Notice 2 whoopies after that one, that's really enthusiastic) It's that time of year again. Some call it the holiday season. I tend to think of it as the thankful season. It's during this time of year that people seem to pause a bit, which is a trick considering there's a great deal of rushing going on, and examine their lives to see what and who they are thankful for. For many, when they realize how much they have to be thankful for, they feel like sharing with others. I think for many it's easier to be generous when you feel like you've been given many gifts. As my time on the board comes to a close, I have been thinking about gifts I've been given.

I don't know that I'm in any way generous, but I have been given many gifts. One of the best ones I've received was an invitation years ago to go to a FFA Foundation board of directors meeting to just "Check it out." I think that was February 2004. Sure feels like more time has passed since then. Since that time I've had the chance to work with some truly amazing people. Some were organizers, some orators, some thinkers and some tinkers, some truly driven people and some who would give you the shirt off their back. All were generous and all had the best interests of FFA members somewhere in their heart.

While I've been here, the Foundation has had 5 ½ directors, each of whom brought some great gifts to the role. The current director, Jennifer Womack, is one of the most amazing people I've ever worked with or for. She has taken the Foundation in new directions and to heights we never considered as board members. I will miss working with Jen, but I know she'll continue to pour into the Foundation. She is part of an amazingly generous family. Time, talent, money; all generations of her family - parents, siblings, and children. They just pour into others. Thank you Jen, Chris, Bryce, Joshua, and family.

As I move along I do so knowing the board is in good hands. The current members, some experienced hands and some brand new, are dedicated to continuing to aid in building FFA members and FFA Chapters in Wyoming. Your board members are: Brendan Thoman, Scott Vetter, Brittany Wilson, Diane Cox, Val Andreen, Becki Dale, Donn Randall, Bart Klipstein, Justin Bailey, Allison McKenzie, and Chris Schmeltzer. The Wyoming FFA Foundation is in good hands. Very good hands.

Enough of the sappy stuff. The board will go on and the Foundation will grow and FFA members will benefit. That's something to be thankful for.

As you navigate your way through the thankful season I hope you'll find much to give thanks for. This time of year I often reflect on John 15:13, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." I know that Jesus was referring to one person dying for another, but I like to think of it also as dying to oneself to serve others. The Wyoming FFA Foundation has a great many people who lay down their lives, as it were, to serve, give, support, encourage, and help. There are people who give money, time, talent, food, fuel, and more to support Wyoming FFA members. If you're one of

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Court Schilt  
FFA Foundation President

**FROM OUR MEMBERS****State Officers reflect on trip to National FFA Convention**

**Tyler Clemetson:** This was my 3<sup>rd</sup> National Convention and it never ceases to amaze me how bright our future is in agriculture. Seeing 65,000 young men and women gather to discuss and resolve issues facing agriculture, learn how to become better leaders to help our industry grow and expand, and to find inspiration to face these challenges. It inspires me to become more active in facing the issues of our industry and become a catalyst that will hopefully inspire someone else to do the same.

**Lacy Nelson:** There's nothing quite like seeing the sea of blue jackets at National Convention. Those blue jackets mean integrity, heart and selflessness. Those blue jackets are worn by those who are making a difference in the world. Those are my kind of people. This year at National Convention it really hit me that 65,000 agriculturalists each doing a small thing to promote agriculture, can make a significant change in the world. That sea of blue jackets is pretty powerful.

**Austin Burkett:** I would have to say that honestly listening to what the National Officers had to say in the retiring addresses was moving. It got me to really think about myself, to think, 'How can I make a difference?' In all of their RA's they talked about being selfless, caring, loving, supportive, honest and compassionate. But what I really took away from their messages is that you have to be you. No one else is like you and you are irreplaceable. It is amazing the difference you can make in one person's life just by being you. A simple smile can make someone's day just a little bit better. And if you are caring, compassionate, supportive, honest and selfless then who knows what you can do.

**Heather Loraas:** This year may have been my

third time at National Convention, but this time around it really hit me how different FFA is as an organization than any other. FFA as a whole is a family and we love and care about each other as well as the rest of the world. I can't imagine anything better than FFA.

**Baxter Heinert:** I think that when we went and served the community of Louisville by picking up trash in the low income neighborhood, it was definitely something that impacted me the most. Being from Wyoming, I never realized how different life can be and how much of an impact even a small trash pickup can make. It was a culture that was all new to me, and I'm so thankful that I got the opportunity to participate in such a humbling experience.

**Quade Palm:** Nothing is as impactful as walking into a room such as Freedom Hall and seeing 60,000+ blue jackets all representing one interest that unifies all of us. Even more so is the fact that there are over 600,000 members in FFA and knowing that this organization is changing every one of those lives every day, just as it did mine. Knowing that I am a State Officer in the FFA makes me proud, but it is humbling to see how small of a part I am in an organization this huge.

**Jess Oldham:** National FFA Convention was a blast. Unfortunately I wasn't able to participate in as many State Officer activities as my peers, due to me competing there and I believe these gave me a whole different experience, but either way I still loved it. I think the part that had the biggest impact on me, was I grew a great appreciation for Wyoming and where I come from. I met a student while in my livestock

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## Quick Info—

# FFA BRIEFS

## New ag teachers welcomed

When one thinks about ag teachers, it is easy to hear the experienced voice of your own ag teacher stating, "Here by the owl," during opening ceremonies. Wyoming is fortunate to have numerous FFA members turned ag teachers who return to teach in Wyoming. The younger face of ag educators in Wyoming is well represented by first year ag teachers Luke Bethea and David White.

Currently teaching in Douglas, Bethea attended high school in Sundance where his family ranches just outside of town. According to Luke, "I decided that I wanted to become an ag. teacher because I loved the FFA and what it does for students. In addition, I feel that agriculture is one of the most important industries in the world and every young person needs to know as much as they can about it." Luke graduated from the University of Wyoming in the spring of 2014.

"I look forward to preparing Career Development Event teams this spring and competing at different competitions around the state," says Bethea. "I measure success in my ag program by accomplishments and growth of each student, ultimately ensuring that they will be successful in their chosen future endeavors within the agricultural field."

David White, originally a pupil of both Mr. Berry and Mr. Cress, also graduated with his teaching degree from UW last spring. White has had the goal of ag teaching in his sights for quite some time.

"When I was in 9th grade I enjoyed agriculture so much that I wanted to teach it. When I first decided to be an agriculture teacher it was because I liked agriculture, but as I got older my goals turned more to helping people. I believe if I can help my students to be successful in school and on projects, they will become successful in everyday life outside of school."

"I live by my own code," says White, further explaining, "Do what is right, work hard, and love people. My quote I love to say to people: 'If you fail, fail with confidence.' The only time you truly fail is when you give up. I strive to have my student step out and never give up, even when they think they will fail because through failure, there is success."

Both of the young men have hit the road running with their programs. Although they are just beginning their careers, both Bethea and White have philosophies that the next generation will benefit from through their teaching.

## Watch for scholarship app

**Cheyenne, Wyo.** — The Wyoming FFA Foundation will soon be releasing its 2015 scholarship application. Watch for it online at [www.WyoFFAFoundation.com](http://www.WyoFFAFoundation.com). Responses to the application will be due back no later than Feb. 15, 2015. Scholarship awards will be presented during the April 15, 2015 Wyoming FFA Convention. Winning students and their advisors will receive an invitation to the scholarship reception.

Separate applications are available for high school seniors, FFA members already enrolled in college and those wishing to attend the Washington Leadership Conference. WLC scholarships range from between \$750 and \$1,000 and can be used to offset the costs associated with traveling to the National FFA Convention.

## Speakers shine at nationals

**Louisville, Kent.** — FFA members have a reputation for being well spoken. That is certainly the case for the following three members who took part in the public speaking Career Development Events (CDE) at the National FFA Convention.

The National FFA Creed Speaking CDE is designed to recognize outstanding FFA members for their ability to present the National FFA Creed in a competitive setting. Members deliver the Creed from memory and respond to three questions. This year's creed speaker from Ten Sleep, Wyo. was Madison Anderson who finished with bronze emblem honors. Sagebrush Marketing sponsors the Wyoming competitor.

After competing in the Creed Speaking contest as a freshman, many passionate speakers go on to compete in the Extemporaneous Public Speaking CDE. Members choose a topic from a choice of categories, have 30 minutes to prepare and then deliver a four to six minute speech and respond to five minutes of questions. Kameesha Morris, a junior from the Buffalo FFA, represented Wyoming at the National FFA Convention. Kameesha was awarded bronze emblem honors. The Northern Ag Network sponsors the Wyoming competitor.

Rachel Derner set new records on a state level this year. Having been deemed champion of both the Prepared Speech CDE and the Extemporaneous Public Speaking CDE, she had to choose in which one to compete in at the national level. Rachel chose Prepared Speaking and brought home Silver Emblem honors with her presentation on hunger. Hageman Law, PC sponsors the Wyoming competitor.

## National officers selected

**Louisville, Kent.** — Students from Georgia, Arkansas, Colorado, Tennessee, Kentucky and New Mexico were selected to comprise the National FFA Officer Team during 2014-2015.

Andy Paul of Georgia, an agricultural education major at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, was elected president.

Victoria Maloch of Arkansas, an agricultural business and pre-law major at University of Arkansas, will serve as secretary. Wyoming just learned that Victoria will be attending the state's convention early April.

Kristen Schmidt of Colorado, an animal science and agricultural business major at Colorado State University, was elected central region vice president.

Stephen McBride of Tennessee, an agricultural business major at University of Tennessee at Martin, will serve as southern region vice president.

Ruth Ann Myers of Kentucky, an agricultural education major at University of Kentucky, was elected eastern region vice president.

Caleb Gustin of New Mexico, an agricultural business and agricultural economics major at New Mexico State University, will serve as western region vice president.

## Become an FFA CHAMPION!

**Cheyenne** — Join the Wyoming FFA Champions by subscribing to the Wyoming FFA Foundation's new monthly giving campaign. Enroll at <http://www.WyoFFAFoundation.com/donate.asp>. Make at least a \$5 per month contribution and we'll send you an FFA cap or visor and you'll receive a subscription to the *Wyoming FFA Times*.

"We're extremely excited about this new program and the opportunity it presents for all of us to champion the FFA program with a small monthly contribution," says Wyoming FFA Foundation Executive Director Jennifer Womack. "While \$5 doesn't make a huge difference in most bank accounts, combined it can make a very big difference for Wyoming FFA. We hope FFA supporters are as excited about growing this campaign as we are!"



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## Ag shop becomes barber shop in quest to help young cancer patient

By Trinity Lewis, Wyoming FFA Foundation

**Mountain View** — “Living to Serve” is so much more than a line in the FFA motto for Wyoming FFA chapters. In Mountain View, the Jim Bridger FFA Chapter gave to make a very positive impact on a young life.

Six-year-old Ella Kissling was diagnosed with kidney cancer, more specifically a wilms tumor, earlier this year. Little Ella has handled the fight with courage and has been through several rounds of chemo, radiation and surgery.

With young children of her own, Mountain View Ag teacher Cari Sue Covolo knew that helping Ella was something that needed to be done. She describes the moment when she was able to pinpoint how to help, “My daughter Kinlee and I were at a roping benefit for Ella. My daughter said ‘Ella doesn’t look good today’ and asked if she’d lost her hair. I

explained that she had, due to her treatments. When we got home that night Kinlee said ‘Mom, Ella needs my hair. I think we need to give my hair to Ella.’ The longer we thought about it, we decided the more people we could get involved the better.” Mrs. Covolo introduced the idea to her FFA chapter and there was a resounding “yes” that they should help. Within a week the chapter had more hair pledged for Ella’s wig than what would even be needed.

Ella’s mom, Sarah Kissling, shared the emotions her little girl has experienced during the hair loss portion of her battle, “Losing your hair with chemotherapy is part of the process. Some days she is ok with it and other she doesn’t feel girly and beautiful. She was so used to having a full head of thick hair, it was really an adjustment. I had cut off about 13 inches of hair to try to

help (which was used in the wig) along with her dad and several friends shaving their heads. Then the Jim Bridger FFA stepped in.”

On Sept. 16, the Mountain View ag shop turned from manufacturing station to hair salon. FFA members and community partners gathered to give their hair. For those who didn’t want to donate their hair, they could pay \$25 to save their current style. Some trimmed their longer hair to shorter lengths and a local hair stylist gave a free cut and style to those willing to donate six inches or more.

A wig like the one Ella needed costs over \$1,200.00. The Jim Bridger FFA Chapter drew upon funds in the Wyoming FFA Foundation’s “Cameco Cowboy State Challenge,” and matched it with local dollars. “Cameco donated these funds to provide financial resources to FFA chapters that see a need in their

community,” says Wyoming FFA Foundation Executive Director Jennifer Womack. “The dollars benefit Wyoming citizens and communities while helping students learn the joy of giving and making a positive impact.”

“The fact that they paid for this wig is something that we financially would have struggled with, if we would have been able to do at all,” says Ella’s mom. The excess funds raised by the Jim Bridger FFA went toward the traveling costs for Ella and her parents to commute to Salt Lake City, Utah to have the wig designed and created.

Sarah Kissling, and Ella’s entire family, expressed their appreciation for all the help FFA provided. “The thing I love the best is how the kids stepped up to show their support. The girls cut their hair and the boys shaved their heads. Even the parents and alumni showed



Mountain View FFA Advisor Cari Sue Covolo and Ella. Covolo is among those who cut her hair to make Ella’s wig.

up and participated. One member kept his shaved until they became the state football champions because Ella was good luck. This not only means the world to Ella, but our family as well. Words cannot explain how much the FFA has done for us. Ella can put on this beautiful wig and feel ‘normal’ again for those moments she needs it. Cari Sue did all the work and planning so all we had to do was

show up. With all that we have going on, that was such a blessing. We cannot say thank you enough to all involved!”

The last time Ella’s tumor was evaluated, it was no longer growing. In fact, it had decreased in size. With two more treatments scheduled before Christmas, the family is hopeful for good news so that after her December treatments they can take a break for a while.



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Feb. 21-28

Watch our website and Facebook page for a special announcement!

### WYOMING FFA CONVENTION

April 8-11

Cheyenne, Wyo.

### WYOMING FFA CAREER FAIR

April 9

Cheyenne, Wyo.

### WYOMING FFA SCHOLARSHIP RECEPTION

April 9

Cheyenne, Wyo.

### WYOMING FFA STATE OFFICER REUNION

During State Convention  
Cheyenne, Wyo.

### GOLF TOURNAMENT

Aug. 11

Douglas, Wyo.

Held in conjunction with the Wyoming Natural Resource Foundation

### DUCK RACE

Aug. 14

Wyoming State Fair

### WYOMING FFA ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Aug. 14

Wyoming State Fair, FFA Exhibit Hall

### WYOMING FFA 4K

Aug. 15

Douglas, Wyo.

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Sept. 26

Torrington, Wyo.

### NATIONAL FFA CONVENTION

Oct. 28-31

Louisville, Kentucky

### INDUSTRY TOUR

Mid-November, TBD

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# Wyo FFA members compete in national ag science fair

By Trinity Lewis, Wyoming FFA Foundation

Seventeen Wyoming FFA members competed in the science fair during the National FFA Convention this past October. Wyoming's presence, and success, at the event continues to grow. Students conduct a study and then report

their findings to a panel of judges with a display and a report.

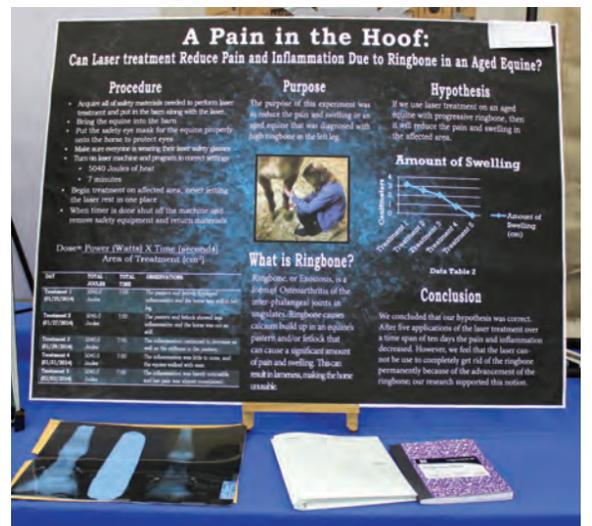
Wyoming FFA Members competed in all six divisions at the national level. In the Ani-

mal Systems Division Tavee Meisinger won bronze emblem honors. Tavee reigns from the Natrona County-Casper FFA Chapter. Also from Casper and competing in the Animal Systems division were Abigail Faxon and Megan Frank, both girls winning gold emblem honors. Rebecca Butterfield and Danae McGarvin from the Worland-Chief Washakie FFA achieved silver emblem honors in the Animal Science Division.

Wyoming's sole competitor in the Environmental and Natural Resources Division was Joshlynn Kastenschmidt of Natrona County-Casper FFA. Although she competed alone Joshlynn loved the experience stating, "My experience was phenomenal. I enjoyed seeing the other projects and comparing them with mine. I also loved shopping at the FFA Convention Center while I waited."

In the Food Products and Processing division, and all from Natrona County Casper FFA, were Timi Reynolds and Robert Hathaway and Jack Hampton, who competed as a team. Each of the entries won a silver emblem.

Morgan Hank from Natrona County Casper



Danae McGarvin and Rebecca Butterfield earned silver emblem honors for their entry pertaining to lasers in treating equine lameness.

FFA was awarded gold emblem honors in the Plant Systems Division. John Lipps also from Natrona County – Casper FFA won silver and Kara Michena and Bree Dooley of Paintrock FFA worked together to achieve a bronze in Plant Systems.

Lee Hedges, Natrona County – Casper member, also competed solo in the Power, Structural and Technical Systems Division. His hard worked paid off with a gold emblem award.

Wyoming entries earned silver emblem recognition in the Social Systems Division. Trey Campbell from Natrona County – Casper FFA and Eben Cowger of Upton were the stu-

dents behind the projects. Eben is Upton FFA's first member to compete in the national event. His project was titled "Investigating Perceptions of Community Members Toward Corporate Farming." For a first time national attendee Eben enthusiastically described the excitement the convention evokes, "My favorite part of nationals was the atmosphere. Wherever you went, if it had FFA members there, the energy of the room was definitely something else."

With experts in the fields of science in high demand, these FFA members have a bright future with a solid foundation in agriscience.

## Livestock, horse, poultry and vet teams compete

The livestock experts and scientists of tomorrow are leaders in FFA today. Wyoming FFA was proud to be represented by the following teams in Louisville, Kentucky at Career Development Events (CDE) during the National FFA Convention in October.

The Livestock Evaluation CDE is no stranger to teams from Lander, Wyo. Lander FFA Advisor Mr. McConnell's team of four excellent livestock judges achieved ninth place overall and team member, Mark McConnell, won ninth place individually in the national contest. Gold emblem winners from Lander included Jess Oldham and Colby Voxland. Alicia Espinosa received silver emblem honors. The National FFA Livestock CDE is a competitive event that tests the student's ability to select and evaluate livestock. The team traveled with the support of the Weaver Ranch of Wyoming and Colorado.

Natrona County – Casper FFA represented Wyoming in the Horse Evaluation CDE. Katelyn Chapin won gold emblem recognition and her teammates Tayler Cotton, Sade Wilson and Lacey Washut were each awarded silver emblem recognition. The team as a whole achieved silver emblem honors. Participants in the horse evaluation event evaluate eight classes of horses. Students deliver four sets of oral reasons and conduct a team presentation.

Wyoming's poultry evaluation team finished with a silver emblem. Burns FFA members Cassidy Malm, Rylee Anderson and Matt Murphy were all sil-

ver emblem winners and Jessica Sowards earned a bronze emblem. The National FFA Poultry Evaluation CDE tests the participant's ability to select top quality poultry and poultry products needed for successful production and marketing.

Knowing good livestock is one thing; the ability to keep them healthy is another, thus the Veterinary Science CDE. Worland's Chief Washakie FFA chapter sent members Callie Klinghagen, Danae McGarvin, Annie Butterfield, all of whom won silver emblem honors. Teammate Ricardo Martinez finished with a bronze. Participants in the Veterinary Science CDE must complete a written exam, respond to scenario questions about current topics in the veterinary industry and present to a panel of judges about the roles and responsibilities of the veterinary team in a variety of situations involving patients from companion animal to large animal. The team achieved Silver Emblem recognition and was supported by Chamberlain Farms of Casper and Lazy H Large Animal Services, LLC of Gillette.

The CDE that encompasses understanding soil, plant and seed anatomy and identification, crop characteristics, entomology and other management practices is agronomy. Natrona County - Casper FFA were recognized with a Silver Emblem. Connor Coughenour was awarded a gold emblem while Jack Hampton, Joshlynn Kastenschmidt and Tyler Hathaway were silver emblem honorees. The team traveled with the sponsorship of the University Of Wyoming College of Ag and Natural Resources.

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# Johnson reflects on his career as a Wyoming FFA advisor

By Trinity Lewis, Wyoming FFA Foundation

**Thermopolis, Wyo.** — For most Wyoming FFA alumni, Joey Johnson is a household name. Having taught Vocational Agriculture for 16 years, Joey Johnson's retirement from Meeteetse High School was a surprise to some. What isn't a surprise is his

continued success in his new field.

Johnson began his teaching career in the 90s when he first taught at Cody High School with Jim Facinelli. From Cody, Johnson went on to spend four years teaching in Belle Fourche, So. Dak.

Before returning to his home state to teach and coach livestock judging at Northwest College. While working at Northwest College he was also the Wyoming FFA Foundation Executive Director and worked both jobs from 2000-2004. After his time in

Powell, Johnson spent eight years in Meeteetse, retiring just one year ago.

Originally a member of the Saddle and Sirloin FFA Chapter in Newcastle, Joey Johnson knew as a small boy he would one day be part of the world's largest youth organization. "I remember looking at my dad's FFA Jacket from the Saddle and Sirloin Chapter in Newcastle and I just thought that was the coolest thing I had ever seen. Since I was able to show at the county fair at age 9, I couldn't wait to be in FFA. I also remember my dad speaking very highly of his agriculture education and FFA instructor so there was a real positive image that I respected. Mr. Ed Merrill was my agriculture education and FFA Advisor. I looked up to Mr. Merrill and he was an extremely positive influence in my life. I knew after having Mr. Merrill in class that I wanted to be an agriculture education teacher and FFA Advisor just like him."

After high school Joey earned his Associates Degree from Casper College and then achieved his Bachelors of Science in Secondary Education from the University of Wyoming. While in college he served as the 1988-1989 Wyoming FFA State Reporter and was the



1989 Wyoming National FFA Officer candidate.

During his teaching career, Johnson coached three state champion horse judging teams, three state champion environmental and natural resources teams, one state champion livestock judging team, and one state champion agriculture sales and service team. All but one of the eight state champion teams placed in the top seven in the respective national contests at the National FFA Convention.

Johnson also had the opportunity to coach the National Reserve Champion Collegiate Cattle Judging Team in Jackson, Miss. at the Dixie National in 2003. He served on the Wyoming State Fair Advisory Committee representing District 5 from 2007-2011. In 2008, he was selected by Wyoming Ag in the Classroom and the Wyoming Board of Agriculture as the 2008 Ag Advocate of the Year and in 2013 he was selected as Park County School District 16 Teacher of the Year.

Johnson now holds the title of University of Wyoming Extension Educator, 4-H/Youth for Hot Springs County 4-H. Since his time with their program, Hot Springs County 4-H has nearly doubled. But growth in numbers isn't considered a stopping point to Johnson.

In the future John-

son hopes to strengthen more of the traditional agriculture programs while influencing the program with more animal science practicum. His daily duties include fundraising and grant writing as well as growing the 4-H program in Hot Springs County.

Johnson admits to missing working with students in the classroom stating, "I've had the opportunity to meet and teach some truly amazing young men and women in my agriculture and FFA Classes. I miss training kids for the different judging teams, and I particularly miss getting freshmen ag students ready for the FFA Creed Contest."

Yet he is positive about the future as he forges ahead always remembering what he learned in FFA, "Everything worth doing is hard work. In FFA I learned that your work ethic is your trademark! If you put 100% effort in everything you do you may not be successful all the time but the hard work and experience that you learn along the way builds your character. FFA builds character in youth and this quality has helped me out in my adult life."

Although he'll be missed when role is called at FFA events, Joey Johnson will be one to watch as he continues in a successful career as an advocate for youth and agriculture.

## PREZ continued from Page 2

those folks I sincerely thank you for your gift. If you're considering becoming one of those folks, I'd sure encourage you to join us. Read through this issue of the *FFA Times* and learn about the great youth we serve and the great adults who guide them. Wyoming FFA is the premier youth organization in the state. If you join us I'm confident you'll be glad you did. If you're interested get hold of Jennifer or any of the board members. They'll take care of you.

As I wrap up this note, and this time on the board, I want to say it's been an amazing, humbling experience to work with and for so many great people. I have a great spot in my heart for FFA members, the teachers who guide them, and the folks, like you, who support them. I may not be in the board room, but I'll be somewhere cheering for Wyoming FFA. Thanks for coming along for the journey. I usually end this column with, "until next time." This time I think I'll just say thank you.

Thank you and may God richly bless you. It has been my great pleasure.

*Court*



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# Buffalo finishes 7th in Environmental & Natural Resources CDE

By Trinity Lewis  
Wyoming FFA Foundation

**Louisville, Kent.** — Buffalo FFA represented Wyoming well in the Environmental Natural Resources (ENR) competition at the National FFA Convention, finishing seventh overall. The team consisted of three gold emblem individuals — Seth Thiele, Cahill Ellenwood and Wyatt Blakeman, as well as silver emblem individual Connor Oaks.

Each of the team members is a senior and they have competed as a team for three years. The team says the most complicated part of the contest was becoming

familiar with the environment and issues that are impacting the Kentucky region. One of the teammates explained, "The soil, precipitation amounts, crops grown, invasive species, and ENR issues that are affecting Kentucky are way different than Wyoming."

Even with the challenges that faced them, each of the FFA members have a special tie to the environment and are passionate about the contest's topics. Seth is the son of a Fish and Wildlife Biologist for the Wyoming game and fish. Seth has

helped his dad since he was young and finds his work very interesting.

Connor's family operates dirt working equipment and a reclamation business. "I have always been interested in the outdoors and how our business impacts the environment. I joined the ENR team because I wanted to learn more about Resource Management," says Seth.

Wyatt has always been involved with outdoor activities explaining, "My Dad and I hunt, fish and camp. Anytime I can be out in nature I am all for it. When I was asked to try ENR it seemed

right up my alley. All of the stuff that I currently enjoy doing is in the ENR contest.

Cahill is no different, tying his love for the outdoors to the ENR event, "I like to hunt and fish so it was natural for me to want to be a part of the ENR team. I have thought about going to college to be a wildlife biologist and ENR seemed to be a great fit. I did not realize that when I joined I would be learning about soil and water so much. I

Joined the ENR team because of the Identification piece, and stayed because I found the other areas interesting."

This year's team is not the first team Buffalo FFA Advisor Jake Evans has helped coach to the National level. Buffalo FFA has had several teams represent the chapter over the past five years including an Agriculture Mechanics team in 2011, Horse judging and Ag Issues team in 2013 and Environmental and Natu-

ral Resources this year. Mr. Evans summed it up by saying "We've been very fortunate." Fortune increases the harder individuals work, which seems to be the case for Buffalo FFA.

Thanks to donations from the Wyoming Natural Resource Foundation and the Wyoming Rural Electric Association, the Wyoming FFA Foundation was able to provide travel dollars to the ENR team. A special thanks goes out to those two entities for supporting Wyoming FFA members.

## LEAD continued from Page 1

new title during the recent political season, Campaign Manager for Representative Cynthia Lummis. Lummis praised Christensen's assets that she largely credits to Wyoming FFA, "Being a Wyoming FFA State Officer gives you leadership, ethics, contacts and organizational skills. You cannot be a state officer without intimate knowledge of the state and its people. Micah interned for me in Washington, DC and I could tell how well he was prepared for this job while working for me. I am always eager to have FFA members as interns as they always seem to bring the same work ethic they have from FFA to our office."

Micah first met Lummis when he traveled to Washington, DC for FFA's Washington Leadership Conference and a year later Representative Lummis attended the Wyoming FFA State Convention where she received her Honorary State Degree. Micah considers FFA a large factor in his ability to perform this role, "The connections I have made as Wyoming's state president are incredible. It goes to show how important agriculture and agricultural education are to our state and our culture. FFA was a place for me to grow in public speaking skills, confidence as well as leadership. All the skills I learned in FFA are still helping me be successful in this position."

Micah is one of the youngest campaign managers for a state office in Wyoming. Overwhelming to some, he has chosen to use this time to grow stating, "This campaign has helped me to think on my feet and be flexible. Most jobs have a list of responsibilities and directions; in the campaign world I rely primarily on instinct and adapt-

ability." Although he admits that the campaign is not without challenges, "As a young campaign manager I am new to the game. Most other campaign managers have worked campaigns in the past and have real experience in the field. To overcome this challenge I have relied on my strengths and have reached out to others."

Although this campaign only occupied one season of Micah's life, he attests that it will have an ongoing impact, "Working on this campaign was an eye opener into the inner workings of Wyoming politics. I have networked with hundreds of people from all areas around the state and have made great friends."

Micah currently serves on the Wyoming FFA Leadership Camp Board and graduated in May from Arkansas State University with two Bachelor of Arts degrees in Political Science and Communication Studies. This fall he plans to attend the University of Wyoming Law School, with a concentration in environmental and energy law.

Recently engaged to past Minnesota FFA State Officer, Erin Daninger, Micah remains ever occupied. Even with this campaign closing, Micah has no plans to completely flee the political scene, "I believe I will always stay active in the political process in some way, whether it means helping on future campaigns, someday serving on a school board, being a part of my local political party, working for a politician or maybe even being one myself. So long as God can use me to serve others through my interest in the political process, I will continue to be attracted to it."

## STATE OFFICERS continued from Page 2

contest, and he was from Connecticut. After talking about where we came from and our backgrounds, I came to realize that not everyone has the opportunity to live in such an Agriculture filled world as I do, and as we do here in Wyoming. The student lived in a city and he worked on the nearest and largest farm, which consisted of three acres wheat, and three Hereford cows. This clearly demonstrates how lucky I am to live on a ranch and be surrounded by true "Ag people" everyday. Although this might not have been a typical take away from National Convention, it was truly what had the greatest impact on me.

**Kyle Webber:** There is one word to explain nationals. Life-changing. I served as a delegate, and it was an experience that was amazing. I met people from all around the nation and made friends with people from South Carolina, and people from Texas, and people from Maryland.

I made those relationships that are going to last a lifetime. Nationals made me realize how lucky I am to be a part of such an amazing organization and an amazing family. I have gained 610,240 of the best friends, brothers, and sisters, and nationals opened my eyes up to that. I wouldn't change anything about it, and will always cherish those memories.

**Caleb Green:** Although I didn't attend this year for personal reasons, I felt I was still at National Convention in spirit through the power of my FFA family. My fellow state officers were there to support me and that's what being in FFA is all about. It's not just agriculture or building leadership skills, it's being in a family and making relationships that will last a lifetime. I'm so blessed to be a state officer and see the family atmosphere in FFA from a different perspective from when I was a chapter member. FFA is definitely family.

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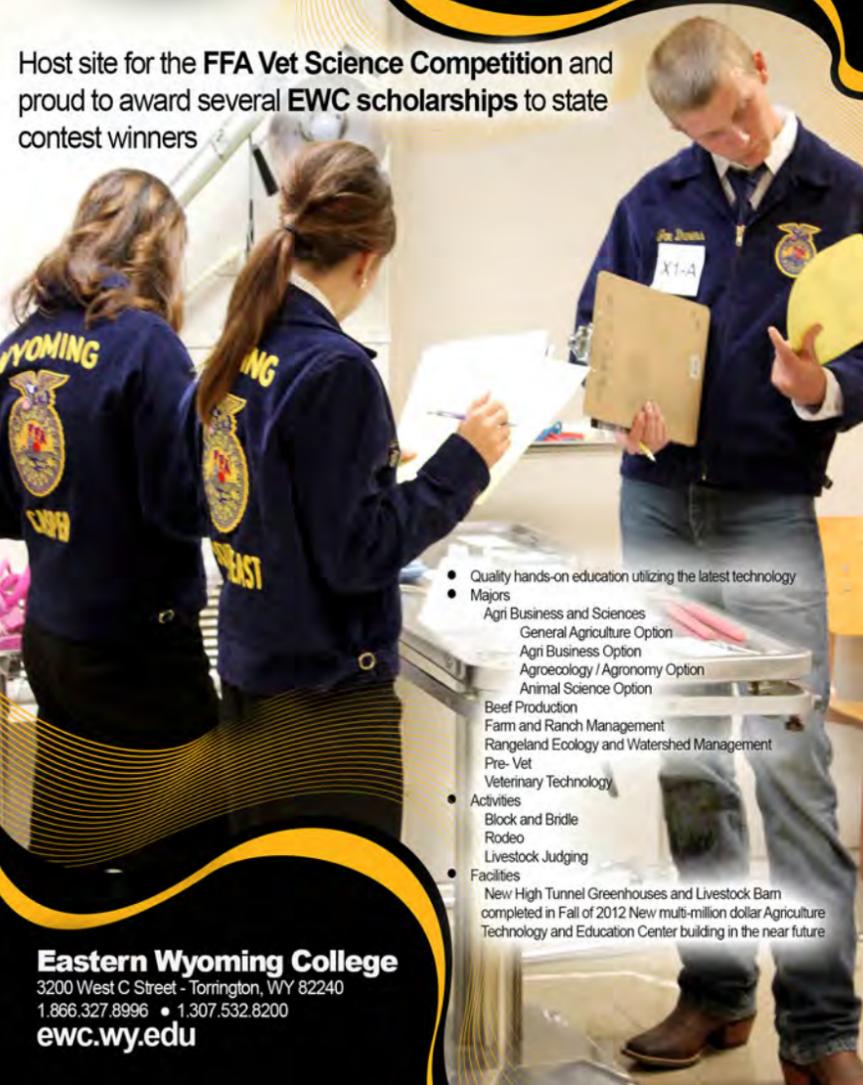

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# 2014 Wyoming FFA Foundation Industry Tour, Cody

## TOUR continued from Page 1



Between 175 and 200 FFA members from all across Wyoming were in Cody mid-November for the third annual Wyoming FFA Foundation tour. Stops included the George Family's dairy, Wyoming Gourmet Beef and Y-Tex, an eartag manufacturer.

Seth George, a member of the Western Dairy Association Board of Directors, welcomed FFA members to his family's dairy farm. Because the family's farm is so diverse FFA members learned about milk production, feed, natural resource management, agribusiness, marketing, ag mechanics and more.



Kristin Tucker, who handles curriculum development and education for the Western Dairy Association, discussed milk's nutritional importance. If young people who are short on food can get just one glass of milk per day, said Tucker, it can go far in keeping that person healthy and meeting their nutritional requirements. Tucker played an instrumental role in making the 2014 tour a success.

"Western Dairy is a great partner in the Ag industry, promoting the importance of dairy farms and the nutritional value of dairy products. FFA is about leadership development, and as a dairy farmer, Western Dairy Association board member and former FFA member, I'm honored to provide this leadership opportunity to this group of young people who represent the future of our industry," said Seth George, whose family owns the George Dairy.

A noon lunch, provided by the Western Dairy Association, included milk. Kristin Tucker, in charge of Dairy Curriculum Development, Activation and Training for the WDA, told FFA members that milk can truly make a positive impact for youth struggling to meet their daily caloric needs. Tucker says a single glass of milk can go far in helping those young people meet their nutritional needs.

FFA members in attendance also heard from Gluten Free Harvest. The company started as an FFA project and caters to those with special dietary needs. Maria Berchtold and David Wagner from the company challenged FFA members to seriously pursue their Supervised Agriculture Experience projects and consider the potential within those endeavors. The duo distributed samples of their company's Canyon Oats.

In Cody, FFA members toured Wyoming Gourmet Beef and Y-Tex, a livestock eartag manufacturer. Y-Tex has been manufacturing eartags in Wyoming for over 40 years. Today the company ships their products, with a product line including both traditional eartags and those utilizing cutting edge technology, all over the world. Members learned about several careers. Jolene Osborn, an engineer who oversees manufacturing, led one of the groups touring the facility. She also told them about careers within the business, including sales and marketing.

At Wyoming Gourmet Beef, FFA members learned not only about agriculture in their state, but lessons in business. David Fales and his wife Kristine led members on a tour of their processing facilities where Wyoming beef is made into jerky, beef sticks and more. Additional information on the products can be found online at [www.WyomingGourmetBeef.com](http://www.WyomingGourmetBeef.com). Fales has a goal of developing a reputation for Wyoming Gourmet Beef that parallels "Idaho Potatoes," "Maine Lobster," "Georgia Peaches," and "Florida Oranges." FFA members were able to witness first-hand the company's ingenuity and Fales' commitment to the company's goals.

2014 marks the third year the Wyoming FFA Foundation has hosted industry tours in conjunction with the FFA Association's fall leadership events. The tours were launched in an effort to showcase agriculture around the state and provide an additional learning opportunity to Wyoming FFA members. The Wyoming FFA Foundation would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the Western Dairy Association, the George Family, Y-Tex and Wyoming Gourmet Beef for making this year's tour possible.



Members of the George Family welcomed Wyoming FFA to their family farm. From the left are Seth, Spencer, Arley, Scott, Adam and Lynn. The George Family has been in the dairy business for 64 years and also has a cow-calf operation. Most of their feed for the dairy is grown on-site. They milk over 500 cows daily and 16 families depend on the dairy for their living.

"The George Family truly rolled out the red carpet for Wyoming FFA," says Wyoming FFA Foundation Executive Director Jennifer Womack. "From letting the members milk cows to getting a birdseye view of feed being mixed, FFA members enjoyed a day of hands on learning. For many of our members this was the first time they'd visited a dairy and it was a day they truly appreciated and will remember. It was an added bonus that many members of the George Family are themselves alumni of the Wyoming FFA program!"

Photo courtesy of the Western Dairy Association

# 2014 Wyoming FFA Foundation Industry Tour, Cody



Scott George discusses the computerized side of milking with an FFA member. The production of each individual cow can be seen right in the milking parlor.



The handling, and quality, of feed is important in nearly every Wyoming operation that involves livestock. That's definitely the case in the dairy business. FFA members, shown center in a lift, received a birds eye view of feed mixing at the George Dairy and an in-depth discussion on the care given to the family's dairy cows.



Lynn George discusses the raising of dairy calves and the breed-back of dairy cows. The dairy uses artificial insemination. Calving takes place for most of the year at the dairy.

*If you have suggestions for future FFA tours, please drop us a line at [Jen@WyoFFAFoundation.com](mailto:Jen@WyoFFAFoundation.com)*



Seth George discusses the computer side of the milk business with FFA members. Computers are used during the milk collection and storage process.



Scott George discusses milk storage. Certain guidelines are in place relating to cooling the milk after collection and storing it until shipment can take place.



David Fales, owner of Wyoming Gourmet Beef, provided countless business lessons to Wyoming FFA members. He discussed his history in the food business and his goals for Wyoming Gourmet Beef. Given Wyoming's high quality beef industry, Fales envisions the product earning the popularity of products like "Florida oranges" and "Idaho Potatoes."

Fales told FFA members the company's history and the dedication it takes to get a business up and running. Additional information on the company's product line is available online at [www.WyomingGourmetBeef.com](http://www.WyomingGourmetBeef.com).

FFA members gave outstanding reviews of the Wyoming Gourmet Beef products they were able to sample while visiting the business. Fales also offered them the opportunity to use the locally grown product in future fundraising endeavors.

*Jennifer Womack photograph*



FFA members interested in ag mechanics took notice of what Arley and Spencer George had to say about maintaining the farm's equipment. Arley discussed maintenance schedules, the inventory they keep on hand and steps they take to keep their equipment costs in check.



*Photos courtesy of the Western Dairy Association unless otherwise noted*

## Students exhibit business skills during National FFA Convention contests

FFA has a reputation for equipping its members with the tools necessary to be successful in education as well as in the job force. The following contests provide a firm foundation for students seeking positions in the businesses of farming and ranching, mechanics, marketing as well as sales. In order to excel to the national level, the following teams had to first obtain the state champion title.

In the Farm Business Management Contest, the Natrona County – Casper FFA earned gold emblem honors. Team members Hunter Romsa and Aver

Reynolds were recognized as gold emblem individuals, while Sierra Hiser and Alix Smith achieved silver emblem recognition. The National Farm Business Management CDE tests student's ability to apply economic principles and concepts in analyzing farm and business management decisions. Understanding that good management will provide food for more mouths using less land than ever before. Stotz Equipment sponsored the team from Casper.

Wyoming's Agricultural Technology and Mechanic Systems Team

from Laramie's Snowy Range FFA finished with a silver emblem. The team included Blane Enyeart, Jordan Runner, Taran Petersen and Chad Carter. The event allows students to apply classroom knowledge to real-life situations through demonstration of problem solving, a team event and hands on performance activities all with an emphasis on environmental natural resource systems, structural systems, energy and electrical systems and machinery and equipment systems. The team traveled with support from Andreen Hunt Construction of Casper.

Few high school students would naturally be exposed to the basics of constructing a marketing plan or presenting a fluid sales proposal. FFA members are yet again the exception thanks to the Marketing Plan and Agricultural Sales Career Development Events. Snowy Range FFA, representing Wyoming in the Marketing Plan CDE, earned silver emblem honors. The team, consisting of Joey Harris, Aurora Gallegos and Sage Barbour, traveled with the support of TR Custom Wicking and the Donn & Julianne Randall Family, along

with Gluten Free Harvest. The National FFA Marketing Plan CDE strives to give students the skills of effective marketing through the development and presentation of a marketing plan.

The Agricultural Sales CDE includes actual sales presentations, a written exam and a team sales situation. Wyoming's Ag Sales Team, from Casper's Windy City FFA, achieved silver emblem recognition. Elexis Forgey and Gabrielle Reimann were recognized as gold emblem individuals and Haley Glass and Colter Whitehouse received silver emblems.

The National FFA Parliamentary Procedure CDE tests students' ability to effectively communicate ideas during a meeting. Components included a general knowledge exam of parliamentary law, a ten-minute demonstration of parliamentary procedure, oral questions, written minutes of the demonstration as well as a team problem solving activity. This year's team from Wyoming was from the Burns FFA Chapter. They finished with silver emblem honors and traveled with support from the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation.

### CODY continued from Page 1

the real life situations in FFA. Most of the students that attend the FIRE conference are freshmen or sophomores and are brand new to the program, so I want them to think about being active and taking advantage of the time that they have in FFA."

#### Advocating for Agriculture

Junior and senior members attended the Chapter Presidents' Conference (CPC), where they worked on state FFA issues as delegates and learned about chapter development and the importance of agricultural advocacy.

Each student was assigned an issue or topic to discuss with other members and report to the larger delegate body with their recommendations. The delegates made recommendations on promoting the Wyoming FFA through social media and recommended adding a Job Interview and Dairy career development event as official competitions. Delegates also proposed Wyoming FFA organize a statewide fundraising event to benefit the Wounded Warrior Project, an agriculture teacher based committee to review state win-

ning proficiency applications and a revised Number One Chapter selection process.

"We are proud of the seriousness our members showed their committee assignments and their maturity is reflected in their recommendations," said State FFA Advisor Stacy Broda. "FFA is one of the few youth organizations that gives members an active say and a chance to participate in the decision-making process. Our members understand that and truly work at bettering the Wyoming FFA."

Members also partic-

ipated in workshops led by the 2014-2015 State FFA Officers focusing on the ways and opportunities FFA members have to be advocates for agriculture. The workshop was a preview for the officer's newly created "Wyoming Day of Agricultural Advocacy" to be held next January.

"I think that the most important concept that I hope the members really grasped was advocating for agriculture," said Baxter Heinert, state FFA reporter. "We all hear about the importance of it, but I think what we, as state officers, wanted them to learn was how to actually advocate and why we use it. I hope the members took it as valuable information to use throughout their experi-

ences in FFA."

#### Coming Together Today and Tomorrow

Together, both conference participants listened to keynote speaker Craig Zablocki and spent time socializing and networking as a larger group.

"FIRE and CPC are absolutely my favorite experiences for Wyoming FFA members," said Heinert. "I think that almost more important than the lessons that we are teaching are the relationships that the members make. I remember making lifelong connections at my first FIRE conference, and I hope that every member can make those same relationships."

Hedges echoed the benefits being surrounded by several hun-

dred members all passionate about the blue and gold.

"The friends that members make at FIRE their freshman year will be at State Convention or CPC or FFA Leadership Camp all the way up until they are seniors, so they not only make friends, but they make friendships that have the ability to last," she said.

"The members are excited and full of energy and I absolutely love watching them grow and develop over the years (or even days.) I especially love spending time with the people that help make FIRE and CPC possible. They are amazing people with huge hearts and a love for FFA, and they all make the weekend fun!"

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# State Officers to 'advocate' in January, sharing ag knowledge

**By Teresa Milner**  
**Wyo. FFA Association**  
**Cheyenne, Wyo.** — The 2014-2015 Wyoming State FFA Officers were discussing their frustration with a lack of knowledge in society about agriculture and food products when an idea was born — an effort dedicated to advocating for agriculture that FFA members from across Wyoming organize and run. And so the Wyoming Agriculture Advoca-

cacy Week was born.

To be held Jan. 26 through Feb. 1, 2015, Wyoming Agriculture Advocacy Week will focus on encouraging FFA members to be the voice of agriculture and engage their local communities in discussion about where their food comes from and how agriculture contributes to Wyoming's economy and culture.

"Our team decided to start this day of advocacy

to actively engage members into agriculture education," said Tyler Clemetson, state FFA 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President. "Our current ag literacy rates in the U.S. are 20 percent, which we feel is quite appalling. So to help begin counteracting these problems we decided to start a program that would educate members on how to educate. This program is supposed to give members the tools they will need to

help spread the word about agriculture."

The state officers introduced their idea at the 2014 FIRE/CPC Leadership conferences, beginning with a workshop how to be an effective advocate for agriculture for older FFA members. "As FFA members, one of our core values is agriculture education, not only of our members but of our nation as a whole," explained Clemetson.

"It is important that our members understand current issues in agriculture as well as some simple facts about ag, so that when presented with situations where they have an opportunity to advocate, they have the tools to confidently educate others with the correct facts based on logic and reason rather than feeling and emotion."

Activities planned for Wyoming Agriculture Advocacy Week include an essay and video competition for FFA members, radio and television appearances by the state

officers and a social media campaign encouraging everyone in the industry to "advocate." The state officers are also encouraging chapters to participate locally with events and activities in their community.

"This idea came directly from the state FFA officer team," said State FFA Advisor Stacy Broda. "They saw a chance to help others learn to stand up for their industry and way of life. I'm excited to see how our FFA members respond to the challenge, and extremely proud of the officers for wanting to make a difference."

It's one thing to complain about agriculture being misunderstood. But it takes maturity and initiative to come together as a team and say "Let's do something about it."

Clemetson says FFA members often don't realize how effective they can be at speaking out for the agriculture industry. "When I was a senior in high school, I had been given the opportunity to go to the National

FFA Convention for Prepared Public Speaking competition," he said. "To help me practice, my advisor and I would go to the senior center, school board meetings, and other public gatherings. Although at the time I thought of them as just another practice, I was talking to a parent one night who had been very interested in what I had to say that evening. I finally realized that as we talked I had been educating and advocating through my practice speeches, and had never really noticed what I did."

The state FFA officers are asking other agriculture industry groups to get involved and help support their efforts to promote Wyoming agriculture. Details about the different competitions, events and social media campaign for Wyoming Agricultural Advocacy Week will be published on the Wyoming FFA's website, [wyoingffa.org](http://wyoingffa.org), after the first of the year. Any groups or businesses who would like to get involved can contact Broda at (307) 630-6094.

## SASSY continued from Page 1

creation to retail markets. Escorted by their father, she drove to Casper to approach businesses. They began with a locally owned sporting goods store. The manager made an order on the spot. Rachelle could hardly contain her excitement as they reported home and went on to the next store. By the end of the day they had to stop asking businesses because no one had declined their offer. Each store they approached placed an order that day. The Harris sisters knew that their business had reached an entirely new level.

May was another high point for the newly founded company when they were invited to host a booth at the National High School Finals Rodeo in Rock Springs, Wyo. The girls accepted the offer and were able to send Sassy Brass apparel home with cowboys and cowgirls from Canada to Hawaii and almost every state in between.

The Harris sisters consider their newfound business a blessing. "Although there is a lot of responsibility and it can be hard to juggle at times, it is so rewarding to watch an idea and a dream take off and turn into a successful business," says Rachelle.

Shaunte especially appreciates the mentorship that comes along with the business. "You see so many people who are older and wiser with so much more experience who struggled through business and yet while they have worked their whole life to gain such success, here I am at 17 already gaining these experiences which will continue to influence the rest of my life." Their products are now in 36 stores in five states. Rachelle will be attending college after she graduates in May and hopes to work toward a degree in agriculture and business marketing to help maintain the success of Sassy Brass. They've also purchased a more advanced machine that clips the casings, grinds them down and ejects the primers. They have been able to hire three stay-at-home moms to help with assembly.

It is rare to find young adults with a good understanding of philanthropic goals, yet Shaunte and Rachelle believe that their business' success is not their own to claim. "Our success is due to our incredible Father in Heaven who showers His blessings upon

this business and my family along with my amazing parents and family who have allowed me to take those blessings and excel," says Shaunte.

Rachelle echoed Shaunte's gratitude, "I give credit for our success to my parents who have taught us to be successful physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. They always say, 'We are not raising teenagers we are raising successful adults.' I am so thankful that they have stood by that! I also know that without my Father in Heaven, none of this would be possible. Without Him I am nothing."

Their passion for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment and wildlife conservation benefit from their attitude of gratitude. With every earring sold, a portion is donated to organizations that help to encourage those causes.

Their parents express awe of the young entrepreneurs stating, "Our daughters are nothing short of amazing. They always have been. They are and have always been extremely responsible. Their work ethic is second to no one. I would hire my girls over most grown men. Their determination has showed through all of their endeavors so when they wanted to begin selling the bullet earrings we were thrilled. We knew that they would gain knowledge from starting, working and growing their own business that couldn't

be taught in any learning institution. We are so proud of the women they are becoming. They are determined business women, excellent students, wonderful human beings, but most of all we are humbled and in awe of their willingness to give back and to serve their Heavenly Father in all they do."

Find Sassy Brass 22 on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and at [www.SassyBrass22.com](http://www.SassyBrass22.com).

## Andreen family recognized for FFA involvement

The National FFA Convention is a time for champion teams to compete for the national title and FFA members to be inspired to achieve. It's also time to recognize a select group of community leaders and FFA supporters.

Our state FFA organization relies on the support of exceptional teachers, individuals and companies to provide life-changing experiences for its members. In Wyoming, Andreen-Hunt Construction is one of those companies. This year the Andreen family traveled to Louisville for the National FFA Convention where Dale received the Honorary American Degree in recognition of that support for the FFA.

Dale Andreen, of Andreen-Hunt Construction in Casper, did not wear blue and gold as a young man. He never memorized the Creed or had a Supervised Agriculture Experience (SAE) project. In fact, the first time Dale was involved in FFA was in 2004 when his son, Burt, became involved in the Casper FFA Chapter. Yet, for the past decade the Andreens have played a pivotal role in Wyoming FFA.

On a local level Dale and his wife, Valorie "Val," have hauled FFA members all across the state and even served as chaperones at National FFA Convention on several occasions. Val helped rejuvenate the Casper FFA Alumni and the group now helps raise thousands of dollars per year to benefit the three chapters in Casper. For the past five years Andreen-Hunt Construction has sponsored Wyoming's Agricultural Mechanics team, provid-

ing travel dollars to help the team travel to and compete at the National FFA Convention. They've also been ardent supporters during the annual Blue Jeans Ball and numerous other Wyoming FFA events.

All three of the Andreen's young adult children — Burt, Amy and Lisa — have served as Wyoming FFA State Officers and still serve in their own ways. Burt assists the Casper teams preparing for state and national Career Development Event (CDE) competitions. He also serves as a Wyoming FFA Camp Director, assists with the FFA Association's fall leadership conference, and is integral back stage during the Wyoming FFA Convention. Lisa was this year's Wyoming National FFA Officer Candidate. Amy has helped in various capacities including volunteering at the Wyoming FFA Leadership Camp, during the FFA Association's fall leadership events and at the Wyoming FFA Convention.

Val has been part of the Wyoming FFA Foundation Board for four years and at least one representative from the Andreen family is behind the scenes helping at all FFA related events. Although he wasn't a member himself, Dale is excited about Wyoming FFA stating "FFA is a fantastic youth organization that restores my faith in the upcoming generations." He continued, "I am most encouraged by the great bunch of students and dedicated ag teachers and FFA advisors who make up the organization."



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What's Happening

Calendar of Events



- Feb. 21-28 National FFA Week
- March 2 State Agriscience Fair, Laramie
- March 23 State Vet Science Contest, EWC and Torrington/Lingle contests
- March 28 State Proficiency Judging
- April 8-11 STATE FFA CDE'S AND LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE, CHEYENNE
- April 9 Wyoming FFA Career Fair during the 2015 convention
- April 9 Wyoming FFA Foundation Scholarship Reception, held during the state convention
- June 9-13 Session 1, Wyoming FFA Leadership Camp
- June 16-20 Session 2, Wyoming FFA Leadership Camp

**CELEBRATE FFA!  
NATIONAL FFA WEEK  
IS FEB. 21-28**

**Meats team makes strong showing at nationals**

Food, fiber and natural resources are what the agriculture industry is all about and the first portion to that trio is well known by those involved in the Meats Evaluation and Technology CDE. Competitors in the Meats Evaluation contest focus on developing the skills needed for careers in the meat animal industry. Competitors evaluate beef carcasses for quality and yield grade, identify various meat cuts, place carcasses and identify wholesale and/or retail cuts.

This year's Wyoming team was from the Natrona County-Casper FFA chapter and consisted of Trey Campbell, Wilson Stewart, Kaylen Lewis and Kree Gates. Three of the four members — Campbell, Stewart and Lewis were all awarded gold emblem honors. Gates won silver.

The team began studying for the National FFA Convention early. They attended a camp in June and held practices before, during and after school throughout the fall. They also traveled to both the Uni-

versity of Wyoming and Colorado State University to practice. Mr. Brock Burch, FFA Advisor and team coach, said, "Their team consisted of a senior, two juniors and one sophomore, so they were a relatively young group, yet they were dedicated."

This is not the first time Mr. Burch has led a high placing meats team to Nationals. Assistant coach Burt Andreen says, "These students have a genuine interest in food science and understanding what goes into putting food on the table. We are lucky to get to work with such motivated and talented young people." He smiled and added, "A little luck never hurts the teams either."

Overall, this year's Natrona County - Casper FFA team had the 7<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> high individuals. "That is better than any other team I've ever had," Burch stated. "I hope that they decide to go on and do this at the college level as they are definitely capable enough."



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"**Learning by doing**" is an important teaching strategy that agriculture instructors Heath Hornecker, Tom Parker, Marty Finch, Jeremy Burkett, Todd Jones, and Jason Johnson employ with students. Much of that "learning by doing" is employed in the field working with global positioning systems (GPS), livestock presentations, range ecologies labs, and soil science activities.

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