



News Release – 10/30/24

For Information Contact:

Katibeth Wise

Phone: (229) 254-4811 Email: kwise@gaaged.org

Georgia Celebrates 12 National Champions and Newly Elected National Officer at 97th National FFA Convention

INDIANAPOLIS – The Georgia FFA Association’s success at the 97th National FFA Convention was highlighted by 12 national champions and the newly elected National Southern Region Vice President. Among Georgia’s national winners were six national proficiency award winners, two national Agriscience Fair award winners, two national Career Development Event (CDE) and Leadership Development Event (LDE) winners, one National Talent Winner, and the 2024 American Star Farmer.

Paul Oliver, a member of the Tattnall County FFA chapter, was named the 2024 American Star Farmer. Paul joined FFA as a freshman but has been around agriculture his entire life growing up on a farm. From the skills he learned in his agricultural education classes along with those he learned from family and mentors, Oliver started his own agricultural enterprise focusing on show pigs and market hogs before expanding with a cattle herd and pecan orchard. A total of 4,805 FFA members from across the nation received the prestigious American FFA Degree in 2024. Among those recipients, the top four in the entrepreneurship category were named finalists. Oliver interviewed as a finalist and was named the national winner on stage during the 6th session of the convention. Oliver is a graduate of Tattnall County High School in Reidsville, and his agricultural education teachers are Mr. Adam Carpenter, Mr. Jarrett Greene, Mr. Trey Kirkland, and Ms. Leigha Kirkley.

Coffee County FFA member, Jack Lingenfelter, was elected as the National Southern Region Vice President. After a lengthy application and interview process, Lingenfelter was chosen to serve as one of the six members of the 2024-2025 national officer team out of 37 candidates vying for the position. He will spend the next year in his new position representing student membership during meetings with the National FFA Board of Directors, facilitating workshops that bring leadership and knowledge to FFA members, delivering motivational speeches, and serving as an advocate for FFA on a global scale.

Conner Paulk of Irwin County (Agricultural Processing), Raegan Gilbert of Banks County (Beef Production-Entrepreneurship), Drevin Wilkerson of Cook County (Diversified Crop Production-Placement), Teeghan Jameson of Stephens County (Environmental/Natural Resource Management), Mason Nunn of Morgan County (Grain Production), and Matthew Anderson of Banks County (Outdoor Recreation) were each named national FFA proficiency award winners for success in their Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) programs. Only four students in the nation are named National Finalists in each of 45 proficiency areas. Georgia had 18 national proficiency award finalists and six proficiency winners.

- MORE-

Georgia FFA's two winners in the national Agriscience Fair included Erin Keith of Franklin County Middle (Animal Systems – Division 1) and Emi Walker of North Oconee (Plant Systems – Division 3). In addition to the two national winners, Georgia FFA also had 13 agriscience fair projects placing in the top 5 of their division.

Two Georgia chapters earned 1st place finishes in national Career/Leadership Development Events at the convention. Georgia CDE/LDE success was highlighted by the following chapters: Banks County (Environmental/Natural Resources CDE) and Mary Persons (Forestry CDE). Georgia's other top-5 finishers in CDE/LDEs include Banks County (3rd place –Agricultural Technology & Mechanical Systems).

The National Chapter Award Program is designed to recognize FFA chapters that actively implement the mission and strategies of the organization. Georgia was represented well by two chapters who were chosen as finalists in this award program. Russell Middle and Youth Middle were both named finalists (top 5, top 3; respectively) in the Middle School Models of Excellence division.

Thirty-two Georgia chapters received a national 3-Star ranking, the highest ranking offered in the National Chapter Award program. Georgia's 3-Star chapters are Apalachee, Atkinson County, Berrien County High, Cambridge, Camden Middle, Central of Carroll, Commerce Middle, Creekview, Eastside, Etowah, Franklin County High, Franklin County Middle, Golden Isles Career Academy, Haralson County, Jackson-Empower, Lee County Middle West, Liberty County, Madison County High, Morgan County Middle, Newton College and Career Academy, Northside Middle, Oglethorpe County High, Peach County, Pierce County Middle, Rabun County, Russell Middle, Screven County High, South Effingham High, Treutlen County, Walnut Grove, Winder-Barrow, and Youth Middle FFA.

Five Georgia FFA members performed as a part of the National FFA Band, Chorus, and Talent program. The National FFA Band, Chorus, and Talent feature musically talented FFA members from across the nation who showcase their skills throughout general sessions, luncheons, and other events throughout convention. Leland Guay and Tristen Robins of Northwest Whitfield and Daniel Jones of Rabun County represented Georgia in the National FFA Band. Georgia FFA members who performed as talent participants include Ian Mitchell-Edge of Crisp County and Hunter Boswell of Oglethorpe County. Ian Mitchell-Edge was also named as the National Talent Winner.

One hundred and eighty-one Georgia FFA members received the prestigious American FFA Degree, the highest degree offered to an active member. These students spent years developing their Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) programs to reach this honor. Less than 1% of FFA members receive the prestigious American FFA Degree.

To see a complete list of Georgia's 2024 American FFA Degree recipients, visit https://www.georgiaffa.org/docs/2024%20American%20FFA%20Degree%20-%20Georgia_84779.pdf

Eight Georgians received the Honorary American FFA Degree for their outstanding contribution to Agricultural Education and the FFA. Georgia's recipients of the Honorary Degree included: Dr. Mark Kistler, Dr. Carl Nichols, Mrs. Nancy Sell, Mrs. Christy Smith, Mr. Micah Story, Dr. David West, and Mr. Clint and Mrs. Hope Oliver.

A complete set of results and a variety of highlights from the 97th National FFA Convention can be found at <https://www.georgiaffa.org/NationalFFAConvention>

-END-