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The Baxter Bulletin

A collage of images showing FFA members, agricultural activities, and a group photo in front of a building with a bear sculpture.

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MH FFA Officers discuss their school careers in agriculture

Members experience leadership, community service in MHHS Chapter

Staff Report

Mountain Home High School Senior and FFA President Colton Cooley has spent five years in the organization and appears to have loved every minute of it.

"Being in FFA has waxed my appreciation for the agriculture field as I've learned how broad it really is and the opportunities available," he said.

For a number of MHHS students, Cooley believes FFA has given them a "home" club that they wouldn't have had otherwise.

"FFA has helped me develop a lot of communication and networking skills, while also furthering my knowledge of all aspects of the industry," Cooley added.

Sophomore Hannah Baker, a junior advisor for MHHS FFA, also has been involved with the chapter for five years.

When she was elected to her position, she said it "felt amazing to be chosen to help lead our local FFA chapter."

"FFA equips students for the agriculture industry," she said of the group.

She said she tries to lead her fellow FFA members by example and believes the organization has added to the district and the school's list of accomplishments.

As for her happiest memory from FFA, she said winning the State Agronomy competition was one of her favorites and believes that



Newly elected officers of the Mountain Home High School FFA Chapter are: (first row, from left) Fairboard Representative Hadleigh Baker, Vice President Madison Hutson, Second Vice President Kelsey Roach, Parliamentarian Kinsey Devine, Secretary Taylor Albright, (second row) President Colton Cooley, Treasurer Haylee Silzell, Reporter Abby Taylor, Junior Advisor Hannah Baker and Sentinel Mason Dismore. SUBMITTED PHOTO

FFA has helped her develop her communication skills, along with strategic thinking and problem solving.

Hannah's fraternal twin sister, Hadleigh Baker, also is a sophomore and served as the Fair Board Representative this year, which is her fourth year in FFA. Following her win, she said "it felt better than winning an Oscar."

She said she believes being in FFA has given her a better insight into agriculture, and has tried to lead by serving as a good and responsible example.

Additionally, she believes FFA has been a positive addition to the school's overall environment, while personally it has helped her develop great communication skills.

"My happiest memories have been meeting some of my best friends through FFA," she said.

Treasurer Haylee Silzell is a junior this year and has been with FFA for four years.

"I felt really proud to be able to serve my community through agriculture," she said of being elected

as an officer.

She said she tries to stay positive and be kind to others as a way to set an example to her peers. As for how FFA changed her feelings about agriculture, she said it gave her an understanding as to how important it is and gave her the ability to advocate for it.

"It has made a huge difference by helping me with my leadership skills, public speaking and interview skills," she said.

Throughout her training to compete in LDEs and CDEs, Silzell said she

has no fear when it comes to speaking in front of a crowd or stepping into an interview room with a panel of judges.

Senior Madison Hutson, FFA Vice President, will complete her fifth year with FFA in the spring. When she was elected to office for the first time, she said she had a sense of belonging and growth and in her final year and she still has a sense of pride.

"During my time in FFA, I've been able to discuss various agricultural fields with many different

leaders, consumers and more," she said. "With this, I've been able to widen my horizons and see more of how important agriculture truly is."

She believes FFA has been important in helping to form future leaders at MHHS and has shown students how to juggle all the many aspects of growing up, while still having a last chance to be a kid.

"Through FFA, I've been able to gain skills in and out of the classroom, whether this be self-discipline, to being able to speak in front of a group," she said. "FFA has taught me how to be a leader and a friend while remaining responsible."

FFA Parliamentarian and junior Kinsey Devine is in her third year of FFA and found being elected to be quite an honor, adding that FFA has been one of the most impactful parts of her life.

"And getting to serve my chapter on the officer team is a great achievement," she added.

While she said she's always had a great appreciation for the agriculture field, she said FFA has continued to open doors for her.

"Being a leader is something I always try to exemplify to others," she said, by taking initiative. "Being adaptable is also something I strive to be because almost nothing goes according to plan."

She concluded that being involved in FFA has taught her responsibility and leadership, and how to think on her feet.

ABOUT THE COVER: Members of Mountain Home Public School's FFA group attended State FFA Career Development Events at the University of Arkansas on April 8 of last year and are pictured outside Razorback Stadium. This is an event that members must qualify for in order to compete. District Career Development Events are in March and up to 80 schools are eligible to compete in the district. The top 10 percent, or top 8 teams, qualify for State. Mountain Home took 16 qualifying teams to State, including two teams that became State Champions and went on to compete in Nationals.

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Why FFA was for me

Mountain Home FFA students discuss why they are in FFA

Staff Report

For some area students, joining FFA is a foregone conclusion for them if they come from a farm family. Some students are naturally drawn to it because they either love animals or have a deep love of nature.

For Mountain Home Junior High (MHJH) eighth grader Brooke Hicks, she joined FFA because she wanted to try something new.

"FFA has been everything I expected and more," she said. "I have made friendships with people I never thought I would get to know. Some of my best friends I have met through FFA."

Her favorite part about FFA is the friendships she's made along the way.

"It is a great way to meet new people and visit places that you never thought you would have the opportunity to go to," she said. "Honestly, the only thing that I don't like about FFA is that we miss a lot of school, but it all makes up for it when we get to go to new places and get new opportunities."

Ninth-grader Isaac Therrien joined FFA because he knew that there were a lot of career opportunities that he can pursue and also joined to "show my support to our local agriculture program."

"FFA has absolutely exceed my expectations," he said. "When I first joined, I thought it was boring and I wouldn't have fun, but I now realize that this has been such an amazing experience. I've met so many new people and I love FFA, because no matter where you go, everyone is one big family."

Landen McCracken, a ninth-grader at MHJH joined FFA to "try something I haven't done before. I've heard from friends that it was a really good group."

Going in, McCracken thought it was just going to be about learning and doing things with animals and learned a lot about agriculture, animal science and what FFA is really about.

Seventh-grader Kendrick Sanders joined FFA because he loves animals and "I really like goats, and I want to show them."

He said it has been one of my favorite classes, besides math and enjoys hearing about the things he could do in the future.

"I know a lot about cheese and I might do the dairy team, but I hate milk, so I don't know," he added.

Ninth-grader Josh Pelton from MHJH joined FFA because his sister was in FFA and he had found it extremely interesting.

"I have been expecting FFA to be full of fun and engaging, hands-on activities. And for the most part I was right," he said. "What I did not expect is how social it is."

His favorite thing about FFA is going around meeting new people while participating in fun events.

Leah Reel, a ninth-grader from MHJH joined FFA because she loves animals and working with them, learning about how to care for them.

She said so far FFA has been exactly what she expected it to be, learning about how animals are born and how to raise them. Working in the shop and in the barn has been one of her favorite



Mountain Home FFA student Hannah Dooley is demonstrating showmanship with her market hog to her ninth grade class. SUBMITTED PHOTO

things, doing hands-on projects.

Ninth-grader Hannah Doolley of MHJH joined to show livestock and to participate in Leadership Development and Career Development events. She said FFA has been pretty much what she expected, yet it has had more to offer than her 4H career.

Her favorite thing has been being able to show her livestock, that she's put a ton of work in and been able to show.

Haley Kotlicky, a ninth-grader at MHJH joined FFA because she was interested in learning the different parts of agriculture.

"When choosing classes for my schedule, I put a star next to agri so I would definitely get the class," she said. "I was interested in learning about animals and farming. After a year in this class, I've learned that there is more to agri than farming and animals."

Ninth-grader Trinity Denton of MHJH joined FFA because she likes "anything to do with agriculture — from the animals to the hands-on learning activities."

"FFA has been everything I expected. We've learned about horses, chickens, cows, pigs and learning to have a good work

ethic," she said.

Erika Chenevey, a ninth-grader from MHJH, said she originally joined FFA through her survey of agriculture class.

"I didn't know that being in an agri class meant being in FFA, but I'm glad I'm here and I wouldn't want to have it any other way."

Chenevey said she didn't know what to expect from FFA, other than it was about animals and farming, and didn't expect it to be more than that, but "I was genuinely surprised by how much FFA covers. It's so much more than animals and farming."

What the 'jacket' means

MHHS students reflect on meaning of the classic FFA Blue Jacket, as source of pride

Staff Report

According to the National FFA website, the organization's iconic FFA Blue Jacket is meant to serve as "a beacon of community and pride."

"As a part of the FFA Official Dress, it is important that students gain the full experience and benefit of being an FFA member," the site continues. "Through the support of sponsors and donors, FFA has been able to provide blue jackets to deserving members."

Nationally, Culver's franchises across the nation have the opportunity to sponsor their local chapter(s) by providing a blue jacket to those members that cannot afford one.

Each restaurant will pay \$65 to fund the first jacket donated. The remaining fee will be paid by Culver Franchising System, LLC. After the first jacket, the restaurant will pay \$130 to fund each blue jacket for the chapter of their choice.

Darling Ingredients is proud to partner with the National FFA to connect over 150 Darling facilities with the local FFA chapters across America.

"The FFA spirit to change the world aligns with our commitment to create sustainable ingredients for a growing population," according to the site. "To wear the blue jacket is a privilege, and we are



honored to help make that possible for those who seek the challenge to create a better future for us all."

Through the Syngenta Blue Jacket Program, Syngenta retailers can show their support to local chapters. Participating retailers award two official blue jackets to a local chapter or members of the chapter along with \$2,000 in unrestricted financial assistance to the chapter.

And, through the Invenergy Blue Jacket Program, the company supports the distribution of blue jackets to local FFA chapters across the country. As a leading developer of sustainable energy, Invenergy is proud to support local students as they pursue agricultural career paths.

For Mountain Home High School junior Addison Tillis, the Blue Jacket represents "privilege, pride and the future."

Tillis has served in FFA for three years, and believes that its as important today as it was in the past, and believes that knowing

the organization's history is an important part of shaping its future.

"I enjoy taking the opportunity to learn more about FFA," Tillis said.

To MHHS senior Annie Williams, the FFA jacket means a great deal.

"To me, the Blue Jacket means responsibility and unity," she said. "It is a promise to advocate for and support the future of agriculture."

Having served in FFA for three years, she said that FFA is still important because it educates students on the importance of agriculture and how to sustain it. She said the thing she enjoys the most about being in FFA is being able to compete in different areas and push herself out of her comfort zone.

"I've learned how to become a better leader and how to make a positive impact on those around me," Williams said.

She said she will always remember how the FFA brought her together with some of her closest friends.



Cotter FFA student Taylor Johnson shows off this awesome chicken as part of Farm Bureau Ag Education Day for students at Amanda Gist Elementary School in Cotter. SUBMITTED PHOTO

All about the animals

For Cotter students, love of their stock shines through

By Bulletin Staff

For the newest members of the Cotter Public Schools FFA chapter, it's all about the animals.

Students at Cotter can join FFA beginning in seventh grade and a survey of seventh- and eighth-graders indicates the importance of working with livestock is paramount.

"I enjoy being around the environment and being around the animals," said first-year member Paige Meis. "You have to have patience and can't give up on the animal."

For second-year member Avery Rice, she enjoys "feeding and helping take care of the animals" and has learned "how to take care of (them)" and "many other crops."

Cheyenne Walterscheid said learning "how to properly take care of crops and animals", along with the agriculture terms she never knew, have been her mostly enjoyable parts of FFA.

"I've learned a lot of skills, so many that I can't name them all," she added. "but if I were to say some, I'd say everything has a purpose and to be kind to everything."

Maturing membership

As the students continue their FFA journeys through high school, the love of animals is never lost, but a bigger picture begins to take shape.

"I enjoy going to the barn to learn and hands-on experiences with the animals," said Zoe Donahue, a junior who is in her third year of FFA. "I've also learned a lot of life skills, like time management, professionalism, confidence, active listening and public speaking. I've also learned what you put in, is the better result that you get back out."

Wiley Harris, a junior, credits FFA for teaching him about "working with people, tolerating people and commitment. "We still need farmers for food and FFA teaches hard work," Harris said. "FFA has allowed me space for true growth."

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Cotter reflects on time in FFA

Norfolk FFA teacher remembers his teacher Jim Walling of Viola and his program

Staff Report

To hear Norfolk FFA teacher and advisor Lyndell "Lyn" Cotter tell it, he did a lot and accomplished a lot back in the day when he wore the FFA Blue Jacket at Viola High School. And, it was in no small part due to his teacher and advisor, who no doubt modeled him into the FFA teacher and advisor he is today.

"I was very involved in FFA while in high school. I had the best ag teacher in the state, Mr. Jim Walling," Cotter said. "He truly led by example then and still does today. I showed cattle throughout my 8- to 12-grade years. I was involved in different Career Development Events (CDE) judging livestock and dairy cattle."

Following graduation, Cotter earned his Associate's Degree in Animal Science and his Bachelor's Degree in General Agriculture. He said several years later, in 2008 — after selling insurance for the Farm Bureau for 11 years — he went through the nontraditional teaching program and received his teaching certification.

"In the back of my mind, I had wanted to become an ag teacher for several years, but didn't think the timing was right and really didn't know how to go about the process — with me being out of school for so long," he said.

Once he earned his certification, an opening was available in the Mountain

Home School District, and he was fortunate enough to get his first teaching position there.

Since those days as a student, he said one of the biggest changes to FFA has been the participation and success of more female students. Simply put, he said the girls seem to be outworking the boys right now.

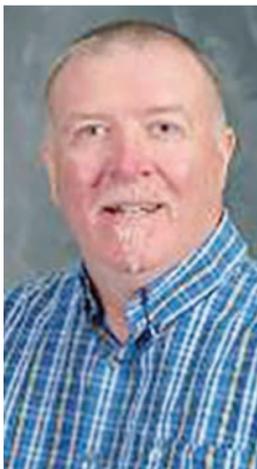
Another change has been the expansion of the various CDE to help prepare students for their future.

"We seem to ask more of our members and for most, it will turn into a year around course," he said. "Our most active members are not just learning and working while school is in session, but instead they are working seven-days-a-week and throughout the summer. It takes a lot of commitment from not only the students, but their support group at home as well, in order for their time spent in FFA to be a success."

He adds without the support from home, the work of ag teachers and advisors is a whole lot more difficult and he appreciates the support from parents and the community.

"It takes a village for students to reach their full potential," Cotter said.

As for FFA Week activities, he said there will be a number of team building exercises each day, with breakfast to be provided for members one morning. Cotter said



Lyndell "Lyn" Cotter

the week will also include some travel as the FFA chapter will compete in CDE contests.

"The saying is 'FFA is more than cows, sows and plows,'" Cotter said. "FFA has so much more to offer. Just about every career field can have a connection back to an FFA experience or opportunity. Our different pathways encompass hundreds or maybe thousands of careers."

As an affiliated FFA chapter, meaning that students who take FFA classes are automatically enrolled in FFA at no cost, Cotter said his current membership is around 61 students. He adds this year's group consists of young students new to FFA, but he's been appreciative of their willingness to try new things.

"They didn't know what to expect coming into this school year and several have stepped up and asked how they can get involved and what they can do to learn more," he said.

MERRY CHRISTMAS YA'LL, FROM MR. COTTER AND THE NORFOLK FFA CHAPTER



Holiday festivities for the Norfolk FFA Chapter included a variety of games and activities, and the cooking of a lot of venison. PHOTO SUBMITTED



NORFOLK FFA STUDENTS MAKE THE PLAYGROUND ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL



For FFA students, education comes in many forms. For these FFA students, the value of the experience from this swing project can not be justified by only a letter grade in a grade book. Pictured are: (from left) Isaiah Morris, Trenton Hall and Kendon Moore. SUBMITTED PHOTO

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Mountain Home instructors look back at their own FFA experiences

Staff Report

Back when the former Jacquie Rohr was a member of Mountain Home High School's FFA program, she was only one of two girls in the school's chapter.

As a 1986 MHHS graduate, she served as FFA President, raised and exhibited crossbred market steers along with registered Maine Anjou and Simmental heifers in the original MHHS FFA Livestock Barn built in 1983.

"Now, girls make up more than 50 percent of the membership," said instructor Jacquie Albright of Mountain Home Junior High.

Albright went on to earn her associates in agriculture at Arkansas State University-Beebe, then pursued her Bachelor in Agriculture Education at ASU-Jonesboro. Throughout her career, she continued her education, earning a Master's Degree in Educational Administration and a Specialist's Degree in K-12 Special Education. Additionally, she's National Board Certified in Career Tech Education

"When I began teaching, Mountain Home was a two-teacher program, and I taught alongside Mr. Roger Steele, and we were the only program in the county," Albright said. "Today, our program is a five-teacher program. We have added seventh grade, a plant science pathway, a new greenhouse, updated livestock facilities to include small animals and new construction to add additional ag mechanics shop space. There are now two other programs in our county, and FFA continues to grow locally and nationwide."

As part of FFA Week activities, MHHS FFAers will enjoy:

- Breakfast on Thursday, Feb. 23 sponsored by West Plains Bank
- Career Development Events at ASU-Beebe on Wednesday, Feb. 22
- Career Development Events at University of Arkansas in Fayetteville on Saturday, Feb. 25.

"FFA remains relevant due to the increasing need for agri-

culture literacy, leadership, and career development. FFA is an inclusive organization that is intra-curricular versus extracurricular and includes something for everyone," Albright said. "Regardless of your interest, there is something for you in FFA/agriculture."

As for her students' futures, Albright is hopeful that they continue to develop their teamwork and leadership skills, as well as the career and life skills they've learned in the program.

"The students leave our program with foundational solid career, community and leadership development skills," she said.

Albright said that FFA agriculture is not only essential, but includes something for everyone.

"Regardless of your interests, you can find something in our program tied to your career choice or help you find the career of your choice," she said.

As a student, teacher Tyler Lewis said he enrolled in every ag class he could take at Calico High School. He received a degree in ag education at ASU-Jonesboro and then pursued a Masters of Administration at Southern Arkansas University in Magnolia.

"I grew up on a farm and always enjoyed that lifestyle," he said. "If you enjoy what you do, you will never work a day in your life."

Since becoming a teacher, he has a better understanding of how to fully reach and engage his students so they reach their potential. Lewis said there will always be a need ag education as there is a need for people to understand where and how their food is produced.

"FFA is not just sows, cows and plows," Lewis said. "We provide students experiences for the next generation to have a future in leadership, careers and to be successful."

Teacher Josh Baker recalls having had a great FFA career and experience while he was a student at MHHS.

"I showed livestock and participated in CDEs [career development events] and I was able to travel to the National Convention and many trips that shaped my future," he said.

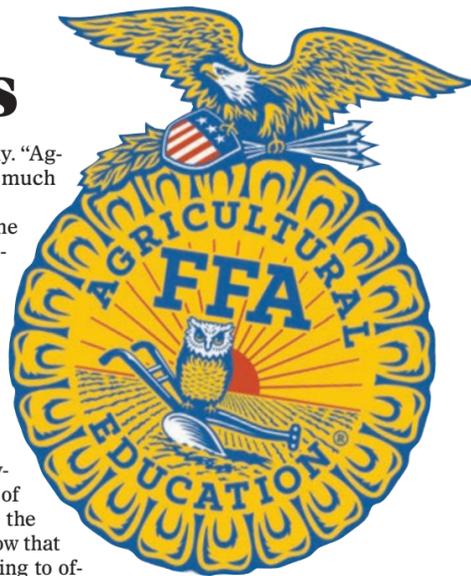
A 1998 MHHS graduate, Baker received a Bachelor of Science degree in Ag Education, along with a Master of Science from Southern Arkansas University in Magnolia.

As for becoming an ag teacher, he said it was his mom that put the idea in his head, telling him he "had the qualities that would make me a good teacher."

"There are more opportunities for students to be involved,"

he said of ag today. "Agriculture is so much more diverse."

Additionally, he said the connections and the leadership skills the students have learned will last them a lifetime. He said the students' eagerness to learn and grow as leaders has given him a sense of pride and wants the community to know that FFA has "something to offer all of our students."



Members of the Mountain Home FFA annually attend Leadership Camp at Camp Couchdale in Hot Springs. Members and advisors attend for one week. SUBMITTED PHOTO



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Cotter FFA officers learn leadership skills

By Bulletin Staff

While many equate membership in FFA as learning about agriculture, the organization states it's vision as "providing the next generation of leaders who will change the world," according to the FFA website.

The first steps in leadership often come in the form of serving as an FFA local officer, which is apparent in the Cotter Public Schools' chapter.

Junior Madi Wood, a four-year member of FFA, is the chapter president for the 2022-23 school year.

"I have developed social skills and more effective decision-making skills for a group of people, not just myself," said Wood of FFA's impact. "I try to be involved in many different aspects of FFA, from the show team to the competitions which you have to be in official dress. I'm trying to show

others the opportunities available within FFA."

For treasurer Calli Dilbeck, the experience has changed her perception of the agriculture field.

"Learning about all the hard work that goes into farming and food production makes me realize we take a lot of things for granted, and we need to be more appreciative," she said.

"When I first joined FFA, I didn't know much about anything in the agriculture field," added Abby McLean, who serves as the chapter's reporter. "Now I feel like I know a lot about food science, animal science, mechanics and different things that have to do with agriculture."

Offices are also seeing the impact the FFA chapter has on its community.

"I think we do a good job in donating eggs and meat to our local community, said Hunter Cordell, a sophomore. Dilbeck added,

"Our FFA chapter sets a good example for other clubs, younger kids and upcoming members."

Serving as an officer has certainly been rewarding, according to both Madi Wood and Tenley Wood, a senior who serves as chapter secretary.

"It was a great feeling to know that I would be involved with a group of people who shared the same opinions as me, while also getting to go on trips and spending time with my friends and fellow officers," Madi said.

"It felt awesome to be chosen as an officer, it is something I've always wanted to do since I joined," Tenley added.

The happiest memories of serving in FFA for most officers is the trip to the national convention, held each year in Indianapolis, with trips to the Arkansas State Fair and other competitions.



Officers of the Cotter FFA Chapter took time out of their schedule while at the FFA National Convention in Indianapolis to take this group photo. Officers for the 2022-23 school year include President Madi Wood, Vice President Ethan Wood, Secretary Tenley Wood, Treasurer Calli Dilbeck, Reporter Abby McLean, Sentinel Taylor Johnson, Junior Advisor Olin Davidson, Historian Wyatt Black, Parliamentarian Hunter Cordell and Green Hand Representative Jayden Dutcher. SUBMITTED PHOTO

Norfolk FFAers look ahead

Students in FFA chapter see importance, opportunity in FFA and agriculture field

By Bulletin Staff

For a career that for decades seemed at odds with the modern age of technology, agriculture has made great technological strides as we get further into the 21st Century. Ag has embraced many opportunities to grow with the advancements in ecology, biology, the agricultural sciences and animal science.

Shelby Free, a freshman at Norfolk High School, has been in FFA for two years

and believes the program is still important these days because it can help kids — and people in general — with personal growth by helping them become leaders.

"It makes a positive impact on the world," Free said.

FFA has given Free the opportunity to experience new things and gain confidence.

"The importance of wearing the blue jacket lets FFA members be united," Free added.

Junior Audrie Foreman has been with FFA for two years and in that time, she has enjoyed the different opportunities that the chapter members get to experience and how involved everyone is with school or in the community.

"Working together is sometimes the best thing to do," she said. "If you ask for help, the people you surround yourself with will help you out; they might not guide you step-by-step, but they will help you get to

the end of something."

She believes the importance of the FFA Blue Jacket indicates that the student wearing it is willing to "put forward the effort needed and that you are a part of something that could lead them into something that you might use during their whole life."

Jimmy Foster, a junior marking his third year with FFA, said he enjoys the sense of community he feels whenever he's at an event, which he believes helps him develop the skills he needs later in life. He said "my leadership, perseverance and dignity have all improved for me."

As for the FFA Blue Jacket, Foster believes that blue jacket "signifies that I am in the FFA organization, and that I am a part of something larger than myself."

"It helps promote leadership in high school students so that they may contribute to society in greater ways in the future," he said. "It promotes unity and community among members of the FFA. It also raises awareness and attention to the FFA."

Sophomore James Whitehead has been in FFA for three years and enjoys the hands-on-work that comes with being in the organization.

"We work together as a team and help others as needed," he said.



Norfolk FFA Chapter students undergo rabbit judging during the 2022 Arkansas State Fair in Little Rock. SUBMITTED PHOTO

He believes FFA is still important as its people with that skill set are needed to work in ag outside of school. Whitehead added that wearing the FFA Blue Jacket demonstrates to students that the one wearing it has leadership skills and can help the community.

Sophomore Natalie Wyatt is in her third year of FFA and has enjoyed all the great experiences and life lessons she's learned — whether going to conventions, camps or CDEs. Some of the skills she's learned include time management, confidence, professionalism and leadership.

"The FFA Blue Jacket is a long-time symbol that symbolizes the importance of leadership skills and in the future of agriculture," she said.

Harlie Foreman, a freshman in her first year of

FFA and so far has enjoyed meeting new people like the FFA State Vice President and worked hard in order to go to nationals.

"The importance of wearing the blue jacket is to show faith, honor and pride in being in FFA," she said. "FFA is so important these days to prepare kids in farming and social skills in life — if they want to be a farmer or something else to do with agriculture."

Junior Ethan Terrill has spent three years in FFA and in that time he believes he's developed more confidence and responsibility from taking care of, and showing animals.

To him, the blue jacket is the most important part of their uniform "as it connects us with all other future farmers who wear it — those before us who have worn it as well."

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COTTER FFA CHAPTER RECOGNIZED FOR FOOD DONATIONS FOR THOSE IN NEED



The Cotter FFA Chapter was recognized and awarded State Champion for food donations. Last year, they donated over 11,000 eggs and several pounds of produce to the school's Grocery Program and the Food Bank of North Central Arkansas. Pictured receiving the award is Cotter FFA member Tenley Wood (right). This year, in addition to eggs and produce, the chapter has also donated meat. SUBMITTED PHOTO

Norfolk chapter in building year

Teacher, advisor Lyn Cotter says FFA chapter consists of younger, driven students

Staff Report

As Norfolk FFA teacher and advisor Lyndell “Lyn” Cotter said previously, his FFA chapter this school year consists primarily of younger, driven students that have been willing to try all the new things that have been thrown at them.

Here’s a rapid fire list of what those younger kids think so far of FFA:

- Cate Shaddy, eighth grader. Her favorite thing so far has been “taking a trip to Silver Dollar City to see the lights.”

- Isabelle Lindsey, eighth grader. Her favorite thing in FFA has been working with poultry.

- Colton Dickerson, eighth grader. He said his favorite thing “was the part when we was doing the meat judging.”

- Haleigh Forman, eighth grader. She believes that FFA will help in her future as “it would look good on my resume.”

- Kiarra Bryant, eighth grader. She said so far she’s learned how to take care of cows.

- Blake Peter, eighth grader. He said he was surprised to learn that acorns are deadly to cows.

- Tera Swindle, eighth grader.

She believes that being in FFA will provide her good job references in her future.

- Jovee Webster, eighth grader. She said FFA will help her in the future to “get jobs, get into colleges and many more things.”

- Emma Marler, eighth grader. She said that others may be surprised to know that people can actually get a degree in livestock judging.

- Samuel Schmidt, eighth grader. He said that “the welding classes will help him when I want to get my degree.”

- Avery Davis, eighth grader. Her least favorite thing about FFA so far has been “remembering the FFA creed.”

- Chloe Rohrscheib, eighth grader. She said something she didn’t know before joining FFA was that sometimes when a mother sheep is in labor, and having two babies, both of them can try and come out at the same time.

- Erin Coddington, eighth grader. Her least favorite part of FFA has been memorizing the FFA creed, saying “I’m just not really good at memorizing things, that’s all.”

- Warren Louque, eighth grader. He believes that being in FFA is going to provide him

the experience he needs to get into college, get future jobs and teach him valuable lessons.

- Addelynn Lubbock, eighth grader. She said the thing that surprised her the most by being in FFA is that sheep get their tails cut off because they cannot lift them.

- Presleigh Lanning, eighth grader. Her least favorite thing about FFA was getting her shoes dirty.

- Gavin Stone, eighth grader. He said one thing that students can gain from FFA is that “they can learn how to farm and take care of livestock.”

- Sophie VanLandingham, eighth grader. She said she can already see where FFA could help them gain social skills and other future skills for jobs.

- Isabell Moore, eighth grader. She believes that belonging to FFA can help her with her leadership skills, along with her work and labor skills.

- Phineas Biting, eighth grader. He said FFA can help people who want a job in agriculture learn a lot.

- Scarlette West, eighth grader. She said that students can gain problem-solving skills in FFA and that it “also helps strengthen students, by learning



Back in January, Norfolk FFAers had the privilege of having State FFA Vice President Evan Seay visit with them about FFA and all it has to offer as far as team building activities. Instructor/advisor Mr. Cotter said it was an hour well spent with a great group of kids. SUBMITTED PHOTO

new things and helping with social skills.”

- Aimee Johnson, eighth grader. Her favorite thing about FFA so far was the trip to Silver Dollar City.

- Suezanna Metzger, eighth

grader. She believes “students can gain leadership, teamwork and how to run a business” through FFA.

- Gabriella Smith, eighth grader. She said in FFA she’s learned how to check eggs.

FFA on the rebound at Cotter Public Schools

By Sonny Elliott

sonnye@baxterbulletin.com

A love and passion for agriculture drives Cotter’s Adrienne Watts as she leads the school’s FFA Chapter into the 2023 National FFA

Week, which begins today and concludes on Feb. 25.

Watts, a Cotter Public Schools and University of Arkansas graduate, has a busy week planned for her chapter, which includes 105 members.

“We’ll kick start our week with Green Hand Day for the first-year members,” she said. “We will have staff appreciation at school throughout the week and an (agriculture) trivia game, active games during lunch, judging trips and snacks throughout the week for members.”

Active in both FFA and 4-H while in school, Watts said the FFA program is just as important now as it was during her days as a student at Cotter in the mid-2000s.

“FFA is every evolving to meet the needs of our students and will always be relevant as we rely on agriculture for our daily needs,” she explained. “Personal growth and leadership in my students is very important to me. It’s my goal to develop soft skills in our students that will carry with them through college or trade school, and eventually into rewarding careers.”

“My hopes are that students have a solid understanding of agriculture, even if they don’t go into an agriculture career. I hope they serve as an advocate for our industry and they work hard to be

involved in their community and are upstanding citizens,” Watts added.

FFA, like most other student organizations, saw a decrease in student involvement during the COVID-19 pandemic, but Watts said things are bouncing back.

“I feel it is definitely more challenging to host engaging and fun

activities with so many restrictions in place,” she said. “It has been more challenging to get students back into the swing of things and getting students involved in clubs is a harder sell, but I’ve seen a pretty big upswing this school year in membership and involvement.”

Cotter FFA definitely

provides a sense of pride for Watts.

“I have a great officer team and solid membership. Students are overall excited to be in FFA and get more involved, especially our younger members,” she said. “We are excited to have a completely normal spring, loaded with our normal activities.”



Cotter Future FFA and agriculture teacher Adrienne Watts was a 2006 graduate of Cotter High School and a former member of FFA in her own right. She earned her bachelor’s degree in agriculture, food and life sciences from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. HELEN MANSFIELD/THE BAXTER BULLETIN

COTTER FFA CHAPTER ATTENDED THE U OF A LDE INVITATIONAL CONTEST



Members of the Cotter FFA Chapter attended the LDE Invitational Contest and Leadership Competition sponsored by the University of Arkansas in Lincoln. Competitors included Ethan McMillan, Calli Dilbeck, William Morris, Madi Wood, Abby McLean, Trevor Lewis, Cole Tilton, Colton Thornton, River Harris, Jayden Dutcher and Dakota Williams. SUBMITTED PHOTO

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EXPERIENCING THE 'IMPACT' OF LEADERSHIP AT HOT SPRINGS CONFERENCE



Members of the Mountain Home FFA attended the annual Impact Leadership Conference in Hot Springs on the weekend of Jan.27-28. This conference included grades 10 through 12. The prior weekend, grades eight and nine attended a Greenhand Conference at the same location in Hot Springs. SUBMITTED PHOTO

THE 96TH ANNUAL ARKANSAS FFA STATE CONVENTION SET FOR HOT SPRINGS



The 96th annual Arkansas FFA State Convention is coming up on Monday, April 24 through Wednesday, April 26 in Hot Springs. Convention applications are due on March 1. SUBMITTED PHOTO

COTTER'S FFA HENS PRODUCING A SMALL FORTUNE



Cotter FFA students Jayden Dutcher, Taylor Johnson and David Roger show off an impressive amount — and impressive dollar amount — of eggs that have been laid by the chapter's chickens. Last year, the chapter donated over 11,000 eggs to the school's Grocery Program and the Food Bank of North Central Arkansas. SUBMITTED PHOTO

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Excerpt from FFA creed