

2026 NEBRASKA AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION & FFA HANDBOOK



What is agricultural education?



Agricultural education is a school-based program that prepares you for careers in agriculture, food and natural resources.

The three components of agricultural education tell our story.



INSTRUCTION

The lead circle and base foundation in the agricultural education system is formal classroom and laboratory instruction in 29 available courses.

Agriculture teachers work hard to make these classes experience-based and relevant to careers in the agriculture industry.



SUPERVISED AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCE

Agricultural education students are guided in developing a Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) to develop skills and gain knowledge of the agriculture industry.

Student SAEs include research projects, job shadowing experiences, jobs held or businesses started by students. All SAEs relate directly to agriculture.



FFA

FFA is the organization for students enrolled in agricultural education and seeks to benefit students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

FFA allows students to compete, participate and receive recognition in agricultural career skills development and leadership programs.



What happens in the classroom?

Agricultural education is taught by a certified agriculture teacher who holds a degree in agriculture from a college or university. He or she is dedicated to professional development and staying up-to-date on the rapidly changing global agriculture industry.

You will learn about the Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources career pathways in your introductory course. You'll then continue on to intermediate and capstone level courses, building upon what you learned in the previous year. The pathways provide a guide for you to follow what interests you most! Your agriculture teacher will also integrate FFA and Supervised Agricultural Experience concepts and principles into your classes.

COURSE OPTIONS & PROGRAMS OF STUDY

Introduction to Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources

(introductory courses are taken by all agricultural education students)

· intermediate course + capstone course

ANIMAL SCIENCE

- Animal Science
- + Small Animal Management
- + Large Animal Management
- + Veterinary Science
- + Biotechnology

POWER, STRUCTURE & TECHNOLOGY

- Welding
- Power, Structural & Technology Systems Fundamentals
- + Metals & Fabrication
- + Agricultural Technology
- + Precision Agriculture
- + Advanced Power, Structural & Technology Systems

ENVIRONMENTAL & NATURAL RESOURCES

- Environmental & Natural Resources
- + Environmental & Natural Resources Management
- + Wildlife Management

FOOD PRODUCTS & PROCESSING

- Food Science & Safety
- + Food Products and Technology

AGRIBUSINESS

- Agricultural Business
- + Agricultural Sales
- + Agricultural Communication
- + Agricultural Economics
- + Agricultural Entrepreneurship

PLANT SCIENCE

- Plant Science
- + Crop Management & Agronomy
- + Nursery Management
- + Landscape Design
- + Floriculture
- + Biotechnology

DIVERSIFIED AGRICULTURE SCIENCE

- Diversified Agriculture
- + Integrated Agricultural Science

Where can your program of study lead you?

AGRIBUSINESS SYSTEMS

Workers use technology to coordinate all activities that contribute to production, processing, marketing, distribution, financing, and development of agricultural commodities.

Career Ideas

Agricultural Loan Officer · Agribusiness Manager · International Ag Marketing Specialist · Marketing Communications Manager · Financial Manager



ANIMAL SCIENCE SYSTEMS

Workers study genetics, nutrition, reproduction, growth and development of food, and companion animals. They inspect and grade livestock food products, purchase livestock, or work in sales or marketing.

Career Ideas

Geneticist · Nutritionist · Physiologist · Biomaterials Engineering · Farm & Ranch Manager



DIVERSIFIED AGRICULTURE SYSTEMS

Workers in diversified agriculture can study all programs of study to develop skills to work with plants, animals, food, environment, natural resources and power, structural and technical areas.

Career Ideas

Farmer · Sales Representative · Farm & Ranch Manager · Entrepreneur · Machinery Operator



ENVIRONMENTAL & NATURAL RESOURCES SYSTEMS



Workers are involved in pollution control, recycling, waste disposal, and public health. They conduct hazardous waste management studies and analyze environmental research projects.

Career Ideas

Environmental Engineer · Hazardous Materials Handler · Health & Safety Sanitarian · Toxicologist · Conservation Officer · Water Quality Manager · Forestry Scientist · Fisheries Scientist · Wildlife Manager

FOOD PRODUCTS & PROCESSING SYSTEMS



Workers discover food sources and develop ways to process, preserve, package, or store food. They create new food products and inspect food processing to ensure food safety.

Career Ideas

Biochemist · Food Broker or Engineer · Food Science Technician · Quality Assurance Specialist

AGRICULTURAL POWER, STRUCTURE & TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS



Workers apply knowledge of engineering, power hydraulics, pneumatics, electronics, structures, and controls to agriculture and develop ways to improve the processing of agricultural products.

Career Ideas

Agricultural Engineer · Diesel Mechanic · Welder · Farm Equipment Mechanic · Global Positioning Technician

PLANT SCIENCE SYSTEMS



Workers develop ways to improve the nutritional and aesthetic value of plants and quality of seeds.

Career Ideas

Agronomist · Entomologist · Plant Scientist · Golf Course Superintendent · Landscape Architect

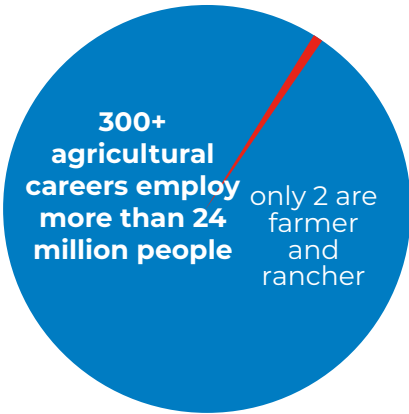
Why are careers in agriculture so important?

The world population is growing like never before. There are more than 8 billion mouths to feed, and our population is expected to grow past 9 billion people by 2050. Jobs and careers in all sectors of agriculture will be vital to keeping up with the global demand for agricultural and food production.

To feed everyone, we'll need to produce as much food in the next 50 years as we have produced the last 10,000 years.



In the United States, one part of this challenge is finding enough workers to fill more than 20 million agricultural jobs.



AMERICAN AGRICULTURE IS COMPOSED OF MORE THAN 300 CAREERS RELATED TO THE PRODUCTION OF FOOD. OF THESE, ONLY TWO ARE THE TRADITIONAL ROLES OF “FARMER AND RANCHER.”

OUT OF AN ESTIMATED 104,800 AVERAGE ANNUAL JOB OPENINGS FOR COLLEGE GRADUATES IN AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL FIELDS, ONLY ABOUT 50,100 SPECIALIZED GRADUATES ARE PRODUCED EACH YEAR, RESULTING IN A 52% GAP IN THE CORE LABOR SUPPLY.

Source: Purdue University & U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2025). Employment opportunities...2025–2030.

What is a Supervised Agricultural Experience?



A Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) is an experience-based program in which you gain work-based learning experiences and develop skills in agriculture career areas that interest you.

There are two key steps to getting started with your SAE:

STEP 1: Visit with your agriculture teacher about your career interests.

STEP 2: Create a program that develops skills in your areas of interest.

FOUNDATIONAL SAE VS IMMERSION SAE

Foundational SAEs include instruction for students related to:

Career Exploration & Planning

Personal Financial Planning & Management

Workplace Safety

Employability Skills for College & Career Readiness

Agricultural Literacy

Immersion SAEs are identified as one of the following five types:

Entrepreneurship/Ownership:

In this SAE, students create, own, and operate a business which provides goods and/or services to the marketplace. The business can range from starting a mowing service to developing mobile apps. Students make the operational and risk management decisions on how goods and/or services are provided.

Placement/Internships: In a placement SAE, students work in an agriculture-related business but do not own the business. An internship SAE provides a more targeted experience that focuses on meeting specific training needs based on an educational training plan.

Research (Experimental, Analytical, Invention): Students follow the scientific process and accepted best practices for conducting research. They complete a research plan and conduct peer reviews, providing

a summary presentation of their research. Research can be experimental in nature, analyzing why or how something occurs, or applying engineering design processes to create a new product or service.

School-Based Enterprises: This is an entrepreneurship SAE that involves a group of students working cooperatively to create a business. The business is student-led and provides goods or services operated from the school campus utilizing facilities, equipment, and other resources provided by the agricultural education program.

Service Learning: Service learning is where a student or a team of students work toward meeting a need in the school or community. They design and carry out a project to provide a benefit to an organization, group, or individuals within the community.



FFA – What’s it all about?

THE MISSION:

The National FFA Organization is dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education.

THE MOTTO:

Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live, Living to Serve.

THE COLORS:

In 1929, at the second National FFA Convention, the delegates adopted National Blue and Corn Gold as the official colors of the FFA. This became the colors of one of the most recognizable symbols of FFA, the blue corduroy jacket.

THE EMBLEM:

The FFA Emblem was designed and adopted in 1933 as part of the official jacket. The emblem itself carries much meaning to those involved in agricultural education.

THE FFA CREED:

The FFA Creed was written by E.M. Tiffany and was adopted at the 3rd National FFA Convention. It is recited by new members to reflect their growing belief in agriculture and agricultural education.



FFA OFFICIAL DRESS:

The uniform worn by FFA members at local, state, and national functions is called Official Dress. It provides a distinctive identity to the organization and its members. Official Dress has been worn with pride by millions of FFA members since 1933.

Official Dress guidelines for FFA members include:

- Official Blue Corduroy FFA jacket
- Black slacks and black socks/nylons or black skirt and black nylons
- White collared blouse or white collared shirt
- Official FFA tie or official FFA scarf
- Black dress shoes with closed heel and toe



OFFICER TEAMS:

Chapter officers are elected to lead their local FFA chapter and serve a vital function in FFA.

Typically, six major leadership roles are elected: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Reporter, and Sentinel.

To meet local needs and to expand leadership opportunities, other officers may be designated at the chapter level, including roles of Historian, Parliamentarian, and Chaplain.

Nebraska State FFA Officers are a team of seven college-aged students who lead the state's agricultural education and FFA organization. They are elected through a multi-stage application and interview process, and they spend a year-long term traveling to promote agriculture, facilitate leadership workshops, and visit local chapters. The state officer team is comprised of a President, Secretary, and five Vice Presidents.

Did you know?

Nebraska has nearly 12,000 FFA members in 218 chapters.

FFA was started in 1928 when 33 ag students gathered in Kansas City to solidify support for agricultural education. Nebraska was the sixth state to charter in 1928.

FFA has grown to over 1,042,245 members in 9,407 chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

FFA Program of Activities

All well-run organizations have a plan for activities. FFA chapters develop a Program of Activities (POA) as a way to set goals for the chapter and outline the steps needed to meet those goals.

A well-planned POA will ensure chapter activities meet the needs of its members, provide direction from year to year, lead to a workable budget, provide experience in planning, and serve as a reference point throughout the year. A POA also helps chapters communicate their goals with administrators, parents, advisory committees, and their communities.

By engaging in the development and delivery of a quality POA, students develop leadership and planning skills which are essential in all careers.

Chapters can earn national recognition for their POAs. Each year, there are 10 chapters identified as a National FFA Premier Chapter in each of three focus areas: Building Communities, Strengthening Agriculture, and Growing Leaders.

In addition, another 10 high school chapters will also be chosen as National FFA Models of Excellence award winners. These chapters exhibit excellence in all three categories of the Program of Activities. This award program recognizes chapters who successfully complete an annual POA designed to encourage members to work as part of a team, to serve others, and to grow as individuals.



THE CHAPTER POA HAS THREE FOCUS AREAS:

Building Communities

Strengthening Agriculture

Growing Leaders

Statewide FFA Leadership Opportunities



FFA offers exciting opportunities to gain leadership and career skills while making new friends from around the state. Leadership conferences combined with competitive events take place throughout the year.

PATHWAYS TO CAREERS (P2C)

Each fall, Nebraska FFA members are invited to attend a high-energy conference with industry representatives. Students have the opportunity to engage with industry professionals from the seven agriculture, food, and natural resources career pathways. Industry professionals lead hands-on, interactive workshops and develop relationships with future employees.

CHAPTER OFFICER LEADERSHIP TRAINING (COLT)

COLT is for FFA chapter officers to earn how to effectively serve their chapters. Conferences are held throughout May. The focus is on individual leadership skills, as well as how to work as a chapter officer team. Officers engage in experience-based leadership activities, share and learn great ideas, and create an action plan for their year of service.

IGNITE

Each fall, two Ignite Conferences are held in different regions of the state. Ignite is a one-day leadership conference for students in grades 7, 8, or 9. Students learn about various opportunities in FFA and a variety of leadership topics. Participants get to know other students and begin understanding what is possible in agricultural education and FFA.

CHAPTER VISIT PROGRAM (CVP)

The Chapter Visit Program is a one-day visit from a Nebraska State FFA Officer to your school and classroom. During the visit, state officers facilitate workshops for agriculture classes, meet with the chapter officer team, and learn about the local ag ed program and FFA chapter. A series of seven different workshops are offered so that a chapter may select topics that best meet the needs of students enrolled in agricultural education courses.

STATE CONVENTION

Nebraska FFA State Convention is an annual event for Nebraska's FFA members, advisors, agriculture teachers, parents, sponsors, donors, and guests to attend. The convention is held in Lincoln at Pinnacle Bank Arena, the University of Nebraska, and at various hotels.

FFA members have the opportunity to attend leadership workshops, participate in competitive events, listen to motivational speakers, visit with state officers, meet other FFA members from across the state, attend ag industry business tours, and network with vendors at the expo and career fair.

FFA Competitive Events, Degrees & Awards

Can you think of another program where students can develop essential leadership, life, and career skills; earn money; and be recognized on local, district, state, and national levels for these efforts? FFA has it!

FFA DEGREE PROGRAM

FFA members can earn degrees as they progress through the phases of their leadership, academic, and career skills development. Each degree advancement has specific requirements that must be achieved.

There are five degree levels:

- 1. Discovery FFA Degree**
- 2. Greenhand FFA Degree**
- 3. Chapter FFA Degree**
- 4. State FFA Degree**
- 5. American FFA Degree**



PROFICIENCY AWARDS

Agricultural proficiency awards honor FFA members who, through their SAEs, have developed specialized skills that they can apply toward their future careers. Students can compete for awards in areas covering everything from Agricultural Communications to Wildlife Management and more.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT EVENTS

Nebraska Career Development Events (CDEs) help students develop abilities to think critically, communicate clearly, and develop skills for a competitive job market. Some of the CDEs state-winning individuals and teams will move onto National Convention.

For more information about FFA degrees, a full listing of Proficiency Award categories, and Career Development Events, visit neaged.org.



FFA Competitive Events, Degrees & Awards



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT EVENTS

Nebraska Leadership Development Events (LDEs) provide FFA members with experience in the practice of influencing others through speaking and parliamentary procedure competitions. For some LDEs, the state-winning individuals or team will represent Nebraska at the National FFA Convention.



STATE & AMERICAN STAR PROGRAM

The State and American Star awards represent the best of the best among thousands of State and American FFA Degree recipients. Finalists for the award have mastered skills in production, finance, management, and/or research. State and American Star award areas include: Star in Production, Star in Agribusiness, Star in Agricultural Placement, and Star in Agriscience.

Meet The 2026-27 State Officer Team

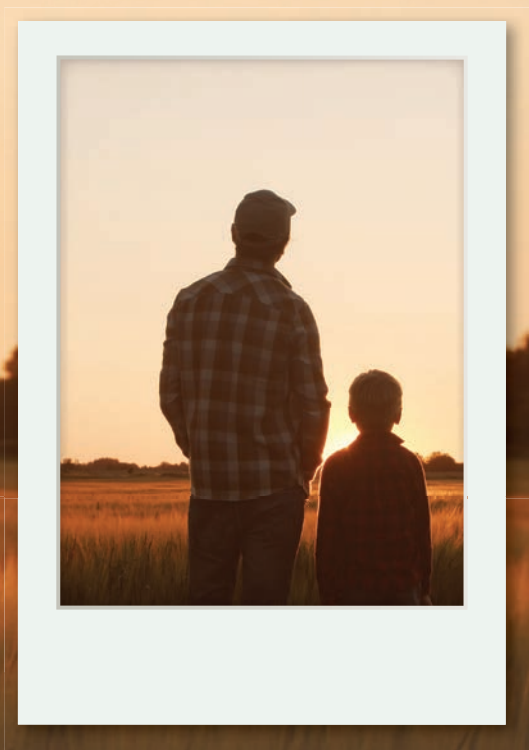


Nebraska FFA Officers commit to a year of service to the association members and agriculture industry. These seven individuals are responsible for facilitating conferences, meeting with business and industry representatives, traveling statewide to FFA chapters, serving as delegates to the National FFA Convention, and much more.

The following individuals are serving as your 2026-27 Nebraska State FFA Officers:

- STATE PRESIDENT:** CARSON REIMAN
- STATE SECRETARY:** LUKE EISENMANN
- STATE VICE PRESIDENT:** MEGAN MACKLIN
- STATE VICE PRESIDENT:** LOGAN BELL
- STATE VICE PRESIDENT:** JOSETTE MCCONNELL
- STATE VICE PRESIDENT:** HUDSON DELLEVOET
- STATE VICE PRESIDENT:** LEVI OTHMER

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GROWING NEBRASKA'S **FUTURE**



NIFA is proud to support **Nebraska FFA** and the students developing the skills, leadership, and vision that will shape the **future of agriculture**.

From ag education partnerships to resources for beginning farmers and ranchers, **NIFA** is committed to supporting Nebraska's **next generation**.

nifa.org/farmer-ranchers





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Growing Leaders



Building Communities



Creating Career Connections

THANK YOU TO ALL THE CORPORATE PARTNERS WHO HELP THE NEBRASKA FFA FOUNDATION FULFILL ITS MISSION.



Nebraska Agricultural Education

neaged.org

Nebraska FFA Foundation

neffafoundation.org