



News Release – 11/07/23

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## **Georgia Celebrates 12 National Champions at 96th National FFA Convention**

INDIANAPOLIS – The Georgia FFA Association’s success at the 96<sup>th</sup> National FFA Convention was highlighted by 12 national champions. Among Georgia’s national winners were five national proficiency award winners, three national Agriscience Fair award winners, and four national Career Development Event (CDE) and Leadership Development Event (LDE) winners.

Jack Lingenfelter of Coffee County (Agricultural Communications), Joseph Ledford of Jackson-Empower (Ag Mechanics Repair & Maintenance-Entrepreneurship), Jamin Miles of Appling County (Fruit Production), Adam Stone of Bowdon (Service Learning), and Thomas Dehoff of Screven County (Wildlife Management) 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 five proficiency winners.

Georgia FFA’s three winners in the national Agriscience Fair included Erin Keith of Franklin County Middle (Food Products and Processing – Division 1); Emi Walker and Hazel Brubaker of Malcom Bridge Middle (Plant Systems – Division 2); and Makena Blalock of Sonoraville (Social Science – Division 3).

Four 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 (Forestry CDE), Bleckley County (Agricultural Technology & Mechanical Systems CDE), Madison County (Agricultural Communications CDE), and Denmark (Veterinary Science CDE). Georgia’s other top-5 finishers in CDE/LDEs include Jesse Cronic of Jackson-Empower (2<sup>nd</sup> place –Employment Skills LDE), Banks County (2<sup>nd</sup> place – Environmental / Natural Resources CDE), Perry (3<sup>rd</sup> place – Floriculture CDE), and Madison County (5<sup>th</sup> place – Poultry Evaluation CDE).

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 four chapters who were chosen as finalists in this award program. Commerce Middle FFA was named as a finalist (top 3) in the Premier Chapter – Growing Leaders division. Golden Isles Career Academy FFA was named as a finalist (top 10) in the Premier Chapter – Building Communities division. The Denmark chapter was a finalist (top 10) in the Premier Chapter – Strengthening Agriculture division.

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Thirty-nine 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, Bonaire Middle, Cambridge, Central Middle, Commerce, Commerce Middle, Denmark, Eastside, Etowah, Franklin County, Franklin County Middle, Golden Isles Career Academy, Hahira Middle, Haralson County, Islands, Jackson-Empower, Jefferson City, Madison County, Newton College And Career Academy, Northside Middle, Oglethorpe County, Rabun County, Russell Middle, Screven County, Screven County Middle, Winder-Barrow, and Youth Middle.

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. Georgia FFA members who performed as talent participants include Ian Edge of Crisp County and Emma Lawerence of Emmanuel County Institute. Ella Jenner of Ben Hill FFA represented Georgia as a member of the National FFA Chorus while Jeffery Hendricks of Madison County FFA and Molly Huff of Winder-Barrow FFA represented Georgia in the National FFA Band.

One hundred and fifty-seven 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 2023 American FFA Degree recipients, visit [https://www.georgiaffa.org/docs/76762\\_2023%20American%20Degree%20Recipient%20List%20-%20GA%202023.pdf](https://www.georgiaffa.org/docs/76762_2023%20American%20Degree%20Recipient%20List%20-%20GA%202023.pdf)

Nine 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: Mr. Rob Jackson, Mr. Travis Sertich, Dr. Veronica Sanders, Mr. Chad Crews, Mrs. Audrey Pickren, Mr. Gene Sutherland, Jr., Mr. Randy Odom, Mr. Ricky Wheeler, and Mr. Ben Lastly.

A complete set of results and a variety of highlights from the 96<sup>th</sup> National FFA Convention can be found at [https://www.georgiaffa.org/docs/sidemodules/17494\\_Results%20from%20Georgia%20FFA%20-%20National%20Convention%202023.pdf](https://www.georgiaffa.org/docs/sidemodules/17494_Results%20from%20Georgia%20FFA%20-%20National%20Convention%202023.pdf)

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