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Georgia brings home 16 National Winners from 92nd National FFA Convention

INDIANAPOLIS – The Georgia FFA Association’s trip to the 92nd National FFA Convention was highlighted by 16 national winners. Among Georgia’s national winners were the American Star in Agriscience, two Career Development Event (CDE) winners, five national proficiency award winners, seven national Agriscience Fair winners and the nation’s Outstanding Middle School chapter. More than 67,000 FFA members from across the nation attended the convention.

Courtney Cameron, a member of the Lowndes County FFA chapter in Valdosta, was named the 2019 American Star in Agriscience. Well over 4,000 FFA members from across the nation received the American FFA Degree in 2019, including 177 from Georgia. From the class of 2019 recipients, the top four with Agriscience research-based Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) programs were named Finalists for Star in Agriscience. Cameron, along with the three other finalists interviewed before a panel of judges in Indianapolis. Cameron discussed her SAE that focused on nearly eight years of plant-based research focused on the tobacco mosaic virus and its impact on various vegetables. Cameron is a student at the University of Georgia. She is the daughter of John and Mary Beth Cameron, and her agricultural education teachers are Dr. James Corbett, Mr. Quinton Haddock and Mrs. Anglia Crosby.

Career Development Events (CDEs) and Leadership Development Events (LDEs) are team and individual competitive events designed to test student’s technical knowledge and ability in a variety of agricultural and leadership areas. Georgia’s 2019 national CDE champions include the Cambridge FFA (Agricultural Communications) and the Pelham FFA (Floriculture). Sarah Beth Waller (1st place individual), Taleen Hannah, Sarabeth Goud, and Harrison Phillips comprised the team from the Cambridge chapter that bested 34 other teams to win the national Agricultural Communications CDE. The team’s advisors and agricultural education teachers are Mrs. Sarah Nerswick and Mrs. Ashley White. Jacob Harper (3rd place individual), Thalik Hudson (5th place individual), Madison Barrett (7th place individual) and Mary Walton made up the Floriculture team from Pelham that bested 44 other teams to take top honors. Their FFA advisor and agricultural education teacher is Mr. Justin Sealy.

The Commerce Middle School FFA chapter was named the nation’s Outstanding Middle School chapter as part of the National Chapter Award program. Commerce Middle was one of five national finalists for the award, including Morgan County Middle, Northside Middle, West Laurens Middle, and Youth Middle, all of Georgia. Each chapter had students make a presentation explaining their chapter’s activities in the Growing Leaders, Building Communities, and Strengthening Agriculture portions of the FFA Program of Activities. The agricultural education teacher and FFA Advisor at Commerce Middle is Mrs. April Davis.

Chloe Lynch of the Island FFA (Agricultural Education), Jessica Brogdon of the Walnut Grove FFA (Agricultural Sales – Placement), Duncan Patton of the Madison County FFA (Beef Production – Placement), Dawson Peek of the Lowndes County FFA (Outdoor Recreation), and Dylan Dent of the Wayne County FFA (Poultry Production) were each named national FFA proficiency award winners for the success they earned in their Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) programs. Only four students from across the nation are named National Finalists in each of the 47 proficiency areas. Georgia was third in the nation with 21 national proficiency award finalists and second in the nation with five proficiency winners.

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Georgia FFA's seven winners in the national Agriscience Fair included Johnathan Rivers and Rylen Mercer of the Lowndes Middle FFA (Food Products & Processing – Division 2); Bethany Champion of the Sonoraville FFA (Food Products & Processing – Division 3); Joseph Corbett and Cayden Mathews of the Lowndes County FFA (Plant Systems – Division 4); Marin Lonnee of the Oconee County FFA (Plant Systems – Division 5); Alexis Herring and Madison McDonald of the Lowndes County FFA (Power, Structure & Technology – Division 6); Gracie Sutton and Jordan Brown of the Lowndes County Middle FFA (Social Systems – Division 2); and Kaleb Bell of the Berrien County FFA (Social Systems – Division 5). Georgia had a total of 32 national Agriscience Fair finalists who interviewed in Indianapolis.

Georgia also earned six additional top-5 finishes in national FFA Career Development Events at the Convention. Georgia's CDE success included the teams from Veterans placing 4th in the Agricultural Sales CDE, Brantley County placing 3rd in the Environmental/Natural Resources CDE, Banks County placing 3rd in the Forestry CDE, Perry placing 3rd in the Nursery/Landscape CDE, Oconee County placing 3rd in the Poultry Evaluation CDE and Kylie Whitworth of the Madison County FFA placing 3rd in the Prepared Public Speaking Leadership Development Event (LDE). Page Paschal of the Perry FFA was the 1st place individual in the Nursery/Landscape CDE.

Twenty-six Georgia FFA chapters received a national 3-Star ranking, the highest ranking offered in the National Chapter Award program. Those chapters included Apalachee (Barrow County), Atkinson County, Berrien County, Bonaire Middle, Cambridge, Carver Middle, Commerce Middle, Franklin County Middle, Islands, Jefferson Middle, Locust Grove, Morgan County Middle, Newton College & Career Academy, Northside Middle, Oconee County, Pataula Charter, Pepperell, Perry Middle, Pike County, Russell Middle, Screven County, Screven County Middle, Stockbridge, West Jackson Middle, West Laurens Middle, and Youth Middle. Apalachee and Commerce Middle were named National Finalists (top 10) in the Premier Chapter competition.

Eight Georgians were recognized for their support of agricultural education and the FFA as part of the Convention. Mr. Martin Bius (Bainbridge), Senator Ellis Black (Valdosta), Mr. Shawn Collins (Moultrie), Mr. Mike Giles (Gainesville), Mrs. Luann Jones (LaGrange), Tim Lewis (Elko), Russell Segers (Jasper), and Mr. Jerry Taylor (Hull) each received the Honorary American FFA Degree for the contribution that they have made to the agricultural education program and FFA.

One hundred and seventy-seven Georgia FFA members received the prestigious American FFA Degree, the highest degree offered to an active FFA member. These students spent years developing their Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) programs to reach this honor. Murdock Wynn of the Colquitt County FFA (Star in Agricultural Placement) and Hadden Powell of the Bleckley County FFA (Star in Agribusiness) were also American Star Finalists. This is the largest class of American Degree recipients in the history of Georgia FFA. Less than 1% of FFA members nationwide receive the prestigious American FFA Degree.

Three Georgia FFA members earned the opportunity to perform their musical talents at the National FFA Convention. Allison Chassereau (Metter), Hayden Pollard (Mt. Zion) and Grace McBride (ECI) were each selected to perform in the Talent program; while Zachary Godwin (Cambridge), Jada-Tate Beckford (Arabia Mountain) and Hannah Williams (Telfair County) performed in the National FFA Chorus.

The Georgia FFA Association was recognized as a membership growth state, marking the 21st consecutive year that the Georgia has increased in FFA membership. Georgia was represented in Indianapolis by 25 official voting delegates, and more than 1,500 local FFA members and advisors from across the state.

A complete set of results and a variety of highlights from the 92nd National FFA Convention can be found at <http://www.georgiaffa.org/page.aspx?ID=47>

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