



News Release – 11/1/21

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Georgia Celebrates 14 National Champions and National Vice President at 94th National FFA Convention

INDIANAPOLIS – The Georgia FFA Association’s success at the 94th National FFA Convention was highlighted by 14 national champions and the election of Erik Robinson as the 2021-2022 National FFA Southern Region Vice President. Among Georgia’s national winners were the American Star in Agribusiness, seven national proficiency award winners, four national Agriscience Fair award winners, the nation’s Outstanding Middle School chapter, and the winner of the Building Communities division of the Premier Chapter award.

Tyler Ertzberger, a member of the Franklin County FFA chapter, was named the 2021 American Star in Agribusiness. Ertzberger began his own livestock photography business in 2013. He takes and sells livestock photographs at local, county and state fairs and livestock exhibitions across the southeastern United States. Ertzberger has built a successful business that employs 18 people and earned more than \$40,000 in cash sales in 2020. In addition to photography, Ertzberger develops marketing material for livestock sales and auctions. A total of 3,863 FFA members from across the nation received the prestigious American FFA Degree in 2021. Among those recipients, the top four in the Agribusiness category were named finalists. Ertzberger interviewed as a finalist and was named the national winner on stage during the 6th session of the convention. Ertzberger is a graduate of Franklin County High School in Carnesville, and his agricultural education teachers are Mr. Cale Watkins, Mr. Trey Harris, and Mrs. Taylor Brown.

One hundred and fifty two 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. In addition to Tyler Ertzberger, Madison County FFA member Duncan Patton was named a national finalist (top 4) for the American Star in Agricultural Placement award. To see a complete list of Georgia’s 2021 American FFA Degree recipients, visit https://www.georgiaffa.org/docs/03939_American%20Degree%20Recipient%20FINAL%20list%20-%20GA%202021.pdf

Erik Robinson, a member of the Effingham County FFA chapter and a student at the University of Georgia (UGA), was elected from a field of 36 candidates to serve as one of six national FFA officers for 2021-22. Robinson will take a one-year leave of absence from his studies at UGA to travel over 100,000 miles across the nation and to Japan serving as an ambassador for the national FFA organization and agricultural education. Robinson went through seven rounds of interviews and is the nineteenth Georgian to be elected as a national FFA officer. Erik is the son of Rick and Tara Robinson of Rincon. His agricultural education teachers and FFA advisors are Mrs. Meredith Arrington, Ms. Annah Shearouse, and Mr. Logan Hunter.

The Bonaire Middle School FFA chapter was named the nation’s Outstanding Middle School chapter as part of the National Chapter Award program. Bonaire Middle was one of five national finalists for the award, including Carver Middle (Monroe), Franklin County Middle, and Screven County 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 Bonaire Middle is Mrs. Cheralyn Keily.

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Cassie Carter of Habersham Central (Agricultural Services), Devin Boyer of Franklin County (Diversified Horticulture), Brady Walker of Tift County (Fiber/Oil Crop Production), Wendall Warr of Early County (Forest Management & Products), Luke Hendrix of Wayne County (Fruit Production), Matt Malcom of Morgan County (Nursery Operations) and Eli Hallford of Franklin County (Poultry Production) 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 led the nation with 23 national proficiency award finalists and seven proficiency winners.

Georgia FFA's four winners in the national Agriscience Fair included Britton Davis and Gracie Sutton of Lowndes County (Environmental/Natural Resource Systems – Division 4); Cayden Mathews and Joseph Corbett of Lowndes County (Plant Systems – Division 6); Fraser Knapek and Katie Spivey of Perry (Power, Structure and Technical Systems – Division 4); and Grace Adcock and Allie Royston of Franklin County Middle (Social Science – Division 6).

Georgia also had five additional Agriscience Fair entries that earned top 3 national honors. Those top 3 finishers included Anna Cantrell and Claire Hall of Franklin County (3rd place – Animal Systems division 2), Canyon Randall and Lex Turner of Franklin County (2nd place – Animal Systems division 6), Caleigh Goldstein of Youth Middle (2nd place – Food Products & Processing division 1), Taylor Atkinson and Kayden Swaney of Franklin County Middle (3rd place – Plant Systems division 2), and Laura Walker and Kate Walker of the North Oconee FFA (3rd place – Plant Systems division 4).

The Commerce Middle FFA chapter was named the national winner of the National Chapter Award Program Premier Chapter award in the Building Communities division. The Commerce Middle chapter was highlighted for their work making PVC trees to promote fish habitat and attract fish to ponds and lakes in and around their community. The Cambridge (Alpharetta) and Eastside (Covington) chapters were also finalists (top 10) in the Premier Chapter – Building Communities division. The Creekview chapter (Canton) was a finalist (top 10) in the Models of Excellence division of the National Chapter Award program.

Thirty 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, Bonaire Middle, Cambridge, Carver Middle, Central of Carroll High, Central of Carroll Middle, Clinch County, Coahulla Creek, Commerce, Commerce Middle, Creekview, East Jackson, Eastside, Franklin County High, Franklin County Middle, Haralson County, Jackson County, Lakeview Fort Oglethorpe, Locust Grove, Loganville, Newton College & Career Academy, Northside Middle, Oglethorpe County Middle, Pierce County Middle, Screven County Middle, Stockbridge, Summerville Middle, Wilcox County, and Winder-Barrow.

Eight Georgia chapters earned top-5 finishes in national Career Development Events at the convention. Georgia CDE success was highlighted by 2nd place finishes for Banks County (Environmental/Natural Resources CDE), North Murray (Floriculture CDE), Mary Persons (Forestry CDE), and White County (Marketing Plan CDE); as well as 4th place finishes for Jackson County (Livestock Evaluation CDE) and Coffee County (Nursery/Landscape CDE); and a 5th place finish for Cambridge (Agricultural Communications CDE) and Gilmer County (Dairy Evaluation CDE).

Fifteen 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: Stacey Beacham, Reggie Beasley, Jay Bordon, Clint Hood, Wayne Juers, Kevin Jump, Nelson McCracken, Justin Sealy, State School Superintendent Richard Woods, Lance and Debbie Harper, Wayne and Carol Ertzberger, and Jim and Melanie Patton.

A complete set of results and a variety of highlights from the 94th National FFA Convention can be found at <https://www.georgiaffa.org/page.aspx?ID=47>

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