

# WYOMING FFA TIMES

A publication of the Wyoming FFA Foundation

2012 Awards and Results Edition

## Cheyenne High Plains named #1 Chapter

**By Teresa Milner, Wyoming FFA Times**  
**Cheyenne** — The High Plains FFA from Cheyenne was honored as Wyoming's top chapter in the 2012 Chapter Awards Program on April 2 at the Wyoming FFA State Convention in Cheyenne.

The Chapter Award Program recognizes FFA

chapters that successfully complete an annual program of activities, a written plan guiding the chapter's year of service. Each program of activities includes a series of activities designed to encourage its members to grow as individuals, to work as part of a team, and to serve others.

Chapter President Kelley Fisher says the honor was one the chapter had been working toward for a while.

"It was definitely a surprise when our name was called, but I know we all hoped we had a shot at Number One chapter this year," she said. "We've been a gold emblem chap-

ter the last few years, and our members really worked hard to pull it all together and get it accomplished tonight."

High Plains demonstrated their participation and success in a variety of leadership, career and community service events. The chapter promoted **See AWARD Page 4**

## FFA recognizes 'State Stars'

**By Teresa Milner, Wyoming FFA Times**

**Cheyenne** — While their projects of tack sales, grasshopper research, farming and raising cattle are very different, four award winning Wyoming FFA members all share a passion for agriculture and a commitment to succeed, earning them the honor of being named as a 2012 Wyoming State FFA Star at the state FFA convention, held April 2-5 in Cheyenne.

Ali Ballard, Casper FFA, was the State Star Farmer. B.W. Ochsner, Torrington/Lingle FFA, was named as the State Star in Agri-placement. Reata Brannaman, Sheridan FFA, was awarded the State Star in Agribusiness, and Taylor Smock, Pine Bluffs FFA, was named as the State Star in Agriscience.

"When students enroll in agriculture education and FFA, they select a hands-on program of work, known as a supervised agriculture experience program (SAE)," said Ron Pulse, State FFA Advisor. "These programs help solidify concepts learned in the classroom or through FFA experiences, and incorporate the student's individual interests and goals. SAEs can include livestock production, placement in an agriculture company, an exploration of an agriscience topic or working for an agribusiness."

The state star awards program recognizes the top students in each area for their outstanding agricultural skills and competencies. Each year at state convention, up to 20 finalists—five in each category—vie for these top awards. These students have excelled in their SAE, demonstrated outstanding management abilities and met other leadership and scholastic requirements. Each finalist receives \$100 from the Wyoming FFA Foundation. The state star receives \$500 from the National FFA Foundation.

Nominees were chosen by a panel of agriculture education teachers and selected by the Wyoming FFA state officer team.

**Ali Ballard, State Star Farmer, Casper FFA**

Ballard owns and manages a herd of 470 cattle, 150 head of Rambouillet sheep and 30 horses. She started her SAE and sheep flock with just three bum lambs

**See STAR Page 5**



## Foundation, FFA partners present \$25k in scholarships

**By Stacy Broda**  
**FFA Foundation Scholarship Chair**

**Cheyenne** — With over 60 applications received, during the 2012 Wyoming FFA Convention the Wyoming FFA Foundation and its supporting partners awarded approximately \$25,000 in scholarships to 28 deserving FFA members.

### State Officers

2012 marked the first time in recent history that the Foundation has been able to present a scholarship to each member of the retiring Wyoming FFA officer team. Encana Oil and Gas provided the first \$4,500 to make this project possible. Rob and Leslie Hendry of Lysite and the Casper-based Wold Foundation provided matching funds to bring the fund total to the needed \$9,000. Thanks to these combined efforts, all nine members of the 2011-2012 Wyoming FFA Officer Team received a \$1,000 college scholarship to use Fall 2012.

"These scholarships were a priority for the Foundation over the past year," says Jennifer Womack, Wyoming FFA Foundation Executive Director. "The nine young leaders who comprised this past year's officer team worked extremely hard on behalf of Wyoming FFA. As we present them these scholarship we wish them the best of luck with their future endeavors and ask them to remember their FFA roots."

### SS Ranch

Thanks to the Malm Family's SS Ranch a new scholarship was presented this year to a student with **See FFA Page 7**



2012 Wyoming FFA Convention by the numbers

## Chalk one up to SUCCESS!

- 1,000 in attendance
- Theme: Cultivating Character
- Teams from across Wyoming competed in 12 Career Development Events
- Individual FFA members competed in the prepared public speaking, FFA Creed speaking and extemporaneous public speaking
- Convention Keynote speakers encouraged FFA members to reach new heights
- 9 members of the 2011-2012 Wyoming FFA Officer Team presented their retiring addresses
- 9 new Wyoming State Officers were welcomed to stage to form the 2012-2013 Wyoming FFA Officer Team
- This year's event winners will represent Wyoming at the National FFA Convention, Oct. 24-27, 2012 in Indianapolis, Ind

## 2012-2013 Wyoming State Officers selected

**Jennifer Womack, Wyo FFA Times**

**Cheyenne** — As the 2012 Wyoming FFA Convention came to a close, nine FFA members were called to the stage to serve as the

2012-2013 Wyoming FFA Officer Team.

Earlier this spring these individuals, along with over 20 of their FFA colleagues from across Wyoming, applied to serve as a Wyoming FFA

Officer. Those FFA members spent the week in the "hot box," sweating it out to see who among them would be a part of the new officer team.

Over the course of the coming year they'll lead

the organization, host leadership trainings for younger members, represent Wyoming at community events and more. The *FFA Times* recently caught up with some of these young leaders to ask about their plans for the year ahead.

**Bryce McKenzie, President Buffalo**



In the year ahead Bryce McKenzie plans to build a strong team with his fellow state officers **See TEAM Page 6**



During the 2012 Wyoming FFA Convention these nine individuals walked on stage to comprise the 2012-2013 Wyoming FFA Officer Team. BigStar Livestock Images photo



## PREZ says

"FFA Members, Why are we here?" The gavel taps three times, 2000 feet hit the floor in unison as FFA members stand, and the convention hall comes alive in one voice, "TO PRACTICE BROTHERHOOD, HONOR AGRICULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, AND TO DEVELOP THOSE QUALITIES OF LEADERSHIP WHICH AN FFA MEMBER SHOULD POSSESS."



Court Schilt  
FFA Foundation President

Ever since my time as a member so many years ago, that part of convention opening ceremonies has held a unique place in my memory. I remember my first national convention in Kansas City, Mo. Along with 15,000 other FFA members we stood just like the members do today. 30,000 feet hitting the floor at one time was huge. The sound, like thunder. You could feel it in the concrete and it was cool. It's always cool. That's the way each convention session was opened the first week of April. With around a thousand FFA members plus guests in attendance it was a great convention. And it's still cool.

Enough history and nostalgia. Let's see if we can find some news you can use. The last line of that part of opening ceremonies has been rolling around my head for the last few weeks. "Develop those qualities of leadership which an FFA member should possess." What are those qualities and where will they be used by these FFA members?

Among the qualities I think of are traits like honesty and integrity. Perseverance. Keeping an open mind yet having the conviction to stand your ground. The Golden Rule comes to mind. The desire to put others needs ahead of self for the good of the group. I'm sure there's more and most readers will add to this list or maybe create one of their own. That's a good thing.

So then, what does an FFA member do with these qualities? I think that depends on the member. Some will use them as chapter or state officers. But what about those that didn't get a chapter or state office? Where do they apply those qualities? I think a better question is, where should they not apply them? During convention there were 10 prepared public speakers and only one would be selected to go to national convention. There were 30+ teams in some of the team competitions, but only one team wins. We had 26 fully qualified candidates running for 9 state offices. I'm pretty good at basic math, so I know that there will be some disappointment at the end of the week. Where am I going you wonder? Well, I believe every person, young and old, FFA member or not, will be called upon at some time to lead. The person called may not even know they're being called at the time. They might just be in the right place at the right time and someone sees their character and it makes a difference. If that's the case, shouldn't they have these traits in action all the time? Yes, they should. We should. As parents, teachers, and supporters of youth we should be helping them to understand the importance of strong character through both our words and our actions. Just telling someone about integrity has little impact if they see you live without it.

As a supporter of Wyoming FFA you are helping young people learn about and develop those kinds of traits. In many cases you're helping them couple these qualities with specific skills such as speaking or evaluating multiple criteria, or developing critical thinking skills. Your generosity helps them take part in programs to improve their local chapter, their community, their education. Investing in FFA members is putting your financial backing behind the next generation of community and business leaders. They'll be geneticists, ranchers, doctors, construction workers, rough necks, lawyers and more. They'll be making decisions that will impact the way we live, the way our grandchildren will live. Isn't it comforting to know you are helping provide opportunities for them to develop those qualities of leadership that an FFA member should possess? Thank you for sharing some of you with them.

If you're not yet giving financial support to Wyoming FFA members, I hope you'll take a good look through this issue of the *FFA Times* and see the good that comes from an investment in these exceptional young people. Remember, as you read about the young leaders who excelled at state convention, there are many others who were just behind them, preparing to lead when their time comes. The growth is not in winning, but in the journey to the contest.

Wishing you a blessed Spring. Until next time, Court

# Let's Talk WYOMING FFA

## Featuring a Wyoming FFA Leader

*Editor's Note: Thanks to vocal opponents like Andrea Gurney, the U.S. Government has withdrawn its proposed labor laws relating to youth working on America's farms and ranches. Andrea's speech on the topic, given prior to the rules being withdrawn, earned her top honors in the prepared public speaking competition at the 2012 Wyoming FFA Convention.*

Four children run out of the school, grinning from ear to ear as they race to the bus. They just completed their first day of school in the United States. They all clearly enjoyed their day. The bus rolled forward, and the drop off route began. After fifteen minutes, the bus pulled off to the side of a dirt road in front of a beat field. The three brothers and sister pulled on their gloves, grabbed their stuff, and stepped off the bus where their mother was waiting for them, with a hoe for each. The other children stared at them in bewilderment, curious to know what those kids could have done to earn such a punishment at such a young age; however, to those four kids, this was not a punishment, it was a way of life.

Children raised on farms and ranches begin work at a young age. Summers are spent in tractors, fields, or on horses moving cattle. For years, this tradition has been carried on, and never questioned. Today, kids born and raised to work in agriculture have caught the eye of the nation, and now we are facing an issue that could drastically change agriculture in the United States. Agriculture is said to be one of the most hazardous jobs and it is estimated that four hundred thousand children under the age of eighteen work on U.S. farms. The U.S. Department of Labor is concerned about our safety and the effects that working at such young ages has on us. So recently, they proposed new child regulations for children working in agriculture. These regulations would not apply to children working on farms owned by their parents; however, anyone under the age of sixteen would not be allowed to work on *any* farm or ranch for money, even if it's owned by other family members. This proposal also has several stipulations that prohibit minors from being hired to work with animals. Kids under the age of sixteen would not be allowed to do the following: 1) work on a farm in a yard, pen, or stall that is occupied by an un-castrated male animal older than six months; as well as a sow with suckling piglets, or a cow with a newborn calf. 2) Assist in animal husbandry practices that inflict pain upon the animal and are likely to result in unpredictable animal behavior such as branding, breeding, dehorning, vaccinating, castrating, and treating sick or injured animals. 3) Handling animals with known dangerous behaviors. 4) Poultry catching or cooping in preparation for slaughter or market; and finally, herding animals in confined spaces such as feedlots, corrals, or on horseback, or using motorized vehicles such as trucks and terrain vehicles. Other revisions would prohibit teens under sixteen from working in places six feet above the ground such as barn lofts, grain elevators or scaffolds. They also wouldn't be able to operate power driven machines, with just a few exceptions. Anyone under eighteen years old would not be allowed to work at feedlots, livestock auctions or stock yards. These restrictions could affect organizations like 4-H and FFA, the largest youth organization. As they allow kids to participate in hands on agricultural activities that will give them tools to use in their



## Freedom to Farm

By Andrea Gurney  
Southeast FFA

future; however, if these new proposals pass there is a possibility there will no longer be FFA or 4-H, as they are based around working on farms and ranches. While these restrictions may make complete sense to those who have no agricultural background whatsoever, it is absurd and frustrating to those of us who do.

Let's go back to those four kids working in the beet fields for a brief moment. Their days were long and tiring, there was a possibility of getting hurt, as they worked with sharp objects and followed behind a tractor; however, at this young age none of them were severely hurt to the point where they had to be taken to the hospital, because their parents *were* concerned about their safety; therefore, they *educated* them on how to prevent hurting themselves. Safety is an immense concern to the U.S. Department of Labor, which is why they made the proposals in the first place. I will agree that working in agriculture *can* be dangerous, as children can experience injuries in this department. But why are we targeting agriculture when there are other more major issues out there that are causing farm more child mortalities? For example we are experiencing

a global food shortage. In the world 16,000 children die because of hunger related causes each day. Compare this to the estimated 104 kids who die *each* year due to agricultural related injuries. While this number of deaths is tragic compare it to the four children that die *every day* as a result of child abuse, and the estimated 800 kids that die annually due to heart attacks. Not only that, but has anybody taken into consideration what participating in sports can do to a child? I myself play sports, and I understand why kids enjoy it so much; however, it causes a great amount of injuries, two million actually...a year. In agricultural there are an estimated 33,000 injuries annually. If I'm doing my math right, that is a significantly smaller number of injuries; but yet, the nation is still targeting agriculture. *Education* is the key to solving this problem.

Instead of focusing our attention on educating these children, we are creating a policy that bans them from working on farms. The United States is based on creating a better tomorrow, as well as a stronger nation. If we were to force these new proposals on children working in agriculture we would only be weakening ourselves. Making a profit would be difficult. Take a look at those four kids working in the beet fields again. They migrated from Mexico and their family was intent on succeeding in the United States. They were paid 32 dollars an acre; therefore, it was mandatory for them to work in order to get more done in less time. If those kids would not have assisted their parents their income would not have been as high and they would have never made it to where they are now. So tell me, is it really such a bad thing that children help on farms? In rural communities like our own, kids have to work on farms to help their families succeed; unfortunately, the U.S Department of Labor is arguing the fact that it is affecting children's education.

At Southeast High School three fourths of the students work on farms and ranches, and our graduation rate each year varies from ninety-seven to a hundred percent. I realize that there *are* kids who drop out of school in order to work on their family farms; however, what we must understand

See **FARM** Page 12

## WYOMING FFA FOUNDATION

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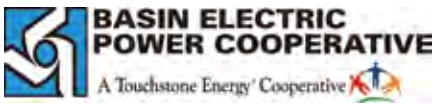


Quick Info—

# FFA BRIEFS

## FFA members to visit D.C.

**Cheyenne** — Thanks to the generosity of two electric companies — Tri-State Generation and Transmission and Basin Electric — four Wyoming FFA members will be traveling to the Washington, D.C. this summer to experience the nation’s capitol. They’ll make the trip as part of the National FFA Organization’s Washington Leadership Conference, an event that encourages personal growth among FFA members while growing their awareness of the nation’s governing processes. Fourteen students applied for the scholarships.



Tri-State Generation and Transmission donated \$3,000 for three, \$1,000 Washington Leadership Conference scholarships. Colton Wright is from the Burns FFA and lives on his family’s ranch. He is currently the 3rd Vice President of his chapter and raises breeding sheep.

Claire Streeter is from the Burns FFA and hopes to go to school and receive a major in Animal Science. She shows horses in FFA and competes on the sales and service and parliamentary procedure teams.

Rachel Derner maintains a 4.0 GPA at Burns High School where she is a freshman. She has shown livestock and horses and competed in the creed and public speaking.

Ty Carpenter of Mountain View FFA is currently a junior and is the president of his FFA chapter. He says FFA has been the driving force that makes him want to better himself, his community and the future of agriculture. Ty will receive the scholarship donated by Basin.

“A special thanks goes out to Tri-State and Basin for helping these young leaders experience the nation’s capitol,” says Stacy Broda, chair of the FFA Foundation’s scholarship committee. “Washington Leadership Conference brings many benefits to our young people including developing their own leadership skills and their awareness about American government.”

## Golf entries open

**Douglas** — Entries are now being accepted for the 2012 Cowboy Chuck and Chip, a four-man golf scramble. Co-hosted by the Wyoming FFA Foundation and the Wyoming Natural Resource Foundation, the tournament will be held at the Douglas, Wyo. golf course on Aug. 14 in conjunction with the 2012 Wyoming State Fair and Rodeo.



Entry fees are \$75 per golfer and include a post event meal and awards reception. Call Jennifer at 307-351-0730 or download this year’s entry form at [www.WyoFFAFoundation.com](http://www.WyoFFAFoundation.com). Once complete it can be emailed to [Jen@WyoFFAFoundation.com](mailto:Jen@WyoFFAFoundation.com).

## Blue Jeans Ball scheduled

**Casper** — The Wyoming FFA Foundation is pleased to announce that the 2012 Blue Jeans Ball will take place on Sept. 29 in Casper at the Parkway Plaza and Convention Centre.



“We’re really looking forward to this year’s event,” says Jennifer Womack, Wyoming FFA Foundation Executive Director. “We’re hopeful our FFA friends in Casper and from across Wyoming will join us to celebrate our outstanding FFA program here in Wyoming.” The evening will include a prime rib dinner, live band, auction, keynote address and more.

Tickets to the event are \$35 each and are available by calling Womack at 307-351-0730 or emailing [Jen@WyoFFAFoundation.com](mailto:Jen@WyoFFAFoundation.com). They can also be bought online by making a \$35 per ticket contribution under the “donate” link. Be sure to include your address and write “Blue Jeans Ball” in the donation notes.

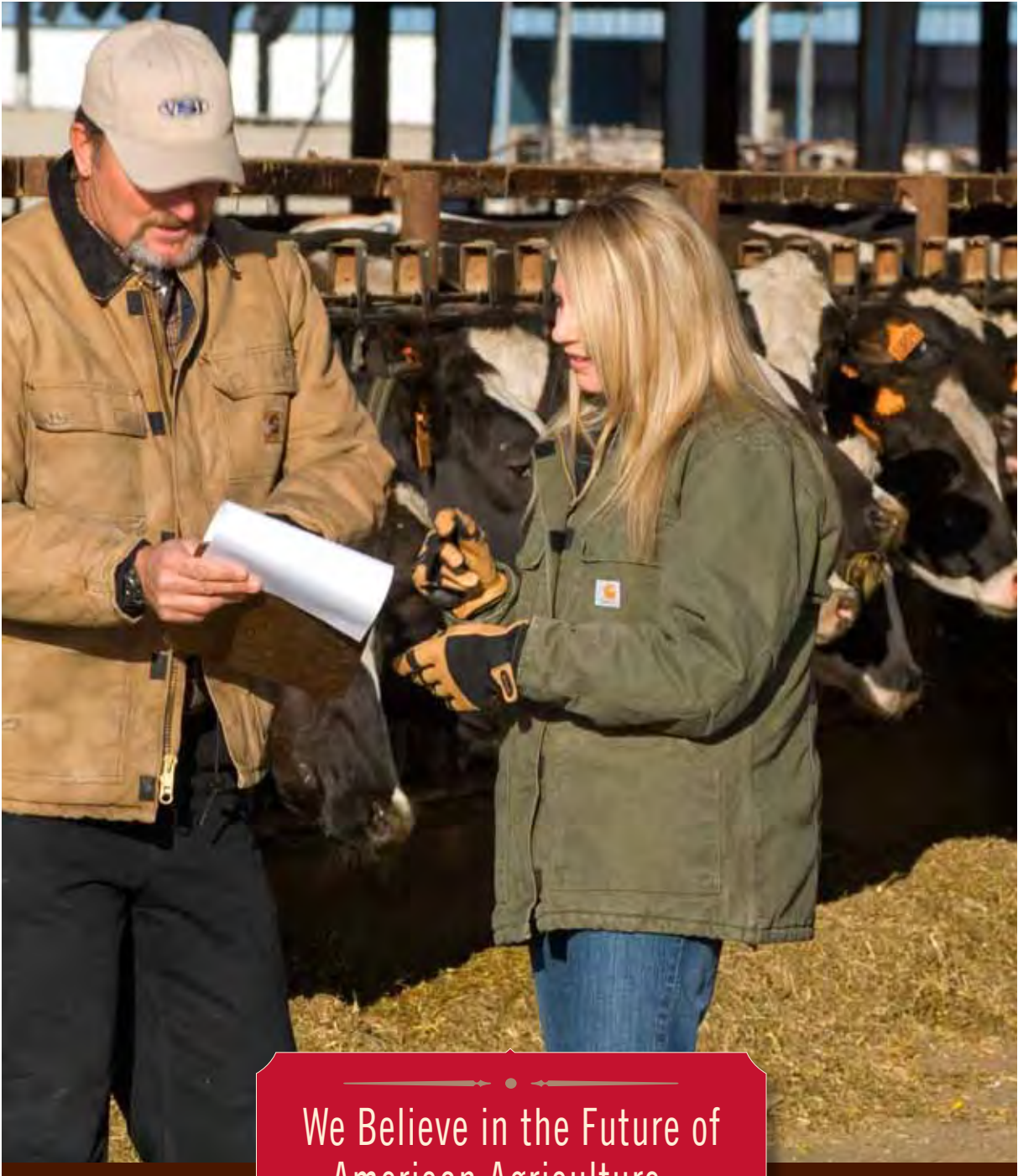
## FFA members, guests welcomed

**Cheyenne** — Cheyenne Kiwanis Club members and the Wyoming FFA Foundation teamed up on Monday, April 2 to welcome members and guest to the 2012 Wyoming FFA Convention. Pizza was served to approximately 650 individuals during a three-hour window prior to the first convention session.



The FFA Foundation is able to offer this dinner each year thanks to donations from FUSA Insurance Agency, Tri-State Generation and Transmission, Rocky Mountain Power, Cheyenne Frontier Days, Bill and Judy Johnson, the Casper FFA Alumni and the Cheyenne Kiwanis Ag Committee.

“We appreciate the volunteers and donors who make this event possible,” says Wyoming FFA Foundation Chairman Court Schilt. “FFA members appreciate the meal and the opportunity to catch up with their friends from across the state. For the advisors, the dinner ensures students get a good meal and arrive on time to the opening session of the FFA Convention. A special thanks also goes out to our friends at Papa John’s here in Cheyenne. They did a fantastic job of helping us serve 650 guests in a very short amount of time.”



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**AWARD** continued from Page 1

agriculture and food safety by partnering with the Laramie County Cowbells to host an annual Ag in the Classroom expo. The FFA members helped teach more than 300 elementary school students about agriculture, livestock, farming and where food comes from. The chapter helps ensure learning continues by distributing bags of material for teachers to take back to their classrooms after the expo.

High Plains FFA also helps the Cheyenne community by hosting a canned food, clothing and pet supply drive each year during National FFA Week in February, helping to restock supplies for charities after the holiday rush.

This past year, the giving spirit hit chapter members closer to home. Members helped the family of a student at Central High, collecting enough food in just two days to stock the family's kitchen for weeks. They also collected stuffed animals and toys for the family's children.

"We are really fortunate to be part of a community like Cheyenne," says Fisher. "Our chapter and FFA as a whole receives great support from our school and our community, and events where we can give back are really meaningful to our members."

But it wasn't all work and no play for the High Plains FFA. They are also self-admitted picnic

addicts, hosting a summer picnic, a back-to-school picnic, a December carry-in dinner, an FFA week tailgate party and a Cinco De Mayo party, all to celebrate FFA fellowship through food, fun and games.

"I think the best part about being a member of our chapter is getting to enjoy all the other members," said Fisher. "We have a really diverse and passionate membership, from the kids who grew up on a ranch to kids from the city who are just discovering agriculture and FFA. We enjoy spending time together and learning from one another."

"One of my favorite events was the new fun day we helped with at the hospital," said Cameron Berry, chapter vice president. "We helped set up

bouncy castles, cooked chicken and helped run a carnival for the employees at Cheyenne Regional Medical Center and their families. We had fun playing the games with the kids and meeting new people from our town."

The High Plains members enjoyed working on this new project, especially partnering with the Frontier FFA Chapter from East High School.

The Wyoming State FFA officers visit each chapter and review the chapter application annually. Awards are chosen by the state officers. The highest ranking chapter each year is designated as Wyoming's Number One chapter.

Chapter advisor Ty Berry said persistence was the key for his students winning the coveted prize this year.

"I am proud of how our

members and especially our officers really hung with it this year," he said. "Together they evaluated all of our activities and our application to see where they could make improvements, and worked hard to document the many activities they take on every year. They really demonstrated their commitment to making our chapter the best it could be."

Other chapter highlights include degree workshops hosted by older chapter officers, 100 percent participation by freshmen in the local creed competition, scholarship days and participation in the Heifer International Program.

"The High Plains chapter truly exemplifies the part of the FFA Mission 'Living to Serve,'" said Ron Pulse, State FFA Advisor. "From helping fellow FFA members

learn how to fill out applications, to participating in local service activities, these members understand the importance of working hard and being a part of something larger than themselves."

The chapter is now eligible to compete in the National FFA Chapter Award competition.

Recognition as Wyoming's top chapter was only the beginning of what some High Plains members were referring to as an "epic state convention." High Plains won the meats evaluation, livestock evaluation, marketing plan and poultry evaluation career development events. The chapter also saw ten of its members receive the State FFA Degree, and members Teddy Weekly and Payton Blackwell were elected as the 2012-2013 State FFA Third Vice President and Secretary, respectively.

**THE WYOMING FFA FOUNDATION WOULD LIKE TO SEND A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THE JUAN REYES FAMILY FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT**

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**As a supporter of FFA the Wyoming Business Council Agribusiness Division would like to congratulate all FFA members for their accomplishments this past year.**



Members of Cheyenne's High Plains FFA worked together earning their chapter recognition as Wyoming's #1 chapter for 2012.



**The Wyoming FFA Foundation  
would like to thank the following  
participants in the 2012 Bulls for  
the Blue and Gold Program.**

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given to her by a neighboring rancher. Her interest quickly expanded into raising her own market lambs, then a small cattle herd with her stepfather.

Ballard focuses on diversifying her marketing efforts to maximize profits, selling her cattle and sheep at a variety of different auctions, private treaty sales and to local 4-H and members. She is also working to improve the genetics of her cattle herd, replacing the commercial cattle she sells with registered females.

“My plan is to use video marketing more effectively down the road,” she said. “I believe I can reach a larger number of buyers by getting more involved with operations such as Superior Livestock.”

Ballard said she’s tried to better understand and improve several efficiencies of her operation, such as calving efficiency. “We have a calving efficiency of 92 percent, versus the industry standard of 95 percent,” she explained. “We decided to calve all our cows in the pasture behind our calving barn instead of at the feedlot. This makes it so the cows have more room and clean ground. We’re always looking for ways to improve.”

Ballard plans to attend college at either the University of Wyoming or the University Nebraska-Lincoln, and will continue to work on the family ranch when possible. She wants to triple her sheep flock size in the next four years, and secure a teaching position in Casper after completing her degree.

In addition to livestock production, Ballard was the state champion doubles tennis player and serves as 2<sup>nd</sup> vice president of her chapter. She also competes in soccer, FFA meats judging and is a member of several junior rodeo, horse and sheep organizations.

“As long as Ali has been in agriculture class, she has had a strong work ethic and I have seen her at home and the way she takes on responsibility,” said Ballard’s FFA Advisor, Brock Burch. “Then this past fall, things really changed for her family: her stepdad passed away. Without a dad around, Ali has stepped up. She helps get work done at home and she still has excellent grades. Ali is still one of, if not the best, leader we have in the Casper program.”

**B.W. Ochsner, State Star in Agri-placement, Torrington/Lingle FFA**

Ochsner is an employee at George Ochsner & Sons Ranch, Inc., a corporation of four families. Ochsner helps with the purebred Hereford and Angus cattle breeding operation and 2,000 head commercial cattle feedlot. He also assists with man-



aging the ranch’s 30,000 acres of pasture and farmland.

“Simply put, I was born into my SAE. By being raised on a family owned and operated ranch, I have spent my entire life learning and working on the ranch,” said Ochsner. “Once I began to work on the ranch and receive compensation for my work, I made it a priority to learn about the family operations of the ranch. By understanding how different tasks are accomplished by my dad, uncles and grandpa, I hope to better prepare myself for when I will need to do certain tasks by myself.”

Since beginning his SAE as a freshman, Ochsner has logged more than 1,700 hours. As Ochsner matured, he was given new responsibilities on the ranch. Today, his duties include pulling calves and checking the cows at night during calving season, pulling windmills and trucking silage independently.

“I’ve learned more about the daily feeding routines,” he explained. “I have been able to learn about the different feed rations we give our cattle to the point that I can load feed trucks and dispense feed to the cattle without assistance. I can now take care of many jobs by myself that used to require assistance from other.”

In addition to his ranch employment, Ochsner manages his own small Hereford cattle herd, including cows, heifers, show steers and breeding bulls. He exhibits his own and the ranch’s cattle at shows during the summer, and assists with private treaty bull sales. Ochsner also participated in parliamentary procedure, farm business management and agronomy judging, finishing as the top individual in the state in agronomy. He was also recognized as the Gold Emblem recipient in the beef production placement proficiency award area and received his state FFA degree.

His chapter advisor is Jason Groene.

**Reata Brannaman, State Star in Agribusiness, Sheridan FFA**



Brannaman began

her award-winning project by assisting her father with his horsemanship clinics around the world, riding client horses and teaching customers when needed. Eventually she started running a companion traveling horse equipment business, selling silk scarves, palm leaf cowboy hats and horse halters.

When her father was featured in a documentary that was short-listed for the Oscars, Brannaman appeared in the movie. In the film, she’s wearing her signature hat, which viewers immediately wanted to buy. Not one to miss a marketing opportunity, Brannaman negotiated with the Sunbody Hat Company on the idea of making the “Reata” hat. Her hat, a replica of the one she wears in the film, has become one of the top selling cowboy hats in the United States. She earns a 15 percent commission on each hat sold, and a 10 percent discount for wholesale hats she purchases for resale.

“My father, Buck Brannaman, is very well known in the horse world,” says Brannaman of her father, who served as a consultant on the movie “The Horse Whisperer.” “His achievements and notoriety have given me many opportunities to pursue my love of horses and horsemanship.”

Brannaman says the most difficult part of her project is getting some adults to take her seriously as a businesswoman.

“Some adults, including teachers and business representatives look at me and only see a high school kid,” she explains. “But if I’m persistent, soon they realize that I don’t need coddled. I’m a high school student, but one who has a clear vision, has established a viable career for herself and is very much in control of her own future.”

Brannaman also owns and trains her own line of horses. She uses a stallion to breed to outside mares, and provides riding instruction and horse training services to a variety of clients. Brannaman is responsible for all aspects of her production business, from negotiating stud fees for the stallion and marketing his bloodlines to bookkeeping.

She is currently in negotiations with Greeley Hat Works for a felt hat shaped like her signature palm leaf hat and with Stetson on a new line of western clothing for working cowgirls.

After finishing high school, Brannaman will attend Montana State University in Bozeman, studying business and marketing. She plans to convert her horse equipment business from a one-on-one retail operation into an Internet sales based operation so she can limit her travel and focus on college. After college, she wants to continue to

work in the equine industry, focusing on business and marketing products for other horse lovers.

“I have never had a student with a sales and marketing program as strong as Reata’s. She has her own line of tack with Double Diamond Outfitters, and sells merchandise with her own label. She has also started her own hat and clothing line,” says FFA advisor Nick Siddle. “She’s one of the most talented and driven students I know.”

In addition to her work with horses, Brannaman is involved in public speaking, agriculture sales and the National Honor Society. She is currently the Sheridan FFA chapter reporter.

**Taylor Smock, State Star in Agriscience, Pine Bluffs FFA**



Smock was recognized for her agriscience work on a grasshopper and research project through the Laramie County Weed and Pest District. Smock spent her summer working with private landowners to complete grasshopper sur-

veys, including calculating grasshopper density, collecting insects and identifying species and stages of growth.

“It started as just a summer job at first,” said Smock. “But as the summer progressed, I saw what an interesting topic it was and how much was involved in grasshopper control.”

Smock defined three goals to accomplish in her first year of work—working more than 30 hours per, making three or more collections and visiting three or more properties each week she worked. Over the summer, Smock logged more than 433 hours and achieved all three of her goals.

“One part of my job was to identify the species of grasshopper and also the instar, or the level of growth,” she explained. “We do this to determine if an area is sprayable or not. The first step was to freeze the grasshoppers overnight. Then I took a small magnifying glass and looked at things like color, general size and body shape. It was interesting to learn that grasshoppers varied so much.”

Smock also expanded her GIS and computer skills. She was required to mark her survey sites using a GPS system and track the location, latitude, longitude, weather conditions and grasshopper counts. Smock would then upload her data to an Arc Map system and plot

the information on a map.

Even though science isn’t her passion, Smock said there were many skills she took from her experience.

“All your life, you’ll have to follow directions and processes, which this job helped teach me to do,” she said. “I also learned a lot about the importance of scientific methods, technology and using computers in a way I never have before.”

“Taylor was very self-motivated and took it upon herself to learn distinguishing characteristics of different species of grasshoppers, which was important so as to recognize the difference between beneficial and detrimental species,” said Steve McNamee, Assistant Supervisor of the Laramie County Weed and Pest Control District in reference to his summer employee.

Smock also raises market steers, selling the grain fed cattle to repeat customers each year. She is the Pine Bluffs FFA chapter president and participates in parliamentary procedure, sales and service and speaking competitions.

She hopes to put her experience and education to work in the cattle industry as a career. She plans to attend the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and pursue a degree in livestock grazing systems. Her chapter advisor is Brian Cox.

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## UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING



## TEAM continued from Page 1

cers and focus their combined efforts on all things positive for the Wyoming FFA Association. Bryce credits past National FFA Officer Laila Hajji with inspiring him to run for a state office. Hajji addressed Wyoming FFA Convention attendees when Bryce was a freshman, opening his eyes to the fact that he too could lead and inspire others to do more.

"My FFA experience is something that could never be replaced," says Bryce. From building confidence, developing public speaking skills and inspiring young people to reach their goals, he says it's an organization that will have a lasting impact on his life and several others.

**Jessica Pingetzer,**  
*Vice President*  
*Shoshoni*



"I wanted to become a Wyoming FFA State officer so that I could serve, advocate and lead," says Jessica Pingetzer. "I want to give back to the orga-

nization that has given me so much. It's an honor to serve as a State Officer. Additionally, I want to help promote agriculture. Agriculture is something that is essential to people and it is important that they understand agriculture."

In the year ahead Jessica says she wants to make a positive difference for her fellow FFA members. FFA, she says, is amazing in its ability to bring students together to network, develop a passion for agriculture, reach their potential and enhance their lifelong career skills.

**Colby Hales,**  
*2nd Vice President*  
*Laramie*



"My main goal of this year is to try and be a role model for members young and old," says Colby Hales. "The state officers have always been a role model for me, and it is my goal to attempt to be no less."

Colby says he's proud to be a member of the

FFA. It's an organization he says helps students build their abilities, grow their self-esteem and earn a competitive edge in all they do.

"The friends I have made in FFA," says Colby, "are true friends." He says they support one another in their endeavors and will be friends lifelong.

**Teddy Weekly,**  
*3rd Vice President*  
*Cheyenne*



"I joined FFA four years ago and came from a city background," says Teddy Weekly. "But from that day I joined FFA, I knew this organization and industry was for me." In the year ahead Teddy says he'll work to represent the organization in a positive manner and do what he's able to spark the interest of Wyoming FFA's 2,000 plus members.

"I like being able to be myself and join a group of kids with similar interests," says Teddy. He also appreciates the numerous opportunities the organization has made available.

**Payton Blackwell,**  
*Secretary*  
*Cheyenne*



"I felt that my time in the FFA wasn't finished and I had a great desire to make a bigger impact with FFA members," says Payton Blackwell. "I have gained skills, friendships and memories that can never be replaced. My public speaking skills, my leadership skills and everything else I have gained throughout these past years are things I could never put a price on."

Payton says, "I have so many goals for this next year, but, my main ones are to make a difference in Wyoming FFA. I want to help make this organization the best it can be for our members. Also, I really strive to inspire members to recognize their potential in FFA and in life in general. I hope I can show each member I work with that they are all incredible. They are incredible solely because they are Wyoming FFA members but they each possess many more qualities that make them that much more special."

**Nick Edelman,**  
*Treasurer*  
*Douglas*



A desire to help younger FFA members and an appreciation for the leaders he's looked up to in recent years drove Nick Edelman to seek a spot on the new officer team. "I want to teach the leadership skills that have been

passed down to me from past state officer teams," says Nick.

"I am excited for the upcoming year and can't wait to see everyone at FFA Camp," says Nick. Over the course of the coming year he says he hopes to develop new young leaders in the Wyoming FFA and make a positive impact on those around him.

**Ashley Spatz,**  
*Reporter*  
*Burns*



"I want to be able to show younger members how wonderful this organization is, and hopefully inspire them to continue passing on those key traits that make the FFA succeed," says Ashley Spatz. Camaraderie within the organization is strong, she says noting, "Students of different backgrounds can come together to join an organization and have similar goals. The FFA is a premier student organization and those students are the ones who will keep the FFA going strong down the road."

In the year ahead Ashley hopes her officer team can join forces with the advisors and other FFA leaders to promote FFA and make some positive changes that would allow more Wyoming students to join the organization.

**Taylor Smock,**  
*Sentinel*  
*Pine Bluffs*



"I ran for a State Office because I want to make a difference to someone," says Tay-

lor Smock. "When I was a freshman, it was those State Officers who really jump started my excitement for FFA. Not only that, but there have been so many people through the years who made me realize that I, like everyone else, had something special; that I have the power to succeed, and to have confidence in myself. It has always been a dream of mine to make an impact on people the way that these people have done for me."

Taylor says, "My favorite thing about being in FFA has always been the members. I love interacting with people and FFA members continue to make me proud with how amazing they are! They are, in every sense of the word, the cream of the crop!"

**Lisa Andreen,**  
*Parliamentarian*  
*Casper*



"There are so many reasons that I wanted to become a State officer," says Lisa Andreen, "but what intrigues me the most is that I can serve an organization that has become my everything. I have met my closest friends through FFA. I want to inspire and influence this organization as much as it has inspired and influenced me."

Of her time in the FFA Lisa says, "I like the people the most. FFA members are the friendliest, most respectful, responsible, mature people I have ever met and they are so enjoyable to be around. I have learned so much from advisors, camp counselors, state officers, past state officers, directors and others who have impacted my life. I also like how the Career Development Events, Supervised Agriculture Experience projects and conferences prepare you for real world experiences."

Watch for these nine young leaders at FFA events in your community this year!

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FFA continued from Page 1

plans of studying animal science. BW Ochsner of the Torrington-Lingle FFA received this inaugural \$300 scholarship to aid in his studies and eventual plans of becoming a livestock

B.W. Ochsner



breeding technician. BW is president of his FFA chapter and has been a successful participant in many FFA competitions including livestock and meats judging.

Andrea Lohr Live by Faith

Ron and Julie Rabou of Cheyenne launched this scholarship to honor Andrea's message of living life to the fullest, appreciating one's family and making the most of even the toughest situations. Andrea was a member of the Kentucky FFA, but frequently traveled to Wyoming to work with FFA members. Her battle with cancer ended in 2011, but her story of positive living lives on through this scholarship and in many other ways.

The Andrea Lohr Live by Faith Scholarship is awarded each year to a student who, despite difficult obstacles, is having a positive impact on others. The 2012 recipient is Bill Dalles of the Snowy Range FFA who will study Ag Business at the University of Wyoming this coming fall.

F.A.I.R. Posse

Morgan Flitner of the Paintrock FFA is the recipient of the \$500 scholarship from F.A.I.R. Posse. The award is presented each

Morgan Flitner



year to an FFA member who has a history showing at the Wyoming State Fair and Rodeo. Morgan has been showing horses at the Wyoming State Fair since she was in the fourth grade and considers the event a family tradition.

Nickie Linnabur Memorial

Each year the Clark's Mule Days Charity Pool provides a scholarship in mem-

ory of Nickie Linnabur to a Park County student. This year's recipient is Sage Keltner of Cody. Sage will receive a \$1,500 scholarship to help in meeting her college goals that include studying equine science and business.

General Scholarships

Each year, thanks to the support of donors who believe in the FFA program and step forward to help members reach their college goals, the Foundation has a pool of funding to award to deserving FFA members. Colby Hales from the Snowy Range FFA received \$500 to study Agriculture Education at Casper College. Ty Malone from the Jim Bridger FFA received \$750 to study Animal

Colby Hales



Science at Casper College. Jessica Pingetzer received a \$750 scholarship to study Ag Business at Casper College. Richard Clark of the Rock Creek FFA received \$750 to pursue his goals of becoming an agricultural engineer, beginning with stud-

ies at Laramie County Community College. Kelley Fisher, who also received a \$750 scholarship, plans to study kinesiology and minor in animal science at the University of Wyoming.

Encana Oil & Gas

Thanks to the support of Encana Oil and Gas, four FFA members will receive \$1,250 scholarships to further their studies in the natural resource sciences. Lisa Zezas of Buffalo will be majoring in Wild-

Lisa Zezas



life Biology and Management. Alan Hamner, a former member of the Lyman FFA, is studying in the University of Wyoming Reclamation and Restoration Center. Priority is given to students who enroll in this particular program at UW. Kate Richardson, a member of the Buffalo FFA, is studying Range Management and Production Agriculture. Trey Gladson, a member of the Gillette FFA, will study Natural Resource Management with a minor in diesel mechanics.

Wyoming Ag Business Association

Keith Kennedy of the Wyoming Ag Business Association was in attendance at the 2012 Wyoming FFA Convention to present college scholarships to two deserving FFA members. Bill Dalles from the Snowy Range FFA received the Jeff Lundberg Memorial Scholarship. Bill plans to attend the University of Wyoming where he'll major in Ag Business. He says he is especially proud of his livestock judging accomplishments and that he has a positive attitude no matter what.

Katelin Malm from Southeast FFA also received a scholarship from the Wyoming Ag Business Association. She plans to become a Certified Public Account-



Katelin Malm

tant and hopes to carry on her family's ranching traditions and promote the beef industry. She is the chapter president and has competed on the farm business management, livestock judging and ag sales teams.

The Wyoming FFA Foundation's scholarship application is available each February, online at [www.WyoFFAFoundation.com](http://www.WyoFFAFoundation.com). Scholarships are available to both high school seniors and those already enrolled in college.

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# Wyoming FFA announces 2012 proficiency award winners

*Cheyenne* — Upon joining the FFA, members are asked to develop an SAE, which stands for Supervised Agriculture Experience. Whether it’s raising livestock or working for a local business, these projects make the members eligible for recognition in a variety of ag-related areas. Here’s a look at the 2012 winners and their sponsors:

**Vegetable Production (Placement)**  
*Sponsor: John Meier & Son, Inc.*  
Amori Erickson, Star Valley, Gold

**Vegetable Production (Entrepreneurship)**  
*Sponsor: John Meier & Son, Inc.*  
William Wood, Snowy Range, Silver

**Ag Processing (Placement)**  
Hadley Pape, Pinedale, Gold

**Specialty Animal Production (Placement)**  
Brittany Study, Chief Washakie, Gold  
Alex Snyder, Jim Bridger, Silver

**Landscape Management (Entrepreneurship)**  
Tyson Gillies, Lyman, Gold

**Ag Communications (Entrepreneurship)**  
*Sponsor: Justin & Leonard Chamberlain*  
William Wood, Snowy Range, Silver

**Diversified Crop Production (Placement)**  
*Sponsor: Wyoming Crop Improvement Association*  
Nicholas Vetter, Torrington, Gold  
Michael Miller, Riverside, Silver

**Ag Mechanics Design & Fabrication (Placement)**  
*Sponsor: Laramie Peak Motors*  
Jacob Frederick, Chief Washakie, Gold  
Rangler Stuckey, Chief Washakie, Silver

**Ag Mechanics Repair & Maintenance (Entrepreneurship)**  
*Sponsor: D&W Livestock, Newcastle*  
Karsten Hauf, Jim Bridger, Gold  
Jacob Frederick, Chief Washakie, Silver  
Rangler Stuckey, Chief Washakie, Bronze

**Goat Production (Entrepreneurship)**  
William Wood, Snowy Range, Gold  
Madelon Morgan, Gillette, Silver  
Taylor Slattery, Gillette, Bronze

**Forage Production (Placement)**  
*Sponsor: Waterworks Irrigation, Jerry & Ruth Thompson*  
Bryce McKenzie, Buffalo, Gold  
Lauren Hedges, Casper, Silver  
Kaylee Jo Fegler, Shoshoni, Bronze

**Environmental and Natural Resource Management (Entrepreneurship)**  
Landan Doyle, Chief Washakie, Gold  
Seth Peterson, Chief Washakie, Silver

**Equine Science (Entrepreneurship)**  
Reata Brannaman, John B. Kendrick, Gold  
Karyn Rieger, Chief Washakie, Silver

**Diversified Livestock Production (Placement)**  
Ty Malone, Jim Bridger, Gold  
Jeptha Richie, Pinedale, Silver  
Chelsea Anglen, Jim Bridger, Bronze

**Diversified Livestock Production (Entrepreneurship)**  
Ali Ballard, Casper, Gold  
Cassie Hefenieder, Worland, Silver  
Kyle Webber, Powell, Bronze

**Small Animal Production and Care (Placement)**  
Brittany Study, Chief Washakie, Gold

**Small Animal Production and Care (Entrepreneurship)**  
Mary Chandler, Gillette, Gold  
Baily Smith, Powell, Silver  
Brooke Mason, Casper, Bronze

**Home and/or Community Development (Placement)**  
Haley Schmeltzer, Chief Washakie, Gold

**Agricultural Service (Entrepreneurship)**  
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William Wood, Snowy Range, Silver

**Agricultural Service (Placement)**  
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Cassie Hefenieder, Chief Washakie, Gold  
Lexi Haun, Chief Washakie, Silver  
Lacey Good, PaintRock, Bronze

**Ag Sales (Placement)**  
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Lisa Zezas, Buffalo, Gold  
Crystal Schleichardt, Jim Bridger, Silver  
Lexi Haun, Chief Washakie, Bronze

**Ag Sales (Entrepreneurship)**  
*Sponsor: Fred & Joan Moller*  
Reata Brannaman, John B. Kendrick, Gold  
Cassie Hefenieder, Chief Washakie, Silver  
Zoey Taucher, Natrona, Bronze

**Beef Production (Placement)**  
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Newt Iorg, Jim Bridger, Silver  
Ty Carpenter, Jim Bridger, Bronze

**Cereal Grain Production**  
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Nicholas Vetter, Torrington, Gold  
Colbee Craig, Powell, Silver

**Swine Production**  
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Drew Crichton, Riverton, Silver  
Rylee Crippen, Riverton, Bronze

**Environmental Science and Nat. Resource (Placement)**  
Patrick Bonine, Gillette, Gold  
Chantale Sternberg, Casper, Silver

**Veterinary Science (Placement)**  
Brittany Study, Chief Washakie, Gold  
Heather Honken, Laramie, Silver

**Food Science and Technology (Placement)**  
Jenna Nelson, Gillette, Gold

**Specialty Crop Production (Entrepreneurship)**  
*Sponsor: Justin & Leonard Chamberlain*  
Jay Wells, Thermopolis, Gold

**Agriculture Education (Entrepreneurship)**  
*Sponsor: Justin & Leonard Chamberlain*  
Landan Doyle, Chief Washakie, Gold

**Sheep Production (Entrepreneurship)**  
*Sponsor: Heath & Jaime Hornecker*  
Haley Schmelter, Chief Washakie, Gold  
Bryce McKenzie, Buffalo, Silver  
Aleesha Gludson, Gillette, Bronze

**Poultry Production (Entrepreneurship)**  
Kyle Webber, Powell, Gold  
Erin Hutton, Buffalo, Silver  
Madelon Morgan, Gillette, Bronze

**Beef Production (Entrepreneurship)**  
*Sponson: Malm Ranches, Albin*  
*Sponsor: Green River Valley Cowbells*  
Mark Bullinger, Powell, Gold  
Marissa Vitt, Jim Bridger, Silver  
Tamara Connally, Powell, Bronze

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## Key ingredients: America by Food display travels to Wyoming

By Shawna Praeuner  
Wyoming FFA Times

**Laramie** — The Smithsonian Institution is coming to Wyoming...or at least one of their projects is. The Museum on Main Street, also known as MoMS, has teamed up with the Wyoming Humanities Council to bring a traveling museum to Wyoming starting in Green River in September 2012.

MoMS has several exhibits they offer

in their traveling exhibits, but Wyoming will get to experience *Key Ingredients: America by Food*. Through this exhibit, they have developed an interactive and lively presentation on the evolution of American food. They examine the home and the restaurant kitchens and how a greater variety of foods have become available through technological advances in both areas. Looking more closely

at the restaurants, this exhibit shows how Americans have developed a "sense of community through food." Beyond the food, *Key Ingredients: America by Food* examines history, farming, table manners, markets and even kitchen gadgets. By comparing these present-day practices with the way they were done in the past, this exhibit provides a wide variety of topics sure to please audiences

of any age. Mary Reid, a teacher from Georgia who has seen this exhibit said, "This exhibition will get you talking about food and sharing memories with whoever is around at the time."

This particular exhibit was chosen based on its appeal and relevance to all of the citizens of Wyoming. In fact, many of the host sites have a special tie to *Key Ingredients: America by Food*. The Sweetwater County Museum, in partnership with the Rock Springs Museum, hosts "From the Melting Pot" classes annually, celebrating the culture diversity in the area. The Cheyenne Children's Village is a part of the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens, which educate people on properly growing and preparing foods. The exhibit will also be on display at the 2013 Wyoming State Fair, which is rich with food, agriculture, families and the western heritage of Wyoming.

MoMS is the key initiative for the Smithsonian Institution Travel-

ing Exhibition Service. Its primary purpose is to "directly engage small town audiences and bring revitalized attention to underserved rural communities through their own Main Street museums, historical societies and other cultural venues." With the help of state humanities councils, MoMS also has the opportunity to educate people on their own culture and history within their communities. After having the exhibit there, the Belton Area Museum Association in South Carolina said, "This exhibit helped put us on the map!" By bringing this exhibit to Wyoming, their hope is that FFA members will get even more opportunities to get involved with the sponsoring venues and their partnership organizations.

Based off of research done by MoMS, one-fifth of Americans live in rural areas. Forty-three percent of America's museums are located in small, rural towns. Because of the rural areas where these muse-

ums are located, sometimes they do not have the funding available to bring in such extravagant exhibits. Museums on Main Streets "provides these institutions with access to otherwise scarce resources and assists them in making lasting improvements that advance their institutional ambitions."

The exhibit will make its first appearance in Wyoming in September 2012 at the Sweetwater County Museum in Green River. From there, it will travel around the state to the following towns: Jackson, Cheyenne, Gillette, Rawlins, Douglas, Powell, and Sheridan. It will rotate from every corner of the state from September 2012 to January 2014. If you would like more information on this exhibit or MoMS, please visit [www.museumon-mainstreet.org](http://www.museumon-mainstreet.org). You can also receive more information the Wyoming Humanities Council at <http://www.uwyo.edu/humanities/> or find them on Facebook.

Thank you



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# Wyoming Custom Meats Inc. owner gained entrepreneurial skills, goals in FFA

By Shawna Praeuner  
Wyoming FFA Times

**Hudson** — For many students their experience in FFA has a way of guiding their career path one way or another. For Jared Hamilton of Hudson, FFA not only guided his career path, it helped him become a successful entrepreneur with Wyoming Custom Meats, Inc.

Jared, along with his older and younger brothers, grew up on the family ranch in Hudson. They were always a big help when it came time for haying season or helping with the cattle. Like a lot of ranch kids, Jared started showing livestock in 4-H at the earliest age possible. Attending the Fremont County Fair with his steers, pigs, and commercial cows was a normal summer for him. He actually started building

his entrepreneur skills early at age nine by raising his show pigs, which he continued for roughly five years.

Once in high school and FFA, Jared put all his efforts into showing steers, which he continued doing through his college career at Laramie County Community College. After receiving an Associate's Degree in 2003 in Agricultural Business, Jared transferred to the University of Wyoming, where he graduated in 2005 with a Bachelor's of Science degree in Agricultural Business.

Jared credits his involvement in livestock judging with where he is today with Wyoming Custom Meats Inc. Livestock judging was the reason he went to college at LCCC in the first place and that's where everything really started to fall into place for him, saying "From there, the people I met and the things I experienced continued to come together to bring me to where I am now."

Jared knew that he

wanted to run his own business, saying, "I have always been the self motivated type and a big project starter, so being in business for myself just seemed to be the natural thing to do." He likes a challenge and running your own business is definitely that. He set out to start Wyoming Custom Meats Inc. in Hudson, Wyoming.

Wyoming Custom Meats Inc. opened on June 21, 2007. The 5,000 square foot facility was built on land that was given to Jared by his grandparents. It is a state-inspected slaughter and processing facility. They offer services for beef, buffalo, lamb, goat, and pork. Their company goal is to provide high-quality, locally raised livestock to individuals and institutions alike.

Wyoming Custom Meats Inc. not only provides slaughter and processing services, but retails dry-aged beef, pork, and lamb from livestock raised locally in Wyoming. They also provide wholesale services for a wide-range of businesses and individuals. Their customer base ranges from individuals to county fairs to school districts to senior centers. Keeping up

with the times, you can place orders with Wyoming Custom Meats Inc. by stopping in at the facility, calling 307-332-3655, texting 307-349-5277, or placing an order online at [www.WyomingCustomMeats.com](http://www.WyomingCustomMeats.com). They are open Monday through Friday from 8 am to 5:30 pm.

Wyoming FFA has influ-

enced a lot of people within the agriculture industry and Jared is no exception.



Dry-aged beef, pork and lamb from locally-raised livestock is available at Wyoming Custom Meats. Courtesy photo



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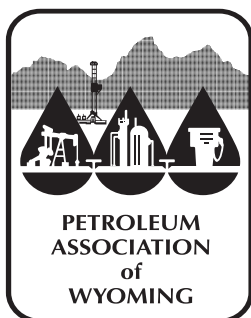


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# Former Wyoming State FFA Officer Laura Nelson: ‘Every step counts’

By Shawna Praeuner  
Wyoming FFA Times

Growing up on the Wyoming-Nebraska line, former Wyoming FFA member Laura Nelson had agriculture embedded in her from day one. She and her siblings spent their summer months working on the family farm and preparing their 4-H and FFA projects in cattle, hogs, horses, photography, cooking, sewing, and of course speech contests. Being so active, it was only natural that Laura try-out to be a member of the FFA state officer team, where she ultimately served as the 2005-2006 State FFA Reporter.

With her focus on the leadership development events, Laura turned her “gift for gab” into something productive. Starting out with the Creed contest her freshman year, she soon expanded to contests with the National Farmers Union and the American National Cattlemen. From there her FFA advisor, Mr. Donn Randall, encouraged her to participate in the Wyoming Beef Ambassador contest. That opened a whole new door of opportunities. Laura spent the next year as a member of National Beef Ambassador team, providing connections to earn an internship with the National

Cattle Industry Convention. This opportunity connected Laura to her future and current employer, Certified Angus Beef.

While in FFA, Mr. Randall’s favorite saying was “you don’t have to, you get to.” Laura took that saying and ran with it. Coming from a smaller chapter, she got the opportunity to participate in almost every aspect of FFA, especially as a state officer. With a fun-packed year, it’s hard to pinpoint one favorite memory, but the chapter visits definitely made an impression. Laura and fellow officer Lander Nico-demus traveled from Sara-

toga to Afton to Lyman to Pinedale and everywhere in-between. Since chapter visits are during the beginning of the year, they experienced driving through white-out blizzards and could have been the spokes-people for all the energy drinks they consumed. But in the end, every trip was worth it according to Laura, “Fellow FFA members and advisors were incredibly generous and hospitable, and I loved that they were so excited to show us all the great things they had accomplished over the year.”

When asked what FFA taught her, Laura only had one simple response: EVERYTHING! She credits a lot of it to her Pine Bluffs advisor, Mr. Randall, saying, “I still think of Mr.

Randall, our chapter advisor, as a huge influence on so many parts of my life, and the lives of all the students he taught.”

FFA really did guide Laura to her current career path. She started out with an SAE in ag communications, which ultimately led to her receiving a bachelor’s degree in Communication and Journalism from the University of Wyoming. From there she moved to Manhattan, Kansas to work for the Certified Angus Beef satellite office. Now, she works at the CAB headquarters in Wooster, Ohio, where she mainly focuses on developing ways to share information about high-quality beef production across the country. Of course, when interviewing for her current job, a past

FFA experience came to her, “I remember wracking my brain to remember the meats evaluation unit I ‘got to’ participate in as a sophomore. Thank goodness Mr. Randall made us all expand our horizons beyond our immediate interests – who knew I would need to know so much about beef quality grading!”

Before getting back to her busy life, Laura left the following advice for current FFA members: “Every step counts, so take advantage of everything your chapter and association has to offer. You never know when something you learned in the classroom or someone you met at convention or camp will have a huge impact on your future. Soak it up, take it in and enjoy as much as you can!”

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## FARM continued from Page 2

is that there are *many* causes for teen drop-outs. For example over 36 percent of kids with disabilities fail to graduate, and fewer than 38 percent of teen mothers have a high school diploma. Recently the state of Colorado conducted an experiment and found that there are more high school dropouts in cities versus rural areas. Regardless, my point is, agriculture is *not* the only cause for dropouts in school. If anything working in agriculture can push children to *want* to pursue an education.

The four kids working in the beet fields are a perfect example. They attended school and three of them went on to college; the other became a successful rancher once he completed high school. Each one of them claims that working at a young age made them stronger emotionally and physically.

They came to learn the real value of a dollar, and working for their family made them feel as though they were a part of something, it gave them a purpose in their lives... to always work hard no matter the conditions. It taught them respect and responsibility. Three out of the four are my uncles the other my mother. Our strong Hispanic heritage has conditioned us to work hard at *any* age. Not only has it brought success to my family but to others as well. When our country started over 70 percent of Americans were considered farmers. It was the most respected position you could hold. It has taught us unforgettable lifelong lessons, and it prepares us for the challenges that we will face later on in life. Agriculture has set the foundation for our nation to grow. Why tear it down?

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# Critters take over Clear Creek FFA, serve as chapter fundraiser

*By Gayle Smith*  
**Wyoming FFA Times**  
**Arvada** – Sometimes even the craziest ideas can turn into profitable ventures, and the Clear Creek FFA Chapter of Arvada has found a new use for scrap metal making Patio Pals.

The idea first became reality three years ago, when one of the students



*Patio Pals* The Clear Creek FFA began making Patio Pals three years ago after one student welded together pieces of scrap metal in ag shop class. Today it's turned into a successful fundraising project for the chapter. Courtesy photo

started welding together pieces of scrap metal during ag shop class. After seeing the first critter, Ag Advisor Lynne Latham and her students started researching similar items.

"We had a burst of creativity, and came up with our line of critters," she says, adding that within the line is a moose, sheep, cow, horse, pig, rooster and a reindeer.

Made to last, Patio Pals are critters made of metal and are powercoated to withstand the elements. In the center of each critter is a six-inch flower-pot holder, and the Patio Pals can be displayed

indoors or outdoors and are designed to enhance any flower.

"The sheep has been the most popular so far," says Latham of the patio-pals. However, she readily admits the zany critter may have had an unfair advantage, since there was a Basque Festival in nearby Buffalo last summer.

"It took us all summer to get 75 sheep Patio Pals ready for that festival," she recalls. "We sold them all in three hours. We could have sold more if we had them made."

**Marketing is important**  
 Most of the Patio Pals have been sold outside the community.

"We are a very small community, and everyone gets hammered for fundraisers," she says. "So, we haven't marketed them much in our own community."

Other communities

found out about the clever project through the Clear Creek FFA ag sales team.

"We built some as a project for the ag sales contest," Latham explains.

"At the contest, the judges liked them so much, they started buying them for real. Word spread and we started to get orders from neighboring communities.

We filled a big order last spring when one of the judges from Northwest College ordered them for her own store. She thought they would be popular with the tourists."

This spring, the students haven't been quite as aggressive marketing the Patio Pals.

"We are thinking about making some to sell at local craft fairs this summer, but we haven't made any definite plans yet," says Latham.

One place people will

be able to find Patio Pals is in the Mercantile store at the Wyoming State Fair in August.

"This is their 100th year anniversary, and we are very excited to be part of that through the Mercantile,"

Latham says. "We are a member of the Wyoming First group."

**Patio pals teach precise shop skills**

By making the Patio Pals, the students have been able to fine-tune their measuring, cutting and welding skills during shop class.

"I think it's important for the students to learn how to build a quality product," Latham explains. "I personally inspect each one to make sure it's perfect according to my standards. I want them to be very stable and last a long time, so I test every weld."

The pals have become easier to make since the students designed some jigs. Now they lay them out on the metal, cut them out and piece them together.

"It still takes about two to three hours to make one from start to finish," she says. The community has donated horseshoes and oil field pipe for the students to use. Nuts, washers and round rod are purchased to finish them off.

**A profitable venture**

Most of the students are involved either in production or marketing of the Patio Pals.

"One of the neatest things that has come out of the project is that the students have seen where



*Final product* Clear Creek FFA members Genny George, Mason Rockafellow and Gage Belus show off a reindeer and sled they made as part of their FFA fundraising project. Courtesy photo


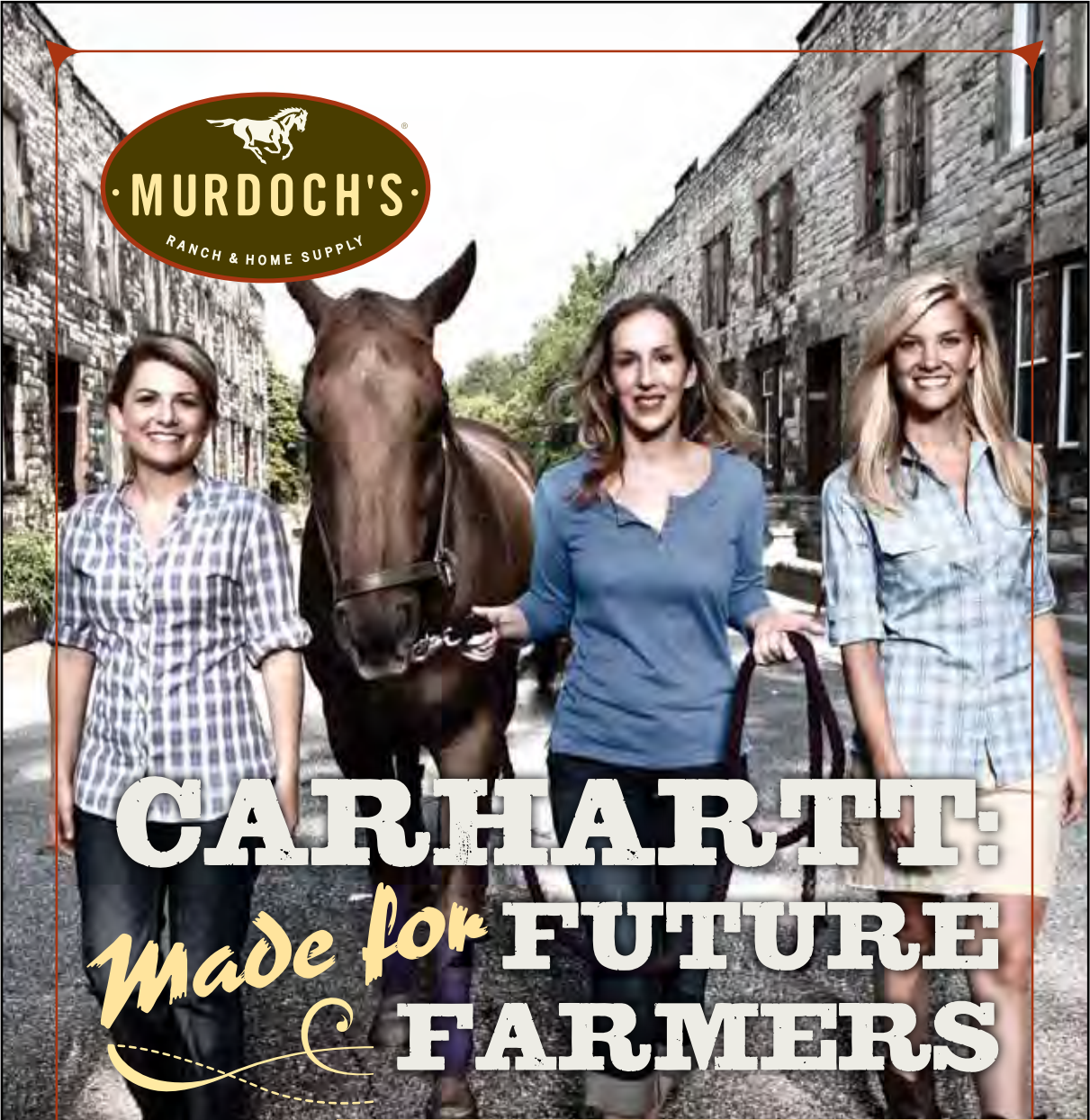
you can take a wild idea or brainstorm and turn it into a business," says Latham. "In the beginning, everyone looked at it as a scrap iron creation. The ideas developed from there. A lot of students were involved with a lot of different designs. It has been a group effort through the entire process."

When the students were preparing the Patio Pals for the Basque Festival, it became almost like an assembly line trying to finish them in time, Latham says.

"From that experience, I think they found out how repetitious it could be doing that type of job," she says. "Some of them were burnt out from the experience."



Since then, Latham has left it up to the students to decide where they want to go with the project in the future.

"As the school year draws to a close, some of the students are finishing up their own shop projects, so they are moving on to making some Patio Pals," she says. "These are very unique critters that have been a lot of fun for the kids and I to make. It has also proven to be a good fundraiser for us, but I have left it up to the students to determine where the project goes from here."





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2012 State Degree recipients announced

*Cheyenne* — The Wyoming FFA Association has announced the recipients of the 2012 Wyoming State FFA Degree, the highest honor any FFA member can earn for their accomplishments in their supervised agriculture experience program.

“These students have met certain benchmarks in their FFA and agriculture education careers, and have shown their growth in leadership, scholastic achievement and community service activities,” explains State FFA Advisor Ron Pulse.

When students enroll in agriculture education and FFA, they select a hands-on program of work, known as a supervised agriculture experience program (SAE), explains Pulse. These programs help solidify concepts learned in the classroom or through FFA experiences, and incorporate the student’s individual interests and goals. SAEs can include livestock production, agribusiness experience or placement in an agricul-

ture business or company.

The State FFA Degree recognizes a student’s growth in their chosen SAE. To receive the degree, a student must have earned and productively invested at least \$1,000 or have worked at least 300 hours in an ag-related business. Other requirements include receiving the chapter FFA degree, delivering a six-minute speech, serving as a chapter FFA officer or committee member, having a satisfactory academic record and completing at least 25 hours of community service.

“Less than 10 percent of FFA members receive the degree each year,” Pulse says. “These students really excelled in their SAEs and stood out among their peers.” Degree recipients were recognized in a special ceremony at the Wyoming State FFA Convention, held April 2in Cheyenne.

This year’s list of degree recipients includes 180 students from 39 chapters across the state.

Submit material for our next edition by Sept. 17, 2012

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**“Learning by doing”** is an important teaching strategy that agriculture instructors Heath Hornecker, Tom Parker, Marty Finch, Jeremy Burkett, and Todd Jones employ with students. Much of that “learning by doing” is employed in the field working with global positioning systems (GPS), livestock presentations, range ecologies labs, and soil science activities.

**Andrea Leininger**  
Range Management  
La Junta, Colo.

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