

National FFA convention convenes Nov. 11

The nation's largest annual student convention will get under way next week as 17,000 Future Farmers of America, their advisors and guests gather in Kansas City, Missouri, November 11-14, for the 48th National FFA Convention. Heading the list of featured speakers will be Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller and Cincinnati Reds All Star Catcher, Johnny Bench. Other features of the convention include an expanded Agricultural Career Show and the introduction of eight "Celebrate 76" activities to involve FFA chapters and members in the 1976 U.S. Bicentennial Celebration.

Hotels and motels in the Kansas City area report record advance registrations and are expecting to be filled to capacity during the four-day National Convention. The convention will be attended by FFA representatives from every State as well as from Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, according to National FFA Executive Secretary, Wm. Paul Gary. In addition several students from Europe and South America who are participants in the FFA International exchange program will also be in attendance as guests of the FFA.

Also among convention guests of honor this year will be Agricultural Education leaders from several Latin American and European nations who are meeting in Kansas City this year to plan the First World Conference in Agricultural Education to be held in conjunction with the 1976 National FFA Convention. The conference is being sponsored through the National FFA Foundation, Inc., by Massey-Ferguson Inc.

The convention will be a whirlwind of activity for all who attend. In addition to business sessions conducted by elected delegates, convention participants will be involved in career related contests, and educational tours of Kansas City area agribusinesses. An agricultural career show occupying a floor of the convention hall will give students an insight into careers open to students with training and experience in agriculture. In addition to award presentations and pageantry, this year's convention program includes speakers from government, business, and sports as well as from the ranks of the FFA organization.

Of the anticipated, 17,000 persons in attendance about 4,000 will be advisors, parents, school administrators and others with special interest in the Future Farmers of America. Business of the National FFA Convention is conducted entirely by the organization's 119 student delegates, all of whom are in high school or who have graduated within the last year. The delegates, who represent 485,000 FFA members from 49 States and Puerto Rico, arrive a day early to participate in committee meetings and to prepare for the convention business sessions and activities. Six National Officers elected at the 1974 National FFA Convention preside over all business sessions. All meetings are conducted according to rules of parliamentary procedure with student delegates voting on all issues of business.

Although the 48th National FFA Convention officially

opens Wednesday morning, delegates will begin their work on Tuesday with a series of committee meetings, and will hold their first business session in which they will hear reports of official committees. A Tuesday evening Vespers Service conducted by the National Officers and the National FFA Chorus marks the beginning of convention activities. Following the Vespers Service, FFA members will be entertained in the Municipal Auditorium Music Hall by the Operaland singers of Nashville, Tennessee. The special performance of "Our Country" for FFA members is being sponsored by the Ararat Temple of Kansas City, Missouri.

Throughout the convention, music and entertainment is provided by a unique 115-piece FFA band and 99-member chorus. The band and chorus are selected from applications of FFA members mailed to band director, Roger Heath, director of VIP Bands, Blacksburg, Virginia, and chior director, M. D. Myers of West Lafayette, Indiana. Both band and chorus members arrive three days before the convention to practice and participate in special activities. Additional entertainment is provided by talented FFA members who perform on the stage and at banquets throughout the week, demonstrating a variety of talents from group singing to string quartets. A Talent Show on Thursday evening features these FFA members performing for the entire convention audience prior to the opening of the "Stars Over America" Pageant.

For FFA members not directly involved in the

convention program, several activities are planned. A major attraction is the AGRICULTURAL CAREER SHOW, now in its tenth year, featuring educational exhibits from many agricultural trade associations and professional societies. The exhibits illustrate the hundreds of career opportunities available today in agriculture. Trade association personnel are on hand to answer questions and discuss career opportunities. FFA members will also be offered educational tours to agricultural business and industry in the Kansas City area.

National livestock and animal products judging contests, a mechanics contest and a horticulture contest get under way on Wednesday as outstanding FFA contest teams from almost every state in the nation compete for top national honors. This year 276 three and four member teams will compete in one of seven contests which include: agricultural mechanics, dairy cattle, milk quality and dairy foods, livestock, poultry, horticulture and meats. Contests are sponsored by individuals, business, industry and trade associations through the National FFA Foundation, Inc. which provides administrative, award and travel funds. The contests are an annual event held in cooperation with the American Royal Livestock

and Horse Show which provides the animals. Winners of the judging contests are announced at a Friday morning session of the convention.

Business sessions will be conducted daily. Major business this year includes a proposed amendment to the National FFA Constitution which would increase the number of voting delegates each state is entitled to send to the convention. Delegates will also discuss and vote on a proposed change in Alumni membership and on several other minor constitutional issues.

The official opening of the 48th National FFA Convention will be on Wednesday morning (November 12) when National FFA President Alpha Trivette gives the official call to order for the first convention session. During the morning session, convention participants will be welcomed to Kansas City by Mayor Charles Wheeler. A multimedia presentation will tell how FFA chapters can "Celebrate 76" by participating in FFA activities and using the FFA theme for 1976 - "A Future For America." The morning's activities will conclude with an address by former Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter, a large farmer and one time FFA member.

At the Wednesday afternoon business session, 309 FFA chapters will be recognized for outstanding achievement in the FFA Chapter Award Program.

The Chapter Award recognizes FFA chapters for participation in 11 major areas of activity and this year will award bronze emblems to 75 chapters, silver emblems to 111 chapters and gold emblems to 123 chapters.

Wednesday evening's program will feature the speeches of four regional winners of the FFA Public Speaking Contest. Judges will score each of the four speakers and select the winner of the \$300 National FFA Public Speaking Contest award sponsored by the National FFA Foundation, Inc. During the evening session five men will receive the FFA's VIP Citation for their continuing dedicated service to the National FFA Organization. They are: Bert L. Brown, Olympia, Washington; M. A. Fields, Petersburg, Virginia; Leo Knuti, Seal Beach, California, Cola D. Watson, South Hero, Vermont, and Warren G. Weiler, Worthington, Ohio. Guest speaker for the Wednesday evening session will be Johnny Bench, All Star Catcher for the Cincinnati Reds.

Distinguished Service Awards will be presented on Thursday morning to 29 men and women who have contributed their time and efforts to the success of the FFA. In addition 76 FFA members will be presented awards for outstanding

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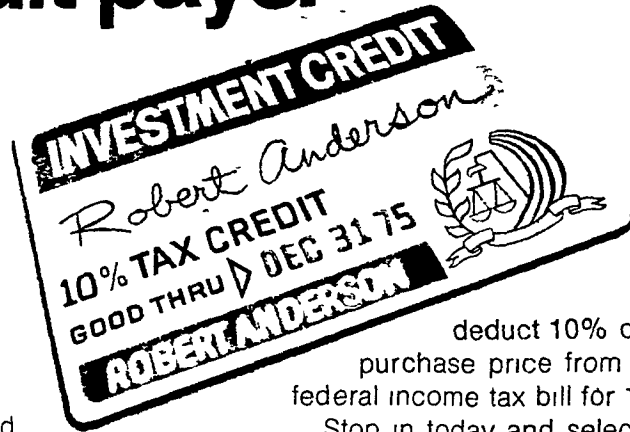
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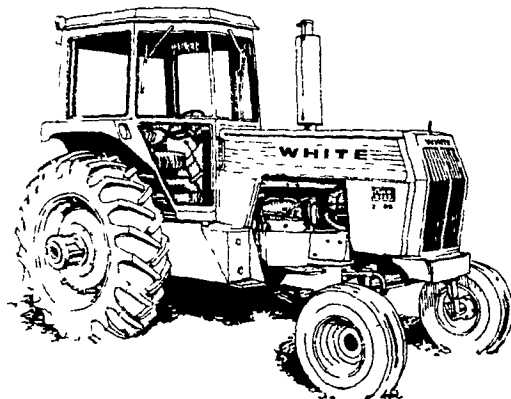
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