

FFA Holds Convention At Farm Show

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Lancaster Farming Staff
HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — More than 200 members of the Pennsylvania FFA and parents and adult leaders Monday attended the 65th FFA Mid-Winter Convention in the Large Arena of the state Farm Show Complex.

It was the second straight year for the FFA to hold its convention in conjunction with the annual Farm Show event.

In previous years, the FFA held its convention at the Forum Building in Harrisburg, oblivious to participants and attendees across town at the state Farm Show. The two events were concurrent, but otherwise unassociated.

Last year, in order to boost public awareness of the organization, its leadership opted to hold the convention in the Large Arena of the complex. It was success and was repeated this year.

To a packed arena, the members conducted their annual convention meeting, held primarily to make recognition of the outstanding support to the organization by individuals, to present Keystone Farmer Degrees, the highest state degree, and to select the four recipients of the state Star awards, one of its highest honors.

Also honored are FFA chapters which have received state or state-and-national recognition for activities during the past year.

In addition to the special guests and recognized supporters, including Boyd Wolff, state secretary of agriculture, U.S. Sen. Harris Wofford gave a short address to the group.

Wofford talked about Russell Redding, former executive director of the state FFA and former state officer who now works as Wofford's chief of operations in Washington D.C., and how he can see the same leadership qualities that Redding possesses in the FFA state officers of 1993-94.

Of special emphasis during his address, Wofford talked about the need for education reform and how it is coming and that it will incorporate more of the FFA-way of passing on knowledge — by doing things.

"People learn best by doing," Wofford said. "Real learning involves getting your hands dirty," he said, adding that the same observation was made by Socrates — an excess of book knowledge without a direct real-world connection is more or less wasted knowledge.

"You're on the crest of education reform," he told the group saying that teachers should be more like coaches and provide instruction and support.

Further, he said that it will be based on a saying, "What I hear I forget. What I see, I remember. What I do, I understand."

In other business, Linda Hall, of the Little Lion FFA Chapter in State College, was the recipient of the 1993 FFA Computers in Agriculture award. In her work she incorporated several computers, and programmed spreadsheets for tracking and maintaining her chapter's citrus sales, and for research and for use in the chapter's SAE.

It is the last year the award is to be presented. Over the years, there were four recipients of that award.

Other awards presented included those to chapters which have increased membership by 10 or more during the past year; Nancy Clove was recognized with the Blue and Gold award for her outstanding service to the Pa. FFA.

Earl Brown was recognized for being Agricultural Science Teacher of the Year. As leader of the Spud Growers Chapter in Coudersport for 28 years, Brown has 159 youth enrolled in his program which has incorporated a number of different innovative projects.

Barry Oswald, state advisor, was also recognized by the association for his two years with the group. He announced a job change within the state Department of Education, that was causing him to leave.

A replacement was not announced.

The announcement of the 1994 State Star Award recipients began with an introduction of the regional stars. There are four different categories in which a member can strive to achieve recognition for outstanding performance: in production agriculture; in agricultural sales, service and mechanics; in horticultural production; and in specialized agriculture.

In the production category, Laurie Janine Wildman, daughter of Edward T. Wildman and Loretta Wildman, from Westfield, was named State Star.

Wildman, the FFA Northcentral Pa. Region Star in Production, has been involved with sheep and swine breeding and finishing for the past four years at her parents' farm. She also has gotten off-farm work experience at Fox's Pizza Den, and served as her chapter's reporter, vice president and president.

In addition to her FFA activities, she has been involved with the Leo Club, SADD, Student Council, and the high school yearbook staff. She said she intends to pursue a college degree in either agricultural education, or agricultural business.

The other regional production stars include James Findley, son of Kenneth and Kathy Findley, of Holtwood, the Eastern Regional Production Star, who has been involved with dairy calves and heifers, market and breeding swine, beef breeding, horse production and raising commercial vegetables.

Having served as vice president of the Manor FFA Chapter, Findley has worked on a farm as a dairy and crop farmer, has been involved with 4-H, and participated in the Pennsylvania Council of Cooperatives. He said he plans to eventually go into partnership with his two older brothers at the home farm.

Heather Fidler, is the FFA Western Pa. Production Star. The daughter of Richard and Mary Fidler, of West Alexander, she has served as reporter and vice president of the McGuffey FFA chapter while working with breeding sheep, market hogs and beef cattle.

She also has been involved with



Elizabeth Spayd receives a Pa. FFA State Star Award for horticulture from Barry Oswald, state FFA advisor.



Laurie Wildman receives a Pa. FFA State Star Award for production agriculture from Barry Oswald, state FFA advisor.



Luke Watson receives a Pa. FFA State Star Award for agricultural sales, service and mechanics from Barry Oswald, state FFA advisor.



James Gerwert receives a Pa. FFA State Star Award for specialized agriculture from Barry Oswald, state FFA advisor.

the West Alexander Ag Club, the West Alexander Fabric Fusers, and the County Council, and the German Club. She said she intends to pursue a physical therapy degree from Weeling Jesuit College.

The Southcentral Pa. Production Star was Tracey Lynn Willwert, from the Red Lion FFA Chapter, where she has served as its secretary and president for two years. The daughter of John and Brenda Willwert, of Red Lion, she has been involved with beef, sheep, and swine finishing projects, as well as breeding sheep.

She is also involved in the Horse-N-Round 4-H Club and the York County 4-H Beef Club. She said she intends to pursue a college degree in business management.

The state FFA Star in Horticulture recipient was Elizabeth Spayd, daughter of Edwin and Mary Spayd, of Fleetwood, who has been involved in the production of perennials, bedding plants, azaleas and chrysanthemums. She has also worked at a summer produce stand.

Spayd, the Eastern Pa. Star Award winner, has served as secretary, treasurer, and chaplain of the Oley Valley FFA Chapter. She has also played high school field hockey, and been involved with LODA and Olean. She said she

plans to work full time for the family business and then go to business school.

The state Ag Sales, Service and Mechanics Star is Luke Watson, a member and student advisor of the Spud Growers FFA Chapter, and also the northcentral region star.

The son of Douglas and Mary Watson, of Coudersport, Luke has worked for four years for his father at Ulysses Lumber Co. doing such things as piling lumber, doing equipment maintenance and construction of company buildings. He has also worked in a local store as a cashier and has also done a home improvement project.

Luke is a member of his church youth group and said he plans to pursue college-level forestry studies, before returning to work for his father.

The eastern region star is Andrew Horning, son of David and Janice Horning of Monton. His past work experience includes four years working as an electrician for Nolt Electric Service and two years working at Subway, while also serving as treasurer and vice chaplain of the Grassland FFA Chapter.

In addition, he has been involved with his church youth group, midget baseball, school

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