

More Than 44,000 To Attend FFA Convention

(Continued from Page D3)

gram."

The MC Cook Central FFA Chapter member also has used his skills in many ways. During his junior year of high school Gregg's mother was diagnosed with cancer and was the primary source of income for the family. After his mother passed away he has been given many added responsibilities. Terry Rieckman is Gregg's adviser.

"It is my goal to someday teach and coach in a small school, and start my own beef herd," Gregg said. "The knowledge and skills I have learned from my SAE, agriculture classes, and the FFA will help me in offering to students the best knowledge I can."

Ambrose Sees Potential In Expanding Lawn-Care Operation

"There is a great demand for lawn care services especially with today's busy lifestyles," said Troy Ambrose, Amherst, Wis. The 20-year-old signed contracts with neighboring village to maintain all its parks and ball diamonds.

In addition to already expanding lawn care business, Ambrose hopes to further his business into landscape design. "I want to provide smaller quantities of decorative stone, bark and black dirt to people who want to do their own landscaping projects on a smaller scale than what other companies deliver it for.

"My operation offers a wide variety of services to clients including: mowing, trimming, spring and fall clean-up, planting shrubs, fertilizing lawns, sweeping driveways and lawn weed control," Ambrose said.

Ambrose is a finalist for the National FFA Organization's 1998 American Star in Agribusiness Award, one of the agricultural education organization's highest honors. He will compete with other finalists for the award at the 71st National FFA Convention Nov. 12-14 in Kansas City, Mo.

"I will continue with the partnership in the lawn care service with my dad and brother," Ambrose said. "I would like to expand the business and hire high school students for the extra hours that will be needed."

The Amherst FFA member learned to set goals for himself. "The FFA and agricultural education have taught me responsibility as well as record keeping and communication skills that have helped me become an active community member." One of Ambrose's first goals was to apply for his State FFA Degree. However, he has exceeded that and has been selected as a Turf Grass Management National Proficiency Award Winner. Ambrose's adviser is Tim Pederson.

Barker Accepts Challenge, Chooses Farming

"For as long as I can remember, I've been interested in farming," said Shane Becker, Worthington, Minn. "With my strong will, my parents' help, and my love for farming, I eagerly accepted the challenge and became actively involved.

"I have made progress toward achieving my goals by increasing yields without increasing my input costs," Becker said. "This year I planted 40 percent of my corn acres to Bt corn to reduce corn borer yield loss." The 21-year-old uses innovative management practices to increase overall profitability.

Becker is a finalist for the National FFA Organization's 1998 American Star Farmer Award, one of the agricultural education organization's highest honors. He will compete with three other finalists for the award at the 71st National FFA Convention Nov. 12-14 in Kansas City, Mo.

"An FFA skill which has helped me is the ability to sit back and look at the big picture and realize how everything I do is connected to everything on and off the farm," Becker said.

Becker's motivation comes from a strong desire, help from his parents, and a love for growing crops and operating machinery. "Hard work and long hours have brought my operation to this point," Becker said.

As a Sioux Valley-Round Lake-Brewster FFA Chapter member, Becker knows that each experience through the FFA and on the farm will continue to help him become a better manager. Becker's adviser is Gerald McConkey.

"My FFA experiences have given me the knowledge, leadership skills, experience, and ability to set goals so that I may continue to experience the pride which comes from working hard, doing a good job and looking toward improvement in the future," Becker said.

Dobbins Determined To Keep Farming, Ranching Tradition Alive

"I have always had a true love for animals. This coupled with my family tradition of production agriculture, led me to develop a strong desire to raise cattle, said Lance Dobbins, Thomas, Okla. This 22-year-old third generation rancher now owns 650 head of cattle, 448 acres of grain land, and 704 acres of hay ground.

After making his initial investment of four head of stocker

steers, he reinvested into an expanding herd. Dobbins soon started importing Mexican cattle at a reduced cost, in turn using a value-added approach to make a substantial profit from these cattle.

To recognize his accomplishments, the National FFA Organization named him a 1998 American Star Farmer finalist, one of the agricultural education organization's highest honors. He will compete with three other finalists for the award at the 71st National FFA Convention Nov. 13-15 Kansas City, Mo.

Dobbins had several sleepless nights for a young teen-age boy. He took out a loan to purchase more land. This additional responsibility of the loan drive Dobbins to pay strict attention to the health and performance of his cattle. "This served to fuel my fire to convince me that one day I want to become self-employed in the field of production agriculture," Dobbins said.

"My future plans include continuing to expand the size and scope of my operation," Dobbins said. "I believe this is a distinct possibility if I continue to use the latest technology, careful management, and maintain accurate records."

This Thomas-Fay-Custer FFA member feels that he received skills that allowed him to keep very accurate, detailed, and well-organized set of records. Other skills he has obtained while in FFA have been his marketing abilities. "By keeping a close eye on the markets and charting price trends, I have been able to start developing a marketing strategy that allows me to see the greatest return out of my investments," said Dobbins.

Dobbins FFA advisers are Jim Maddox and Dale Glazier.

Boehm Makes Big Money From Interest In Agriculture

"Agriculture has been the center of my personal, scholastic and professional life, having been born and raised as a fourth generation agriculturist," said Dana Boehm, Taylor, Texas. "I thoroughly enjoy every aspect of farm life and derive great satisfaction from the hard and honest work ethic instilled within American agriculture."

The National FFA Organization recognized Boehm's success by naming her a 1998 American Star Farmer finalist, one of the agricultural education organization's highest honors. She will compete with three other finalists for the award at the 71st National FFA Convention Nov. 12-14 in Kansas City, Mo.

"For years I had experienced what it took to be successful in production agriculture: dedication, perseverance, financial planning an extremely hard work ethic," Boehm, 21, said. However, being a girl on a farm run by men it was hard for her to become more actively involved. "I was pushed aside when it came to doing the 'fun stuff' because 'it wasn't a girl's place to be.'

"Goals that I set forth have ranged from efficiency and production levels in my yields to state and national FFA award recognition. The awards and goals that I set my sights on would reflect superior production levels encompassing 5,000+-pound maize yields and 140+-bushel corn averages," Boehm said.

Boehm hails from the Hutto FFA Chapter. She was valedictorian in her class and is now attending Texas A&M University studying veterinary science. Boehm also was the state beef proficiency winner. Her FFA adviser is Don Kuempel Jr.

"Increasing competitive food markets, food processing concerns, and shifting consumer demands are only a few of the many issues that are altering the environment for U.S. livestock producers," she said. "It is imperative that my generation take an aggressive stance in preserving this country's greatest asset: agriculture."

Pearce Is Living The American Dream

"Owning your own business and making a sizable profit is the American dream — it's also mine," said Charles Pearce, Walworth, Wis. "I'm still learning every day with every new experience."

Growing up on his family's farm, Pearce, 21, had a chance to make a difference in their operation. "Feeling the pride of making a difference, while working, I knew this was the field I wanted to pursue," he said.

Pearce is a finalist for the National FFA Organization's 1998 American Star Farmer Award, one of the agricultural education organization's highest honors. He will compete with three other finalists for the award at the 71st National FFA Convention Nov. 12-14 in Kansas City, Mo.

Pearce now manages more than \$2 million worth of assets jointly with his family. "I now carry out all meetings with our loan adjuster, crop consultant, feed consultant, accountant and employees," Pearce said. "In the next 10 years I plan to expand my crop enterprise to more than 3,000 total acres.

"I enjoy taking risks and being my own boss, having my own decision making process, and having a variety of job roles: planning, buying inputs, selling commodities, planting, tilling, harvesting, managing personnel, and trouble shooting," Pearce adds.

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