AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

NORTHWESTERN REGIONAL SCHOOL



2026-2027 HANDBOOK

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION/FFA HANDBOOK

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THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION PROGRAM AT NORTHWESTERN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

The Agricultural Education Program consists of four full-time instructors with extended contracts, one of whom is the Program Coordinator. The Ag Ed Program offers a series of year-long courses for tenth-, eleventh-, and twelfth-grade students, as well as an Exploring Agriculture course for ninth graders. Additionally, the Program offers an exploratory class for seventh-grade students in Northwestern's middle school as well as assorted adult education courses. The National FFA Organization and Supervised Agricultural Experience Program are, by state regulations, an integral part of the curricular offerings and are unique to this Program.

The Agricultural Education Program is designed for the student who expresses an interest in any of the following areas: plant science, animal science, natural resources, mechanics, business management, and leadership. The Program is intended to prepare students for college as well as for employment immediately following high school. All courses in this Program combine theory and hands-on experience to provide technical skills training and knowledge in a wide variety of careers. All courses can be linked into a four (4)- year sequence or taken independently. State regulations require all students to participate in a work experience program. This program should be related to agriculture and involve a time commitment outside of school hours. Students must also participate in certain local FFA activities, which is a national student leadership organization. Program offerings are subject to approval by the local Agricultural Education Consulting Committee and the State Board of Education.

PHILOSOPHY

The Agricultural Education Program is designed and conducted to develop competency in agriculture as a basis for entering and advancing in agricultural careers or to continue with post-secondary education. An equally important purpose of this program is to encourage the development of each student's ability to think critically and solve problems efficiently through diverse experiences related to agricultural science. This diversity is achieved by emphasizing practical application offered through realistic laboratory experiences and a supervised work experience program.

Incorporating youth organization activities into the agricultural curriculum encourages students to grow socially and emotionally while instilling a sense of leadership and civic responsibility. The Program continually strives to provide a climate that fosters a student's sense of self-worth and commitment.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

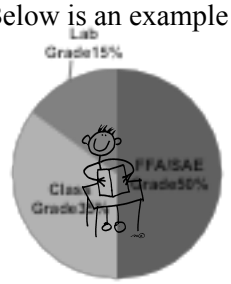
1. To provide knowledge and skills in agriculture, which will give students the capabilities to advance in employment or continue their education beyond high school in agriculture.
1. To provide students a safe, non-threatening, and pleasant environment in which they can acquire and practice human relations skills (i.e., leadership, cooperation, friendship, courtesy) and develop a feeling of self-worth and awareness.
2. To help students gain awareness and understanding of current issues and practices in agriculture and how they relate to various aspects of modern life.
3. Supplement general learning by incorporating exercises into the curriculum that encourage improvement in math, reading, writing, and decision-making skills.
4. To provide agricultural literacy and career exploration in agriculture for students from kindergarten to adult.

RETENTION POLICY

In an effort for every student to reach their maximum potential and remain on track for graduation, the Agricultural Education Program has developed a retention policy for both academics and behavior. In keeping with our tradition of high expectations yet allowing for continued success in the program, grades will be reviewed at the end of each marking period. In applying to the Agricultural Education Program at Northwestern, an agreement was reached between you, your child, and the Ag Ed Program related to student performance and the privilege of attending the Program. This includes: maintaining an overall C- or above average in the Ag Ed Program; following the rules and regulations of Northwestern Regional School; engaging in an approved work experience program; participating in FFA activities and maintaining passing grades in all other courses (staying on track for graduation). All students will be reviewed quarterly for their compliance with the NWR Ag. Ed. Retention Policy. The Overall Program Performance Grade (OPPG) will be calculated based on the following formula:

Upperclassmen: 35% Class and 15% Lab, 50% FFA/SAE
Freshman: 50% Class, 50% FFA/SAE

The student's Overall Program Performance Grade must be a 70 or higher, or the student will move on to the steps of our Retention Policy. The Overall Program Performance Grade will not appear on the student's report card; it is only used for the purposes of our Retention Policy. Below is an example of how the formula works:



Equine Science Class quarter grade = 88 at 35% = 30.80
Equine Science Lab quarter grade = 95 at 15% = 14.25
FFA/SAE quarter grade = 65 at 50% = 32.50
Total Overall Program Performance Grade = 77.55

The following steps will be taken to ensure the success of both the student and the Agricultural Education Program:

- **STEP 1 -** The first time a student falls below this expectation, a letter will be sent home via certified mail, placing them on academic probation.

- During this probationary period, the student is expected to raise their grade prior to the close of the next marking period. If the student is successful in satisfying the requirement of an OPPG of 70 or better during this probationary time, a letter will be sent home congratulating the student and including the following stipulation: It is the expectation of this Program that the student will continue to successfully satisfy the requirement of an overall 70 average or above. Should the student fall below this expectation again at any given time during the remainder of the school year, he/she will be placed on a contract for the remainder of the school year as outlined in STEP 2 of the retention policy.

- **STEP 2 -** If the student does not show satisfactory improvement at the end of the probation period, a mandatory conference will be scheduled, which will include parents/guardians, housemaster, guidance counselor, Ag Ed instructor(s), and the student. At this time, the guidance department will be requested to provide progress reports for all courses, as well as attendance.

(continued)

- Upon meeting, a contract will be drawn between the student, parent/guardian, Northwestern Regional Administration, and the Agricultural Education Program, which will outline the stipulation to raise grades and meet all expectations for the remainder of the school year. The contract shall state that the student will be immediately released from the Program if they have not fulfilled the expectations of the contract.

- **STEP 3 -** If no progress is made by the end of the current marking period, the student will be released from the Agricultural Education Program, with a letter sent home by certified mail stating so. By law, parents/guardians have the right to appeal the decision in writing by the date outlined in the letter. If you plan to utilize the appeal process, the student should remain in all classes until the process is complete.

- If the student does not choose to appeal and is not from Barkhamsted, Colebrook, New Hartford, or Norfolk, this will result in the student being returned to their sending district, no longer remaining at Northwestern Regional School.

BEHAVIORAL POLICY

To maintain the highest level of safety and respect for all students, the following behavioral policy has been established. Should a student demonstrate a pattern of inappropriate behavior or not uphold the behavioral and safety expectations of either the Agricultural Education Program or Northwestern Regional School, they will be placed on behavioral probation, with the following steps being enforced:

- **STEP 1 -** The first time a student falls below behavioral expectations, a letter will be sent home via certified mail, placing him or her on behavioral probation.

- **STEP 2 –** Should a second behavioral or safety concern arise during the remainder of the school year, a mandatory conference will be scheduled between parents/guardians, housemaster, guidance counselor, Ag Ed instructor(s), and the student. At this time, a review of overall performance at Northwestern Regional will be included.

- Upon meeting, a contract will be drawn between student, parent/guardian and the Agricultural Education Program which will state the behavioral expectations which will include but not be limited to: complying with all behavioral expectations as outlined in the Northwestern Regional handbook, as well as the expectations of the Agricultural Education Program and the National FFA Organization's Code of Ethics (as outlined in the official FFA manual), complying with all school policies, respect for others and property, following all safety rules and considering the safety of others at all times.

- **STEP 3 –** Should a pattern of poor choices/decisions become apparent through inappropriate behavior, the student will be released from the Agricultural Education Program, as stated in the signed contract. By law, you would have the right to appeal the decision in writing by the date outlined in the letter. If you plan to utilize the appeal process, the student should remain in all classes until the process is complete.

- If the student does not choose to appeal and is not from Barkhamsted, Colebrook, New Hartford, or Norfolk, the student will be returned to their sending district and will no longer remain at Northwestern Regional School.

The administration of Northwestern Regional School has helped develop this policy and supports upholding it to ensure a positive experience for all students in the Agricultural Education Program. This policy has been developed to ensure that students take advantage of the outstanding agricultural and leadership opportunities available in the Agricultural Education Program at Northwestern Regional School.

ACADEMIC LEVELING AND COLLEGE ARTICULATIONS

All courses offered to 10th, 11th, and 12th-graders in the Agricultural Education Program are leveled as college or honors (please refer to the NWR7 Program of Studies, Course Level Descriptions, and Weighting page).

In addition to leveling, some courses will or are able to earn college credits. Some of the colleges/universities with which our Ag Ed Program is articulated with include:

- UCONN (registration fee required)
- State University of New York (S.U.N.Y.) at Cobleskill
- Keene State
- Northwestern Connecticut Community College (articulation in progress)

Some of these institutions are issuing credits based on completion of specific courses in the Ag Ed Program, while others require remaining in the same curriculum area for the 10th, 11th, and 12th grade years.

Please call the Ag Ed Office for further information.

PROGRAM OF STUDIES 2026-2027
COURSE OUTLINES

Curriculum for all of the courses offered in the Northwestern Regional Agricultural Education Program are aligned with the current Agricultural Science and Technology Education Standards.
You may view the Standards at the CT State Department of Education website.

FFA/SUPERVISED AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCE PROGRAM — Grades 9-12, (Y) — Level 2 — ½ Credit
Prerequisite: Approval of written application to the program and participation in another Agricultural Education course.

This course is **required** of all students enrolled in the Agricultural Education Program. The course is designed to help students locate and obtain successful work experience in agriculture in order to obtain skills and experiences not available in the traditional school setting. Additionally, this course grants credit for participation in a wide range of leadership activities sponsored by the local FFA Chapter, State FFA Association, and the National FFA Organization.

EXPLORING AGRICULTURE — Grade 9, (Y) — Level 2 — 1 Credit
Prerequisite: Approval of written application to the program and participation in SAEP/FFA.

This course provides an overview of the agricultural industry in the United States and around the world, with an emphasis on career exploration. In this course, students will acquire basic knowledge and skills and gain practical, hands-on experience in all areas of agriculture (leadership, plants, animals, natural resources, and mechanics).

AGRICULTURAL LAB — Grades 10-12, (Y) — Level 3 — ½ Credit
Prerequisite: Exploring Agriculture (taken concurrently)

The Agricultural Lab, a required one-half credit course, is taken in addition to a one-credit Agricultural Education class. Students should be enrolled in the Ag Lab that corresponds with their selected course.

CONSTRUCTION & FABRICATION Grades 10-12, (Y) Levels 1/2 1 Credit
Prerequisite: Approval of written application to the program and participation in SAEP/FFA.

This course will cover basic construction and fabrication essentials common in agricultural mechanics. General safety practices and proper use of hand tools, power tools, and equipment used in carpentry, metal fabrication, plumbing, and electrical trades will be studied**.** Building principles will be applied to construction and fabrication of agricultural equipment, facilities, and products.

FLORAL DESIGN & FLOWER SHOP MANAGEMENT Grades 10-12, (Y) Levels 1/2 1 Credit
Prerequisite: Approval of written application to the program and participation in SAEP/FFA.

This course provides in-depth coverage of the skills and knowledge required for success in the floral design and floriculture industry. The student will design floral arrangements for all occasions, grow and care for a wide variety of greenhouse crops, and learn the business management aspects of the floriculture industry. Students will also learn to use and maintain horticultural facilities and equipment.

EQUINE SCIENCE Grades 10-12, (Y) Levels 1/2 1 Credit
Prerequisite: Approval of written application to the program and participation in SAEP/FFA.

This course will cover the proper handling, care, and management of horses, including all areas of the equine industry and the employment opportunities associated with them. Anatomy, physiology, health, nutrition, and breeding are among the topics to be covered. Local farms will be visited to offer examples of these applications, and horses will be made available for students to work with. Incorporation of numerous "hands-on" activities and lab experiences is to be expected.
Students successfully completing this course may be eligible to receive 3 college credits from S.U.N.Y. Cobleskill.

COMPANION ANIMAL SCIENCE Grades 10-12, (Y) Level AP/UCONN/2 1 Credit
Prerequisite: Approval of written application to the program and participation in SAEP/FFA.

This course is designed to provide students with basic skills used in companion animal-related businesses today. These skills will include handling, health care, feeding, and general management of companion animals. Emphasis will be placed on the various applications in small-animal science and on how to secure successful employment in these types of businesses. Students will use, manage, and maintain the small animal lab facilities.
Students successfully completing Level 2 of this course may be eligible to receive 3 college credits from S.U.N.Y. Cobleskill. Students successfully completing the UCONN Level of this course may be eligible to receive 3 college credits from UCONN.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT Grades 10-12, (Y) Levels 1/2 1 Credit
Prerequisite: Approval of written application to the program and participation in SAEP/FFA.

This course will provide an in-depth examination of wildlife populations, management practices, and regulations that affect practices. Students will also evaluate the history of wildlife management as a scientific art and how it is practiced in the United States, as well as locally. In addition, students will investigate the ethical and economic considerations of wildlife management, conservation, and habitat alteration and renewal. ***Students successfully completing this course may be eligible to receive 3 college credits from S.U.N.Y. Cobleskill.***

LANDSCAPING & TURF MANAGEMENT Grades 10-12, (Y) Levels 1/2 1 Credit
Prerequisite: Approval of written application to the program and participation in SAEP/FFA.

This course will cover aspects of landscape design, construction, and maintenance, along with areas of turf production and lawn maintenance. The course will help prepare students to work in, manage, or own a landscaping business. Technical knowledge and scientific concepts will be supplemented with hands-on experience in the areas of landscape construction.

Business and sales techniques/concepts will be covered to prepare students for jobs and careers in the landscaping industry. Students will also gain experience and knowledge in the use and maintenance of trade equipment and tools. ***Students successfully completing this course may be eligible to receive 3 college credits from S.U.N.Y. Cobleskill.***

THE NATIONAL FFA ORGANIZATION

The purpose of the National FFA Organization, the largest student organization in the world, is the development of agricultural leadership, cooperation, and citizenship.

When school starts in the fall, each freshman will be given access to the FFA Student Handbook and Official FFA Manual online through the National FFA Organization website.

Official Handbook in English: https://ffa.box.com/s/wbvvrdx5rxxf7vv8n6vnka2dg3hdxid3
Official Handbook in Spanish: https://ffa.app.box.com/s/plv2hm1c59aq3rj12opfh58x7j7kuoim
Official Manual in English & Spanish: https://www.ffa.org/official-manual/

These references provide a complete description of the FFA and its activities. They are to utilize these references throughout their time in the program.

Please refer to the page in this handbook titled "FFA Calendar of Activities," which illustrates some of the FFA opportunities available to students beginning with their freshman year in high school through graduation. What a student does each year that he or she is a member of the FFA will impact their achievement over the following years in the Program.

OFFICIAL DRESS: The uniform of FFA members at local, state, and national activities provides an identity and gives a distinctive and recognizable image to the organization.

Official Dress Guidelines per the National FFA Organization for an FFA member include:

- An official FFA jacket zipped to the top.
- Black dress slacks and black socks/nylons or black skirt and black nylons.
- White collared button-down blouse/shirt.
- Official FFA tie or official FFA scarf.
- Black dress shoes with closed heel and toe.

Official dress, when requested, should be clean, neat, and professional in appearance as students are representing not only our local FFA Chapter, but the Connecticut FFA Association and the National FFA Organization. **Jeans, yoga pants, leggings, work boots, and sneakers are not considered official dress. Skirt lengths should be below the knee. Please refer to the next page for acceptable Official Dress illustrations.**

As soon as students return to school in September, orders will be taken for jackets. Girls' jackets are sized from 28 to 50; boys' 28 to 56. The cost is $65.00. The Ag Center has a small number of used jackets (in limited sizes) available at a cost of $40.00. If you are interested in purchasing a used jacket, please contact the Ag Office at (860) 379-9013 by September 11th.

FFA scarves and neckties are available for $17.00 each.

Financial Assistance for FFA Official Dress for families with demonstrated need is available on a limited basis through our Parents, Friends & Alumni Group as well as through the FFA Give the Gift of Blue Grant (please contact the Ag Ed secretary for further information – inquiries are strictly confidential).

DUES: FFA dues for the 2026-2027 school year are due as soon as students return to school in the fall in the amount of $35.00, which pays for National, State, and Chapter dues. If paid by check, the check should be made payable to **Regional School District #7 or RSD7 in blue or black ink only. FEEL FREE TO WRITE ONE CHECK FOR OFFICIAL DRESS AND DUES!!!!**

ACCEPTABLE FFA OFFICIAL DRESS











GUIDELINES FOR FFA MEMBER EXPECTATIONS

FFA members are expected to attend monthly FFA meetings and take advantage of opportunities to participate in extra optional activities and events. While in attendance, members will be held to a high expectation for personal behavior and professional appearance.

In order to maintain an appropriate professional environment in which order is maintained and in which all FFA members feel able to participate in proceedings, members are expected to follow these guidelines during monthly FFA meetings:

- Refrain from talking unless granted the floor by the chapter president.
- Keep personal electronics, including cell phones, earbuds, and other technologies silent, out of use, and put away.
- Uphold school dress code, including not wearing hats or hoodie hoods*.
- Remain engaged and attentive to the proceedings of the meeting.
- Sit up in your seat and keep the posture of a young professional.
- Arrive on time.
- Get permission from an advisor prior to a meeting should you need to leave early**.
- Avoid antagonizing and distracting behavior.

These expectations align with the Connecticut Agricultural Science and Technology Education Standard ***CT-LS.04.01:*** *Understand the concepts, strategies, and tools needed, which contribute to premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through participation in FFA.*

Failure to uphold these expectations will result in a loss of points to the member's required grade.

FFA members are expected to behave and act professionally at all required and optional FFA activities. They should always remember that they are representing their local FFA chapter, the Connecticut State FFA Association, and the National FFA Organization.

* Official Dress is required for some special FFA meetings and activities. FFA members are expected to follow the National FFA Official Dress Guidelines as published in the FFA manual. Failure to do so will result in loss of points for their required grade.

**A member who needs to leave an FFA meeting before it is adjourned must first get permission from an FFA advisor prior to the meeting. Then, during the meeting, the member must ask the chapter president for a question of privilege to leave the meeting.

SUPERVISED AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCE – SAE

The importance of SAE programs extends far beyond the agricultural education classroom. An SAE is a catalyst for personal growth, career development, and responsible citizenship that leads to individual, group, and societal benefits not possible through formal education alone. Skills, knowledge, experiences, and connections gained through SAEs remain with students for a lifetime and positively influence others along the way. An SAE is more than an integral part of agricultural education; it is tangible learning with an applied purpose and measurable results. The following are some of the benefits of SAEs:

Benefits to Students

- Assists with career and personal choices while building self-esteem.
- Applies business practices such as record keeping and money management.
- Nurtures individual talents and develops a cooperative attitude toward others.
- Builds character and encourages citizenship and volunteerism.
- Provides a comfortable environment for practical learning that is challenging, but fun.

Benefits to FFA Chapters

- Creates opportunities for students to earn recognition for themselves and the chapter.
- Promotes involvement in proficiency awards, CDEs, and other FFA programs.
- Encourages parental involvement and support of chapter activities.
- Develops leadership and teamwork skills essential to chapter success.
- Provides every chapter member with a venue for personal growth and achievement.

Benefits to Teachers, Schools

- Strengthens relations between the school, community, and agriculture program.
- Serves as a motivational tool for student learning and scholastic achievement.
- Creates familiarity with and promotes new technologies and agricultural practices.
- Provides year-round instruction that is practical, relevant, and industry-based.
- Expands agricultural competencies learned in the classroom and laboratory.

Benefits to Employers and the Agricultural Industry

- Provides a labor force skilled in technical and applied agricultural practices.
- Fosters a good work ethic as well as critical thinking and interpersonal relations skills.
- Keeps young people involved in the local community and/or the agriculture industry.
- Serves as an effective venue for on-the-job training and career preparation.
- Assists schools in keeping instruction relevant based on industry needs.

Benefits to Communities

- Promotes community service and involvement.
- Provides the community with a competent and educated workforce.
- Improves the efficiency of the agriculture-related jobs in the community.
- Develops knowledgeable, conscientious, and informed citizens.
- Creates an awareness and appreciation of the community's economic, environmental, and human resources.

TYPES OF SAE PROGRAMS & ASSESSMENT OF SAE'S

There are four types of Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) areas:

A. Foundational – students experience the "big picture" of agriculture and its many related careers.

(This type of program is great for beginning students and those who are uncertain about their interests, but others can also benefit. Examples include helping in ag-related tasks at home, such as raking leaves or painting the garage, job shadowing, etc.)

B. Research – students conduct research using the scientific process.

C. Placement – students work for someone in an approved worksite.

(These SAEs may be located in agribusinesses, school labs, farms and ranches, or in community organizations. For example, working at Tractor Supply or Flamig Farm).

D. Entrepreneurship – students plan and operate an agriculturally related enterprise or business. (Examples include producing and marketing livestock, crops, nursery plants, or forest products; providing a service, such as lawn care; processing agricultural products; repairing, designing, or fabricating agriculturally related equipment).

As with any educational exercise, consistent and ongoing assessment is an essential measurement of program success. An SAE is no exception. Evaluating SAEs and demonstrating tangible results not only benefits students but also strengthens agricultural programs at the local, state, and national levels. In the case of SAEs, assessment is especially important because an SAE is an integral component of agricultural education and, therefore, comprises part of a student's grade. We assess students' SAE and record-keeping twice per quarter, with greater weight given at the end of each quarter. SAE Evaluation Sheets are used each time and provide students with the necessary feedback for improvement. Each assessment evaluates the SAE in the following ways:

- SAEP Value (30%) – Evaluation of the student's SAEP based on scope and scale, growth and development, educational opportunities, and relevance to agriculture.

- SAEP Records (20%) – SAE Agreement forms, objectives, record of hours, list of skills, and photographs are updated in our online portfolio system. Number of hours and continual progress – Students are required to complete a minimum number of hours, but are also required to make progress during each marking period. Annual required hours are: Freshman 50 hours, Sophomores 100 hours, Juniors 200 hours, and Seniors 300 hours.

In addition, Agricultural Education students are required to do **5 hours of community service per quarter** as a part of their FFA/SAEP grade. Community Service is defined as an opportunity in which a student gives their time, energy, or knowledge through activities focused on helping others and improving community resources.

THE FFA CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

The calendar of activities is published online early in September so that students and their families are aware of and prepared to participate in the wide variety of events. **Required activities** are illustrated on the calendar in **RED**. With this advance notice, work, sports, and family schedules can be arranged early.

> Please refer to the Agricultural Education 2026-2027 calendar, accessible online at www.nwr7.com, and click AGRICULTURAL ED, then scroll down to access the calendar. Hard copies of the calendar may be obtained through the Ag Ed Office. ***Parents, guardians, and family members are strongly encouraged to attend and become involved in the many FFA activities available.***

NOTE: Please visit www.nwr7.com/district/agricultural-education for updates and links to our calendar to stay up to date, or call (860) 379-9013.

The following is an explanation of some events/activities as they appear on the calendar.

FFA Monthly Chapter Meetings (Required): Each month, an FFA Chapter meeting will be held that all FFA members are required to attend. These meetings (with two exceptions – the Winter Achievement Night & Annual Awards Ceremony, which are held in the evening) are usually on the first Monday of the month, except where noted on your calendar. Students are required to be at these meetings.

Chapter Officer Retreats: Twice each year, the Officer Team will spend 1-2 days in workshops. They will learn the responsibilities of their respective offices, commit to working together as a team, review the proposed calendar for the school year, and promote the completion of this year's Program of Activities.

Chapter Officer Leadership Training (COLT): This is a one-day workshop rotated among the State Ag Centers at which the current officer team will meet with other officer teams as well as State FFA Officers and will be involved in intensive leadership training. Topics covered included: responsibilities of their office, improving communication skills, membership development, and positive public relations.

Fall Family Activity/Welcome Back Social Event: This annual event is held at the beginning of the school year and is a casual, social event at which students and their families can meet and get to know other students, their families, staff members, alumni, and generally to become more familiar with the Ag Ed Program, FFA, and its goals for the year. It is a perfect opportunity for parents/guardians to become aware of the many ways they can support their children as well as the Program through its activities and those of the Parents, Friends & Alumni Group.

Riverton Fair: Each year, FFA members run a booth at the Riverton Fair where they sell apple crisp, apple cider, maple syrup, and other maple products (all of which they make). **Parents are called upon to work a 2-hour shift with students during this three-day event.**

Career Development Events/Leadership Development Events: Each spring and fall, the State FFA Association holds skills contests at UConn and other designated locations throughout the State. There are numerous CDE's & LDE's available. For example, Poultry Judging, Floriculture, Nursery/Landscape, Livestock, Forestry, Milk Quality & Products, Ag Business Management, Horse Management, Equine

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Judging, Ag Mechanics, Tractor Driving, Veterinary Technology, Environmental & Natural Resources, Prepared, Creed & Extemporaneous Public Speaking, Parliamentary Procedure, Employability Skills, Conduct of Chapter Meetings.

Winter Achievement Night (Required): Students are recognized for their accomplishments in leadership, agricultural education, and the SAE program as they progress through the FFA, typically in February.

Picture a ladder. The first step is the Greenhand Degree. This is earned by first-year students who demonstrate a knowledge of the FFA history, FFA Creed, motto, and salute. They must also be enrolled in an agriculture course and have plans for an SAE.

The second step, eligible after one year in an agricultural education course, is the Chapter FFA Degree. Students earning this Degree must:

- have an SAE,
- be familiar with the Chapter's constitution and Program of Activities,
- earned and productively invested $150 or worked at least 45 hours outside of class time in an SAE program,
- effectively led a group discussion for 15 minutes,
- demonstrate five procedures of parliamentary law,
- show progress toward individual achievement in the FFA award program,
- have a satisfactory scholastic record.

Winter Achievement Night is a special awards ceremony held in February to recognize these students and others. **Parents and family members are strongly encouraged to attend and show their support. Parents may also be called upon to provide refreshments for this activity.**

National FFA Convention: This year, in October, the FFA organization will hold its National Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana. This convention is attended by more than 65,000 FFA members from across the United States, as well as Puerto Rico and Guam. A large number of national contests are held here for students who have excelled in Chapter, District, and State competitions, and awards are presented to outstanding members.

Wreath-making: This activity benefits both the Ag Center and the participants. Participants have the opportunity to make a wreath for themselves and a second one to donate to the Ag Program.

Chapter Public Speaking: Public Speaking is a very valuable skill students develop in the FFA. Each year, all students will be called upon to participate in one of three contests: Extemporaneous Public Speaking, Prepared Public Speaking, or Creed. After their presentation to their class, students will be encouraged to compete against other students in the Chapter. This competition will take place in early February, and **parents and friends are strongly encouraged to attend to support all students**. Judges for this competition are selected from the staff of Regional #7, local schools, and our community. Parents may be asked to provide refreshments for this activity.

District Public Speaking: The top two winners in each contest at Chapter Public Speaking will go on to compete at the District level. This event is usually held right after school at one of the District I schools. Again, **parents, family, and friends are encouraged to attend**. The top winner in each contest will then go on to compete at the State level. The top winner in each contest at the State level will then go on to compete on the national level at the National FFA Convention.

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FFA Image Training: IMAGE (I Am Ag Ed) Training Conference is a one-day integrated workshop that will inform, reinforce, and provide a hands-on approach to developing leadership skills for second through fourth year students.

FFA Future Leaders Workshop: This one-day activity is for the benefit of first-year agricultural education students. State FFA Officers will conduct workshops on FFA history, communication skills, motivation, team building, and chapter achievement. Students will be selected and invited by a consensus of the Ag Ed Instructors.

Maple Syrup Production: Each year, we continue to manage our maple syrup production. Lines will be repaired and trees tapped on weekend(s) during February. Sap is collected as needed, and processing will be done at our on-campus facility. Parent support may be needed weeknights and weekends to conduct this operation.

Poinsettia & Holiday Sales: Students select, order, plant, care for, and sell poinsettias for the public and local churches. Additional holiday floral centerpieces, cemetery pots, and wreaths are also created and available for sale. Order forms are typically emailed home in early December.

Easter Flower Sales*:* **Depending on when Easter falls (when it is not part of the school's spring break), students *may* grow and sell Easter Lilies**. Daffodils, hyacinths, and tulips may also be available. These flowers are on sale in our Greenhouse beginning two weeks before Easter. Please pass the word regarding all our sales to your family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors. You are welcome to come in and shop any day during school hours, but kindly call first at (860) 379-9013 to ensure access to the greenhouse.

Greenhouse Sales: Just as at Christmas and Easter, spring is a busy time in our Greenhouse. Students select, order, plant, raise, and sell bedding plants, vegetables, herbs, and hanging baskets. Sales are scheduled during school hours and on specified Saturdays and/or Sundays in May (please refer to your calendar). Remember to visit our greenhouse during planting time.

FFA Awards Ceremony (Required): Our annual awards night, an exciting evening that culminates the year's activities. It is a night to recognize students, parents, and community members for their participation in and support of the Agricultural Education Program and the FFA during the past year. It is an excellent opportunity for younger siblings to become familiar with the Program.

FUNDRAISERS

Fall Bulb Sale
Citrus Plus Sale

The FFA holds two major door-to-door fundraisers each year. Shortly after school begins, students are asked to sell bulbs for fall planting. In November, students take orders for citrus (a variety of oranges, grapefruit, apples, pears, and pineapple), assorted nuts, cheeses, and meats with delivery made mid-December, just in time for Christmas. We strongly encourage students to participate in these fundraisers as the proceeds from these sales help to fund FFA activities and awards. Incentives in the form of credit dollars and FFA credit are given to all participants completing sales in the allotted time.

Other sales that take place during the year include: Christmas wreaths, maple syrup, greenhouse sales: Poinsettias, Easter lilies, spring bedding plants and vegetables; goat kids; piglets; and a variety of FFA catalogue items.

Parents Group Fundraisers

Our Parents Group historically holds several major fundraisers: a Holiday Craft Fair in November and a Scrap Metal Drive in the spring. Currently, the Parents Group is looking into an additional fundraiser for the spring. These fundraising efforts provide funding for the Outstanding Student Awards presented quarterly, as well as college scholarships and scholarships to attend the National FFA Convention. All of these events require a lot of work; therefore, we encourage the involvement of all parents.

FIELD TRIPS

Students have the opportunity to attend many field trips throughout the school year. In each case, when a trip takes place outside of Ag Ed class time, on weekends, or for special trips/occasions, parents will be sent a letter explaining the activity (date, time, cost, etc.) and a permission form to be signed and returned. For overnight trips, special health forms will be **REQUIRED** to be completed and returned to the health office prior to the trip dates. These forms will need to be completed for **EACH** overnight field trip throughout the year (i.e., attending both the National FFA Convention and an animal science overnight trip or Student Exchange trip)

Parents/guardians are requested to sign a general permission letter at the beginning of each school year if they will allow their son/daughter to participate in subject-related field trips during Ag class or lab time, or immediately after school.

LOCKERS

Students are given an Ag locker and encouraged to be prepared with clothes needed for various activities, with weather in mind (hats, gloves, coats, boots/work shoes, etc.).

PARENTS, FRIENDS & ALUMNI OF THE NORTHWESTERN REGIONAL FFA

Our parents' support group has been a strong, valuable organization whose purpose is to support the Agricultural Education Program, the FFA, but most importantly, the students in their efforts and activities. Volunteers are needed for various projects and events throughout the year.

Members of this group encourage, support, and promote the FFA and its members in their activities at the local, state, and national levels. They provide a "tie" to the FFA and assist the staff and students by involving former members in the many annual activities.

Our parents' group and alumni merged to become Parents, Friends & Alumni of the Northwestern Regional FFA and are affiliated with the State and National FFA Alumni Associations. You have the opportunity to become a member and show your support for a program you believe in and want to see grow and prosper. Anyone interested in joining this group may do so in one of two ways:

1. Support the Northwestern Regional FFA on the chapter level. Get involved personally as well as support our FFA members in their many activities. There are no dues at this level of involvement, unless you want to be an officer; then you will need to be a paid member.

2. Become a member on the local, state, and national levels. With this membership, you will receive the National Alumni Newsletter, "New Visions". You may be an active member at this level for $20.00 per year. To receive a copy of New Horizons, the monthly FFA magazine, is an additional $2.00. Applications can be requested through Mrs. Hodges in the Agricultural Education Department office.

Through their fundraising (the annual craft fair and other events), our Parents, Friends & Alumni group currently provides quarterly Outstanding Students Awards, in the form of $20.00 in credit dollars that can be used to purchase items from the store or the FFA Supply Catalog, or used towards FFA Activities/trips, to a student in each of the current Ag classes. The group also provides scholarships for students attending the National FFA Convention, offers advanced leadership opportunities, and provides three College Scholarships to seniors and first- and second-year graduates of the program. The parents group has also provided equipment (computer equipment, camera, printer, scanner, flags, dictionaries, display board, etc.) for the Agricultural Education Department, as well as financial assistance for FFA Official Dress for families with demonstrated need (please contact the Ag Ed secretary for further information – inquiries are strictly confidential).

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