



National FFA WEEK

February 17-24, 2024

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OCONTO COUNTY
TIMES HERALD

SHAWANO LEADER

Friday, February 16, 2024

FFA Week 2024 runs Feb. 17-24

NEW Media salutes our local FFA local chapters through their own words and photos

Agribusiness is part of the lifeblood of northeast Wisconsin, and every day, members of FFA are contributing to their schools and communities through a wide variety of activities — a fact NEW Media is thrilled to celebrate in our annual salute to National FFA Week.

Through their own words and photos, FFA members describe the work they've been doing in the local chapters based

at area high schools.

National FFA Week always runs from Saturday to Saturday and encompasses Feb. 22, George Washington's birthday. This year, the week kicks off on Feb. 17 and culminates on Feb. 24.

The National FFA board of directors designated the weeklong tradition, which began in 1948, recognizing Washington's legacy as an agriculturist and farmer.

A group of young farmers founded FFA in 1928, and the organization has been influencing generations that agriculture is more than planting and harvesting — it involves science, business and more.

The National FFA Organization is a school-based national youth leadership development organization of more than 945,000 student members as part of 9,163 local FFA chapters in all 50 states,

Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The FFA mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. For more, visit the National FFA Organization online

at FFA.org and on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter.

The National FFA Foundation builds partnerships with industry, education, government, other foundations and individuals to secure financial resources that recognize FFA member achievements, develop

student leaders and support the future of agricultural education. A separately registered nonprofit organization, the foundation is governed by a board of trustees that includes the national FFA president, educators, business leaders and individual donors. For more, visit ffa.org/give.



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FFA is a lifetime activity. Tim and Adam Wierzbowski flip cobs of corn on a grill in Washington Park during the Wittenberg-Birnamwood FFA Alumni Corn Roast in Wittenberg last summer.

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Month by month, Shawano FFA stays busy

By MADISYN WEINIG
Shawano FFA Reporter 2023-2024

Our Shawano FFA Chapter has many events throughout the year for members to participate in. Many of these events are planned by the 2023-24 officer team, which includes five juniors, our president, Anna Majeski; vice president, Brynn Hannes; secretary, Hannah Yeager; treasurer, Kendra Strebel; and reporter, Madisyn Weinig, as well as one senior, the sentinel, Maddie Krueger.

The FFA school year starts in September, with the annual steak fry. This event is held each year for members to pay their dues and socialize with other members of the chapter. Moving into October, we started the second annual year of Socktober. This event is held to raise socks for homeless shelters and schools within the community. This year the event raised 511 pairs of socks.

Another activity that was held was homecoming float building. This year the club chose to decorate the float with our chapter theme of “Expand your Roots with Shawano FFA.” Another event in October is the Trunk or Treat event at Olga Brener, where we decorate a vehicle and hand out string cheese to trick or treaters. Closing out October, we get the annual fruit and kringle fundraiser.

To start out November, we have members go into fifth-grade art classes to teach them about Christmas trees and have them decorate ornaments for the Christmas tree in the high school commons. The tree is put up at the end of the month, and after the hard work is done, we treat our members to a pizza social.

Staying in the holiday spirit, December starts with members going into classes at Hillcrest and Sacred Heart to teach children about reindeer and help them make reindeer food. Shortly after, we held Milk and Cookies with Santa. This event is a community event held at The Naborhood Park for kids to come and see Santa and enjoy milk and cookies.

To start off the new year, we hold many work nights for our members to come and work on State Degrees, American Degrees and Proficiencies. These applications are due throughout February, and we want to make sure that our members have adequate time and resources to finish their applications.

Another event in February is Walsh Dental’s Giving Kids a Smile Event. We send members to help with this event. This year National FFA Week is Feb. 17-24. Members work hard to plan activities and dress-up days for the school to participate in. During this week, we will also have treats for our members, teachers and students. To close out FFA Week, the chapter officers help out with the FFA Alumni Wild Game Feed, which is held at Shawano County Park.

In March, regional CDEs (Career Development Events) take place. A CDE is a group of four individuals who compete in a contest related to an agricultural career. Members work hard to study their topic area throughout the year and this contest shows how they rank against others in the area, if they qualify for the state competition it is held at the end of April.

At the beginning of April, we hold a Drive your Tractor to School Day. We are also looking to have members of the community participate in this event by driving tractors around the elementary schools to show children the machinery. A final event that is held in April is Kids Safety Day. This is held at Olga Brener for children to learn about safety in different careers.

Finally, at the end of the FFA year in May, we hold an awards night for members and their families to celebrate their achievements and accomplishments throughout the year. This is also where the 2024-25 officer team will be announced and installed to start their year of planning and service on the officer team. We are looking forward to coming events and are excited to see where our younger members will take the chapter.



Members helping to pack string cheese that is handed out at the Trunk or Treat event. From left, Addyson Kust, Brooklyn Koenig, Aiden Kern and Camden Kern.

CONTRIBUTED



Shawano FFA held a Greenhand Day for all freshman who were interested in or wanted to check out what FFA is. The day was filled with different activities led by our advisers and chapter officers. Here, Freshman were challenged to make Kool-Aid blindfolded with only the help of one person. This was meant to teach them about the importance of communication. From left, are Claire Wegner, Kyera Williams and Harper Rettke.

CONTRIBUTED



Shawano FFA members and officers helping to set up the Christmas tree in the high school commons. The tree and other decorations are set up at the end of November and left up until the end of December for the school and community members to enjoy. From left, Levi Wendorf, Kendra Strebel, Kenley Kelliher and Brynn Hannes.

CONTRIBUTED



Oconto Falls High School FFA meetings have been moved to the school's Performing Art Center as membership surges past 100 members, 22% of the school's student population. CONTRIBUTED

Oconto Falls FFA membership outgrows agriculture class meeting room

In the past year, the Oconto Falls FFA Chapter had many exciting accomplishments and participated in many events. During the summer Executive FFA Officer Retreat, the students decided that the goals for 2023-2024 would be: enthusiastic opportunities, inclusion and increase active participation.

Some notable accomplishments include 12 of our chapter members earning Greenhand Degrees, eight earning Chapter Degrees and one, our very own chapter president, Abigail Roskom, earning her State Degree.

Three members, Mika, Megan and McKenna, attended the Washington Leadership Conference. Our chapter had members attend the State Convention as chapter delegates and one participant in the State FFA Band. Members also participated in other FFA leadership workshops and conferences.

The chapter organized an Elementary Ag Night where students with their parents and moved through stations. FFA members at both Washington Middle School and Oconto Falls High School led them in activities such as fishing, planting seeds and making pine cone bird treats. Students even had the chance to witness a student making jams and jellies, which they could eat on a gourmet grilled cheese. They earned stamps for each activity completed, which they recorded in a booklet to qualify for prizes.

Another new elementary student project was Farm Boots Ag Literacy Night where elementary school students and their families moved through stations to listen as FFA members read pages of a book about different types of footwear ag workers wear and discussed it with them.

Every June, our chapter collaborates with the three other county FFA chapters to help at the Breakfast on the Farm, last year held at Kohls Dairy Farm in Gillett, which had 4,500 attendees.

The year wrapped up with our annual holiday fundraiser, featuring fruit and local agribusiness products. This year's sale set a record for products sold and profit earned help support premier leadership, personal growth and career success thanks to the support of our community and business partners.

FFA advisers are Walter Taylor, Hallie Rehn and Mariah Markhardt.



Natalie and Margaret Rieth prepare their steer for the Wisconsin State Fair Junior Beef show. Their mom is providing feedback as they work on the animal. CONTRIBUTED



The Oconto Falls FFA executive officer team for 2023-24 is, from left, Ben Adams, reporter; Lillian Holley, vice president; Mika Tassoul, sentinel; Destiny Vandevoort, vice president; Olivia Wagner, secretary; Kara Philhower, parliamentarian; Abigail Roskom, president; Jadya Weslow, vice president; and Isabelle Blazek, historian. CONTRIBUTED



FFA members at Oconto Falls High School are thankful for this year's holiday fundraiser, which surpassed \$40,000 in gross sales. Profits support student learning to achieve premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education. Members sold fruit from MinnTex Citrus, and our chapter is proud to offer items from local agribusinesses like Meatski's Meats, Springside Cheese, Pete's Mustard and Big Dees Honey Farm. CONTRIBUTED

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A very busy year for Lena FFA

The 2023-24 Lena FFA officer team consists of President Anthony Seefeldt, Vice Presidents Mackenzie Vorpahl and Nadia Shallow, Secretary McKenna Garrigan, Sentinel Kyriana Bergevain, Reporter Lily Ann Greetan, Treasurer America Thomas, junior adviser Logan

Graef, and adviser Roberta Windus.

The Lena FFA has been very busy throughout the year. Members attend State and National FFA Convention, judge dairy cattle at the World Dairy Expo, volunteer at the WPS farm show in the information booths, and volunteer

in the education area of Oconto County Breakfast on the Farm. For fun, the members attend regular meetings, where we have game nights, movie nights, cookouts and fun activities. As a group, we attend various events such as Disney on Ice, Monster Trucks or a Green Bay Gamblers game.

The Lena FFA Alumni and FFA Supporters are a vital support group to the Lena FFA. Without their support and dedication, the activities we do would not be possible.

The Lena FFA Would also like to thank Peshtigo Veterinary Clinic LLC, Zoetis Industry Support

Program with Valley Vet Clinic SC for their generous donations. Mark your calendars for 9 a.m. to noon April 20 when Lena FFA, along with Valley Vet, will be hosting a vaccination clinic for dogs and cats in the Lena Agriculture Room.

The Lena FFA officers

have planned a very exciting FFA week. The officers will be promoting dress-up days, Money Wars with donations being donated to a local student in need of medical assistance, our annual Ag Olympics, coloring contest, and sponsoring an FFA emblem hunt and daily FFA trivia.



Lena FFA members attending the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis are, from left, Macy Herald, Alabama Lambert, Grace Madson, America Thomas, Lillyan Neta, Anthony Seefeldt, Logan Graef, Kaelyn Cook, Kenna Garrigan, Kenzie Vorpahl and Laila Collar.

CONTRIBUTED



Sam Peterson exhibits his dairy animal at the Oconto County Fair.

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Grace Seefeldt takes part in the formal show at the Oconto County Fair.

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Payton Berger, the Wittenberg-Birnamwood FFA officer team treasurer, checks out turkeys to take to the food pantry.

CONTRIBUTED

Active in the

This school year has been busy for the Witt-Birn FFA. Starting off the year, our officer team wanted to plan events that would benefit the local communities. Since then, we have hosted three major events that have helped expand our outreach to our community. We donated apples to our school cafeteria, hosted The Gobbler Gallop, which supported donating to the food pantry, and donated fruit to the local fire stations. These projects have been an amazing way to give back to our community.

In September, we teamed up with Rock Ridge Orchard to donate apples to our school lunch program. We made four donations throughout the fall, totaling 12 bushels of Cortland apples and nine bushels of Ruby Macintosh. This donation ensured the school had fresh apples to serve during lunch time. Our officer team enjoyed being able to benefit the school, while also working with a small business from central Wisconsin.

Nov. 11 and the weeks leading up to it was by far the busiest time for our officer team, but no matter how much work it took, that day made it all worth it. On Nov. 11, our FFA teamed up with 17 amazing sponsors to host the first annual Gobbler Gallop. The Gobbler Gallop was a 5k run around the town of Wittenberg. Any donations that we received and all entry fees went to purchasing Thanksgiving dinners to give to the Wittenberg Food Pantry. In total, we donated 50-plus Thanksgiving dinners and \$3,800 to the pantry. Our runners were ranked by age, and awards were given to the winner of each age group. We had a warming station in the pavilion where hot chocolate, coffee, and donuts were served. While the officer team mingled with the runners everyone, expressed how much they enjoyed the run and how they hope we will continue to do it.

Lastly, before Christmas break a few officers took fruit from our fruit sale in November to four surrounding fire stations. We wanted to thank the local firefighters for always keeping the community safe. Donating to local businesses is something that our FFA really enjoys doing and hopes to continue.

Overall, so far we have accomplished so much and can't wait to see what the rest of the school year brings.

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community: Wittenberg-Birnamwood FFA



ABOVE: The Wittenberg-Birnamwood FFA chapter officer team, after the Gobbler Gallop, from left, are Vivian Resch, Lillian Fischer, Adrianna Quade, Payton Berger, Ava Medo, Matthew Nousen, Jonas Bushman, Matthew Christain and Gracyn Uttecht, and in the front row Korey Nousen.

RIGHT: The officer team donated apples to the school lunch program. From left, are Vivian Resch, Lillian Fischer, Payton Berger, Korey Nousen, Matthew Nousen, Jonas Bushman, Lauri Klumppan, Kandice Miller and Lois Anderson.

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Progressive FARMER READER INSIGHTS

Gresham FFA chapter involved in diverse activities

Gresham FFA has numerous upcoming activities planned and participated in many notable activities for the 2023-24 school year, led by this year's FFA officers: senior Jocelyn Cerveny as president, senior Bryson Nelson as vice president of student development, sophomore Allie Cerveny as vice president of chapter development, sophomore Emily Jensen as vice president of community development, senior Abigail Hohensee as secretary, sophomore Cody Mehlberg as reporter, junior Jefferson Hoffman as student adviser, and Jeff Zobeck as the adviser.

The summer before the school year started, the officer team and Mr. Zobeck, with two additions, Porter Hoffman and Kaidyen Zaitz, traveled to Madison for the Wisconsin State FFA Convention at the Alliant Energy Center in the middle of June. They were able to attend workshops, connect with other FFA members, attend sessions and enjoy fun activities.

Also, before the beginning of the school year, two FFA officers Jocelyn Cerveny and Bryson Nelson were able to attend WLC (Washington Leadership Conference) for a week in July. This conference allowed them to learn about the history of Washington, D.C., and gain leadership experience all while connecting with FFA members from all over the nation.

Starting at the beginning of the school year in September, the officer team was able to attend a leadership conference in Seymour and develop greater leadership skills. The officer team then planned an exciting community event, a

Haunted Barn on Oct. 14. Many FFA members contributed and participated in the success of this event, which raised a great amount of food for the local food pantry in Gresham and some money for Gresham FFA.

FFA members were then able to take a trip to the World Dairy Expo in Madison, which was a great learning experience about the importance of the dairy world. At the end of October and going into November, the officer team and Mr. Zobeck, with an addition, Griffin Hoffman, traveled to Indianapolis for The National FFA Convention and Expo. During this trip, they toured a buffalo farm, a boar genetics farm and a candy factory. They also were able to attend a concert, sessions, and build new relationships through other fun experiences.

Gresham FFA has already had a few Blue and Gold Nights, one, in particular, was a service project in December where they helped wrap presents for Christmas is For Caring. Two blood drives were already run by Gresham FFA, and they plan to have another one before the end of the school year. For the rest of the school year, some activities that are planned include exciting events for FFA Week, donkey basketball, WPS Farm Show in Oshkosh, touring Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center in Manitowoc, roadside cleanup, and Plow Days.

The Gresham FFA officers, along with Mr. Zobeck, are proud of their accomplishments and excited for what the future holds for Gresham FFA.



Gresham FFA members who attended World Dairy Expo included, from left, Jocelyn Cerveny, Abigail Hohensee, Jacob Hohensee, Luke Jensen, Jessa Jensen and Bryson Nelson. CONTRIBUTED



Representing Gresham FFA at the Washington Leadership Conference are Jocelyn Cerveny, left, and Bryson Nelson. CONTRIBUTED

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Gresham FFA members attending the 2023 Wisconsin FFA Convention included, front row, from left, Allie Cerveny, Emily Jensen, Jocelyn Cerveny and Abigail Hohensee. Back row, from left, are Cody Mehlberg, Porter Hoffman, Kaidyen Zaitz, and Jefferson Hoffman. CONTRIBUTED

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Suring FFA is having another successful year

The Suring FFA chapter has been very busy with its program of activities to promote student leadership, strengthening agriculture and building communities.

In May, our chapter hosted our annual Ag Education Day that included a petting zoo and various ag education related stations for Suring Elementary and St. John Lutheran students.

In June, our chapter with other FFA chapters participated in the Neighborhood Dairy Distribution service project, which provided numerous dairy products to community members, we participated in the Breakfast on the Farm ag education activities and we helped the Breed Sportsman assemble bicycles for their annual Fourth of July celebration.

Eight Suring FFA members attended the FFA State Convention held in Madison and had the opportunity to watch Macie Reed receive her State FFA Degree. We toured Two Guernsey Girls Dairy in Freedom and LaClare Family Goat Creamery in Malone. Throughout the summer, numerous members participated in many livestock shows, the Wisconsin State Fair and the Oconto County Fair.

In July, the newly installed officers went to Spur of the Moment Ranch for our officer retreat. Officers discussed new ideas for the following year and upcoming events. Tessa Losurdo, Kaley Thompson and Maddie Hatfield attended the Washington Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C., where members are provided a premiere leadership experience.

The Suring Labor Day Celebration provided many opportunities for service, fundraising and fun.

Our annual Haunted Forest took place in October. Over 60 members participated in the fun of scaring, concessions or group leading. We also held a food drive for the Suring School Food Pantry.

We continued our Pumpkin Carving/Decorating Contest for our entire student body.

In November, we sent eight members to the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis. Lots of tours, member bonding and fun. In December, the chapter has a large fruit sale that many community members generously support. We had another successful sale.

The Suring FFA and Ag Education program has a long history at Suring Public School. The FFA chapter was chartered in 1947. The school currently has 82 members and their adviser is Mary E. Smith. The many programs and activities of Suring FFA would not be possible without the help of our Suring FFA Alumni and the Suring Community. Thank you!



ABOVE: Morgan Dryja and Bunny Cramer help an elementary student hear the heartbeat of a rabbit during Ag Education Day.

CONTRIBUTED



LEFT: Suring FFA Officers 2023-24 are Ginger Gerndt, secretary; Bunny Cramer, treasurer; Birdee Cramer, parliamentarian; Hailey Huguet, sentinel; Tessa Losurdo, president; Chloe Schroeder, reporter; Georgia Gerndt, vice president and Chase Schindel, vice president.

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Gillett FFA builds relationships in the local community

By HOPE SOPER
Special to NEW Media

The Gillett FFA has been strengthening agriculture and promoting community growth for many years.

The FFA has been a thriving club with 50-plus members. These students have attended conferences like the Fall Leadership Workshop to sharpen their leadership skills and grow as people.

FFA has opened many new doors for Gillett members as they have had opportunities to travel to places like Madison and experience the World Dairy Expo and Indianapolis for the National FFA Convention and Expo.

The Gillett chapter strives to help grow its community. One of these events is the annual Holiday Dinner, when the elderly are invited to have a home-cooked meal and visit with members. It always puts a smile on someone's face and is a great way to kick off the holiday season.

Another event they put on yearly called "Farmer Appreciation," where they put together five-gallon pails with Glazers Donuts, milk, and other snacks. They then

deliver the buckets to local farmers and thank them for all their hard work.

Members always lend a hand and volunteer at various community events like Breakfast on the Farm and the town clean up.

The Gillett FFA always wants to spread the word about FFA and get others involved. They plan exciting events, including FFA Week activities and Partners in Active Learning Support, a mentoring program for elementary schoolers.

Many members of the Gillett FFA are currently getting ready for the Leadership Development Events and Career Development Events competitions and working on submitting their Supervised Agriculture Experience proficiency application. These competitions help students expand their knowledge of agriculture and help them prepare for a career.

The Gillett FFA is a thriving club that offers many opportunities and benefits students in many ways. Getting involved provides ways to help serve your community, prepare for the future, and grow relationships.



Kylee Stelzer of Suring FFA leads the grand champion beef market steer into the auction ring during the 2021 Sale of Champions at the Oconto County Youth Fair in Gillett.

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