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National FFA Organization Names 2017 American Star Award Finalists

INDIANAPOLIS (*Friday, July 21, 2017/National FFA Organization*) –Today, the National FFA Organization selected 16 students from throughout the United States as finalists for its 2017 top achievement awards: American Star Farmer, American Star in Agribusiness, American Star in Agricultural Placement and American Star in Agriscience.

The American Star Awards represents the best of the best among thousands of American FFA Degree recipients. The award recognizes FFA members who have developed outstanding agricultural skills and competencies through the completion of a supervised agricultural experience (SAE) program. A required activity in FFA, an SAE allows members to learn by doing. Members can own and operate an agricultural business, intern at an agricultural business or conduct an agriculture-based scientific experiment and report the results.

Other requirements to achieve the award include demonstrating top management skills; completing key agricultural education, scholastic and leadership requirements; and earning an American FFA Degree, the organization's highest level of student accomplishment.

A panel of judges will interview finalists and select one winner for each award at the 90th National FFA Convention & Expo, Oct. 25-28 in Indianapolis. The four winners will be announced during an onstage ceremony on Thursday, Oct. 26.

ADM Crop Risk Services, Case IH, Elanco and Syngenta sponsor the American FFA Degree recognition program.

The finalists include:

American Star Farmer

Joseph Arnold of the Lac qui Parle Valley FFA Chapter in Minnesota
Nickolas James Vollmer of the Merino FFA Chapter in Colorado
Jake Fanning of the Laverne FFA Chapter in Oklahoma
Mark Cavallero of the Madera FFA Chapter in California

American Star in Agribusiness

Nathan M. DeYoung of the Shenandoah FFA Chapter in Indiana
Austin D. Nordyke of the Hugoton FFA Chapter in Kansas
Audra Montgomery of the Carrington FFA Chapter in North Dakota
Shaun Wenrick of the Anna FFA Chapter in Ohio

American Star in Agricultural Placement

Matthew S. Ries of the Lomira FFA Chapter in Wisconsin
Devin Debruhl of the Shenandoah FFA Chapter in Indiana
Kellie Mae Einck of the South O'Brien FFA Chapter in Iowa
Bailey Wilson of the Pilot Point FFA Chapter in Texas

American Star in Agriscience

Chrysta Noelle Beck of the Pettisville FFA Chapter in Ohio

Elizabeth Baker-Mikesell of the Greenwood FFA Chapter in Pennsylvania
Leah Danielle Hefty of the DeKalb FFA Chapter in Indiana
Loren Gregory King of the Branch Area Career Centers FFA Chapter in Michigan

Visit FFA.org/stars for more information about the American Star Awards.

The National FFA Organization provides leadership, personal growth and career success training through agricultural education to 649,355 student members who belong to one of 7,859 local FFA chapters throughout the U.S., Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The organization is also supported by 225,891 alumni members in 1,934 alumni chapters throughout the U.S.

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About National FFA Organization

The National FFA Organization is a national youth organization of 649,355 student members as part of 7,859 local FFA chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The organization is supported by 225,891 alumni members in 1,934 local FFA Alumni chapters throughout the U.S. 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. The National FFA Organization operates under a federal charter granted by the 81st United States Congress and it is an integral part of public instruction in agriculture. The U.S. Department of Education provides leadership and helps set direction for FFA as a service to state and local agricultural education programs. For more, visit the National FFA Organization online at FFA.org and on Facebook, Twitter and the official National FFA Organization blog.

About National FFA Foundation

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. Governed by a 19-member board of trustees composed of educators, business leaders, individual donors and FFA Alumni, the foundation is a separately registered nonprofit organization. About 82 percent of every dollar received by the foundation supports FFA members and agricultural education opportunities. For more, visit FFA.org/Give.