



Press Release

For Immediate Release

Texas FFA Association
614 East 12th Street
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TexasFFA.org

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Rudder FFA Receives Top Honors at Texas FFA Convention

Dallas, Texas – The Rudder FFA Chapter was recognized as a gold-level chapter for the esteemed Golden Horizon award in the multiple-teacher division at the 88th annual Texas FFA State Convention held July 11-15 in Dallas.

The gold-level Golden Horizon award is the highest state rating to be bestowed upon a Texas FFA chapter. Golden Horizon award selection is based on exceptional chapter involvement and activities within the school and community. The Rudder FFA Chapter placed third out of the 1038 active FFA Chapters in the state of Texas.

The Golden Horizon award recognizes well-rounded chapter involvement that promotes maximum participation in order to deliver all facets of the agricultural education program.

Rudder FFA Receives Gold National Chapter Rating and advances to Nationals

The Rudder FFA Chapter received the prestigious Gold Emblem rating at the Texas FFA State Convention.

The Gold Emblem rating is only bestowed upon the top 10 percent of FFA chapters in Texas. The Rudder FFA Chapter placed eighth in the state-wide rankings. There are 1038 active FFA Chapter in the state. Gold Emblem FFA chapters advance to the national level to be judged for the National FFA Chapter Contest.

Chapters that received the Gold Emblem rating actively implemented the FFA mission and strategies. These chapters improve their operations by using a Program of Activities, which emphasizes student, chapter, and community development.

Thurman and Fazzino of Rudder FFA is Named Texas FFA Star Award Finalists

Reagan Thurman and Katherine Fazzino, of the Rudder FFA Chapter, were honored as Star Lone Star Degree Finalists. Thurman was the Area 3 FFA Star in Production, while Fazzino was the Area 3 Star in Agriscience.

The state award winner in each category received a \$1,000 Dina Wallrath-Robertson Memorial Star Scholarship made available by the Texas FFA Foundation. Star Awards are given at each degree level in four categories: Placement, Production, Agribusiness and Agriscience.

FFA Stars are chosen based on the most outstanding Supervised Agriculture Experience Program within their respective degree and category. Winners maintain a comprehensive record keeping system to help justify and explain their Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) project.



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Two Rudder FFA Members Place First in Texas FFA Agriscience Fair

Katherine and Olivia Fazzino, of the Rudder FFA Chapter, each placed first in their respective divisions at the Texas FFA Agriscience Fair at the 88th annual Texas FFA State Convention held July 11-15 in Dallas.

Katherine participated in the Environmental Services/Natural Resources category, Sr. Division. Olivia participated in the Plant Systems category, Jr. Division. The Agriscience Fair fuses the traditional science fair with agriculture. FFA members conduct cutting edge agricultural research to compete in categories such as biochemistry and microbiology, environmental science, zoology, botany and engineering.

The Agriscience Fair was made possible by the ExxonMobil Corporation. As the state award winners in their category, both received a \$1,000 scholarship from the Richard Wallrath Education Foundation.

Alexandria Alderete also participated in the Social Systems category, Sr. Division, where she placed fifth in the state.

Five Rudder FFA members are Named American FFA Degree Candidate

Nathan Cervenka, Mary Frances Fazzino, Angela Flores, Natalie Swenson, and Karlyn Wager were named as candidates for the American FFA Degree at the FFA State. The American FFA Degree is the highest degree bestowed by the National FFA Organization.

The American Degree is the top degree in a four-tier degree program that recognizes individual achievement in instructional programs, supervised experience and leadership development. The American Degree is awarded at the National FFA Convention in October.

A portion of the American FFA Degree ceremony states, “Boundaries within our country exist only in name. True American citizens are interested in and loyal to their local communities and states, but their greatest devotion is to their country. Recipients of the American FFA Degree see beyond limited horizons. They concern themselves not only with the affairs of their local chapters and state associations, but also with the National FFA Organization, working for the advancement of agriculture, which, in turn, strengthens America.”

Five Rudder FFA members selected to serve as FFA Foundation Ambassadors

Katherine Fazzino, Olivia Fazzino, Rosemary Fazzino, Lauren Hillert, and Reagan Thurman of the Rudder FFA Chapter served as a Texas FFA Foundation Ambassadors during the FFA State Convention.

These five Rudder FFA members were among the 50 FFA members selected to serve as Foundation Ambassadors. The Foundation Ambassador program serves as the official liaison to sponsors, special guests and dignitaries on behalf of the Texas FFA during the annual Texas FFA Convention.



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Ambassadors went through a competitive application process, and once selected, they received an extensive two-day training specifically focused on donor relations, personal skills development and professional networking. Foundation Ambassadors studied the history of the Texas FFA Association, Texas FFA Foundation and the records of sponsors' commitments to agricultural education and the Texas FFA.

Many Ambassadors were matched up with representatives from the Texas FFA Foundation's corporate sponsors and individual donors, while others assisted in the logistics of the annual VIP Breakfast or helped organize sponsors' availability for stage appearances during convention general sessions.

Three members of the Rudder FFA Serve as Courtesy Corps

Colby Jeske, Lily Mason, and Rylie Philipello, of the Rudder FFA Chapter served as a Courtesy Corps member at the 88th annual Texas FFA State Convention.

The Courtesy Corps is a team of student volunteers who handle many logistical functions at the nation's largest state FFA convention.

Eleven Rudder FFA members receive State Lone Star FFA Degree

Alexandria Alderete, Brandi Bratton, Katherine Fazzino, Colby Hardy, McKenlee Herd, Hanna Hitchcock, Hayden Muth, Lane Ponzio, Ty Ponzio, Trent Terry, and Reagan Thurman were awarded the Lone Star FFA Degree in at the 88th annual Texas FFA Convention in Dallas, Texas. The Lone Star FFA Degree is the highest degree bestowed by the Texas FFA.

The Lone Star FFA Degree recognizes FFA members who have received the Chapter degree, been active FFA members for at least two years, completed at least four semesters of agricultural science at or above the ninth grade level, maintained a supervised agricultural experience (SAE) program, demonstrated their leadership skills, and have shown a commitment to the FFA through involvement at the chapter level and above. There Rudder FFA members were among the more than 2,500 FFA members to receive this esteemed degree.

Rudder FFA supporters Receive Honorary Lone Star FFA Degree

Rudder FFA supporters Dr. Larry Herd, James Hodges, Ashley Jenkins, Rachel Layton, Bennie Mayes, Kim Ponzio, Nicole Terry, Beau Thurman, Linda Thurman, and Sherita Wilson-Rodgers were awarded the Honorary Lone Star FFA Degree during the FFA State Convention. The Honorary Lone Star FFA Degree is the highest honorary degree bestowed by the Texas FFA.

The Honorary Lone Star FFA Degree recognizes individuals who have rendered outstanding service to agricultural education and the Texas FFA.

The 88th annual Texas FFA Convention recorded approximately 12,000 members and guests. Members of the state's largest agricultural youth leadership organization spent the week attending leadership



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workshops, participating in events and activities, being recognized for their achievements, and serving as the legislative body for the Texas FFA Association.

The Texas FFA is the nation's largest state FFA association with a membership of more than 115,000. FFA gives students the opportunity to apply practical classroom knowledge to real world experiences through local, state and national competitions. For more information about the Texas FFA, visit www.mytexasffa.org.