



Quarterly Newsletter

Ag Teacher by choice, not by chance!

Fall 2019

Letter from the President



Dear Florida Agriculture Teachers,

Welcome back to another school year. I hope you had a restful summer and are ready for the 2019-2020 school year. FAAE members had a busy

summer with several teachers representing us at the NAAE Region V Conference in Charleston, SC and the FACTE Conference in Orlando, Fl. It was great to spend time with you during these conferences. If you were not in attendance, plan to put it on your calendar for this coming summer. It is a great way to network with colleagues.

I wanted to take a moment to say thank you for joining our professional organization. As our membership continues to increase, we

are working to provide you with professional development. Mid-Winter Conference is planned for January 10-12, 2020. Please plan to join us for this exciting weekend of professional development.

If you have not joined FAAE this year dues are \$150. You can join during one of our professional workshops or on our website www.flaged.org. Please feel free to reach out to an area director if you have questions about membership.

Thank you for all that you do in your classroom to inspire our future generation. Please feel free to reach out to me at any time. I hope to see you at an FAAE event this year!

Best Wishes,

Ashley Thoron

Area Updates

Area 1 Representative Stan Scurlock



Welcome back to school. I hope you had a great summer with some R&R. An Ag teacher in my book is on call 24/7/365 but I hope you had an opportunity to enjoy life in some way.

As we dive back into another year I would like to remind you about the mid-winter conference approaching in a few months, January 10-12. We need your recommendations and suggestions for workshop topics that you feel will be beneficial to cover at the conference. Dr. Thoron and I will be putting an agenda together soon, but we want to make sure we are offering workshops that are needed and helpful.

This summer I had a chance to experience agriculture of North Carolina and South Carolina during my travels to the Region V Conference and the Carolina Ag Teacher Conferences. One thing I learned is agriculture may be diverse from state to state but the dedication and passion of the ag educator remains the same across the board.

I wish you a great year. If you ever need to get in contact with me, you can reach me at stan.scurlock@jcsb.org or 850-209-8302

Area 2 Representative Kaitlin Van Heusen

"Welcome back to another fantastic school year! To our new teachers, thank you for joining such a great profession. We are glad you are here and are willing to help you any way we can. To our veteran teachers, thank you for your continuing commitment to agriculture education. I would like to take a moment to introduce myself, I am Kaitlin Van Heusen. I currently am part of the Bradford County School District teaching at North Florida Technical College in Starke, FL. I am serving as your Area II Representative on the FFAE board. Thank you to Area II for allowing me to do so!

Area II is coming off of a great summer full of many accomplishments. Congratulations to all of our winning chapters and students at the Florida FFA State Convention. We look forward to seeing your continued success in the future. Thank you to all of our teachers who have attended new teacher training and more. The time you have invested into your growth is appreciated by your students. Also, congratulations to Emily Acevedo for being the FACTE Outstanding Secondary Student of the Year. She is from the Bradford FFA Chapter. I would also like to congratulate Alex Baun from Oak Leaf for her recognition at FACTE.

Please share your chapter successes and amazing chapter pictures throughout the year. I am always looking for material for the newsletter! Feel free to reach out with questions. My email is vanheusen.kaitlin@mybradford.us. I hope you have an amazing school year.

Area 3 Representative Sarah Hurst

“Welcome back Area 3 teachers! The students and teachers in Area 3 have had a great summer. Over 20 FFA members from our area will receive their American Degree at National Convention in October, and 6 Agriscience Fair Projects were selected as National Finalists (Congratulations Brooksville!). Area 3 had finalists and state winners in several contests at State Convention in June, including Creed Speaking, MS Extemporaneous Public Speaking, MS Prepared Public Speaking, and many more I missed. There were also 5 National Chapter Award winning chapters, 3 two star winners and 2 three star chapters. Brooksville FFA was also selected as a Premier Chapter: Strengthening Agriculture national finalist. Congratulations!

Teachers and schools from our area also won awards from FFAE and advanced onto regional competition. Congratulations Carrie Owen- Outstanding Agricultural Education Teacher, Amanda Forstater- Outstanding Early Career Teacher, and Vanguard High School- Outstanding Secondary Program.

I know many of you have been busy with officer retreats this summer, here’s how two of our chapters made the most of their time! Right before school started, the Taylor Senior FFA and Taylor Middle FFA chapters had a combined military-themed STARS Officer Leadership Retreat. They spent four days at Gold Head Branch State Park learning about project planning, teambuilding, organization skills, and creating the POA for both chapters. They wore officer shirts with the motto “Improvise, Adapt, Overcome,” and took a field trip to Camp Blanding to visit the military museum and learn about how teamwork and project planning play an important role in the military. Experienced officers led short workshops for the new officers. On the final day they hosted a community pot-luck lunch with the parents and Alumni members where the officers presented their POAs. The officer teams are very excited to roll out their planned events as they accomplish their theme of “Racin’ Towards Success”!

Check out their team photo at the state park:



Hope your school year is off the great start and that we see you at Mid-Winter Conference in Haines City in January.”

Area 4 Representative Jimmy Sweeney

I hope that everyone in Area IV has had a wonderful start to another exciting school year. I would like to extend a welcome hand to all the new teachers in Polk, Osceola and Orange counties. We are ecstatic you have chosen to teach in our area. I hope that everyone has a successful year. If you are a new teacher, or experienced, please do not hesitate to ask for help from another teacher as we all are striving for the same goal.

Polk County is starting a new mentoring program this year to help the less experienced teachers navigate the wonderful world of FFA and ag teaching. The new teacher will be paired with an experienced teacher to hopefully alleviate problems and guide them.

I hope that we can continue to grow our membership in FFAE and allow more teachers the opportunity to network and gain valuable professional development. I invite all of Area IV to the Mid-Winter conference at the LTC in early January. Please be on the lookout for more information on email in the coming months.

Jimmy Sweeney
George Jenkins High School
Area IV FFAE

Area 5 Representative Jonathan Heavner

FAAE members,

First let me thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as Area 5 Director on the FFAE board. I look forward to representing you and doing my best to help provide meaningful professional development as we all work to further agriculture education.

I'd like to ask you to complete a few simple tasks today. Task one: Reach out to me. My cell phone number is 618-719-1212 and my email is heavnerj@manateeschools.net. I would love to hear from you and learn about your programs. The more advisors I hear from the better I'll be able to serve our area.

Task two: reach out to a new teacher in your county. The burnout rate for ag teachers is high. We all know this. We all understand the hours, hard work, and sacrifices it takes to run our programs. If we do not give beginning ag teachers the support they need, they will never make it to year 5, let alone be career ag teachers. I ask that if you know of an opening in your county or area, reach out to the new teacher, and see what you can do to help them in their first year. We are all in this together. Encourage the new teachers and help make them aware of the programs available to help them in their first few years of teaching.

Sincerely,

Jon Heavner

Area 5 Director