



Quarterly Newsletter

Ag Teacher by choice, not by chance!

Spring 2023

Letter from the President – Ms. Farrah Johnson

Whew! We made it! Happy Summer to everyone! Congratulations to all the teachers and chapters who will be celebrating successes this week! I know many hours of set up and practices go into all the preparation for all of the FFA competitions. Recognition this week is no small feat and congratulations is in order! You help provide the many life changing opportunities for our students throughout the school year and this week at convention.



It seems a little surreal that this school year is already over. I don't know about you, but some weeks flew by this year while others seemed to drag on. I know for many this year brought its fair share of highs and lows. I know we have dealt with hurricanes and floods then droughts conditions. But this year has also brought major accomplishments, national championships growth and accomplishments. I encourage you to take a moment and take a step back and reflect on this year. Maybe there is something new you want to try, maybe you have some changes you want to make, maybe you want to figure out how to do something again. Whatever it may be, try to figure out 1 thing that could make next year even better.

I know an Ag teacher summer is often very different from our many colleagues at school. Summer often includes road trips for picking up animals, summer conferences, farm maintenance, officer retreats and more! As busy as we can fill our planners, please stop and take some time to recharge this summer. You are worth the time and investment of investing in yourself just as much! I often hear you can pour from an empty glass. Take time to relax and enjoy life at some point this summer.

Our FFAE board hosted the Region V Conference last week in St. Augustine. This responsibility rotates through the states so we host once every seven years. We hosted roughly 130 ag teachers and families to include tours, activities and meal functions. A special thank you to our sponsors who helped make the event a success and our officers who went the extra mile with set up and delivery. I may be biased, but I think it was one of the best! I know many are looking forward to our FACTE conference and FFAE Pre-conference July 17-19 at the Sea World Renaissance! We are excited about the great professional development and look forward to seeing you there.

Thank you to everyone who had a Florida Agricultural Education license plate! We are still in jeopardy of losing the tag in the future. Proceeds from this tag support FFA leadership events, FFAE professional development and more. We will continue to look for ways to promote tag sales in the future. If you do not have the FFA tag, please consider purchasing one or two!

Thank you for what you do everyday! Your students and parents don't always remember the extra mile, but it doesn't go unnoticed! Have a great summer!

Area Updates

Area 1 Representative Stan Scurlock



Well, another busy school year in the books and another hot summer before us. I hope everyone has time to relax and recuperate before the next school year. I know if you are like me, you will be at the school at least three or four times each week working or preparing for next year. We as agricultural educators have a don't stop mentality which can work against us sometimes. So, try to find that time to focus on your family and yourself.

For those attending the FFA State Convention have a great time. Looks like we will have a full house event. Make sure to renew your FACTE, FAAE and NAAE dues while you are there. Remember your membership runs from July to June. So, sign up or renew while you are there to get your full year of benefits.

Have an awesome and safe summer!

Area 2 Representative Stacy Young

As we are about to wrap up the year, we are excited for the number of chapters that will be competing and represented at state convention from Area II. We have three advisors nominated for Advisor of the year from our area, 19 state star finalists as well as Jill Huesman for FFA Hall of Fame. We also have a number of teacher openings in our area. Many of them are in small rural communities with a lot of support for the programs. A number of them would be a great place for a person to make their mark and build a program like they dream about. If you are interested into moving to our area, please feel reach out to me and I will let you know of the ones that I personally know of that is open. As the new year approaches, I would like to encourage everyone to try something new this year. Reach out to someone in our area or another area to look at a new opportunity for your students to participate in.



Area 3 Representative Sara Hurst



Hello Area 3!

Congratulations to all our Area 3 teachers, new hires, and teams! I'm back again this summer with fun ideas for you to destress. This year I've included an activity or attraction to check out in each county in Area 3. The work never ends, but that doesn't mean the fun has to stop. Take a tour of Area 3 and check out these interesting locations:

1. **Citrus County**- Check out the **Withlacoochee State Forest** (<https://www.fdacs.gov/Forest-Wildfire/Our-Forests/State-Forests/Withlacoochee-State-Forest>). In the forest you can find caves, horse riding, biking, and hiking trails, Croom motorcycle area, kayaking areas, and more. One of the most unique features are the several caves that are open to the public, including Dames

Cave (AKA Vandal Cave), Sick Bat Cave, Peace Cave, and Danger Cave. Camping, fishing, and hunting are also available.

2. **Flagler County**- learn more about our history at the **Florida Agricultural Museum** (<https://www.floridaagmuseum.org/>). They offer tours, horseback riding, summer camps, and wagon rides. Flagler county is also home to several state parks with a variety of environments ranging from beach to scrub to historical ruins, so make it a day trip!

3. **Hernando County**- Visit the world famous mermaids at **Weeki Wachee Springs State Park** (<https://weekiwachee.com/>). You can catch a mermaid show in the underwater theater, take a boat tour, and swim and waterslide at Buccaneer Bay. With reservations, you can stand up paddle board or kayak down the winding Weeki Wachee River.
4. **Lake County**- Create your own sip and shop with a visit to **Lakeridge Winery & Vineyards** (<https://www.lakeridgewinery.com/>) to check out their award winning local wines. Then, find your next treasure at **Renninger's Vintage Antique Center & Farmer's Flea Market** (<https://renningers.net/mt-dora/>). Open on weekends, Renninger's is sure to offer many interesting items to browse.
5. **Marion County**- For the adventurous, take a zipline tour of an old quarry at **Canyons Zip Line and Adventure Park** (<https://www.zipthecanyons.com/index.html>). They even offer a moon light tour where participants whiz through the canyons in the dark. Also available is horseback riding and kayaking.
6. **Seminole County**- Visit the animals at the **Central Florida Zoo and Botanical Gardens** (<https://www.centralfloridazoo.org/>), they offer zip lining, animal encounters, and zoo camps for children.
7. **Sumter County**- Sell your junk or find new treasures at **Brown and Brown Farms Junk in the Trunk Sale** (<https://brownandbrownfarms.com/>). Held the first Saturday of every month, browse items of all types from dozens of vendors. There is also a country store to visit, as well as seasonal festivals.
8. **Volusia County**- No list of things to do in Volusia county would be complete without a mention of **Daytona International Speedway** (<https://www.daytonainternationalspeedway.com/>). While summer is not prime racing time, the NASCAR racing experience is available, as well as tours of the track.

There are dozens of attractions, local restaurants, activities, and places to stay that I didn't list, so choose a place to visit and make a day or a week of it! Use the little time off you get to take a family trip, a staycation, or a girls' day. Enjoy your summer!

My term as your Area 3 Representative ends in July, but you can still email me at sara.hurst@marion.k12.fl.us. We hope you will join FFAE if you haven't already, and we hope to see you soon!

Area 4 Representative Kyle Carlton



Congratulations on putting another school year in the books. I apologize for missing some folks who are retiring this year but I will recognize a few who have served for many years and are hopefully going to enjoy many more years of life and leisure (Jimmy Sweeney, Randy Uis, Tim Bean, and Donna Oliver are some from Area IV).

A busy summer lies ahead for many of us and our students with state convention, Region V Conference, Forestry Camp, officer retreats, Leadership Camp, and FACTE all on the agenda. I encourage all of you to attend and participate in FACTE. It is an excellent opportunity for fellowship and professional development. Thinking back over the years, the events over the summers that I spent talking icons in our profession informally or learning in structured workshops were some of the most beneficial and informative opportunities to make me a more proficient FFA Advisor/ Ag Teacher. At this time of the year, many of us do not want to think about next school year but rather, would like to get a brief break from the grind, but consider taking advantage of these opportunities.

Congratulations to all of the advisors and FFA chapters that have had a successful spring regarding CDE's. Also, good luck to those of you who will be competing at the state convention. It will be a good to see old friends and meet new ones at convention. Stop by the FFAE table and say hello and consider renewing your membership.

Area 6 Representative Phillip Cosby

Hill-Gustat Middle School

Congratulations to Aaron Simpson for making the top 4 in Florida FFA in the State OH Demo finals in Production.

Sebring High School FFA

Landscaping and Marketing Teams at FFA State Ornamental Horticulture contest in Gainesville!

Lake Placid Middle School

2023 State Ornamental Horticulture Demonstration Finals update....

In the Consumer Use category Kendra Connell and Jo-Dee Slade placed 3rd in the state!

In the Landscaping category Lowry Dean and Easton Duncan placed 6th in the state!

A HUGE congratulations to both of our teams for your accomplishments and representing Lake Placid Middle FFA. Our chapter is so extremely proud of you guys.

Students from around the area have become certified in many different industry certifications.



FAAE Award Winners!!

We'd like to take a moment to congratulate our award winners. These individual's applications were evaluated by an award application committee and selected to represent our state in the regional competitions this summer. Please congratulate these individuals on being fantastic representatives of our Florida Ag Ed family! Good luck at regional competitions.

Teacher Turn the Key – Lexi Sanchez

Outstanding Early Career – Jessica Hawkins

Outstanding Secondary/Middle Program – Bell MS/HS (Brett Wasden & Debbie Jones)

Outstanding Teacher – Stacy Young

Ideas Unlimited – Amanda Ellis

Outstanding Service Citation – Hilary Holley, Florida FFA Foundation

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