

MISSOURI NEWS SCENE

Champions of agronomy

By JERILYN JOHNSON

THE Brunswick FFA Chapter has kept the Show-Me State winning streak alive. Since 2000, Missouri FFA teams have won the Agronomy Career Development Event at the National FFA Convention. The Brunswick FFA team topped a field of 32 teams and earned first-place honors at the 2006 convention in Indianapolis — its second victory in a row.

The all-star team of Elizabeth Gunn, Jordan Harmon, Jason Reichert and Chris Sterling, all of Brunswick, was well prepared and schooled. The team's coach and agriculture instructor, Tom Zeilstra, has built a program with high standards. Daily four-hour practices, field trips to the University of Missouri's Bradford Farm and local farms, plus advice from area agronomy specialists were all part of the team's preparation.

"It was a pretty cool thing to repeat," says Jason Reichert, a senior at Brunswick High School. "It's a very intense, competitive event, so you have to be prepared."

Team members did so well they swept the top individual placings in the Agronomy CDE, as well. Sterling earned first place, Harmon was second, Gunn was third, and Reichert took fourth.

"This has not been done by any of our past winning teams,

Key Points

- Brunswick FFA wins Agronomy CDE for second straight year.
- CDE tests students' classroom learning and career skills.
- Team members gain valuable experience and scholarships.

so I am especially proud of these members," Zeilstra says.

Real-life scenario

The Agronomy CDE competition tests participants' abilities to apply classroom learning and career skills in agronomy to real-life situations.

For the 2006 team activity, the Brunswick team was provided a scenario of an agronomic situation in the Northwest region of the United States. The team was given a list of 10 crops common to this region — such as wheat, potatoes, sugarbeets, peppers and hops — and asked to develop a management plan in one hour.

Team members chose white potatoes on a 153-acre field as their crop and developed both an oral presentation and a written plan that addressed key agronomy questions and how they would manage that field. Utilizing critical-thinking skills and teamwork, the students justified their decisions to a demands panel of judges.

Cost information utilized for various practices such as irrigation, machinery, harvesting, seedbed preparation, storage and loan interest rates, fertil-



TOP TEAM: Brunswick FFA Chapter is the 2006 National FFA Agronomy CDE winner. Team members are (from left) Elizabeth Gunn, Jordan Harmon, Chris Sterling and Jason Reichert.

izers, and chemicals are part of the CDE. The students are asked to figure profit or loss based on this information.

Individual activities and points are earned with a 50-question general-knowledge examination, plus thorough tests on plant and weed identification, soil science, and purity seed analysis. Individual team members also are tested for their knowledge and reasoning in grain grading, crop quality

evaluation, plant diagnostics and pest management. Finally, each member is tested on farm equipment and machinery identification.

Efforts rewarded

The National FFA Foundation awarded each Brunswick FFA team member a plaque and \$1,000 college scholarship. Bayer CropScience sponsored the 2006 Agronomy CDE.

"The Brunswick school,

community and Missouri FFA are all proud of the winning tradition of the Brunswick FFA Chapter in the Agronomy Career Development Event," says Steve Brown, executive secretary, Missouri FFA Association.

"The Brunswick agricultural education program's success is an example of how the rigor and relevance of the agricultural education curriculum rewards student success."

Missouri FFA members excel in 2006

By JERILYN JOHNSON

THE Missouri FFA Association will be hard-pressed to beat its record-setting year of 2006, but this overachieving group is sure to try. FFA membership grew to 23,704 members in 305 chapters in the Show-Me State last year — a 79-year record-high membership for the state.

"We have been on a continuous upward growth curve since 1985 and look for this pattern to continue," says Terry Heiman, state FFA adviser and state director for agricultural education.

Missouri FFA can boast quality as well as numbers. Last year, Missouri had 327 American FFA Degree recipients — the most from one state in FFA history.

More than 439 secondary agricultural education instruc-

Key Points

- Missouri FFA celebrates many achievements in 2006.
- State membership grows to 23,704 youth in 305 chapters.
- Priorities still personal growth, academics and career success.

tors teach agriculture and provide leadership development through FFA. The Missouri program incorporates the growing demands of science, math, technology, environmental stewardship, marketing, management and business to serve the agricultural, food, fiber and natural resources systems, Heiman says.

FFA not only encourages personal growth, but also promotes career success for students through hands-on experiences, educational rigor, real-world relevance and academic excellence.

Here is a list of more Missouri FFA highlights from 2006:

■ Alesa Raasch, Norborne, was an American Star Farmer National Finalist.

■ Six National FFA Proficiency Award winners are: Erin Croy, Gallatin, Agricultural Education; Cole Knehans, Higginsville, Landscape Management; Michael Manson, Brunswick, Fruit Production; Casey McDonnal, Cameron, Floriculture; Trevon Ogden, Lockwood, Diversified Livestock Production; and Chris Perry, North Shelby, Swine Production.

■ Missouri had 15 National FFA Proficiency Award finalists — a record for the state.

■ Four National FFA Career Development Event first-place winners include: Brunswick, Agronomy; North Shelby, Agricultural Mechanics; Neosho, Dairy Cattle Evaluation; and



Stockton, Parliamentary Procedure.

■ Fourteen CDE teams received a gold rating, ranking within the top 10 teams in the nation.

■ Twenty CDE team members received more than \$25,000 in college scholarships.

■ Six Missouri business leaders and three teachers received the Honorary American FFA Degree.

■ Robert "Bob" Marshall, Columbia, received the National FFA VIP Citation.

■ Three new FFA chapters were founded in Blue Springs, Canton and Tuscombina.

■ A total of 691 Missouri FFA members received the State FFA Degree at the State FFA Convention in Columbia.

■ Some \$100,000 in National FFA college scholarships were awarded to 76 members.

FYI

For more information on FFA, contact a local chapter adviser or Terry Heiman, state FFA adviser, at P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102. Call (573) 751-3544, or visit the Web site, www.dese.state.mo.us/div/careered/ag_mo_ffa.htm.