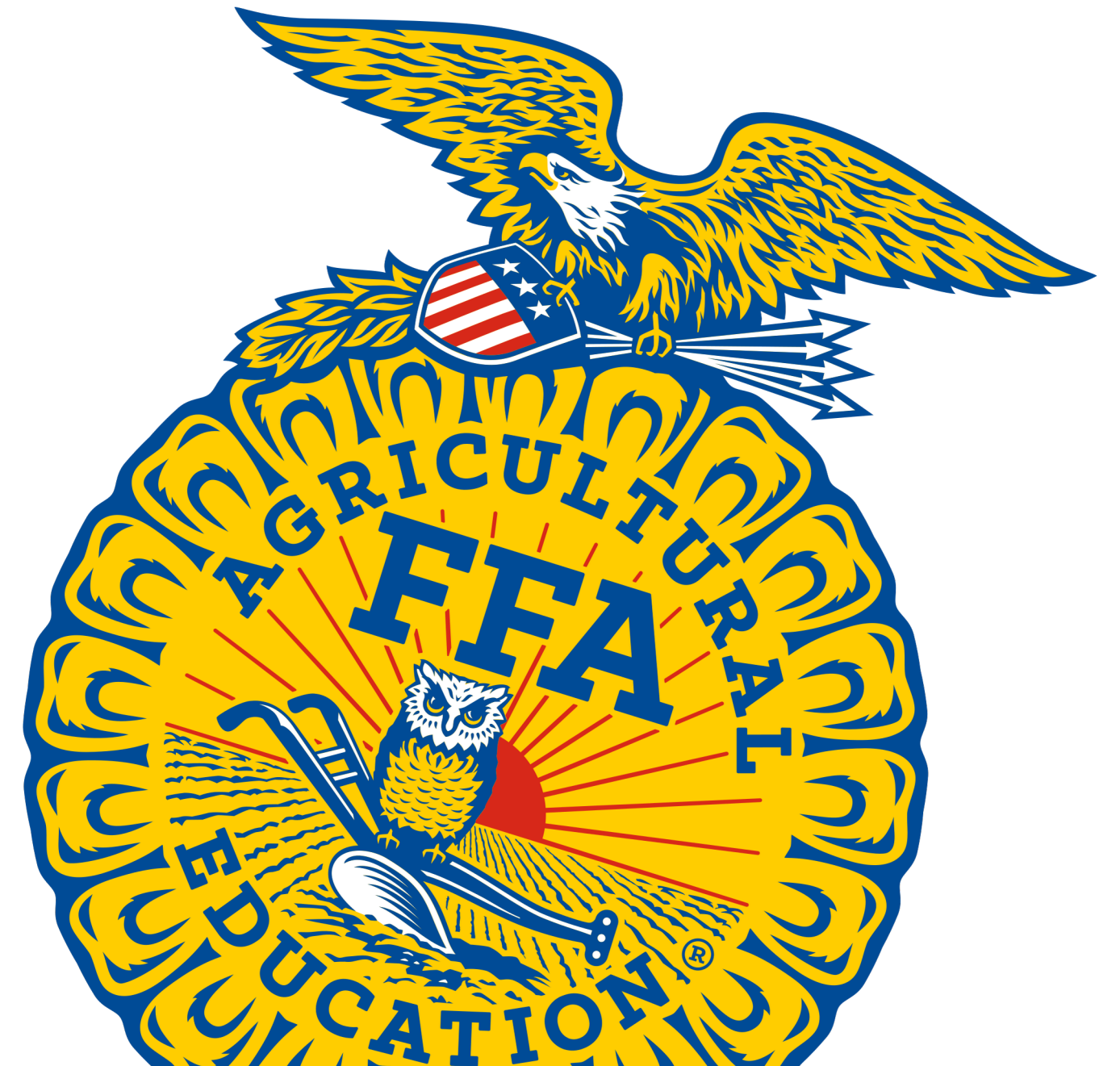


**Richland County High School  
Agriculture Education Department**

**Annual Report  
2025-2026**



# Message from the Teachers



The Agriculture Department continues to thrive at RCHS. During the 2025–2026 school year, 285 unduplicated students enrolled in an Agriculture Education course.

Many notable achievements were accomplished by the Agriculture Department and the FFA Chapter. Students received recognition for their hard work, dedication, achievements, and leadership.

The community is very supportive of the Agriculture Program and the FFA Chapter, and students are actively involved within the community by volunteering at various local events as well as hosting activities that benefit our community. Dual Credit classes continue to provide students with more opportunities to kick-start their collegiate careers and are a great asset to our program.

Ms. Mueller has stepped into her role exceedingly well here at RCHS, and we are excited to see her future contributions within our department.

The Agriculture Department will continue to grow and succeed with the continued support of parents, teachers, the community, the administration, and the RCCU #1 Board of Education.

Respectfully Submitted,

Hayden Kinkade, Lexi Mueller, and Jamie VanDyke



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# Agriculture Enrollment & Demographics

## Agriculture Class Enrollment 2025-2026

- Advanced Ag Mechanics= 15
- Agriculture Mechanics= 62
- Agriculture Business Management= 34
- Agriculture Science = 41
- Agriculture Engineering = 22
- Introduction to Agriculture = 110
- Natural Resources = 23
- Veterinary Science = 4
- Welding I = 28
- Welding II = 8

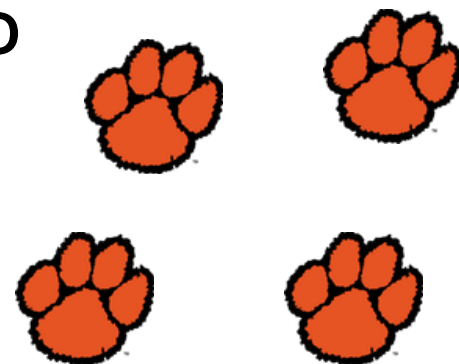
**TOTAL ENROLLMENT = 347 DUPLICATED**

**64%**

Male  
Ag. Ed. Students

**36%**

Female  
Ag. Ed. Students



## 4 Year History

By The Numbers  
Unduplicated Students

**2025-2026**  
**285**

**2024-2025**  
**283**

**2023-2024**  
**275**

**2022-2023**  
**296**



# Agriculture Department Grants

2025-2026

The Incentive Funding Grant (IFG) generated **\$4,533** for the RCHS Agriculture Department to spend on equipment and supplies.

The three-circle grant generated **\$30,191** for time spent with students on classroom lab, SAE, and or FFA activities. To date, **1,795.6** hours have been documented.



## Incentive Funding Grant

The purpose of this grant is to support local agricultural education programs for grades 5-12. The Incentive Funding Grant currently has eight recognized goals for program improvement. They are:

1. Ensure instructional staff are licensed and qualified.
2. Support and serve students' needs relating to college and/or career preparation.
3. Improve the quality of the AFNR instructional program.
4. Promote the development of SAE programs.
5. Increase participation in agricultural student organizations.
6. Ensure high-quality facilities, equipment, and supplies for AFNR programs.
7. Promote the development of engaged local agricultural advisory councils.
8. Increase agricultural literacy and consumer awareness of AFNR systems

2021-2022

\$2,942

2022-2023

\$8,182

2023-2024

\$5,064

2024-2025

\$6,722

2025-2026

\$4,533



## Three Circles Grant

The purpose of this grant is to support implementation of the complete Three-Circle Model of agricultural education by working with Local Education Agencies (school districts and career centers) to compensate agricultural education teachers for **extended working time outside of their regular duties**. This extended time must be spent facilitating work-based learning (e.g., Supervised Agricultural Experience [SAE] programs); managing Career and Technical Student Organizations (e.g., FFA); and conducting curricular and/or intracurricular activities, such as, but not limited to, professional learning and the development of curricular resources.

2021-2022

\$ 33,174  
1,533 HRS.

2022-2023

\$ 30,294  
1,618 HRS.

2023-2024

\$32,228  
1651.5 HRS.

2024-2025

\$ 36,650  
1,720.8 HRS.

2025-2026

\$30,191  
1,795.6 HRS.



# Agriculture Department Professional Improvement



## Professional Development Activities

### June

19th-21st - IAVAT Summer Conference - All

23rd- 30th - Washington Leadership Conference - Steber

### July

27<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> - CASE Ag Robotics & Automation Institute - Kinkade

30<sup>th</sup> - Beginning Ag Teachers Conference - Mueller

### August

6<sup>th</sup> - AgriScience Fair Bootcamp - Mueller

13<sup>th</sup> Section 23 IAVAT Meeting / Workshop - All

18<sup>th</sup> - IAVAT Hydroponics Training - Mueller

### September

9th SIU Greenhand Conference Advisor Workshop - Kinkade/Mueller

### October

10<sup>th</sup> - Host of IAVAT Pre-Service Teacher Bus Trip - All

### November

6<sup>th</sup> - Beginning Ag Teacher Tour - Mueller

23<sup>rd</sup> - National Proficiency Workshop - Mueller

24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> BUILD Conference Advisor Workshop - Kinkade

### December

10<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> NAAE Conference Nashville, TN - All

### January

12<sup>th</sup> - IAVAT - Section 23 Meeting / Workshop - All

30<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> - GROUND ZERO Conference & Advisor In-service - Mueller

### February

20<sup>th</sup> - GROUND ZERO Conference & Advisor In-Service - Mueller

### April

22<sup>nd</sup> - FCAE Ag Mechanics Curriculum Revision - Kinkade

### May

12<sup>th</sup> - Illinois Youth Institute - Kinkade

30<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> - CASE AgX Curriculum Institute - Mueller

### June

1<sup>st</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> - CASE AFNR Curriculum Institute - Mueller



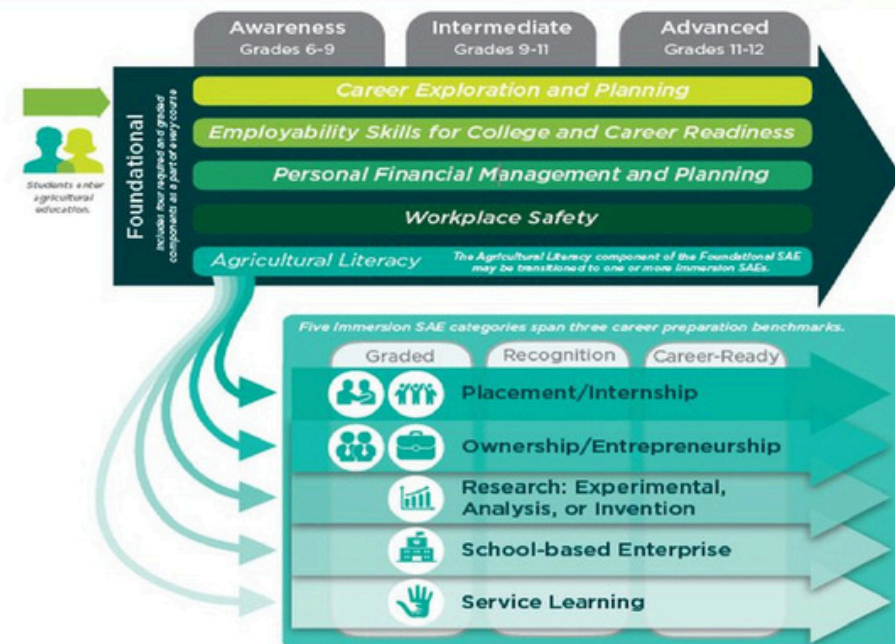
# Students "Learn by Doing"

## Supervised Agriculture Experience (SAE) Work Based Learning



### Putting the parts together

#### SAE Student Roadmap



# SAE Recognition

## 2025-2026 Agriculture Education Fairs

- Section 23 Livestock Fair  
22 students participated,  
earning \$4,577.92
- Section 23 Science Fair  
1 student participated  
earning \$100.00
- Section 23 Grain Fair  
2 students participated  
earning \$55.44

## Proficiency Awards

Proficiency Awards are student recognition for SAE's. There are 5 different levels. Chapter, Section, District, State, and National. Below are the accomplishments of students with proficiency awards in 2025-2026.

11- Section 23 Proficiency Awards- **Asher Lambird – Agricultural Mechanics Design & Fabrication, Reyce Petersen – Beef Production Placement, Bobby Graves – Dairy Production Entrepreneurship, Levi Clodfelter – Diversified Crop Production Entrepreneurship, Owen Kocher – Diversified Horticulture, Seth Clodfelter – Fiber/Oil Crop Production, Blair Grove – Food Service Entrepreneurship, Parker Newkirk – Forest Management & Products, Ashtin McCormick – Goat Production, Kylie Kocher – Nursery Operations, Carder Burgener – Specialty Animal Production.**

5- District V Proficiency Awards- **Asher Lambird – Agricultural Mechanics Design & Fabrication, Bobby Graves – Dairy Production Entrepreneurship, Owen Kocher – Diversified Horticulture, Seth Clodfelter – Fiber/Oil Crop Production, Kylie Kocher – Nursery Operations**

3- STATE WINNERS- **Owen Kocher – Diversified Horticulture, Seth Clodfelter – Fiber/Oil Crop Production, Kylie Kocher – Nursery Operations**

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## State FFA Degree

The Illinois State FFA Degree is the highest degree offered to an FFA member at the state level. It is awarded for production, agribusiness, agriculture placement, and agriscience programs. Applicants must have graduated the previous school year or currently be a Junior or Senior. Applicants must have completed a minimum of two years of agriculture education at the time they receive the degree. A student after entering Agricultural Education must have earned at least \$1,500 or worked at least 750 hours in excess of scheduled class time in a supervised agricultural experience program and they must have productively invested at least \$1,000. This year the Olney FFA had 8 candidates who will receive their degree this summer at the State Convention.

**Bobby Graves, Blair Grove, Emma Hefferman, Kaitlin Kocher, Ashtin McCormick, Aspen Morgan, Reyce Petersen, Truman Ridgely**

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## American FFA Degree

As the highest degree achievable in the National FFA Organization, the American FFA Degree shows an FFA member's dedication to his or her chapter and state FFA association. It demonstrates the effort FFA members apply toward their supervised agricultural experience and the outstanding leadership abilities and community involvement they exhibited through their FFA careers. This year, Olney FFA has 6 American FFA Degree candidates who will receive their degree at the National Convention later in the fall.

**Dacota Anderson-Krome, Gracelyn Hancock, Brett Kocher, Victoria Rudophi, Claire Steber, Delaney Williams**



# FFA Leadership Team



## Olney FFA Chapter Greenhand Leadership Team

**President-** Ian Kocher  
**Vice President-** Grayson Sterchi, Gracie Wright, Nathaniel Zwilling  
**Secretary-** Andrew Lambird, Aubree Petersen  
**Treasurer-** Charlee Engel, Ellee Bare  
**Reporter-** Remington Meadows, Gabe Volk  
**Sentinel-** Zoie McCormick, Caysen Urfer  
**Historian-** Parker Newkirk  
**Points Chairperson-** Kennedy Anderson  
**Student Council Representative-** Kinley Pflaum

## Olney FFA Alumni Leadership 2026

President: Kenna Steber  
 Vice President: Tanner Scherer  
 Secretary: Vanessa McCormick  
 Treasurer: Darin Weidner  
 Reporter: Mackenzie Michels



Membership	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Active	313	275	283	285
Alumni	145	147	195	196
Honorary	166	168	170	173

## Olney FFA Chapter Leadership Team

**President-** Owen Kocher  
**Vice President-** Emma Hefferman, Kylie Kocher, Natalie Zwilling  
**Secretary-** Carder Burgener, Reyce Petersen  
**Treasurer-** Alaina Diel, Brooklyn Diel  
**Reporter-** Savannah Cycholl, Benni Stout  
**Sentinel-** Bailey Graves, Ashtin McCormick  
**Historian-** Ezha Biyok  
**Points Chairperson-** Evelyn Volk  
**Student Council Representative-** Katelyn Bookhout



# FFA Growing Leaders



## LEADERSHIP



- GREENHAND WORKSHOP
- CHAPTER OFFICER LEADERSHIP TRAINING (COLT)
- SECTION LEADERSHIP TRAINING SCHOOL
- BUILD CONFERENCE
- GROUND ZERO CONFERENCE

## HEALTHY LIFESTYLES



- BACK 2 SCHOOL BASH
- DODGEBALL NIGHT IN AUX GYM
- FR. JERRY 5K



## PERSONAL GROWTH

- SAE RECORD WORK NIGHTS
- STATE FFA DEGREE APP WORK NIGHTS
- AMERICAN FFA DEGREE WORK NIGHT



## SCHOLARSHIP



- NATIONAL FFA SCHOLARSHIP
- OLNEY FFA ALUMNI TRUST SCHOLARSHIP INTERVIEWS
- STATE LEADERSHIP CAMP APPLICATION

## CAREER SUCCESS

- AG EDUCATION FAIRS**
- LIVESTOCK FAIR
  - SCIENCE FAIR

- SECTION & STATE CDE'S/LDE'S**
- PUBLIC SPEAKING
  - AG SALES
  - AGRONOMY
  - JOB INTERVIEW

- INDUSTRY TOURS**
- FARM PROGRESS SHOW
  - CGB ENTERPRISES
  - WABASH VALLEY FS



# FFA Building Communities



## ENVIRONMENTAL

- ADOPT A HIGHWAY
- ANNUAL WHITE SQUIRREL COUNT



## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



- FARM BUREAU ACQUAINTANCE DAY
- RICHLAND COUNTY PORK PRODUCERS CONCESSION STAND
- RICHLAND COUNTY FARM BUREAU GROCERY DASH

## HUMAN RESOURCES

- FFA WEEK MAYOR PROCLAMATION SIGNING
- ADOPT A FAMILY
- MEALS WITH A MISSION



## CITIZENSHIP



- FEBRUARY FFA MEETING
- FIREHOUSE TOUR
- VETERAN'S DAY CEREMONY
- OLNEY CITY PARK CHRISTMAS LIGHT BUCKET BRIGADE

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- RIB SALES
- CITRUS FRUIT SALE
- STRAWBERRY SALE
- GREENHOUSE PLANT SALE





# FFA Strengthening Agriculture

## SUPPORT GROUP

- FFA MEMBERS GIVING FFA CHAPTER REPORTS AT ALUMNI MEETINGS
- FFA ALUMNI BREAKFAST
- OLNEY FFA ALUMNI GOLF OUTING



## CHAPTER RECRUITMENT



- 8TH GRADE RECRUITMENT @ RCMS & ST. JOE
- FRESHMAN ORIENTATION
- BROCHURES

## AG ADVOCACY

- FFA WEEK ROAD SIGNS
- FFA WEEK RADIO PSA'S
- NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
- FACEBOOK
- SNAPCHAT
- NEWSLETTERS



## SAFETY

- AG EQUIPMENT SAFETY DEMO
- PROGRESSIVE AG SAFETY DAY 4 KIDS
- NATIONAL FARM SAFETY & HEALTH WEEK



## AG LITERACY



- FFA WEEK PETTING ZOO
- AG IN THE CLASSROOM LESSON DURING NATIONAL AG WEEK
- "LET IT GROW" PLANT LESSON WITH RCES STUDENTS



# Notable Accomplishments

## Fall 2025

Section 23 Winner Forestry CDE Kylie Kocher 1<sup>st</sup> Place Ind.

State FFA Winner Forestry CDE Kylie Kocher 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Ind., Owen Kocher 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Ind., Natalie Zwilling 5<sup>th</sup> Place Ind. Evelyn Volk 10<sup>th</sup> Place Ind. Noah Rudolphi 13<sup>th</sup> Place Ind

National Nursery and Landscape CDE Gold Level Team - 4<sup>th</sup> Place Team

National Forestry CDE Silver Level Team

National Agronomy CDE Gold Level Team

National Parliamentary Procedure LDE Bronze Level Team

National Environmental & Natural Resources CDE Gold Level Team

Section 23 Winner Agronomy CDE Kaitlin Kocher 1<sup>st</sup> Place Ind.

State Winner Agronomy CDE Kylie Kocher 1<sup>st</sup> Place Ind. Kaitlin Kocher 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Ind. Evelyn Volk 5<sup>th</sup> Place Ind. Ezha Biyok 6<sup>th</sup> Place Ind.

Section 23 Winner Job Interview LDE Owen Kocher 1<sup>st</sup> Place Ind.

State Winner Job Interview LDE Owen Kocher 1<sup>st</sup> Place Ind.

Section 23 Winner Prepared Public Speaking LDE Owen Kocher 1<sup>st</sup> Place Ind.

Section 23 Winner Extemporaneous Public Speaking Savannah Cycholl 1<sup>st</sup> Place Ind.



# Notable Accomplishments

## Spring 2026



Section 23 Winner Parliamentary Procedure LDE Kylie Kocher 1<sup>st</sup> Place Floor Member, Savannah Cycholl 1<sup>st</sup> Place Chairperson

Section 23 Winner Conduct of Chapter Meetings LDE Kennedy Anderson 1<sup>st</sup> Place Floor Member, Mattux Hart 1<sup>st</sup> Place Floor Chairperson

Section 23 Winner Poultry CDE

State Winner Poultry CDE Evelyn Volk 5<sup>th</sup> Place Ind., Seth Clodfelter 8<sup>th</sup> Place Ind.

Section 23 Winner Ag Bus. Mgt CDE Owen Kocher 1<sup>st</sup> Place Ind.

District V Winner Parliamentary Procedure LDE Savannah Cycholl 1<sup>st</sup> Place Chairperson, Floor Members- Owen Kocher 3<sup>rd</sup>, Kylie Kocher 5<sup>th</sup>, Emma Hefferman 8<sup>th</sup>

Section 23 Winner Agriculture Mechanics CDE Kylie Kocher 1<sup>st</sup> Surveying, Seth Clodfelter Electricity 1<sup>st</sup>

District V Winner Prepared Public Speaking Owen Kocher 1<sup>st</sup>

State Winner Parliamentary Procedure LDE Savannah Cycholl 1<sup>st</sup> Place Chairman  
Floor Members- Kylie Kocher 2<sup>nd</sup>, Owen Kocher 3<sup>rd</sup>, Carder Burgener 4<sup>th</sup>, Emma Hefferman 6<sup>th</sup>, Bailey Graves 11<sup>th</sup>

State Winner Conduct of Chapter Meetings LDE Mattux Hart 1<sup>st</sup> Place Chairman  
Top 10 Floor Members- Kennedy Anderson 1<sup>st</sup>, Nathaniel Zwilling 3<sup>rd</sup>, Andrew Lambird 4<sup>th</sup>, Zoie McCormick 8<sup>th</sup>

State Winner Horticulture CDE Evelyn Volk 1<sup>st</sup> Place Ind., Kylie Kocher 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Ind., Kaitlin Kocher 7<sup>th</sup> Place Ind., Claire Ginder 12<sup>th</sup> Place Ind., Owen Kocher 13<sup>th</sup> Place Ind.

Section 23 Winner Horticulture CDE Kylie Kocher 1<sup>st</sup> Place Ind.

State Winner Envirothon CDE

District Agriscience Fair Ezha Biyok 1<sup>st</sup> Place Environmental Systems, Brooke Weidner 1<sup>st</sup> Place Social Systems

State Agriscience Fair Ezha Biyok 1<sup>st</sup> Place Environmental Systems, Brooke Weidner 1<sup>st</sup> Place Social Systems, Emma Hefferman and Owen Kocher 1<sup>st</sup> Place Social Systems



# **RCHS AG DEPARTMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL**

In the spring of 2024, an Advisory Council was formed to direct the work of the Richland County High School Agriculture Department. The purpose of this advisory council is to assist the work of the current agriculture department in updating, modifying, expanding, and/or improving the program according to the educational, economic, social, and cultural needs of the community. The goal of the council is to strengthen the relationship between parents, businesses, industry, the community, and the program by articulating long-term goals and objectives. The council also provides ongoing evaluation of curriculum to keep it current with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes identified by representatives of business, industry, labor, and community agencies necessary for students to work effectively in their chosen fields.

## **Advisory Council Members**

Agriculture Business Representative - Ryan Bailey	University Representative - Gary Ochs
Agriculture Mechanics Representative - Daniel Baker	Community College Representative - Doug Robb
Animal Science Representative - Mackenzie Michels	RCHS Principal - Jeff Thompson
Agronomy Representative - Ryan Ochs	RCHS Student Services Representative - Suzanna Ridgely
Natural Resources Representative - Gary Zwilling	RCHS Agriculture Teacher - Lexi Mueller
Food Science Representative - Julie Hill	RCHS Agriculture Teacher - Jamie VanDyke
	RCHS Agriculture Teacher - Hayden Kinkade

