

# Wisconsin FFA Business and Industry Tours- Fall 2017

During the 2017 Sectional Leadership Workshops, the Wisconsin State FFA Officer Team traveled throughout the state to experience the vast array of the Wisconsin agriculture industry. Here are the 2017 business!



## Section One

While in section one, the State Officer Team took their first stop at Jennie-O Turkey Store located in Barron, Wisconsin. This business has been the leader of the turkey industry for over 70 years. The state officers were able to meet with human resources, the production department, and the branded retail department to learn about how the company operates, and even what they look for in potential employees. Jennie-O feeds the world by offering over 1500 products!

GreenWhey Energy Inc. was formed in 2009 by two dairy waste haulers and one master cheesemakers came together to build an anaerobic digester to have a waste disposal system. At this tour, the state officers were able to see the waste management system, learn how the digester works with wastewater from cheese factories, and witness the positive effect this company has had on the environment by their commitment to responsible and clean liquid waste management.

The last stop of the day was at Four Hands Holsteins where they donated sweatshirts to each state officer to wear while up in the cold of Northern Wisconsin. This dairy farm is family owned and operated under Rick and Gwen Dado.



## Section Two

During our Business and Industry visits in Menomonie, we had the chance to tour ConAgra Foods, the home of the famous Swiss Miss! The State Officer team, and local Menomonie FFA alumni, advisor, and chapter president had the opportunity to see how the world renown hot cocoa and pudding is made, packaged, and shipped. ConAgra Foods was very generous in giving each attendee a 60 package box of hot cocoa to take home and enjoy!



The second stop was at Alfalawn Farm, a fourth generation family dairy farm located just outside of Menomonie. It is there where the State Officer team toured throughout the farms state of the art calf facility, rotary parlor, and free stall barns. The team had the chance to see the dedication, patience, and love that goes into managing this, over 2,000 cow operation every single day.

## Section Three

Nick Helstad started welding as his Supervised Agriculture Experiences when he was an FFA member at Black River Falls High School. He began on his home farm, and grew little by little to where he is today. Nick's Welding takes on more specialized jobs, they recently helped in creating the New Falcon athletic center at the University of Wisconsin- River Falls. The state officers were able to tour this facility and see where this SAE is now.





When the state officers visited Jackson Electric Cooperative, they had the privilege of learning more about how cooperatives worked. Jackson Electric paired with Black River Falls FFA chapter and started a Cooperative Test Plot. In addition, during the visit the state officers learned about the history and saw a hotline demonstration.

## Section Four

Cummins Emissions Solutions is based in Mineral Point, WI. State officers toured their manufacturing facility and were able to see firsthand how products are made. They were also able to visit with plant managers and staff to learn more about this industry.



Premier Cooperative is a feed mill, agronomy, and feed sales company. The state officers had the opportunity to tour the warehouse and feed mill. They also talked with founding owners about what it means to be in agriculture and how to start your own business.



## Section Five

Renk Seed is a family owned and operated company that works with farmers to increase their yields and profits. During the visit, we met with Alex Renk who gave us a tour of their facility in Sun Prairie.



Vita Plus is an employee owned livestock feed and supply company. We met with several employees during the visit. Vita Plus provided lunch as an opportunity for the state officers to network with the employees. In addition, Vita Plus provided a presentation of the company's operations and values, as well as a tour of the facility.



ABS provided the state officers an opportunity to see a global company that encompasses many different areas of agriculture. We saw how everything from animal nutrition and livestock handlers, to lab technicians and marketing of bulls played critical roles in their company.

## Section Six





Lodi Canning Company has been owned by the same Lodi family for three generations and is the only privately held cannery in the state of Wisconsin. The state officers had the opportunity to see how locally grown sweet corn and peas becomes cream style corn and canned peas, and how local agriculture can impact a community.

## Section Seven

The first stop in section seven was at a local FFA alumni's business, Black River Orchard. At this orchard, there are about 900 trees of 12 different varieties. The state officers were able to tour the orchard and facility, and even got to pick their own apples!



Marieka Gouda is located in Thorp, Wisconsin and is a family farm with a cheese plant attached. The farm is located in city limits, with 434 animal units allowed. The Gouda made from the family farm and is sold nationwide. The state officers were able to take a tour of the cheese plant and the farm. Then had a wonderful lunch at Café DUTCHess, the café attached to the cheese store.

## Section Eight

The Waupaca Foundry, located in section eight gave the state FFA officers the opportunity to meet and work with Mr. Brian Kaminske, HR manager, and Mr. Gordon Barth. They were able to discuss with us about all aspects of Waupaca Foundry from what they make, their history, and how they plan to expand.



While still in Waupaca, the state officers visited Gusmer Enterprises, Inc. They were able to take a walking tour of the pharmaceutical filter manufacturing plant. In addition, they were able to see the operation from start to finish, meet the owners, and learn about their history and future plans with the company.



## Section Nine

In section nine, the state officers toured a large greenhouse facility, with 26 acres of greenhouse! There were a wide variety of jobs required for this industry. Even at the end of the busy season, the greenhouse had a variety of mums, gourds, and variety of other plants being prepared to be shipped out.





Agropur is a large milk processing plant with 40 plants across America. The state officers were able to see the entire process of how milk is turned into cheese. In addition, Agropur is using their whey byproduct for other uses, such as calf feed. They were celebrating the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the particular plant and the state officers were able to witness the plant and see how it works.

## Section Ten

In Section Ten, the state FFA officers visited SMILES Inc., and were able to learn more about equine therapy, the volunteers who make it possible, and saw how businesses like SMILES share FFA members' passion for serving members.



In their visit to Exacto Inc., state FFA officers learned about the adjuvants and surfactants that the company produces to help farmers maximize yields, and were able to experience the company atmosphere of teamwork, integrity, and continuous improvement.

