

# **WISCONSIN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION and FFA A BRIEF HISTORY**

**1917** – Smith Hughes National Vocational Education Act establishes vocational agriculture programs in public schools.

**1924** – The Wisconsin Association of Vocational Agriculture Instructors (WAVAI) was officially established at the state summer conference with W.C. Christenson as the President.

**1928** – A group of young farmers came together in Kansas City, Missouri and founded the “Future Farmers of America (FFA).” The organization was designed to provide leadership opportunities for students involved in vocational agriculture.

**1929** – The Wisconsin Association of FFA was formed in October of 1929 to further develop a support structure for agricultural education. The first State President was Donald James of Dodgeville.

**1929** – The official colors, National Blue and Corn Gold were adopted by the National FFA, and are still used today.

**1930** – The Official FFA Creed is adopted at the 3rd National FFA Convention. The 5 paragraphs of the creed were written by E.M. Tiffany, a professor of agriculture education at the University of Wisconsin.

**1931** – The first American Farmers from Wisconsin, Parmley Harris and Bernard Smith, received their FFA degrees.

**1933** – The FFA Jacket with the FFA emblem on the back is adopted as the Official Dress.

**1950** – Public Law 81-740 - The FFA is granted a federal charter by the United States Congress. This makes FFA an intracurricular component of education.

**1965** – The New Farmers of America (NFA), an organization for African-American agriculture students merge with the FFA.

**1969** – The FFA allows women to become members.

**1971** – The National FFA Alumni Association was formed to provide further support to the FFA.

**1972** – The Wisconsin FFA Alumni Association was formed to support Wisconsin FFA members.

**1983** – The Wisconsin FFA Foundation was formed through the work of Arnold B. Cordes.

**1988** – The official organization name was changed to The National FFA Organization to reflect the broadening field of agriculture, which today encompasses more than 300 careers ranging from agriscience to biotechnology to turf grass management.

**1992** – The Wisconsin FFA Center is created to assist in the continual delivery of FFA programs for students because of budget cuts at the Department of Public Instruction.

**1994** – Wisconsin FFA holds its last convention with the American Baptist Assembly in Green Lake, Wisconsin. The convention moves to the Madison Civic Center and Concourse Hotel in June of 1995.

**1995** – The Wisconsin FFA Hall of Fame was created. First inducted members were Arnold B. Cordes, Floyd J. Doering and Virgil O. Martinson.

**1997** - Wisconsin FFA Convention moves to the Dane County Exposition Center in Madison, Wisconsin. (Currently known as the Alliant Energy Center of Dane County). Previously the first conventions were held at the Madison Civic Center after leaving Green Lake.

**1999** – National FFA Convention moves to Louisville, Kentucky, after 70 years in Kansas City, Missouri.

**2001** – Wisconsin FFA holds its first Agriscience Fair at the State FFA Convention in Madison, Wisconsin.

**2003** – WAVAI (Wisconsin Association of Vocational Agriculture Instructors) changes name to WAAE (Wisconsin Association of Agricultural Educators).

**2004** – Jackie Mundt is elected as the National FFA President.

**2006** - National FFA Convention moves to Indianapolis, Indiana

**2006** – Matt Anderson served as the Chairman of the National FFA Officer Nominating Committee

**2007** – Wisconsin Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council was created.

**2008** – Nick Palkowski served as the Chairman of the National FFA Officer Nominating Committee

**2010** – Governor Jim Doyle signs into law Assembly Bill 236 allowing certain agriculture classes to be applied as science credits for high school graduation.

**2010** – A permanent FFA emblem is placed on display in the Alliant Energy Center Exhibition Hall Atrium. The FFA emblem was created by the Turtle Lake FFA chapter. Advisor Mr. Don Dipprey.

**2010** – BJ Chrisler served as the Chairman of the National FFA Officer Nominating Committee

**2010** - National FFA Advisor Dr. Larry Case retires.

**2010** – MFE and ALD Conferences changed names to 212<sup>o</sup> and 360<sup>o</sup> Conferences. Over 600 FFA members attended these newly revised conferences in Green Bay.

**2010** – National FFA offers a new Affiliation Fee Program for FFA membership. Wisconsin has 22 chapters that have decided to select this option instead of paying traditional FFA dues.

**2011** – The Summer Professional Development Conference of WAAE moves to Green Bay from Madison.

## **WISCONSIN FFA FIRSTS**

1st National FFA Officer: Owen Owens, Portage FFA  
1st National FFA President: Ivan Kindschi, Prairie du Sac FFA  
1st State FFA President: Donald James, Dodgeville FFA  
1st Female State FFA President: Amber Vickers, Black Hawk FFA  
1st American Star Farmer: Kelby Paske, DeForest FFA  
1st Female American Star Farmer: Karlene Lindow, Marshfield FFA  
1st American Star in Agribusiness: Dale Wolf, St. Croix Central FFA  
1st National Job Interview Winner: Melanie Schotthofer, Cochrane-Fountain City  
1st American Star in Agri-Science: Steven Offer, Marshfield FFA  
1st American Star in Ag Placement: Erik Blaser, Oconto Falls FFA  
1st National FFA Officer Nominating Committee Chair: Matt Anderson, Sauk Prairie FFA

## **Past State FFA Advisors**

1929-30	Vincent E. Kivlin
1930-60	Louis M. Sasman
1960-72	Dale C. Aebischer
1972-88	Floyd Doering
1988-90	Dean P. Gagnon
1990	Kevin A. Keith
1990-93	David Doerfert
1994-98	Kevin A. Keith
1996-03	Sharon W. Wendt
2003-05	Dean P. Gagnon
2006 - Present	Jeff A. Hicken

## **Past State FFA Executive Secretaries**

1939-65	Clarence H. Bonsack
1965-67	Doyle E. Beyl
1967-83	Arnold B. Cordes
1983-85	Virgil O. Martinson
1985-94	Kevin A. Keith
1994-96	Sharon W. Wendt
1996-05	Dean P. Gagnon
2006-Present	Jeff A. Hicken

## **State FFA Program Coordinators**

1992-93	Melanie Burgess
1993-94	Cheryl L. Zimmerman

## **State FFA Executive Director**

1994-present	Cheryl L. Zimmerman
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## **Wisconsin FFA Foundation Executive Director**

1983-1994	Arnold B. Cordes
1994-2009	Mary Elstad Gagnon
2008-Present	Nicole Nelson