



Texas agriculture students shined in national competitions hosted by the National FFA Organization at the 89th Annual Convention and Expo in Indianapolis.

Texas FFA members dominated agriscience fair competition, made a solid showing in career development events which are an outgrowth of the agriculture, food and natural resources curriculum, shined in award competitions which are based on student supervised agricultural experience programs and made significant gains in chapter award competitions. Texas also exerted national leadership by fielding the largest state delegation, posting the largest membership gain for the seventh consecutive year and captured a spot on the national organization's six-member student officer team.

"Intense competition at the state level usually produces students who can perform consistently at a high level on a national stage," said Texas FFA Executive Director Tom Maynard. "The overall performance by our students is a credit to them their communities, families and teachers."

YOAKUM'S TREY ELIZONDO ELECTED WESTERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT

Trey Elizondo of Texas has been elected as 2016-17 Western Region Vice President.

The 20-year-old Yoakum native was announced as the national nominating committee's choice for western region vice president in the waning moments of the 89th National FFA Convention's final session and became the 30th Texan to serve as a national FFA officer, dating back 80 years, when another south Texan, Roy Martin of Cotulla became the first Texan national FFA officer in 1936. Elizondo is the first national officer from Texas since 2009, when Randa Braune of Bellville was elected to serve as one of the four regional vice presidents.

"I am so excited for this opportunity to represent Texas as the western region vice president this year," Elizondo said.

While attaining election to national office is a rare and remarkable achievement, Elizondo's circuitous route to his election makes the feat all the more stunning. Elizondo was a candidate for state office in 2015, made the final 20, but did not make the final cut. Undeterred, he filed to compete for the state's nomination for national office earlier this year and emerged from the process as the Texas Association's nominee.

Elizondo confides that the sting of not being a state officer was an impetus for him to run and provided a significant degree of the fire it took to prepare relentlessly for the process.

"It was a driving force because through this whole process I knew in my heart that I did not want to be a national officer for me because I am too small," he said. "I wanted to show members that difficulties do not equal finality and that sometimes God's plan for our lives is much greater than we could ever imagine.

"I want to be a light of hope for members to see that with a little faith and belief in themselves, they can defy odds as well."

Elizondo arrived in Indianapolis on the Saturday before the national convention got underway to begin the arduous seven-round committee process through which a nine-member nominating committee sifted through 42 candidates, eight of which were from the western region. Following the first four rounds, an initial cut in the process is announced on Tuesday evening by way of a sealed envelope handed to each candidate which cuts the field roughly in half.

"I was very pleased with how I did in the first round of the process," he said. "I felt like I had laid on the table everything I had to offer."

"I was satisfied and content no matter what the letter said, because I knew I did everything I knew how to do, but regardless, I was still nervous for it all!" Elizondo said.

Three rounds followed the Tuesday night cut. The nominating committee’s report is filed with the delegate body in the convention’s final session on Saturday evening.

“On that Saturday of the election announcement, I realized that no matter how it turned out, it would be the last time I wore “Texas” on my back. It was at that moment that I couldn’t have been more thankful for what Texas FFA has done for me over my years and I couldn’t help but smile at how proud I was to be from Texas.

Elizondo served as an Area X officer. His SAE focused on beef production. He competed in livestock evaluation, chapter conducting, public relations, quiz and senior creed speaking.

Elizondo will take a leave of absence from his studies at Texas A&M University where he is studying agricultural education to travel more than 100,000 miles across the nation and world on behalf of the National FFA Organization.

“Though my jacket no longer reads Texas I will always be thankful for that time in a Texas jacket for molding me into the leader I am today,” he said, “And I know, no matter where my travels may take me over the next year I know I will always have a piece of Texas FFA in my heart.”

TEXANS CONTINUE A TRADITION OF SUCCESS IN NATIONAL AGRISCIENCE FAIR

Texas members brought five national titles in the National FFA Agriscience Fair back to the Lone Star State, with ten of its 21 finalists finishing in the top three, 15 rated as gold, and six rated as silver in the four-tier rating system (gold, silver, bronze, and participant). Georgia led the way with seven national winners and Texas came in a close second with five national winners. Stephenville and San Antonio-James Madison each had two national winners and Florence had one.

Historically, Texas members have fared well in the national competition winning a new total of a record 77 Agriscience Fair national titles since the event’s inception in 1998. No state has ever won more national agriscience fair championships than Texas.

Agriscience Fair Championships (All time since 1998)	
1.	Texas - 77
2.	Georgia - 38
3.	New Jersey – 23
4.	Minnesota - 21

NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

- **Olivia Wise-Dent and Kamryn Nichols, James Madison:** Animal Systems, Division 4
- **Mikaela Loerwald and Shane Hilton, Florence:** Food Products and Processing, Division 3
- **Bonnie McKinzie, Stephenville:** Social Systems, Division 1
- **Luke Webber, Stephenville:** Social Systems, Division 2
- **Kaylee Graham and Sydney Martin, James Madison:** Social Systems, Division 3

NATIONAL RUNNER-UP

- **Katherine Marie Fazzino, Rudder:** Environmental Services/Natural Resources, Division 2
- **Micah Rainey and Riley McKinzie, Stephenville:** Power, Structural and Technical Systems, Division 4

National Agriscience State Comparison Top States with 20 or More Finalists				
State	Finalists	Gold Medals	Top Three	Winners
Texas	21	15 (71%)	10	5
Florida	23	4 (17%)	2	1
Georgia	23	18 (78%)	15	7
Wisconsin	23	7 (30%)	4	2
Missouri	23	11 (48%)	4	0
Utah	22	5 (23%)	0	0
Ohio	22	12 (55%)	6	2
Kentucky	21	2 (10%)	0	0
California	20	6 (3%)	1	0

BULLARD FFA NAMED MODEL OF INNOVATION WINNER

Bullard FFA was named as the nation's top entry in the National Chapter Award Models of Innovation Recognition. The nation's top 10 three-star chapters in the student development division competed for the award. Top chapters were also selected from the middle school, student and community development divisions.

Bullard FFA knew changes were being made in the school cafeteria, so the chapter decided to research the student body's food choices and then share that information with cafeteria personnel. After conducting 537 surveys, the chapter found that an average of 64.7 pounds of fruits and vegetables were wasted every day at the cafeteria. Responding to the survey's results, the school made seven immediate changes to the lunch menu, including the addition of salads to the daily selection, removing three poorly reviewed entrees, and providing fruits and vegetables that better reflected student requests. The "Feast or Famine: Healthy Eating in Today's School Cafeteria" project is expected to reduce the cafeteria's yearly waste by over \$20,000.

Austin-Lanier FFA was also a finalist in the Models of Innovation Student Development Division and Weimar FFA was a national finalist in the Community Development Division.

The Models of Innovation awards are sponsored by John Deere as a special project of the National FFA Foundation. It is one of the many ways FFA members accomplish the FFA mission and succeed in making a difference in their communities and the lives of others.

STARS ARE BRIGHT IN TEXAS NATIONAL CHAPTER AWARDS

Texas posted a solid overall showing in the National Chapter Award, with 12 chapters earning three-star ratings in the three-tiered rating system that evaluates a chapter's program of activities execution. Nine chapters earned a two star designation.

Over the past few years, Texas chapters have begun to establish themselves as strong contenders in this national award program. National Chapter Award applications are evaluated by a state committee in June, with gold-rated applicants advancing to national judging held in late July and early August.

The National Chapter Award is a function of the chapter's Program of Activities, a one-year annual strategic action plan which creates a roadmap for a hands-on leadership development experience which engages all members in the chapter's work and leverages the latent potential which exists in all members.

TEXANS TURN IN SOLID CAREER DEVELOPMENT EVENT PERFORMANCES

As a state, Texas boasted another solid showing in national career development events in Indianapolis, and while only one Texas entry captured a national championship, eight finished as national runner-up.

Altogether, Texans turned in 12 top-five finishes this year out of the state's 25 entries, which is 48% of total entries. Fourteen of the state's 25 entries (56%) finished in the top ten, and 15 (60%) were rated as gold in the National FFA Organization's three-tier, gold-silver-bronze, rating system. No Texas team finished as a bronze entry.

Since 1928, 87 Texas entries have claimed national championships. Only California has won more national titles. Six states have never won a national FFA career development event in that time span.

2016 Career Development Events Comparison	
National CDE Titles	National FFA CDE Top Five
California – 4	California, Texas – 12
Georgia and Wyoming – 3	Missouri – 7
Oklahoma – 2	Illinois, Oklahoma, Washington, Wyoming – 6
IL, KY, LA, MA, MN, ND, OH, TX , VA – All With 1	Arkansas, Florida – 5

NATIONAL CDE - TEXAS TOP 10 SUMMARY

- National Champion: Poultry Evaluation, **Ridge Point**
- National Runner-Up: Agricultural Issues Forum, **Canyon**
- National Runner-Up: Ag. Technology & Mechanical Systems, **Sandra Day O'Connor**
- National Runner-Up: Food Science & Technology, **Florence**
- National Runner-Up: Horse Evaluation, **Smithson Valley**
- National Runner-Up: Marketing Plan, **Madisonville**
- National Runner-Up: Milk Quality Products, **Klondike**
- National Runner-Up: Prepared Public Speaking, **Madisonville**
- National Runner-Up: Veterinary Science, **Byron Nelson**

Texas National CDE Top Five History		
Year	Top 5	Rank
2016	12	1 st (tied with California)
2015	8	3 rd
2014	11	1 st
2013	12	1 st
2012	7	3 rd (tied with Minnesota)
2011	8	3 rd (tied with Washington)
2010	10	1 st
2009	6	3 rd (tied w/ FL, GA, WY)
2008	10	1 st
2007	8	1 st (tied with Missouri)
2006	6	4 th (tied with Georgia)
2005	13	1 st

OTHER TOP 10 FINISHES BY TEXAS ENTRIES:

- 3rd - Agricultural Sales, **Sandra Day O'Connor**
- 4th - Meats Evaluation, **Florence**
- 4th - Conduct of Chapter Meetings, **Bellville**
- 9th - Nursery/Landscape, **Marble Falls**
- 10th - Job Interview, **Pearland**

Texas National Career Development Event Results and History Since 2010								
Event	2016 TX Entry	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Agricultural Communications	James Madison	Silver-18th	Silver-12 th	Gold-3 rd	Gold-3 rd	Gold-6 th	Gold-6 th	Gold-3 rd
Agricultural Issues Forum	Canyon	Gold-2 nd	Gold-3 rd	Gold-1 st	Gold-1 st	Gold-2 nd	Gold-1 st	Silver
Agricultural Mechanics	Sandra Day O'Connor	Gold-2 nd	Bronze-33 rd	Gold-4 th	Silver-29 th	Silver-19 th	Gold-13 th	Gold-4 th
Agricultural Sales	Sandra Day O'Connor	Gold-3 rd	Silver-21 st	Gold-3 rd	Silver-14 th	Gold-2 nd	Gold-2 nd	Gold-2 nd
Agronomy	Frenship	Silver-13 th	Silver-19 th	Silver-29 th	Silver-20 th	Silver-16 th	Silver-14 th	Silver-19 th
Creed Speaking	East Central	Silver	Gold-1 st	Silver-15 th	Bronze	Silver	Silver	Silver
Dairy Cattle	Nazareth	Silver-16 th	Silver-18 th	Silver-27 th	Silver-29 th	Silver-17 th	Silver-22 nd	Silver-20 th
Dairy Handlers Activity			Silver					
Environmental/Natural Res.	Rusk	Silver-18th	Gold-1 st	Gold-3 rd	Gold-3 rd	Bronze-29 th	Bronze-37 th	Gold-3 rd
Extemporaneous Speaking	Cedar Park	Silver	Bronze	Gold-3 rd	Gold-1 st	Gold-1 st	Silver	Silver
Farm Business Mgmt.	Seven Lakes	Gold-15th	Gold-13 th	Gold-7 th	Silver-16 th	Silver-19 th	Gold-6 th	Gold-11 th
Floriculture	Dulles	Silver-27th	Silver-20 th	Gold-9 th	Gold-9 th	Gold-9 th	Gold-12 th	Silver-21 st
Food Science & Technology	Florence	Gold-2 nd	Gold-5 th	Gold-2 nd	Gold-1 st	Gold-3 rd	Gold-8 th	Gold-2 nd
Forestry	Simms	Silver-27th	Bronze-38 th	Bronze-39 th	Silver-11 th	Silver-17 th	Gold-3 rd	Gold-8 th
Horse Evaluation	Smithson Valley	Gold-2 nd	Gold-8 th	Gold-8 th	Gold-5 th	Bronze-41 st	Gold-11 th	Gold-3 rd
Job Interview	Pearland	Silver-10th	Bronze-31 st	Silver-29 th	Silver-18 th	Silver-15 th	Silver-9 th	Silver-16 th
Livestock Evaluation	Wall	Silver-17th	Silver-14 th	Gold-8 th	Silver-17 th	Silver-16 th	Gold-9 th	Gold-8 th
Marketing Plan	Madisonville	Gold-2 nd	Silver	Silver-16 th	Gold-1 st	Silver	Gold-2 nd	Gold-2 nd
Meats Evaluation	Florence	Gold-4th	Gold-1 st	Gold-2 nd				
Milk Quality	Klondike	Gold-2 nd	Gold-11 th	Gold-3 rd	Gold-1 st	Gold-10 th	Gold-1 st	Gold-10 th
Nursery/Landscape	Marble Falls	Gold-9th	Gold-9 th	Silver-19 th	Gold-13 th	Gold-6 th	Gold-5 th	Silver-20 th
Parliamentary Procedure	Stephenville	Gold	Gold-5 th	Silver-18 th	Silver-13 th	Gold-5 th	Gold	Gold-3 rd
Poultry Evaluation	Ridge Point	Gold-1st	Gold-1 st	Gold-5 th	Gold-1 st	Gold-2 nd	Gold-1 st	Gold-2 nd
Prepared Public Speaking	Madisonville	Gold-2 nd	Bronze	Gold-3 rd	Gold-4 th	Silver	Silver	Silver
Veterinary Science	Byron Nelson	Gold-2 nd	Gold-2 nd	Silver-27 th	Gold-1 st	Demo Only		

TEXAS RECOGNIZED FOR TOP MEMBERSHIP GROWTH FOR SEVENTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR

The Texas FFA Association was recognized for the nation's top membership growth in an award ceremony that was part of the national delegate process. Texas FFA grew by 6,836 between membership year 2014-15 and 2015-16 and became the first state association in FFA history to surpass 115,000 in total membership. The Texas membership surge accounted for 38% of the National FFA Organization's 18,137-student membership growth. Texas FFA has grown by 41,569 members since 2009, due in part to a revision in the membership business model. 2016 marks the seventh consecutive year that Texas has recorded the top membership gain.

Top Membership States 15-16	Texas FFA Growth Since '10
Texas - 115,941	2014-15; 109,105
California - 83,853	2013-14: 103,731
Georgia - 40,417	2012-13: 95,287
Oklahoma - 27,166	2011-12: 86,657
Ohio - 25,804	2010-11: 81,535

TRADITION OF SUCCESS IN TRACTOR RESTORATION

Texans expect to win the Chevron-Delo National Tractor Restoration Competition, and why not? A Texas entry has been national grand prize winner in four of the previous five years and seven of the previous ten years. Texas has dominated the event since its inception in 1997, and in 2016 Texas entries captured seven of the 12 national finalist positions.

Carson Rose of El Campo was the top Texas entry in 2016, finishing third overall. His entry, which focused on the restoration of a 1955 John Deere 50, also won the best photograph contest.

The competition requires an individual or a team to fully document the restoration of a tractor in an application that is typically about 40-50 pages in length and submitted in August. Finalists deliver a 20-minute presentation, followed by a 20-minute rigorous question and answer session from a panel of experts.

Teachers use this event to support the agricultural power and machinery curriculum as a capstone project, and students who compete in it frequently also compete in the tractor technician career development event.

Carson was awarded a \$3,000 prize for his third-place finish. Ryder Merta, also of El Campo FFA, won the video portion of the contest, which can be viewed here: <http://tinyurl.com/jmpbv3c>

2016 TEXAS DELO TRACTOR RESTORATION FINALISTS

- **Carson Rose, El Campo:** 1955 John Deere 50
- **Leo Davila, Dubiski Career High:** 1966 John Deere 3020
- **Matthew Machicek, Rogers:** 1966 Oliver 1550 LPG
- **Parker Goebel, Cuero:** 1979 International Harvester 886
- **Ryan Ullom, Rockwall:** 1947 Farmall B
- **Ryder Merta, El Campo:** 1924 Holt M-35 (2-Ton) Crawler
- **Corey Verstraeten, Southwest FFA:** 1971 Oliver 1855



2016 Delo Tractor Restoration Competition 3rd Place
2016 1st Place Photo
Carson Rose of El Campo FFA

FIVE TEXANS CLAIM PROFICIENCY AWARDS

Texas won five national proficiency awards in Indianapolis, tying the state's all-time high mark for proficiency winners in a single year, which was set a year ago in Louisville. Eleven Texans were named a national proficiency award finalists.

- **Rhett Bain of Canyon,** Agricultural Services - Entrepreneurship Award
- **Kaine Warnken of Schulenburg,** Beef Production - Placement Proficiency Award
- **Clay Burkham of Canyon,** Home and/or Community Development Proficiency Award
- **Taylor Price of Pilot Point,** Outdoor Recreation - Entrepreneurship/Placement Proficiency Award
- **Taylor Williams of Dawson,** Small Animal Production and Care - Entrepreneurship/Placement Proficiency Award

Texans have enjoyed newfound success in the proficiency award process as Texas teachers improve record keeping practices, engage in the award process and learn to navigate the national application and selection process. In 1999, Texas failed to crack the finals with any proficiency award applications, but has steadily improved and become a factor in the process. 2010 was the last year in which Texas failed to win at least one proficiency award. 2014 was the state's high-water mark for national finalists, when 22 Texans cracked the final four.

Texas ranked seventh in the total number of national finalists, but tied for second for the number of national winners. Only 18 of the nation's 52 state FFA associations had at least one national winner, and only ten of the 52 state associations had multiple winners.

National FFA Proficiency Awards – State Comparison	
National Proficiency Finalists	National Proficiency Winners
Georgia – 21	Georgia – 7
Oklahoma – 17	Minnesota, Texas – 5
Ohio – 16	Illinois, Ohio, Wisconsin – 4
Wisconsin – 15	Oklahoma, Virginia – 3
Texas – 11	Indiana, South Dakota – 2

TEXANS RECEIVE HONORARY AMERICAN FFA DEGREES

Nine Texas agricultural science teachers received the Honorary American FFA Degree at the 89th National FFA Convention. **Ken Abney** of **Hardin-Jefferson**, **Rebecca Brummond** of **Magnolia**, **Karen Eaves** of **Hamshire**, **Tonny Hamby** of **Canadian**, **Elizabeth Holster Green** of **Silsbee**, **Cheryl Lynn Kinney** of **Wills Point**, **Raymond Ramirez** of **Alice**, **Michael Daniel Teague** of **Saltillo** and **John C. VanDevender** of **Buna** received the highest honorary degree bestowed by the National FFA Organization.

Other Texans receiving the Honorary American Degree were **CyLynn Braswell** of **Justin**, **Mike M. Jarrar** of **Houston**, **Teresa Jimenez** of **Houston**, **Lisa Walker** of **Sunnyvale**, and **Clay Ewell** of **College Station**.

TEXAS DELEGATES CHART THE COURSE OF THE NATIONAL FFA ORGANIZATION

Held as a central and integral part of the annual National FFA Convention and Expo, the delegate process brings together 475 student leaders from each of the National FFA Organization's 52 state associations to conduct the business of the organization and share ideas and perspectives that will ensure the continued progress of the organization.

Texas was allocated a record 69 delegates, the greatest number of delegates seated by a state association since the current 475-member delegate body was instituted in 1991.

Texas FFA Director of Leadership Development Tyler Koch said that he was immensely proud of the overall performance of the 2016 Texas delegates.

"Clearly, they displayed a high degree of poise and professionalism as they discussed and deliberated issues," he said.

The delegates took up six issues which are submitted by states, vetted by representatives at the annual State Presidents Conference held in Washington D.C. in July and then deliberated by the delegates who submit input to the National FFA Organization's Board of Directors. Texas members have an opportunity to submit their ideas each year through area officers who discuss potential national issue submissions at the State Leadership Conference held in June.

Subjects taken up by the delegates in 2016 included: Improving National FFA Alumni Engagement, Exploring Methods of Increasing Diversity and Inclusion in National FFA Programs, Reviewing Career Development Event Opportunities, Infusing Agriculture Technology into National FFA Programs, Evaluating Service Opportunities and Recognition, Inclusion of Middle School Members.

Texas FFA State President, Jake Traylor, served as vice chair of the Infusing Agriculture Technology Committee, while State First Vice President, Conner McKinzie, served as Chairman of the Exploring Methods of Increasing Diversity and Inclusion in National FFA Programs committee.

The Texas Delegation not only had leadership in the committee structure, but maintained a strong presence on the delegate floor as they discussed the committee reports and provided input on recommended adjustments to the National FFA Official Dress Guidelines.

While the delegate recommendations on all issues are submitted for further review by the National FFA Board of Directors, the Texas Delegation used its position of high representation as one of solidarity and strength in representing the best interest of the more than 116,000 members of the Texas FFA.

MAYNARD NAMED BY NASAE AS NATION'S OUTSTANDING STATE FFA EXECUTIVE

Tom Maynard, of Austin, was named as the nation's outstanding state FFA executive by the National Association of Supervisors of Agricultural Education at the organization's annual conference and meeting held in conjunction with the 89th National FFA Convention and Expo.

NASAE is the professional organization which represents state-level agricultural education staff, who provide leadership for instructional programs, state FFA associations and foundations. The organization has been presenting outstanding member awards since 1979, but Maynard is the first Texan to win such recognition.

Maynard also served as president of the association in 2015-16. He is the third Texan to serve as president of the national organization, preceded by G.G. Scroggins who led NASAE in 1978-79 and Jay Eudy who served as president in 1989-90.

Maynard is credited with creating policy systems and business models which enabled the Texas FFA Association to more than double its membership during his tenure. He also created numerous new programs, put the organization on the forefront of technology adoption and worked to put the association on sound financial footing.

Maynard announced his retirement from FFA this year to pursue greater involvement in public service. He currently represents citizens in 18 central Texas counties as a member of the State Board of Education.

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