

# Rockwood Agriculture Program

Rockwood, PA

## Parent/Student Handbook and Information Guide



# Welcome to the Rockwood Ag Ed Handbook

Welcome to the Rockwood FFA Parent-Student Handbook. You'll notice that it is not just a handbook for the FFA, but for the entire Agriculture Education Program, including Ag Ed Classes/Science Classes, FFA, and Supervised Agricultural Experience – these are integral components of the program that really can't be separated.

This handbook, should answer any questions you have about our program and all of the opportunities that we have planned for the coming school year. If you have any questions that are not addressed in the handbook, always feel free to contact our FFA Advisor Leanna Weimer by phone at 814.926.4688 or by email at [lweimer@rockwoodschoosls.org](mailto:lweimer@rockwoodschoosls.org)

## Program Description

The Agricultural Education Program is much more than a class. Classroom instruction gives students the knowledge and skills they need for success in today's world, and students get a chance to practice and apply these knowledge and skills in their Supervised Agricultural Experience Projects (SAE) and through the National FFA Organization. When the three parts are properly integrated, student education is maximized. Students learn important academic, career, technical, and life skills when all types of instruction are used. To make the most of the Agricultural Education Program, all students should participate in FFA and have an SAE project.

<b><u>SAE</u></b> <i>(Supervised Agricultural Experience)</i>	<b><u>Ag Ed Classes</u></b>	<b><u>FFA</u></b> <i>(formerly Future Farmers of America, now known as the "National FFA Organization").</i>
<p>An SAE project is any experience outside of regularly scheduled class time in which the student gains new skills or practices skills in agriculture. Students could hold an ag related job, job shadow an Ag professional, or own any agribusiness enterprise such as an animal or plant project or agriculture service business.</p> <p>The student should select their project based on their career and interests, as well as the amount of time they are willing to spend. The type of project and duration of the project is up to the student.</p> <p>Students should have at least one SAE project each year that they are enrolled in the Ag Ed/FFA program. This can be the same or different projects.</p> <p>Students are required to keep records on their SAE projects – the records are graded and included in their class grades. See page 3 for more information on SAE.</p>	<p>Public Law 740 defines SAE and FFA as <i>integral</i> parts of Agricultural Education classes. This means that class grades will include FFA and SAE activities. Again, the student's level of participation can only increase his or her grade; lack of participation cannot decrease it.</p>	<p>The Rockwood FFA Chapter offers a multitude of opportunities to get involved in leadership projects, community service, recreation, competitive events, scholarships, and skills development. This handbook explains many of the opportunities available this school year.</p> <p>Students do not have to participate in all FFA activities – they can pick the activities that they want to get involved in. All FFA members should plan at minimum to attend all monthly meetings and the Annual FFA Banquet.</p> <p>A student's level of involvement and participation in FFA can boost, but will never reduce, a student's grade in Ag Ed Class.</p>

# What is SAE?

## Supervised Agricultural Experience

An SAE program is the actual, hands-on application of agricultural skills outside the classroom. Students are supervised by agricultural education teachers, parents, employers, and other adults who assist them in the development and achievement of their educational and career goals.

SAE is a time honored and tested form of work-based learning. An SAE program can be whatever the student wants it to be—an agricultural business of his/her own, a job shadowing experience, or placement in a paid or unpaid job using agriculturally-related skills and competencies. It is a program designed cooperatively by the student, advisor and parents.

Some examples of recent SAE projects conducted by FFA Members:

Unpaid veterinary internship	Volunteering at an animal shelter	Work hunting & trapping (wildlife mgt.)
Working in a greenhouse	Landscaping projects at home	Working on any farm
Selling vegetables for farmers' markets	Job shadowing an ag teacher	Restoring a tractor
Aquaculture-Raising Brook trout	Raising a garden	Raising livestock
Training horses	Grocery store produce department	
Lawn mowing business		

Students keep records (including pictures) for each SAE project, and these records are submitted every semester to the Ag Ed instructor as part of the Ag Education class grade. Livestock-based projects may be entered and exhibited at the county and state fairs, but this is not required. (see "individual opportunities for FFA members" section). Students are rewarded for successful SAE projects through the FFA's Proficiency Award Program. (See "Proficiency Awards" section). SAE's are also one component of selection to the various levels of FFA membership, also known as Degrees. (See "Degrees of Membership" Section).

## FFA Participation

FFA is an INTRA-curricular activity - not extracurricular like football, Spanish club, drama, or speech. This means that it is a part of the class you are taking and that you are expected to be in FFA. This expectation is similar to what is expected of students enrolled in vocal or instrumental music classes --participation in performances is required and is a part of the students' grades. The difference is that in Ag Ed/Science classes you aren't required to participate in all activities, just certain activities which are assigned. Therefore, your participation in FFA will never reduce your grade.

All students will keep track of their FFA points on the FFA point system, which is due at each monthly FFA meeting (or before) and will be checked at the end of each term.

## FFA Point System

To reward FFA members for participating in FFA activities, they are awarded points on the FFA point system. These points will determine **certain FFA awards** and will be a determining factor in some **FFA trip selections**. Students' grades will **never be penalized** because of a lack of FFA points. Points vary for each activity and are determined annually by the officer team.

POINTS	ACTIVITY
5	Meetings
20	SAE
10+20	Creed
20	Leadership Conference
30	Chapter Banquet
5	County Banquet
20	Local activities
25/fundraiser	Fundraiser
20 participating+20 placing	Fairs
30 local+30 county	Service
20	Parliamentary law

**How to Collect Your Points:** At each monthly meeting, FFA members will be given a point system sheet that lists all of the activities that they could have chosen to participate in since the last meeting, plus any other point-earning opportunities. Members will check off their points and turn the sheet in at the meeting. Students who are not able to attend a monthly meeting may request a point system from the advisors during school the day of the meeting, fill it out and turn it in before the meeting. Any FFA point systems turned in after the monthly meeting (even if it is first thing the next morning) will be considered late – the student will receive zero points for the preceding month.

### Rockwood FFA Calendar

- 10/9 County Leadership at SCTC for OFFICERS
- 10/10 Rockwood Leadership-State Officers
- 11/1 Jacket applications due
- 11/3 County VOLLEYBALL at Meyersdale (7 pm)
- 11/6 County Fall Skills-SCTC (wildlife, small gas engines, tractor driving, FFA History, Horse Judging)
- 1/12 Farm SHOW-MIDWINTER Convention
- 1/26 County Record Books Contest-SCTC
- 2/23 County BASKETBALL at Somerset (7 pm)
- 3/5 Parli Pro at Berlin Brethren Church
- 4/9 County Spring Skills-SCTC (forestry, dairy judging, livestock judging, aquatics, interview)
- 5/? 1<sup>st</sup> annual FFA Banquet (venue to be decided)
- 5/5 Envirothon
- 6/16-6/18 FFA Activities Week (Penn State)
- 7/9 County Dairy Show
- 7/? Western Leadership Conference
- 8/21-8/29 Fair Week activities

FFA membership is limited to students who are enrolled in Agricultural Education courses and certain graduates. Because FFA is an intra-curricular activity (not extra-curricular) it is considered part of a class. If a student wants to join FFA, they must enroll in at least one Ag Ed/Science class during the school year. There is no “way around” this policy – it is federal law.

The “FFA Year” begins on the first day of school and ends on the last day of summer vacation. Therefore, a student enrolled in any Ag Ed class for the 2014-2015 school year (regardless of which semester or quarter) is eligible for FFA membership beginning on the first day of school and lasting throughout the entire school year and the following summer.

Graduates who were FFA members during their senior year and participated in FFA for two years during high school may continue to be members of FFA. Graduate membership must be continuous membership; therefore, if a graduate decides not to retain membership, he or she may not change their mind later and re-join. Again, there is no “way around” this policy – it is federal law. At Rockwood, we generally encourage students planning to study agriculture in college, or students who show livestock, to retain their membership until the fourth National Convention after graduation.

## FFA Activities that Everyone Should Attend

FFA is different from other intra-curricular activities that are part of a class such as Band or Choir because members of FFA get to select what activities, performances, competitions, and projects they become involved in. FFA members are not expected to do everything – you decide what to do based on your interests.

However, there are a few things that every FFA member should plan to do. They are:

- 1) Attend the **Annual FFA Banquet\***, with their family.
- 2) Attend the **Monthly FFA Meetings°**.
- 3) Take part in at least **one Skills and one Leadership Career Development Event** during their FFA career.
- 4) Take part in at least **one community service project** during their FFA career.

An explanation of each follows. Please consult the FFA activity calendar for the dates of these events, and write these dates on your family calendar and make plans to attend:

**The \*Annual FFA Banquet** - The annual FFA banquet is the highlight of the year for the FFA – all members, families, Alumni, and supporters should plan to attend.

Following the meal, we will hold the evening’s program, which generally includes a speaker and the following presentations:

Star Greenhand, Star Chapter Farmer, Agribusiness, Placement, Agriscience Awards, Sub-District/District/State Activity and CDE Recognition, Chapter Proficiency Awards, Leadership Awards, Scholarship Awards, Recognition of past FFA Chapter Officers and introduction of the new Chapter Officer Team. Note: Applications for most of these awards are available from the advisor .

**°Monthly FFA Meetings – Are when the club meetings occur.**

Monthly meetings are conducted using official FFA opening and closing ceremonies and correct parliamentary procedure. The agenda may include new and old business, guest speakers, activities and fun competitions, the formation of committees, door prize drawings, and announcements of upcoming opportunities. Parents and guests are always invited to attend FFA meetings, although they may not participate in discussion unless called upon by a member, and may not vote. Emails will be sent out periodically by the advisor, provided a parental and/or student email address has been furnished to the advisor. Emails will contain reminders about upcoming meetings and activities.

## Leadership Career Development Events (CDEs)

To find out more about each event, please visit <http://www.paffa.state.pa.us/CDE%20Manual.htm>. Click on the CDE Rules and Resources link on the left-hand side of the page. The CDE webpage will provide objectives and rules for each event. Official dress is required for all leadership CDEs except Ag Issues & Perceptions and Experience the Action. All of the following start at the Sub-District level in November:

**Ag Demonstration** - Held only at the local level; a team of students may demonstrate any ag-related skill to the judge panel and audience. Students may also forego this level and just participate at the state level during the farm show.

**Creed Speaking** - The Creed CDE seeks to develop the ability of interpretation and self expression of beginning FFA members. The event is open to first year FFA members. At the Parli-Pro Event in March.

**Extemp Speaking** - To develop the ability of FFA members to express themselves on a given subject without having prepared or rehearsed its content in advance. Topics shall be prepared by the State FFA Staff. Topics will be from the following three areas: Agriscience and Technology, Agrimarketing and International Agriculture Relations.

**Public Speaking** - To develop the ability of young FFA members to competently express themselves during a prepared speech about an ag-related topic of their choice.

**Job Interview** - To provide FFA members the opportunity to demonstrate their ability in completing a job application form, writing a letter of application, preparing a resume, interviewing, and completing a follow-up letter. The participant will select one of the eight full-time, entry-level job openings and apply for the position.

**Parliamentary Procedure** – A team of five juniors and/or seniors demonstrate knowledge of parliamentary procedure to conduct an orderly/efficient meeting and to transact business and to present logical, realistic, and convincing discussion. Each member shall serve as the chair for one ability.

## Skills Career Development Events (CDEs)

To find out more about each event log on to <http://www.paffa.state.pa.us/CDE%20Manual.htm> and go to the CDE Rules and Resources link to the left. These skill sets are what MAY be offered at the county level and could change based on the needs of the county advisors.

**Fall:** Tractor Driving, Small Gas Engines, Wildlife, FFA Knowledge (Vet Science every other year), Horse Judging

**Spring:** Forestry, Dairy Judging, Livestock Judging, Aquatics, Interview

## **FFA Fund Raisers**

The need to raise funds is a reality for all student organizations. We would not be able to provide so many great opportunities for our students if it were not for our fund raising activities. Here is a short summary of what our FFA chapter does to raise funds for our programs. Other activities are conducted on an as-needed or as-available basis.

**-Fundraisers will be discussed at the upcoming ag/ffa advisory board meeting-if you would like to be a part of this process, please contact Mrs. Weimer.**

# Proficiency Awards

The Agricultural Proficiency Awards program like the FFA motto helps you set goals and learn practical skills. The program rewards FFA members at the local, state and national levels for exceptional accomplishments and excellence in a Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program. What are the proficiency award areas? Awards are available to all FFA members enrolled in high school agriculture, including special needs students. There are 47 or more award areas.

For more information and applications log on [www.ffa.org](http://www.ffa.org)

## Proficiency awards are given in the following areas:

Ag. Communications	Diversified Horticulture	Nursery Operations
Ag Education	Diversified Livestock Prod.	Organic Production
Ag Mechanics Design & Fabrication	Emerging Ag. Technology	Outdoor Recreation
Ag. Mechanics Repair & Maintenance	Environ. Sci & Nat. Resource	Poultry Production
Ag. Mechanics Energy Systems	Equine Science	Sheep Production
Ag. Processing	Fiber and/or Oil Crop Prod	Small Animal Prod. & Care
Ag. Sales	Floriculture	Specialty Animal Prod.
Ag. Services	Food Science & Tech	Specialty Crop Prod.
Aquaculture	Forage Production	Swine Production
Beef Production	Forest Mgt. & Products	Turf Grass Management
Dairy Production	Fruit Production	Vegetable Production
Diversified Ag. Prod.	Grain Production	Wildlife Management
Diversified Crop Prod.	Home or Community Development	
	Landscape Management	

Agricultural Proficiency Awards are available to all FFA members enrolled in high school agriculture. Students must meet the following eligibility requirements: Must apply while in high school or within 1 year after graduation from high school. If a high school graduate you must have completed at least 3 full years of instruction in agricultural education or program of agricultural education offered in school last attended. At minimum, must have kept 1 full calendar year's worth of records as an FFA member to apply for a district, state, or national level proficiency award. This does not apply to local awards.

## FFA Degrees

### Discovery Degree

Specifically for Junior High Members who participate in FFA meetings and events on the local level. These students will experience all FFA has to offer, but on a more condensed scale. Dues for Junior High Members are \$10.00.

### Greenhand FFA Degree

As a high school member of the FFA, receiving the Greenhand FFA Degree shows that you have opened the door to the many exciting opportunities that the National FFA Organization has to offer. When you qualify for the Greenhand FFA Degree, you have earned the first of four degrees that build on each other leading the way to the highest degree achievable in the FFA, the American FFA Degree.

Do you qualify?

- I am a FFA member enrolled in agricultural education class.
- I have satisfactory plans for a supervised agricultural experience (SAE) program.
- I learned and can explain the FFA creed, motto, salute, and FFA mission statement.
- I can describe and explain the meaning of the FFA emblem and colors.
- I can demonstrate knowledge of the FFA Code of Ethics and proper use of the FFA jacket.
- I can demonstrate knowledge of the history of the organization, the chapter constitution and bylaws and the chapter Program of Activities
- I personally own or have access to the Official FFA Manual and the FFA Student Handbook.
- I submitted a written application for the Greenhand FFA Degree.

### Chapter FFA Degree

Whether it is helping plan your chapter's next activity, working hard on your SAE or discussing a motion during a chapter meeting, chapter involvement is vital to your future successes in FFA. The root of the National FFA Organization is its chapters. By receiving the Chapter FFA Degree, you demonstrate your role in your chapter's growth and development.

**Application: December, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year of FFA membership**

Do you qualify?

- Must have received the Greenhand FFA Degree.
- Must have satisfactorily completed the equivalent of at least 180 hours of systematic school instruction in agricultural education at or above the ninth grade level, have in operation an approved supervised agricultural experience program, and be enrolled in an agricultural education course.
- Have participated in the planning and conducting of at least three official functions in the chapter Program of Activities.
- Have earned and productively invested at least \$150 by the member's own efforts or worked at least forty-five hours in excess of scheduled class time, or a combination thereof, and have developed plans for continued growth and improvement in a supervised agricultural experience program.
- Have taken part in at least one skills and/or one leadership CDE
- Have effectively led a group discussion for 15 minutes.
- Have demonstrated five procedures of parliamentary law.
- Show progress toward individual achievement in the FFA award programs.
- Have a satisfactory scholastic record.
- Submit a written application for the Chapter FFA Degree.
- Have recorded more than 10 hours of community service projects.

### Keystone FFA Degree

Like a high school diploma, the State FFA Degree celebrates your high school FFA career. Awarded by your state FFA association, this degree is a symbol to the members of your entire state FFA association that you are chapter leaders. As a State FFA Degree recipient, you have taken your FFA involvement beyond the chapter level and have a successful supervised agricultural experience (SAE) program. With your State FFA Degree, you are one step away from achieving the highest degree attainable in the FFA, the American FFA Degree. **Application: February, Usually during the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year of FFA Membership**

Do I qualify?

- Have received the Chapter FFA Degree.
- Have been an active FFA member for at least two years (24 months) at the time of receiving the State FFA Degree.
- While in school, have completed the equivalent of at least two years (360 hours) of systematic school instruction in agricultural education at or above the ninth grade level, which includes a supervised agricultural experience program.



- Have earned and productively invested at least \$1,000, or worked at least 300 hours in excess of scheduled class time, or a combination thereof, in a supervised agricultural experience program.
- Demonstrate leadership ability by:
  - \*Performing 10 procedures of parliamentary law.
  - \*Giving a six-minute speech on a topic relating to agriculture or the FFA.
  - \* Serving as an officer, committee chairperson, or participating member of a chapter committee.
- Have a satisfactory scholastic record as certified by the local agricultural education instructor and the principal or superintendent.
- Have participated in the planning and completion of the chapter Program of Activities.
- Have participated in at least five different FFA activities above the chapter level. The percentage of the total state membership which may receive the State FFA Degree and other requirements may be established by the state FFA association.
- Have recorded more than 25 hours of community service projects.

### American FFA Degree

As the highest degree achievable in the National FFA Organization, receiving the American FFA Degree shows an FFA member's dedication to his or her chapter and state FFA associations. It demonstrates the effort FFA members apply toward their supervised agricultural experience (SAE) program and the outstanding leadership abilities and community involvement they experienced throughout their FFA career. American FFA Degree recipients show promise for their future and have above and beyond to achieve excellence. **Application: During the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> year following high school graduation.**

Do I qualify?

- Have received the State FFA Degree, have been an active member for the past three years (36 months) and have a record of satisfactory participation in the activities on the chapter and state levels.
- Have satisfactorily completed the equivalent of at least three years (540 hours) of systematic secondary school instruction in an agricultural education program or have completed the program of agricultural education offered in the school last attended.
- Have graduated from high school at least 12 months prior to the national convention at which the degree is to be granted.
- Have in operation and have maintained records to substantiate an outstanding supervised agricultural experience program through which a member has exhibited comprehensive planning, managerial and financial expertise.
- Have earned and productively invested at least \$7,500 or have earned and productively invested at least \$1,500 and worked 2,250 hours in excess of scheduled class time. Any combination of hours times a factor of \$3.33 plus dollars must be equal to, or greater than the number 9,000. Hours used for the purpose of producing earnings reported as productively invested income shall not be duplicated as hours of credit to meet the minimum requirements for the degree.
- Have a record of outstanding leadership abilities and community involvement and have achieved a high school scholastic record of C or better as certified by the principal or superintendent.
- Have recorded more than 50 hours of community service projects.

# FFA Conferences and Camps

The Rockwood FFA takes multiple trips to leadership conferences, conventions, and competitions throughout the year. As a rule, high school students must be eligible according to Rockwood's Good Conduct Policy as well as academically eligible in order to participate in these trips. Any student currently failing a class will not be allowed to miss school for FFA-related activities.

On all FFA trips, students pay for their own meals (with a few exceptions as noted) and incidental costs such as souvenirs. On some trips, FFA members are asked to pay a fee to the chapter to cover a portion of the expenses.

## Individual Opportunities for FFA Members

### Exhibiting at the Somerset County Fair

Members of the Rockwood FFA Chapter may exhibit livestock, mechanical, and other projects at the these local fairs. Projects exhibited must be a part of the student's Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program and records should be maintained on this project. Participants can pick up livestock ID forms, entry forms, premium books, etc from the FFA Advisor. All forms should be turned into the FFA Advisor by the established deadlines, NOT directly to the County Extension Office. Because the County Fair is an Individual FFA Activity, the chapter encourages participation, but does not provide financial support, transportation of livestock, or supervision. Important dates to remember for the Somerset County Fairs include the Market Beef Weigh-In; Lamb Weigh-In, and the Livestock ID Deadlines.

## Program of Activities Committees and Officers

Each student has the opportunity to serve on one POA committee. The committee members work to organize the events related to that area. All members can take part in any activity, but committee members are ultimately responsible for organization.

The following list is the fifteen POA committees students can choose to serve on. We try to have at least one student from each grade on each committee, limiting committee size to six students. Each committee elects its own chairperson to provide leadership for the group.

*Student Leadership*  
*SAE*  
*Scholarship*  
*Recruitment*  
*Financial*

*Public Relations*  
*Chapter Leadership*  
*Support Groups*  
*Economic Development*

*Environmental & Natural Resources*  
*Human Resources*  
*Citizenship*  
*Ag Awareness*

The Program of Activities is a large document that is revised annually. Students are given a copy of the POA in December, which lists local, district, state and national officers as well as the chapter constitution, the annual budget & expenditures, and much more. Look for this to show up at home around the end of the year.

Officers are elected in October; officer candidates must fill out an application, complete an FFA knowledge exam, participate in an interview and are sometimes asked to give a short speech before the chapter. Our chapter has six constitutional officers. They are: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Reporter, and Sentinel. The FFA Advisor must be the agriculture education instructor. Students may also consider running for Somerset County (District), Pennsylvania (State) and National Officer positions. The advisor has all information for those opportunities

## For More Information

Feel free to contact the FFA advisor with any questions via email or school phone. The advisor also sends out periodic emails, so if you have an address that is checked regularly please get your address to the advisor. We also use internet communication tools, including [rockwoodschoools.org](http://rockwoodschoools.org) to provide copies of pictures, news and information, documents, applications and the POA. The Rockwoodschoools.org website will also have the FFA schedule on it – sign up to receive notices of date changes or additions.



## How Can I Get Involved?



At Rockwood there is an active Board of Involvement . This group functions as a sort of booster club for the agriculture education program. Although the group is only a year old, so far members have helped to organize fundraising and events, as well as continuing to add ideas for how we can make FFA better in our area. This is a professional group, providing networking opportunities, leadership development for adults and students, and increasing agricultural awareness among the community. One myth about the Board of Involvement is that you can only join if you were an FFA member yourself. Don't let the name deceive you – membership is open to ANYONE who has interest in the agriculture education program and FFA organizations. We need adults in the area to be interested and available for our FFA to succeed.

Please email me or call me if you would like to be a part of the Board of Directors for Involvement. I am always looking for new faces and ideas and would love to have more input from parents and the community.

Thanks-Leanna Weimer