



Indiana FFA Association  
One North Capitol Avenue, Suite 600  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

P | 317-232-8870  
F | 317-232-1362  
[www.inffa.org](http://www.inffa.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Indiana FFA names Section Stars**

*15 members from across Indiana are named Section Stars for their dedication to their Supervised Agricultural Experiences.*

TRAFLAGAR, Indiana (June 2, 2017) – The Indiana FFA Association named its 2017 Section Stars as a part of its program, the Indiana State Stars. After submitting an application, a personal interview, as well as a site visit, these members were deemed Section Stars in their respective categories. Members determined as Section Stars then are interviewed for a chance to be named as a State Star in these four prestigious award areas: Star Farmer, Star in Agricultural Placement, Star in Agribusiness and Star in Agriscience. They will find out the results on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017 at 7 pm at the Hoosier Degree Session during the 88<sup>th</sup> Indiana State FFA Convention at Purdue University. Those determined as State Stars in each of the categories will receive a scholarship for \$250 sponsored by The Jeff Lehman Family. They will also receive a plaque and a copy of the Star videos showcasing each candidates' program, which are sponsored by Beck's Hybrids. Elanco Animal Health sponsors the Section Star Banquet for the Stars and their family held during the 88<sup>th</sup> Indiana FFA State Convention. Below are descriptions of each Section Star and their operation.

### **Section I**

#### **Star in Agricultural Placement – Kelty Bratton, West Noble FFA Chapter**

From a young age, Kelty Bratton has always had a love for cattle. Kelty works for her grandfather and uncle, where she takes care of 30 head of cattle by completing tasks such as feeding, check calves for illness and administer medications when needed. It is her personal goal to own a farm and raise cattle for market and show in the future.

#### **Star in Agriscience – Emily Kilmer, Tri-County FFA Chapter**

After her agricultural educator sparked her passion for agriscience in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, Emily Kilmer has since completed three experiments focused around wind turbine blades, turbidity in water due to various soil types and the impact of tilling methods and water turbidity in surrounding surface water ditches. Emily's research has had an affect on the decisions of local farmers in their tillage practices. Emily will use the skills she has gained as she becomes an agriculture teacher.

#### **Star in Agribusiness – Nic Cleaver, Twin Lakes FFA Chapter**

Nic Cleaver discovered his passion for honey bee production in 2014 when he worked with his family to secure a total of 60,000 bees. Nic's responsibilities include maintaining the hives, checking for queen cells, splitting hives, extracting honey and selling it to customers. He continues to gain responsibilities and expand the operation.

#### **Star Farmer – Blake Danner, Frontier FFA Chapter**

Blake Danner found his love for the livestock industry through his family's business, Purple Power Boar Stud, and from there has grown and developed his own business of raising and selling show pigs. Blake currently owns 27 sows 3 boars, and has sold semen and pigs to 24 different states, just in the last year. He has built his client list by caring for customers and offers anything from feed advice, to show day finishing to each and every one of his customers.

## **Section II**

### **Star in Agricultural Placement – Hayley Musser, Benton Central FFA Chapter**

Growing up on her families Hereford cattle farm, Hayley Musser discovered her passion for cattle at a young age. Hayley's responsibilities on the farm range from daily care, to preparation for shows and assisting in breeding decisions. Hayley's SAE has helped set her up for the future as she plans to continue the family legacy of raising cattle in her adult life.

### **Star in Agriscience – Shelby Henry, Clinton Central FFA Chapter**

Shelby Henry may have begun her SAE with an interest in swine, however that interest eventually transformed into a passion for rabbits. Not only did Shelby begin watching over and monitoring rabbits and their kits, she also began to work science into the process. By measuring the rate of gain amongst three different litters of kits, Shelby was able to determine that meat rabbits grow at a quicker rate than show rabbits.

### **Star in Agribusiness – Tanner Pearson, Delphi FFA Chapter**

Tanner Pearson found his passion in teaching younger elementary school students swimming lessons. He was inspired by his uncle and father who did the same when they were younger. In addition to teaching the lessons, Tanner's responsibilities range from cleaning the pool, adding chemicals and testing the water. With this SAE, he was able to provide students with lifelong skills.

### **Star Farmer – Lane Eckrote, North Miami FFA Chapter**

His family history in agriculture has helped Lane Eckrote discover his passion for being on the farm. Lane farms alongside his father and grandfather, gaining more responsibilities on their crop and beef production farm. He hopes to gain a degree in beef science so that he can bring back skills and knowledge to his family's farming operation.

## **Section III**

### **Star in Agricultural Placement – Brandi Atkins, Rushville FFA Chapter**

Brandi Adkins has a very strong passion for veterinary medicine and got her foot in the door of the industry very quickly. Beginning in 2013, Brandi job shadowed throughout the summer at a local veterinarian's office. After that experience, Brandi eventually attained part-time employment at the office, filling the role as veterinary assistant. Running blood tests, filling prescriptions and maintaining logs are just a few of the many tasks Brandi takes on in the office.

### **Star in Agribusiness – Robert Armstrong, Franklin FFA Chapter**

This section star in agribusiness's love and dedication for honey bees is buzzing after growing up on a small family farm outside of Indianapolis. Robert Armstrong raises honey bees, markets products from his hive and sells beekeeping supplies such as woodware and live bees. He manages 11 production colonies and 10 nucs. Robert hopes to continue to expand and diversify his SAE to become his fulltime occupation and educate others about the importance of agriculture.

### **Star Farmer – Isaac Murdock, White River Valley FFA Chapter**

Isaac Murdock's passion for agriculture began at a young age when he worked with his dad on his family's cattle operation. His own operation started with one bred heifer and has now expanded to 8 cows, 2 heifers, and 1 bull. He has long-term goals of expanding his family's herd from 200 head of cattle to over 500 head in the next few years. Through a passion and dedication for his operation, Isaac continues to find great success in his SAE.

## **Section IV**

### **Star in Agricultural Placement – Liam Ludwig, Batesville FFA Chapter**

Liam Ludwig spends his days working for his family's 200 acre vegetable farm, Hilltop Farms, which has been in existence since 1980. Products from the farm are sold to a grocery store market in Alexandria, Kentucky, as well as the Batesville Farmers Market and sold roadside daily. Liam eventually wants to become either the co-owner or farm manager while learning the trade of welding for an extra source of income.

### **Star in Agriscience – Lindsey Koester, North Posey FFA Chapter**

This FFA member researched various topics including the shelf life of garden vegetables, mold growth in her kitchen, and her favorite, the effect of health habits. In addition to research, Lindsey implements her project about health lifestyles as she gives tours on her family's dairy operation. She strives to educate others about how they can implement healthy habits into their daily lives and whether they will make a positive or negative difference.

### **Star in Agribusiness – Catherine Fisher, Madison FFA Chapter**

They say pictures are worth a thousand words, and this FFA member's agribusiness strives to share agriculture through a different lens. Catherine Fisher has used her business to photograph friends' farms, animals and equipment in order to represent all aspects of agriculture in her local community. Her business, Catherine A. Fisher Photography, has been featured in an agriculture bulletin and in the Indiana State Department of Agriculture's calendars.

### **Star Farmer – Gracie Flaspohler, Batesville FFA Chapter**

The Section IV Star Farmer has found a passion for raising and marketing swine. Gracie owns 103 sows and focuses primarily on crossbred, registered Yorkshire and registered Hampshire breeds. Her SAE consists of breeding, farrowing, marketing and showing swine projects as well as collecting and selling boar semen. She plans to attend Purdue University to pursue a degree in Animal Agribusiness.

###

**About the Indiana FFA Association** - The Indiana FFA is the largest Career and Technical Student Organization in Indiana with over 12,000 members as part of 206 local FFA chapters across the state. The FFA mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success. The Indiana State Department of Agriculture provides leadership and direction for the Indiana FFA as a service to local agricultural education programs. For more information, visit the Indiana FFA webpage at [inffa.org](http://inffa.org), or follow the conversation on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and BlogSpot.

#### Media Contacts:

Tamara Neighbors ([tneighbors@isda.in.gov](mailto:tneighbors@isda.in.gov) or 317-690-4639)

Robert Hays ([rhays1@isda.in.gov](mailto:rhays1@isda.in.gov) or 317-690-3133)