The mission of the Nebraska Farm Bureau Foundation is to engage youth, educators, and the general public to promote an understanding of the vital importance of agriculture in the lives of all Nebraskans.

Does your will need a check-up?

It is no surprise that estate planning attorneys are fielding record numbers of calls during the COVID-19 pandemic. With a small amount of planning now, you can make a big impact for your family and the causes that matter to you. Your legacy is important. Will you consider a gift in your will to the Nebraska Farm Bureau Foundation?

Call Megahn at 402-421-4742 or visit www.nefbfoundation.org to learn more.

FFA Advisors of the Year Awarded

During a virtual ceremony, the foundation awarded two outstanding Nebraska FFA advisors with the FFA Advisor of the Year award. The advisors were nominated by their students and were chosen based on school and community involvement, leadership development in their classroom, and ability to keep their students involved in agriculture.

Gary Maresh from Central City High School is entering his 43rd and final year as an educator and FFA advisor. During his career, he has spent countless hours working with his students to make sure they are successful in the classroom and the community.

“I have had the privilege of teaching in Central City my entire 43-year career. I have had so many great students and parental support. I really feel proud when I see former students return home to be involved in agriculture or be productive citizens. I am humbled by this honor and I want to thank Nebraska Farm Bureau for this honor and my FFA chapter for the nomination,” Maresh said.

Dan Mowinkel from Logan View High School has been the FFA Chapter’s advisor for 30 years. Mowinkel is a pillar in his community and creates hands-on labs to make learning interactive and keep students engaged.

“I’m honored to receive this award; I believe every child I taught and advised has unique qualities and abilities. My greatest hope is that I got them to achieve more than they thought was possible and that they know that I cared for each and every one of them,” Mowinkel said.

“It is an honor to recognize two teachers with long histories of investment in their students, communities, and Nebraska agriculture,” said Megahn Schafer, executive director of the Nebraska Farm Bureau Foundation. “Mr. Maresh and Mr. Mowinkel have decades of dedicated service, and their positive impact will reach across Nebraska and beyond for years to come.”

Dan Mowinkel and Gary Maresh are shown in the photos.
It is summer, and many of the usual activities – playing baseball, going to the swimming pool, attending camp – have been postponed, limited, or cancelled altogether, leaving some parents to ask, “What are we going to do with the kids?” The Nebraska Farm Bureau Foundation provided an answer for several days in July. The foundation’s education team got to work in June, pivoting in-person summer camp activities into Found on the Farm, a virtual summer mini-camp designed to break the boredom of screen-time with live interaction and hands-on learning and fun. This is not the summer programming the foundation had planned, one-by-one, spring field trips, agricultural festivals, and county fairs were cancelled. “We knew we had to be ready with a new approach for summer,” said Courtney Shreve, Director of Outreach Education. “While events have been cancelled, our mission has not. Agricultural literacy is not just our job, it is our passion, and we never once thought about slowing down during the COVID-19 pandemic. We knew families needed high-quality opportunities for their children at home, and we set out to serve them well,” Shreve said.

Found on the Farm was a three-hour virtual camp that featured plant growth, genetics, the food chain, nutrition, and agriculture trivia. What made this camp unique was the supply kit participants received in the mail, full of everything needed to follow along with the camp counselors, learn, experiment, and create. Camp kicked off with a fun trivia game using Kahoot, an interactive online quiz tool popular in many school settings. The day continued with campers assembling a chia pet, flipping coins to determine the genetics of their own calf, crafting an agriculture web that showed all the ways the farm or ranch is at the center of daily life, and using differently colored Skittles candies to create a feed ration for livestock.

“Between the game competition and the hands-on activities, our campers seemed to be having so much fun that they didn’t even realize they were learning along the way,” said Brooke Tempel, foundation education specialist. “There were many smiles, questions, and exclamations, and we loved every minute,” Tempel said.

Parents agreed. “Thanks SO much for all that you did to make this such a fun & educational experience! The boys had so much fun and a lot to tell me when I got home!” said Christy King of Cortland, Neb., mom to campers Bradyn and Conner.

So far, 60 families have participated in Found on the Farm – a full slate of 20 for each of the three camp dates. Each camp was limited to 20 logins to make certain all campers had a chance to interact with the counselors, ask questions, and share their discoveries. The camp was designed for participants ages 8-10, and the foundation team is working on new programming for additional age groups. The program was 100 percent free to participate.

Megahn Schafer, executive director at the foundation said, “This was really a no-brainer for us. With new shopping patterns and supply chain interruptions during the pandemic, agriculture as a source of food, fiber, and fuel has been in the spotlight. In addition to our food supply, and kids need safe ways to continue to play and learn. We are proud to serve Nebraska families with free opportunities that highlight he many contributions of our state’s number one industry – agriculture!”

Welcome Hannah Hosick!

Hannah Hosick joined the Nebraska Farm Bureau Foundation in June of 2020. The foundation added this new position of Education Specialist thanks in part to the support of a private donor. Hannah received her bachelor’s degree from Kansas State University in Agricultural Education in May of 2020. At Kansas State, Hannah was an active member of the Agricultural Education Club, a College of Education EDCAT Squad Leader, a member of Kappa Delta Sorority, and a College of Agriculture Student Ambassador. Hannah leads lessons in the classroom and agricultural literacy activities at fairs, festivals, and community events. She works in collaboration with the Director of Outreach Education to create agricultural literacy resources and to build outreach opportunities.

Hannah grew up in Curtis, Nebraska where she was actively involved in agriculture through her family’s farm and the Medicine Valley FFA chapter. She is devoted to helping young Nebraskans learn about the agricultural industry and encouraging the next generation of agriculturalists in our state. In her free time, Hannah enjoys being outdoors, hunting, fishing and traveling.

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–Christy King, Cortland, Neb.