



CONNECTING

— CHAPTERS —

**FARM BUREAU AND FFA
GUIDE TO A WINNING COMBINATION**



MENTORSHIP



SERVICE



PARTNERSHIP

One of the most important actions that an organization can take requires zero financial commitment and minimal time. It isn't anything flashy or new. It is mentoring.

Nebraska Farm Bureau Foundation has developed a platform for County Farm Bureaus to participate in a program to develop young community members through mentorship.

Connecting Chapters is a program that equips high school FFA members to connect with elementary students and peers to increase agricultural literacy – awareness, knowledge, and appreciation – in their communities. During the school year, FFA chapters will:

- Complete an in-person agricultural literacy training.
- Read and donate a book to an elementary classroom.
- Plan and lead one agricultural literacy activity in their school.
- Connect with their local County Farm Bureau to learn more about Farm Bureau.

This program presents an opportunity for County Farm Bureaus in Nebraska to enrich their membership base by supporting future members to become qualified leaders in their organization.

As the county leader, your role is to arrange a meeting with the FFA chapter, facilitate a conversation about the work of the County Farm Bureau you are a member of, and build a relationship with your local FFA chapter.

Farm Bureau members are busy in their work, life, and organization. How can they reach students in their community? It is possible! In the following pages you will find resources to help you facilitate this meeting and have a conversation with your FFA chapter. When students look back on the most influential individuals in their high school career, we want them to remember Farm Bureau.

QUESTIONS?

Contact Brooke Carpenter, director of education,
at (402) 646-5325 or brookec@nefb.org.



MENTORSHIP

Mentoring is one of the best investments in your organization because it serves as an introduction to the work you do. Agriculture can't afford to let talent lay undeveloped and untapped. FFA is full of future farmers and ranchers, future agricultural industry leaders, and **future Farm Bureau members**.

PREPARING TO MEET WITH THE FFA CHAPTER

Does the County Farm Bureau leader reach out to the FFA chapter?

- The FFA Chapter received your information at the same time you received their information. We ask the FFA chapter to make the initial contact, but you are also welcome to make the first contact!

When does this meeting need to be completed?

- Nebraska Farm Bureau Foundation asks that you meet with the FFA chapter by April 30.

What do I talk about at this meeting?

- We hope that you will talk about Farm Bureau and what it has to offer. Please use the Farm Bureau PowerPoint or the Farm Bureau video found at www.nefbfoundation.org/connectingchapters to help you describe Nebraska Farm Bureau.
- If you have connected and built a relationship with your local FFA chapter and are looking for more ideas, turn to page 4 in this book for ideas to continue building upon the great connection you have!

I don't use PowerPoint. Who can help me?

- Help is available! Please reach out to your regional manager or Brooke Carpenter, director of education, to determine the best way for you to have a positive connection with the FFA chapter.
 - Brooke Carpenter, director of education,
brookec@nefb.org or (402) 646-5325



PARTNERSHIP

Step One

- If your school is new to the Connecting Chapters, please present Farm Bureau 101 during your first visit with the FFA Chapter. The Farm Bureau PowerPoint is a good resource for Farm Bureau 101 and can be found at www.nefbfoundation.org/connectingchapters. Please feel free to share your own experience with Farm Bureau to help students understand the organization. Membership flyers and materials are available by request to Brooke Carpenter at brookec@nefb.org or (402) 646-5325.
- If your school has participated in the past, connect with the advisor to learn if you will be meeting new students or the same students from the prior year. If students are new, please present Farm Bureau 101 again. If all or most students have seen Farm Bureau 101, consider the ideas below for meeting topics to continue building your relationship with the FFA chapter

Ideas for Discussion

- Hot Topic Discussion
 - Identify a hot topic in agriculture such as energy, livestock mRNA vaccines, or property valuations. Use the Nebraska Farm Bureau [policy development guides](#) to learn more. Connect with your regional manager if you're looking for more information to lead this idea.
- Personal Journey and Involvement with Nebraska Farm Bureau
 - Visit the FFA chapter and share your personal journey with Farm Bureau.
- Policy Resolution Development
 - Farmers and ranchers determine where Farm Bureau stands on issues. If your county has submitted a policy resolution before, consider sharing how your county identified an issue and made it a part of Farm Bureau policies.
- Classroom Topics
 - Ask the FFA advisor if they have specific topics that you can help students learn about such as plant science, welding, or animal science.

Ideas for Support

- Field Trip to Farm/Ranch or Agribusiness
 - Can you provide a location for students to tour? Offer to host the FFA chapter to your farm/ranch or agribusiness at a time that works with the FFA chapter.
- Speech Topic Ideas
 - Connect this with the hot topic discussion. Many FFA members must write a speech and you could serve as an expert source!
- Volunteer with FFA Chapter
 - Let FFA advisor know you are willing to serve as a judge for FFA officers or that you will help give feedback on a speech a student has written before they head to competition, or you can help with a contest if they need help.

Ideas for Partnership

- Can you connect with your FFA chapter to host a community engagement event together? Does an event already exist in your community where you and the FFA chapter could contribute together? Here are a few ideas of where you could partner! Adding events increases activity for your county and gives people a place to feel like they belong.
 - National Agriculture Week
 - Agriculture Awareness Festival
 - County Fair

REGIONAL MANAGER CONTACT INFORMATION



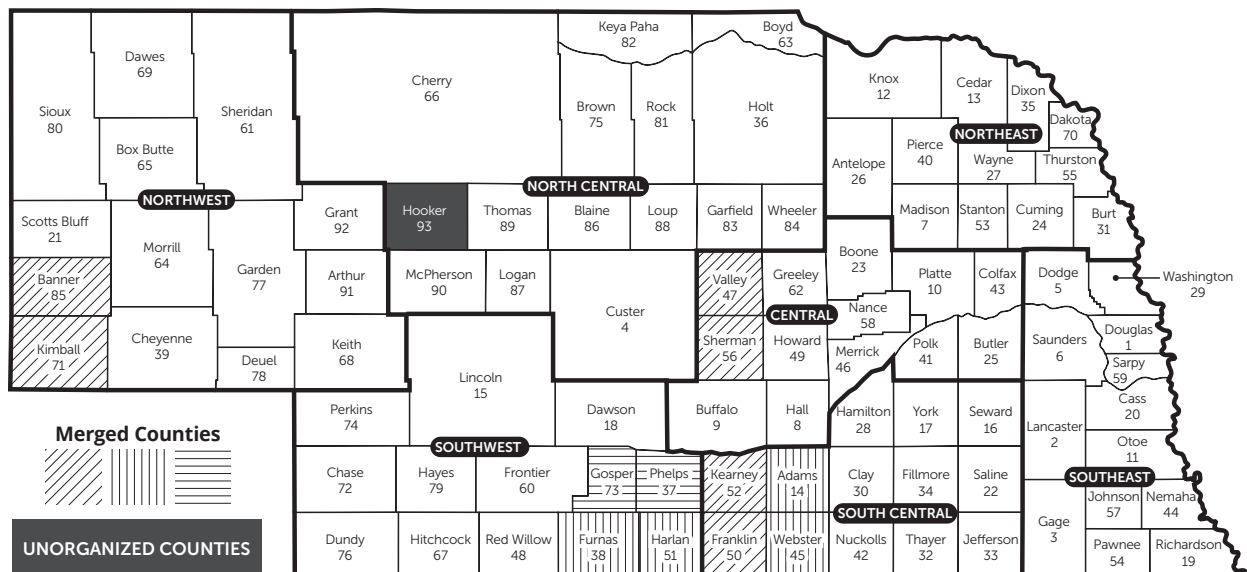
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SERVICE

At the end of your presentation, allow time to visit. The goal for this discussion is to increase communication amongst the County Farm Bureau and the FFA chapter. Many groups are doing similar programs, and this will allow an opportunity to discuss with the FFA chapter if there are any projects you can work on together. For example, can the FFA chapter help with an Ag Awareness Day, or could the FFA Chapter help you lead an activity at the county fair?

By opening the discussion, you will be more effective and efficient in your community by putting resources such as time and finances of two groups together.

COUNTY FARM BUREAU STEPS TO PREPARE

Prior to your meeting with the FFA chapter:

- Can the County Farm Bureau provide any financial support to the FFA chapter?
 - If so, how much and what type of project would you be willing to support?
- In what ways does the County Farm Bureau see a way to support the FFA chapter?
 - Can you work on an event together like a safety day or ag awareness festival?
- How does the County Farm Bureau reach elementary students in the community?
- Are there any County Farm Bureau members willing to provide volunteer time to help with projects?

QUESTIONS FOR FFA CHAPTER

Once you have discussed the above questions with your fellow County Farm Bureau leaders, choose two or more questions from the following list to begin building a partnership with the FFA chapter.

- What are the top five activities the FFA chapter is looking forward to this year?
- How could the County Farm Bureau be supportive of the work you do?
- Is there a way for us to get involved with the FFA chapter? For example, we can serve as interviewers for officer interviews, or we would be happy to donate supplies to handout for National Ag Week.
- Is there an event we can partner on?
- Are your FFA members interested in attending a County Farm Bureau meeting to present about the work you've done in the Connecting Chapters program?

PUT YOUR DISCUSSION IN ACTION

Once you have completed the discussion with the FFA chapter, what happens next?

Discussion is a great way to engage with students, but action items are important to solidify the partnership and build forward momentum. At the end of your discussion with the FFA chapter please:

- Identify one action item from the meeting:
 - Can you provide funds to the FFA chapter?
 - Can you be a guest speaker at a chapter meeting?
 - Can the County Farm Bureau provide materials for the FFA chapter to hand out during National Ag Week?
- Summarize the conversation and present the information at your next County Farm Bureau meeting.
- Stay in touch with the FFA advisor. Send a quick note after the meeting to say thank you for the meeting, identify your action item, and complete any follow up necessary to finish action item.