



Interesting Facts about FFA | *North Carolina FFA*

When the General Assembly passed legislation in 1911 to appropriate money for Farm Life Schools in North Carolina, it also required that the schools have a farm with barns, animals, and other equipment, in addition to adequate space for classrooms and shops for instruction.

In 1939 – 1940 the FFA had 13,000 members in North Carolina. That same year 4,696 members held the Greenhand Degree, 6,299 held the Future Farmer degree (the Chapter degree), and 60 members were awarded the Carolina Farmer degree (state degree)

In 1939, 164 North Carolina chapters had 100% membership

In 1957, Clarence Chappell of Perquimans High School was recognized as the National Star Farmer. After seven years of his SAE, his net worth was \$72,000.

In 1969, it cost \$16 dollars to attend the FFA Camp at White Lake.

In 1978, the North Surry FFA chapter from NC competed in the National Land Judging contest and placed second. They were eight points from first place. Two other NC teams participated – South Lenoir placed 13th and Southern Nash was 21st.

In 1947, you could purchase an FFA manual for 15 cents.

From 1935 – 1965, 6 of the 31 national NFA presidents were from North Carolina.

Although it is not permitted now, between 1936 and 1946 there were 11 North Carolina State Officers to serve more than one term. Thelbert Boykin was the only officer to serve two nonconsecutive terms in 1938 – 1939 and 1940 – 1941. Five of those 11 officers make up the only state officer team to serve two terms in office in 1944 – 1945 and 1945 – 1946.

North Carolina's highest ever recorded membership total was 31,869 members

In 1966, National FFA President Howard Williams (the 3rd national officer from NC) cut the ribbon to open the very first Agricultural Career Show for members.

There have only been two National Star Farmers from North Carolina – Clarence Chappell in 1957 and Franklin Howey from Union County in 1987.

In 1934, official convention delegates at the National Convention motioned to purchase as prize-winning lamb from an FFA member at the American Royal Livestock Association, have it dressed, and sent to President Franklin Roosevelt. The motion passed.

In 1934, at the National Convention, Jack Dunn of Hawaii, had been a candidate for the American Farmer degree, but his name was not approved. Delegates thought that conditions in Hawaii made it harder for farmers, so some pushed to make an exception, but Jack wouldn't hear of it. One person suggested that he be given the Honorary American Farmer degree, but that was against the constitution. A delegate from Massachusetts solved the problem when he moved to award Jack with a Special Honorary American Farmer degree. To this day, Jack Dunn of Hawaii is listed as the only person in the official records as having such a degree.

In 1933, there was a discussion among the National Convention delegates to permit girls to become members of the FFA. The Massachusetts Association had done so, because girls could take agriculture classes. However, the delegates disagreed and adopted a motion to give Massachusetts three months

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to conform to the national constitution or face suspension of their charter. It would be more than 30 years before girls were admitted.

A bill was introduced in Congress in 1929 seeking a federal charter of incorporation for the FFA. The bill got bogged down in the House of Representatives and did not come up for a vote. It would be 1950 before a federal charter was awarded to the organization.

At the second national convention, 33 states were represented by 64 delegates. 35 state associations with 1,500 chapters and 30,000 members had become affiliated with the national organization.

The national convention in 1941 was attended by 8,000 members and friends. National membership had reached 240,972.

Because of the war effort, the 1942 national convention was attended by only 217 people. Even National FFA President Irvin J. Schenk was not at the convention because he was occupied with farm work at the time to assist the war effort. Because of WWII, no national judging contests were held from 1941-1946.

From 1942 to 1945 membership at the national level dropped by 50,000 to 195,000 members and lost nearly 1,500 chapters.

The FFA organization contributed financially to the war effort through members and the state and national levels. \$394,255 in savings bonds and stamps were purchased including a \$10,000 defense savings bond by National FFA.

In activities related to the war effort, FFA members collected scrap metal, paper, rags, and other materials, grew gardens, and repaired machinery. The numbers below show how much was collected:

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| <i>Total maturity value of war and victory bonds and stamps purchased by state associations, chapters, and individual members</i> | \$17,023,566 |
| <i>Total maturity value of war and victory bonds and stamps sold by chapters and individual members</i> | \$18,415,126 |
| <i>Pounds of scrap metal collected by chapters</i> | 332,885,162 |
| <i>Pounds of paper collected by chapters</i> | 65,187,206 |
| <i>Pounds of rubber collected by chapters</i> | 6,394,766 |
| <i>Number of victory gardens grown by FFA members and chapters (121,851 total acres)</i> | 236,465 |
| <i>Number of farm machines repaired by FFA members</i> | 621,900 |
| <i>Number of pieces of farm equipment constructed</i> | 292,369 |

Three former FFA members, Captain Travis Hoover, Captain Robert Gray, and Lieutenant Bert Jordan participated in the famous raid on Tokyo, Japan on April 18, 1942 with General Jimmy Doolittle. Captain Gray was killed in action later that year and has an airfield at Fort Hood, Texas named in his honor.

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Former Washington State FFA President, D. W. Hendrick received a silver star while flying with Chenault's Flying Tigers in China.

Captain Alpha Fowler, former Georgia FFA President was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his "extra-ordinary achievement in serial flight"

Of the 440 Congressional Medal of Honor recipients during WWII, three were known to have been FFA members.

Early in 1929, the *Weekly Kansas City Star* announced that it would offer a \$1,000 prize to the FFA member whose achievements in farming and leadership was the most outstanding in the nation. Hence the reason, the award is called the Star Farmer of America – it was named after the newspaper. Carlton Patton from Arkansas became the first recipient.

The first FFA manual was printed in 1930 with a grant from Farm Journal Press of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

In 1939, Twin brothers Albert and Arthur Lacy of Hondo, Texas had a farm projects so impressive that judges could not decide who should be the Star Farmer of America. Judges decided to give them both the award and to this day, they are the only boys to ever share the coveted award.

In 1955, the FFA received broad publicity when *Time* magazine put a picture of Star Farmer of America recipient Joe Moore, Tennessee on its cover. He is the only FFA member to be honored in such a way.

Five different U.S. Presidents have spoken to FFA members at national convention – Dwight Eisenhower in 1953, Harry Truman in 1957, Richard Nixon in 1968, Gerald Ford in 1974, and Jimmy Carter in 1978. Additional, Vice President George H.W. Bush spoke at convention for Ronald Reagan in 1987.

Sources

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