University of Illinois Agricultural Education students participated in several nationally recognized conferences this past semester.

**Agriculture Future of America (AFA)**
Clayton Carley, Shelby Cooper, Jacob Dickey, and Liz Harfst participated in the AFA Conference in Kansas City, Missouri, in November. They were selected out of more than 1,200 applicants from 87 universities and 42 states nationwide. AFA uses a 4-track program to provide students with personal and professional development skills. Students enhance their skill sets during each level of the program. During the conference, students are given the opportunity to network with peers and leaders in the agriculture industry and develop an enhanced awareness about career opportunities in agriculture.

**Coca-Cola Scholars Leadership Summit**
Jacob Dickey, a junior in Agricultural Science Education, attended the Coca-Cola Scholars Leadership Summit in Atlanta, Georgia. He, along with over 500 fellow Coca-Cola Scholars from around the world, attended sessions conducted by industry leaders, listened to engaging keynote speakers and participated in countless opportunities for formal and informal networking and mentoring. Jacob was named a National Coca-Cola Scholar in 2011, one out of 50 from around the country. Since 1989, the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation has helped dreams come true for more than 5,000 outstanding students out of over 2.3 million applications.

**AgGateway Conference**
Shelby Lahey and Mark McKown, seniors in the Agricultural Education Program at the University of Illinois, participated in the National AgGateway Conference in St. Petersburg, Florida in November. The Gateway to Ag Careers (GTAC) grant provides students an opportunity to be paired with a host AgGateway member for the three-day conference. Students can participate in roundtable discussions about e-business, educational meetings and learn from agriculture industry representatives.

**American FFA Degree**
Congratulations to Collegiate FFA members Brianna Harmon and Sarah Luce on earning their American FFA Degree at the 2013 National FFA Convention!
Student Internship Experiences

Agricultural Education students completed several internships during the summer and fall semesters.

NAILE Internships
David Fulton, Malory Hughes, and Liz Harfst completed internships at the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) in Louisville, Kentucky, in November. During their internship experiences, students worked in the press room to write news releases and create daily segments for the NAILE newsletter. They also attended and covered more than 40 different events. Fulton said, “I learned how to become a better writer, communicate with a team, conduct interviews, and develop networking skills.”

Congressional Intern for Representative Rodney Davis, Illinois District 13
Joe Melisi, senior in Agricultural Leadership Education, completed an internship with Representative Rodney Davis, Illinois District 13, at the Champaign Constituent Office. His responsibilities included answering questions about legislation, providing constituents with Davis’ position on certain matters, and recording constituent concerns regarding current issues. He also directed calls, delivered mail, and developed documents needed by officials. Joe says the most valuable skill he acquired was an understanding of federal government and function of Congress. “I’m very enthusiastic about politics and the roles and responsibilities of the U.S. government. It’s very thrilling to be almost right in the middle of it working for the Congressman.”

Don Moyer Boys & Girls Club
Brittany Brown, senior in Agricultural Leadership Education, started her internship with the Don Moyer Boys & Girls Club in August. Brittany has greatly enjoyed the experience and appreciates the opportunity to work with elementary children. She is developing an ag program for kids that will be held every other Saturday starting in December. “The kids are not very familiar with agriculture, so my expertise is needed! I am enjoying preparing the program, and I am excited to see it come to fruition. I have a great supervisor and team of helpers to create my program. I couldn’t have asked for a better experience!”

National FFA Internship - Social Media
Liz Harfst, senior in Agricultural Science Education, was privileged to complete an internship during the National FFA Convention & Expo as a Social Media Reporter. “While attending numerous events throughout the week, I carried an iPad with me to report news in real-time on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.” She also created a new social media account on Vine for the convention. Another major responsibility was to moderate Tweets shown on the Convention Hall screen before every session. “It was great to experience National FFA Convention from behind-the-scenes in a way that I never had before!”

College of ACES Research Intern - Chicago Public Schools, Learning Gardens
Caroline Hoff conducted research on school learning gardens last summer as a Research Intern for the College of ACES. “I visited over 25 schools with gardens to gain an overall view of the variety of learning gardens in Chicago and talked to teachers who utilize these gardens. Through observations and meetings, I built the foundation for my research on gardening lesson plans.” Caroline developed an instructional manual for setting up gardens. She also designed and conducted a gardening camp for the Chicago Public School system. “This internship was a great way to apply knowledge I have learned in the classroom to real-life situations.”
Students Earn Awards at National ATA Conclave

Eight students from the University of Illinois Agricultural Education Program completed in the National Alpha Tau Alpha (ATA) Conclave during the National FFA Convention in Louisville, Kentucky.

Parliamentary Procedure - 1st place
 Clayton Carley (Chair), Trent Hawker (Secretary), Shelby Cooper, Jacob Dickey, and Claire Geiger brought home top honors in this year’s competition. Through a simulated meeting, students demonstrated their knowledge of parliamentary law.

Program of Excellence - 2nd place
 Danielle Brown and Trent Hawker prepared a written summary and conducted a presentation that summarized the Agricultural Education Program activities from the previous year. Students were evaluated in the areas of Community Service, Professional Development, Fundraising, and Fellowship.

Debate Team - 2nd place
 Danielle Brown, Clayton Carley, Jacob Dickey, and Claire Geiger debated against other university teams on the topic of FDA regulations for GMO and non-GMO products.

Quiz Bowl - 1st place
 Shelby Cooper, Trent Hawker, Caroline Hoff, and Jeff Reale won this year’s quiz bowl competitions. Topic areas included the history of agricultural education, teaching strategies, agricultural education associations, and knowledge of plant science principles and applications.

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U of I Hosts Greenhand & Student Leader Conference

The 2013 Greenhand and Student Leader Conference was held on September 25th. More than 440 students representing 37 FFA chapters throughout Illinois attended the conference. Senior students in Agricultural Education created and organized the workshops for the Greenhand FFA members as part of the their Ag Ed 421 class. Junior and senior students presented the workshops to FFA members who attended. At the conclusion of the workshops, Greenhands had the opportunity to attend a final workshop given by August Schetter, State FFA Reporter, and University of Illinois Agricultural Education student, Jacob Dickey.

In addition to the Greenhand FFA members, student leaders from the FFA chapters had the opportunity to participate in workshops led by National PAS Officers Brian Gordon and Riley Hintzsche, and the Illinois FFA National Officer Candidate, Jacob Meisner.

Kiersten Kasey, senior in agricultural education, was the coordinator for the conference. “Thank you to the 57 university student volunteers for their time and effort in making this conference a success!”

DID YOU KNOW?

Ag Leadership Education (ALE) students were asked to present to the statewide meeting of Extension Unit Directors to discuss What an Ag Ed Intern Can Do For You. Trent Hawker and Caitlin Chrzanowski, both seniors and former Extension interns, shared their experiences and represented Illinois Ag Ed at the event on November 14, 2013 at the I-Hotel in Champaign.

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Jacob Meisner teaching students at the conference.
Jeff Reale Presents Lesson to Elementary Students

Jeff Reale, junior in Agricultural Sciences Education, presented a lesson to Kindergarten students at St. Malachy School in Rantoul, Illinois, on Tuesday, November 12th.

Jeff discussed a variety of agriculturally-related topics with students to make them more aware of agriculture in their everyday lives. He talked to students about different types of farm equipment, farm safety practices, and corn and soybean crops. Jeff also introduced students to various foods and by-products made from the agronomic crops. Students also learned about four different types of corn: sweet corn, popcorn, dent corn, and ornamental corn. As an activity, Jeff provided instruction for students to make their own ornamental “Indian” corn to hang in the classroom.

Jeff was grateful for the opportunity to talk to students and inform them about the different aspects of harvest.

As a future agricultural educator, Jeff said, “It is important to begin teaching the future generations about agriculture at an early age. Some of these kids do not know where their food comes from, and thus we can begin to educate them about the importance of agriculture in their lives.”

AGED Students Earn ACES Scholarships

Congratulations to the five Agricultural Education students were recognized at the annual ACES Scholarship Reception this semester!

Danielle Brown
Erika Ferguson
Nic Turner
Kiersten Kasey
Chelsea Verbeck

The University of Illinois Agricultural Education Program External Advisory Committee met October 18th. The advisory committee provided insight on curriculum and procedures, and participated in working discussions about the Agricultural Leadership Education (ALE) and Agricultural Sciences Education (ASE) concentrations.

Members of the committee are:
- Ginger Boas, Illinois Extension, County Director
- Mindy Bunselmeyer, Illinois FFA Center
- Mariah Dale-Anderson, Illinois Farm Bureau
- Sheila Fowler, Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences
- Steve German, GROWMARK, Inc.
- Bill Harmon, Lincoln Land Community College
- Bryce Hoffman, Monticello High School
- Tracy Hoover, Pennsylvania State University
- Mindy McDermott, Monsanto
- Dave Mouser, Tri-Valley High School
- Jess Smithers, FCAE Coordinator
- Larry Thurow, Parkland College