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**JORDAN HAMILTON**  
Alabama FFA President  
Sand Rock Chapter

Greetings to all FFA members from across the great state of Alabama!!!

**2005-2006 National FFA Theme:  
"Living to Serve!"**

Who would have ever known the events that have transpired in our nation since my last *FFA Reporter* article?

As Alabamians, we are all too familiar with the devastation cause by Hurricane Katrina in late August. Lives have been lost, families separated, communities destroyed, and entire cities demolished through this single natural disaster. Never before in my lifetime have I witnessed such a catastrophic event! But yet at the same time I have never felt more encouraged, motivated, and inspired than I am at how Americans from across the nation are serving one another. Every where you turn, people are in someway attempting to help victims of the storm. Americans are constantly giving of their time and services, making monetary donations, sending much needed relief supplies, and even opening their homes to strangers. These are all perfect examples of Americans serving one another while expecting nothing in return.

While thinking about this, it occurred to me that we, as teenagers, are the next generation these responsibilities will fall to in future times of need. As FFA members



**U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Mike Johanns, poses for picture with Alabama Agriculture Commissioner, State FFA Officers, and State Staff at the Farm Bill Forum held at Tuskegee University**

it is essential that we prepare ourselves for these future leadership roles.

Leadership takes on many different forms. Some people lead through personal service while others lead through organizational skills. As FFA members our organization provides us with opportunities to develop a variety of leadership skills. I encourage each of you to participate in the activities our organization has to offer. By participating you are preparing yourself for the challenges of the future and the calling of our generation to rise up and become the leaders of tomorrow.

Many of the activities that we all enjoy participating in as FFA members will be the starting point for developing the skills needed to become future leaders. By mentioning some of the activities FFA members participate in, it is my intention to highlight some of the beneficial skills acquired from them.

The Public Speaking Career Development Event (CDE) is one

example. Most of us will never deliver a speech as an adult, but many of us will appear as Sunday school teachers, P.T.S.O officers, or in other public roles where we are required to organize our thoughts, choose our words, and have confidence to speak before others. By participating in this event, you will develop the ability to confidently present yourself to others.

Developing and maintaining your own Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) is another great example of an activity that FFA members participate in that helps develop leadership skills. Whether it be owning your own agricultural business or working on a farm, developing an SAE will enable you to develop characteristics of a keen leader such as responsibility, dedication, and hard work.

Finally, the most significant way to prepare yourself in FFA to become a leader of tomorrow is becoming a chapter officer. By serving as a chapter officer, you will learn first hand what it takes to be in a leadership role. You must devote your

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time and efforts to better the FFA organization. The experience is no longer about you, the FFA member, but it is about strengthening your entire chapter and the members it serves.

FFA is an awesome organization! There are numerous activities that we all enjoy. While FFA is a great way to have fun and make new friends, its primary purpose is to preparing you for the future and the curves in the road ahead. Have a great school year!!! God Bless!!!



**BROOKE HEAD**

**Alabama FFA Vice-President  
Marbury Chapter**

The journey continued for the Alabama State FFA officer team after Blast Off. The team traveled to Malvern, Arkansas for the National Leadership Conference for State Officers (NLCSO). This was a once in a lifetime experience for me. I loved every minute of the conference. From the workshops that Jackie Mundt, your National FFA President, and Rachael McCall, your National Southern Region Vice-President,

presented to finding snakes slithering through the camp. I met several amazing state officers during the conference from Mississippi, Arkansas, and Louisiana. I saw how each of them brought something different to their respected state officer teams and that showed me once again why I love this great organization. The Alabama state officer team brought home the Most Energetic Award. Kimberly and myself also were chosen to do opening ceremonies at our banquet that we had on our last night at the conference. So to say the least, we represented the wonderful Alabama State Association quite well.

The conference was a learning experience for all of us. We not only learned how we could better serve the Alabama FFA members, we also learned how to interact and work as a team. We finally were like a family, just like Mr. Davis told us we would be.

In addition to the many leadership conferences that the state officer team participated in, there was also the Career/Technical Summer Conference for career/technical teachers across this great state. I attended the awards banquet to recognize Mr. Keith Adair, the agriscience teacher at Montevallo High School, who was recognized as having the Agriscience Education Program of the Year. I also got to meet with the state officers from the other career/technical organizations again.

Now that a new school year has begun, I am looking forward to being able to make chapter visits. I can hardly wait to meet the future of our State Association, you, the members.



**MATT WILSON**

**Alabama FFA Secretary  
Jacksonville Chapter**

Former state officers and others told me that Blast-off would be a great experience. They said NLCSO (National Leadership Conference for State Officers) would be an excellent time for team bonding. But SPC (State Presidents' Conference) would be the most incredible time of my life. I would hate to think that they were lying to me, and they most definitely were not; it was

the most awesome experience I have ever had. Jordan and I traveled high and pressurized to our nation's capital, Washington, D.C. This was an interesting experience, seeing as how Jordan and I were left alone to navigate through the tangled mess of the Hartsfield International Airport, the red and orange lines on the METRO, and then finally the awfully confusing Omni Shoreham Hotel in downtown D.C. I had been to Washington, D.C. once before, and I thought I knew a favorable amount of information about the city. I was terribly wrong. Jordan and I learned more in that one short week than one could imagine. The theme of the week, "Cultivate the Experience," did not mean much to me at first, but by the end of the week, I was inspired to do just as the theme states.

Throughout the week we accomplished quite a bit of work. We decided on issues for national convention, thoroughly discussed the delegate process, and formed committees on our specific national convention issue. Our committee discussed, and then, we discussed some more. I never thought that I would enjoy such laborious work, but I really benefited from it. Even though State Presidents' Conference (SPC) was full of work, Jordan and I did find time to let loose and have a little fun. One day was reserved for us to go see whatever we wanted to see. We were off! All across D.C. we explored. From Ford's Theater to the International Air and Space Museum, we covered as much as we could! There just was not enough time to see it all. The highlight of our visit, or at least for me – I am sure Jordan would agree though, was the visit to the White House. Members of the Secret Service escorted us to the second floor of the gigantic house on Pennsylvania Avenue. The President joined the ninety-five state officers from around the country eagerly



awaiting his arrival. He appeared and said with a Texas country twang accent, "You guys ever ask the President any questions?" We, of course, were marveled at such a response and began the best we could to ask the President of the United States some questions. After about a thirty minute session, he was on his way and so were we.

We saw more and more sights in the D.C. area. We were off to the Capitol, to the World War II, Vietnam, Korean, and Lincoln memorials. We met with members of congress, including Senator Richard Shelby, and stopped by the United States Department of Agriculture for a meeting with Secretary Mike Johanns. As the days went by, something peculiar happened, I began to feel guilty that only Jordan and I had the chance to go to D.C. Why was I chosen to go to this conference? I am not any better than Brooke, Kimberly, Karen, or Jared, not in the least. Some things will go unanswered. Then I understood something – the theme which meant nothing in the beginning. Since I was granted the opportunity to go, I must do exactly as the theme for the week stated, "Cultivate the Experience." This means that I must share my experience with not only my fellow officers, but with the rest of the association as well. Jordan and I will try our best to do just that this year. We bring back greetings from the President, congressmen, and the national officer team. We will be unfailing leaders during national convention so that we make the very best decisions on the issues at hand. We will live to serve everyone we possibly can. I thank you members for giving Jordan and me the opportunity of a lifetime so that we can share this experience with others.



**JARED BEASLEY**  
Alabama FFA Treasurer  
Gaston Chapter

During the summer, the North, Central, and South District FFA Officers have worked hard in developing their leadership and communication skills. I witnessed first-hand, their passion for agriculture and the FFA while I attended

the North District Leadership Workshops. I was amazed at how well the District Officers were able to interact with, as well as involve all of the members attending the workshops. It was amazing to see how motivated the individual chapter officers were in helping their own chapters become more active throughout the upcoming year. Matt and Brooke were excited as they were able to see the Central District's Chapter Officers participate in the workshops. Kimberly was also amazed at how well the South District Officers performed while interacting with and motivating the South District Chapter Officers to become more active as well. Throughout this year, I encourage you, the chapter officers and members, to stay motivated and set goals for your chapter to accomplish. Chapter Officers, continue to lead your chapter through positive and purposeful influence.



**KAREN BAGGETT**  
Alabama FFA Reporter  
Lawrence County Chapter

The District Officer Leadership Conference (DOLC) went well, even though hurricane Dennis changed some plans. We met most of the District Officers and I have to say that all of the districts are in good hands. We developed and presented

workshops on parliamentary procedure, Maxwell's Five Levels of Leadership, written correspondence, personal mission statements and other subjects. The theme we chose was "Soaring to New Heights," which was completed with a skit by the state officer team. The district officers got to see our goofy sides in our wrong parliamentary procedure skit, but we got serious at the reflections and flag raising ceremonies. Besides having to cut the already too-short conference shorter, things went well. I appreciate the district officer's participation and willingness to work and hope that they use what was taught throughout their year of service to their respective districts. District officers: Pack your bags, take your tickets, run through the gate, look for your seat, find your seat, fasten your seatbelts, and DARE TO SOAR!



**KIMBERLEY HENDERSON**  
Alabama FFA Sentinel  
Enterprise Chapter

What an awesome opportunity I had, along with other agriculturalist, to express my opinion about the USDA Farm Bill. The Forum was held on August 25, in Tuskegee, Alabama. The setting was the Kellogg center on the campus of Tuskegee University.



National FFA President, Jackie Mundt and Southern Region Vice-President, Racel McCall pose with the State Officers from Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi during National Leadership Conference for State Officers (NLCSO) held in Malvern, Arkansas.

The United States Secretary of Agriculture, Mike Johanns, is traveling from state to state getting different opinions about Farm Policy. A standing room-only crowd estimated at more than 500 farmers and Alabama USDA officials spoke their mind about what they would like to see in the next farm bill slated to take shape in 2007. Two Enterprise FFA members participated; Khyri Thurman, who helped lead the pledge of allegiance, and Logan Heim who sang the National Anthem. I, on behalf of the FFA members of Alabama, responded to question number one which states: “How should farm policy address any unintended consequences and ensure that such consequences do not discourage new farmers and the next generation of farmers from entering production agriculture?” To answer the question, I focused on two important issues: 1) profitability and 2) the development of global markets being a key component to keeping future agriculturist in production agriculture. There were several FFA Chapters and Advisors present, along with my five fellow state officers who voluntarily came to represent you, the Alabama FFA Association.

### SAE—For Everyone!

Think back to your first agriculture class. Chances are, your Ag teacher explained the three components of agricultural education. They might have even drawn three interlocking circles on the whiteboard and explained how the components all worked together to create a total Ag Ed experience. Remember what those three components are? If you said FFA, classroom instruction and SAE, you are correct! Now picture the individuals in your FFA chapter. They are enrolled in one of the Ag classes offered and they are engaged in FFA activities. What about their Supervised Agricultural Experience programs? Do all of your chapter members have an SAE? Are members actively developing their SAEs? It’s easy to overlook the SAE component of a total agricultural education experience. However, SAEs can be one of the most powerful, engaging and valuable programs that an FFA member can have! Let’s explore why SAEs are important for members, how they are truly for *everyone* in your chapter and how you as a chapter officer can encourage SAE development for your members.

### What is an SAE?

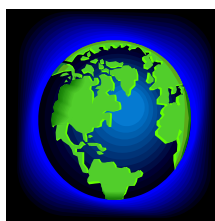
So let’s start with the basics. An SAE is practical application of classroom concepts designed to provide “real world” experiences and develop skills in ag related career areas. Sounds simple enough! However, sometimes one of the toughest things for individuals is

deciding how they will develop their “practical application” into an SAE. Begin assisting members in your chapter with that decision-making process by helping them identify interest areas. What do they enjoy doing? What will they want to continue learning about? Next, help members connect to experiences they have already had. For example, maybe Joe helped his aunt with her vegetable garden. Joe had experience in growing vegetables, and now for his SAE he will start his own garden and sell produce in the local community. Finally, identify current opportunities for project development. Maybe Amy is interested in floral design. Currently there is a part-time job available at the local floral shop—an opportunity that would be valuable for Amy to explore. As members are brainstorming ideas, you can provide more helpful information by explaining the four types of SAEs: Exploratory, Research/Experimentation, Placement and Ownership/Entrepreneurship. You can find detailed explanations of each of these types in the Student Handbook or on the SAE Central page of the national FFA website. Your FFA advisor is a key resource to help members develop their SAEs. Other resources include checking out the list of FFA Proficiency Awards at [www.ffa.org](http://www.ffa.org); SAE Idea Cards and other materials your teacher can order from The Core: Ag Ed Resources.

### Why is an SAE Important?

The strength of your chapter is directly related to its members. The more opportunities for members to become involved, apply what they know and develop additional skills, the more the entire chapter will benefit. An SAE provides a way for a member to be engaged in learning, apply knowledge gained in the classroom and develop hands-on skills as well as become more effective as a leader. With the virtually endless possibilities for SAE programs and the benefits for individuals, there really is a Supervised Agricultural Experience for *every* FFA member. It is

**Touch the world  
one student at a time.**



**Teach Agriscience!**

simply a matter of thinking big, being creative and not being afraid to take a risk!!



Alabama’s State and District Officers at the District Officers’ Leadership Conference (DOLC) held in Columbiana, Alabama.

### How To Encourage SAE Involvement?

As a chapter officer, you can play a key role in helping FFA members with their SAE development. A good place to start is by taking a look at your own SAE. What are you currently doing that is valuable to share with others? Are you taking advantage of the opportunities that you have? Sit down with your chapter officer team and share some of your SAE ideas with each other. Maybe your team can make member’s SAE development a goal for your year of service.

As an officer team and as a chapter, seek out ways to encourage individual members as well as recognize them for their SAE involvement. Organize an SAE Tour where your chapter schedules a day to travel around to visit members in action. Have the individual explain the scope of their program, their responsibilities and the skills they have developed. Invite parents, alumni and community members to participate in the tour. Create an SAE Showcase in your ag classroom or somewhere in your school. Each month different FFA members create a display about their SAE program for the entire chapter and school to see. Have a place for chapter members to post questions about the programs showcased that month, and provide a place for the students with those SAEs to respond. One of the easiest ways to develop chapter member’s SAEs is to simply be interested! As a chapter officer, spend time with your members and ask them how their SAEs are going. Be a resource and offer to help members if you are able. Develop your chapter by helping your members develop SAEs. They provide an opportunity for individual members to build new skills and explore potential careers. And SAEs can be lots of fun! It’s a chance to explore interest areas and do something you love. SAEs—they really **are** for everyone!