

**Reaching
for the
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This Issue...

ABOUT THE COVER:

Trenton FFA member Derek Lowrey takes his SAE all the way to the top by earning the prestigious American Star in Agricultural Placement at the 2008 National FFA Convention. Find out how he did it. See story on Page D.

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REDDEN'S ROUNDUP

By Walter Redden State FFA President

If there is one thing that I love to do in my spare time, it is ride horses. Growing up on the family farm I was around them every day of my life. When I was little my dad would put me on a horse and tell me to ride. Most of the time this was a horse that my dad had just gotten from the sale barn and he had ridden it long enough to make sure it wasn't going to buck me off. Once he gave me the horse, it would be mine to work with the rest of the summer. The first time Dad did this I wasn't too happy about it but, as time went on the idea wasn't so bad. The more I would work with the horse the better it got. By the end of the summer I had that horse broke to ride and it could do anything I wanted. Once I had the horse doing well, Dad would bring me a new one for me to start on because the



finished horse would be up for sale.

One horse I'll never forget was a Shetland Pony named Peanuts. This was the first time that dad had brought home a pony and I had no idea what to think. So dad and I started the regular routine. He would get on and make sure that it wasn't going to buck and then I would get to ride. Now, Peanuts was

quite the pony. I had been around horses all my life but when I got ahold of Peanuts I had finally met my match. One night I was in the back of our barn riding Peanuts in the lot and dad was watching and showing me how to move my legs for different cues for Peanuts. I was getting along real well until Peanuts decided that he had had enough that night and took off bucking. I stayed on for the first hop and jump and on to the second one and then he really cut loose. During this little rodeo my dad was coaching me as he was jumping over the gate to help me. On the third buck I was a goner. Thank goodness that my dad had jumped over the gate because Peanuts had launched me in the air and Dad was there just in time to catch me before I hit the ground. After this episode I decided that I was done riding horses. Peanuts had me so scared and mad that I didn't want to ever ride again in my life.

After Dad got Peanuts taken care of he came over to the stack of hay I was sitting on and told me that I did a good job of trying to make Peanuts stop bucking. So the next few days Dad took over riding Peanuts until I was over being mad. When the weekend came Dad had finally got me talked into riding Peanuts again. That afternoon I saddled up Peanuts and started out the driveway with the rest of trail riders at our house. The ride was going well. We had crossed the river and made it to the back pasture and were to the resting spot before we went into the timber. When

we came to this resting spot Peanuts also thought that he needed to rest and he began to lay down with me still on his back. As Peanuts began to lie down everyone else who was with us started yelling at me to jump off so I wouldn't get smashed. Once I was on the ground I was so mad at Peanuts that I decided there was no way that I was going to ride him back to the house. Once Peanuts got up, he kicked me right in the knee and I fell down to the ground. That was it; it was final! Peanuts and I were just not going to work like the other horses. After my Dad came over to see what happened he picked me up and gave me a great piece of advice that has stuck with me ever since. He said "Son, there are times when you are going to get kicked and knocked down but, if you're

going to be a real cowboy you are going to have to stand up and get back on that horse and show him who is boss."

FFA members, there are many times when we get knocked down and want to give up but, if you want to have a successful future you have to get back up and make the best of the situation. When we are knocked down we tend to forget what we had in sight. Once Peanuts kicked me, I lost sight of riding horses but, after getting over my fear of Peanuts I became a better horse rider. I had gained the experience of being knocked down to help me grow stronger when I stood back up. FFA members, when you get bucked off, get back on and ride again. Soon you will be riding into the sunset of success!

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Reaching for the



BY KATIE ALLEN

Farmers know and understand practices in agriculture and how they work together. Their diverse knowledge makes farmers aware of their importance and what they contribute to the entire industry.

Take young farmer Derek Lowrey of Laredo, Mo. The 20-year-old college senior at Northwest Missouri State University in Maryville had his start in agriculture on his family's row crop and beef farm. His knowledge in crop production expanded as he became more involved in his FFA chapter at Trenton High School, but it was his Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) project in dairy management that earned him the prestigious American Star in Agricultural

Placement at the 2008 National FFA Convention in Indianapolis.

"It was a whole new atmosphere for me," Lowrey says of dairy farming. "But it kind of grew on me."

The Foster/Mack Dairy, located in Grundy County, is a 55-head Holstein operation where Lowrey began working to help the farm's owners who were battling cancer. For the past six years, Lowrey has taken on a variety of roles on the farm. His general labor



duties that included feeding the calves and moving hay eventually switched to oversight of the entire operation as a farm manager.

Lowrey did his dairy work on top of the beef backgrounding operation he also managed at home. He says his father, David, has helped him the most in learning about agriculture and reaching his goals. Lowrey says he told his father early on that he wanted to be the American Star Farmer one day.

“My dad taught me that it takes a lot of hard work to get where you are,” Lowrey says.

Lowrey followed that advice in working on his SAE, and his drive and ambition has certainly paid off. After completing an application and winning at the state level, he was selected as one of 16 national finalists for

the National FFA’s top awards: American Star Farmer, American Star in Agribusiness, American Star in Agricultural Placement and American Star in Agriscience. According to the National FFA Organization, these awards honor the students who have developed outstanding agricultural skills through career development programs, demonstrated outstanding management skills, and earned the American FFA Degree.

Lowrey went through an interview process at the national convention before winning top honors. He received a plaque and a \$4,000 award with the recognition.

Lowrey says the interview was one of the most fun and exciting parts of the award process. “It was exciting to be

with representatives from big companies relating to agriculture,” he says. “Meeting them and just being an FFA Star candidate was cool in itself.”

Lowrey was especially excited to speak with representatives from tractor and farm machinery companies. That interest comes from a side hobby he has in working on and restoring antique John Deere tractors.

Another fun part of winning his award was having his younger brother, Aaron, also at the convention with him. Aaron was recognized as an Agricultural Proficiency finalist in the diversified ag category. Lowrey says he’s also glad to have the support of his mother, Melissa, younger sister, Shelby,

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She sees a future in agriculture

So can you

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BY JARED HENDERSON
STATE V.P., AREA 4

something, but have let others hold you back because you were afraid of what they might think?

I can still remember the day my whole FFA

Wanting to “be cool” I began to join in on this rude activity. It wasn’t long until class was over and we were still sitting at the back, with our Ag teacher towering over us. He didn’t get mad, but just asked why

Unlock Your Passion

career changed. It was my freshman year and I was sitting in the back of my Ag Science I class. The boys I was sitting next to started to become bored, and started to talk loudly and throw paper.

we felt it was necessary to disrupt the learning of others. His disappointment in us was what hurt the most. After the others had left my Ag teacher took me aside and told me I was better than this, that I had

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When going through life, school, or even the FFA have you ever wanted to do or say

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YOUTH LEADERSHIP DAY

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too much potential to be sitting in the back trying to take others down. It was at that moment that I realized that I was not being true to myself and that I had been more concerned with what other people were thinking than to try something on my own.

That was the day when my FFA career turned around. After that day I started sitting in the front of class and realized that I enjoyed this. We began to learn FFA dates and I was fascinated at the history of this organization and the accomplishments and

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and former FFA advisor, Steven Rogers – all of whom he credits as having a part in his success.

Now Lowrey will concentrate on finishing his degree in animal sciences – a path that will eventually take him back home to work on the family farm, where he will continue backgrounding cattle and raising corn, soybeans, wheat, oats and hay. While he has not had as active a role in the Foster/Mack Dairy Farm during his time at college, Lowrey still plans to work summers, holidays and weekends at the farm until he's completed his coursework.

Lowrey encourages other FFA members with similar goals to really get involved in their SAE projects. Lowrey says the American Star can be achieved through setting goals and demonstrating true dedication to the project, to FFA and to agriculture.

involvement that my Salisbury FFA chapter had been a part of. I also realized what I could gain as a member of FFA. It was then that I started to love the FFA and agriculture, because it allowed me to be who I was, showcase what I was meant to do.

So the next time you want to sign up for a contest team you think you'll be good at or enjoy, or you want to go to a camp or activity that your friends aren't going to, don't be afraid to. You never know what talent or passion that experience will unlock in you.

THE OUTLOOK

DID YOU KNOW?

Missouri has had two national FFA officers from the same hometown. Jerry Litton was National FFA Secretary in '56-'57 and Tim Daugherty was Central Regional V.P. in '72-'73. Both hail from Chillicothe.

FFA CALENDAR

February

- 2.....2009 Missouri Agribusiness Academy Apps. DUE
- 11-12.....Mo. Pork Association State Speaking Contest Finals - Columbia
- 13.....Mo. Youth Livestock Grading/Judging Contest Reg. Deadline
- 20-22.....Western Farm Show - Kansas City
- 21-28.....National FFA Week

March

- 7.....College of the Ozarks FFA Judging Workshop - Point Lookout
- 14.....Mo. Youth Livestock Grading/Judging Contest - UMC, Columbia
- 23.....Northeast District FFA/Ag Sales CDE's - Monroe City
- 26.....Crowder Aggie Day - Neosho
- 27.....Ft. Scott Aggie Day - Ft. Scott, Kan.
- 27.....NCMC Ag Club Contests - Trenton
- 31.....Central District Ag CDE's - UCM, Warrensburg
- 31.....Northwest District FFA CDE's - Cameron
- 31.....Southeast District Ag CDE's - Dexter

April

- 1.....Northeast District Ag CDE's - Columbia
- 1.....South Central District CDE's - Rolla
- 2.....Northwest District Ag CDE's - NWMSU, Maryville
- 2.....Central District FFA & Ag Sales CDE's - UCM, Warrensburg
- 2.....South Central District CDE's - Rolla
- 3-4.....Southeast District CDE's - SEMO, Cape Girardeau
- 4.....Open/Central District FFA Trap Shoot - UCM, Warrensburg
- 6-7.....Southwest District CDE's - MSU, Springfield
- 16-17.....Missouri FFA Convention - Columbia

Under the Influence

Many people spend their entire lives trying to “find themselves”. It is human nature for everyone to want to find a circle of friends where they are accepted and a place where they fit in. It is true that we need others in our lives, but we must be very careful as to how we let them influence us. Many people lose touch with their personal goals and values in an attempt to feel accepted.

My mom always says, “Rachel if you always do what you’ve always done you’ll always get what you’ve always gotten.” I have found that statement to be extremely true. I’ve always been just an

average girl and recently I decided that’s not who I wanted to be.

Some of the best advice I have ever been told was to surround myself with happy, successful people. If it weren’t for my decision to give that advice a try you wouldn’t be reading this article today. I was surprised to be honest, that I was able to accomplish a goal I never thought possible.

We need to be extremely aware of the influences that surround us. Others impact our lives daily and sometimes they impact us, either positively or negatively, without us even knowing it. Likewise, we impact others in the same way. It is



BY RACHEL CARTER
STATE V.P., AREA 10

my personal challenge to try to make a positive influence on everyone that I come in contact with every single day. I challenge you to do the same.



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