

# **National FFA Organization**

## **National Constitution**

*(As amended at the 77th National FFA Convention, October 2004)*

### **Article I. Name**

The Future Farmers of America organization shall be known and shall do business as the National FFA Organization. Recognized units of the organization may officially use the letters “FFA” and/or the words “Future Farmers of America” to designate the organization, its units and/or members.

### **Article II. Objectives of the Organization**

The objectives of the organization shall be consistent with Section 3 of the organization’s federal charter, Public Law 105-225 (formerly Public Law 81-740). The organization shall cooperate with national and state government agencies and officials in vocational education to accomplish the following objectives:

1. To be an integral part of the organized instructional programs in agricultural education which prepare students for a wide range of careers in agriculture, agribusiness, and other agriculture-related occupations.
2. To strengthen the confidence of students in themselves and in their work by developing desirable work habits and the effective usage of their time; by learning to assume responsibility; and by developing competencies in communications, human relations, and other social abilities leading to the intelligent choice of a career and successful employment or entrepreneurship in the agricultural industry.
3. To provide agriculture-related programs and activities which will develop pride, responsibility, leadership, character, scholarship, citizenship, patriotism, and thrift; and which will improve the economic, environmental, recreational and human resources of the community.
4. To encourage and recognize achievement in supervised agricultural experience programs, scholarship, leadership and other individual and group activities by providing awards to deserving members and chapters.

### **Article III. Organization**

#### **Section A**

The National FFA Organization is the organization of, by, and for students enrolled in agricultural education programs. It shall consist of chartered state associations composed of not less than four chapters chartered by a state association and having a total active

membership of not less than 125 members. In the event a state association falls below the 125 members and four chapters, it shall remain as a chartered state association of the National FFA Organization. More than one chapter may be chartered in a school when deemed appropriate by the state governing body.

### **Section B**

Chapters of the National FFA Organization shall be chartered only in such schools where recognized systematic instruction in agricultural education is offered under the provisions of federal vocational education legislation. Such chapters shall operate as an integral part of the instructional program of agricultural education.

Schools with large enrollments and/or multiple programs in agricultural education may establish subsidiary chapters of the parent chapter. Each subsidiary chapter shall be organized and operated in accordance with all the provisions of the national, state and local constitutions. Subsidiary chapters shall be coordinated by the officers and advisors of the parent chapter.

### **Section C**

Students enrolled in agricultural education may meet in state convention, adopt a constitution which shall not conflict with that of the national organization, elect officers, develop a Program of Activities, and apply to the national organization for a state association charter. Upon receipt of a charter from the national organization, the state association shall be part of the National FFA Organization and shall be empowered to charter local chapters.

### **Section D**

Collegiate chapters may be chartered by the state association in two- or four-year postsecondary institutions where agricultural courses are taught.

Each chartered collegiate chapter may adopt a constitution which shall not conflict with that of the national organization or the respective state association. They may also elect officers and establish a Program of Activities.

Collegiate chapter members shall pay National FFA Organization dues.

## **Article IV. Procedures for Determining Standing of State Associations and Chapters**

### **Section A**

A state FFA association shall be in good standing with the National FFA Organization when the following conditions are met:

1. All annual national dues have been paid to the National FFA Organization, or shown by postmark or other reliable evidence to have been mailed to the national FFA treasurer on or before May 15.
2. All reports have been submitted to the national organization as requested by the National FFA Board of Directors.
3. Provisions of the state FFA constitution do not conflict with the National FFA Constitution and association activities are in harmony with the ideals and purposes of the National FFA Organization.

The National FFA Board of Directors shall have the power to suspend the charter of any state association which violates the National FFA Constitution and Bylaws. A report of all suspensions shall be presented by the Board to the delegates at the next succeeding national convention. In the event a state association is not in good standing at the time of the opening of a national convention, the delegates in session at that national convention shall have the power, upon recommendation of the National FFA Board of Directors, to withdraw the charter and refuse such association official representation at the annual national convention. When such action is taken, the association in question and the chapters and members thereof shall be denied the privileges of membership in the organization. Upon meeting the requirements for good standing, a state association may be reinstated by action of the National FFA Board of Directors.

## **Section B**

A chapter shall be in good standing with the state association when the following conditions are met:

1. All annual, state and national dues have been paid by the date determined by the state association.
2. All reports have been submitted as requested by the state association.
3. Provisions of the chapter constitution do not conflict with the State or National FFA Constitutions and chapter activities are in harmony with the ideals and purposes of the National FFA Organization.

The governing body of the state association shall have the power to suspend the charter of any chapter which violates the state or National FFA Constitution and bylaws. A report on all suspensions shall be presented to the delegates at the next succeeding state convention. In the event a chapter is not in good standing with the state association at the time of the opening of a state convention, the delegates in session at that state convention shall have the power, upon recommendation of the state association governing body, to withdraw the charter and refuse such chapter official representation at the state convention. When such action is taken, the chapter in question and members thereof shall be denied the privileges of membership in the state association. Upon meeting the requirements for good standing, a chapter may be reinstated by action of the state association governing body.

In the event a local department of agricultural education is discontinued, its chartered FFA chapter may officially operate for a period not to exceed three years (36 months)

from the date of discontinuance, provided proper supervision is given by a person having the approval of the local school administrator and the state FFA advisor. The chapter's charter must be surrendered to the state advisor at the end of the three-year period if a local department of agricultural education is not in operation in the school at that time.

## **Article V. Membership**

### **Section A**

Membership in the National FFA Organization shall be of four kinds: active, alumni, collegiate and honorary.

### **Section B**

Active Membership—To be eligible for active membership in a chartered FFA chapter, a student must be enrolled in a secondary agricultural education program. State associations may consider “secondary agricultural education programs” to be grades 7-12.

To become an active member and retain membership, a student must:

1. While in school, be enrolled in at least one agricultural education course during the school year and/or follow a planned course of study; either course must include a supervised agricultural experience program, the objective of which is preparation for an agricultural career.
2. Show an interest in the affairs of the organization by attending meetings, striving for degrees of membership, and participating in other organized activities of the chapter.
3. Pay all current state and national dues by the date determined by the chapter.
4. Display conduct consistent with the ideals and purposes of the National FFA Organization.

A member may retain active membership until November 30, following the fourth National FFA Convention after graduation from high school.

A member in good standing at the time of induction into the armed forces of the United States of America or into the FFA international program shall be in good standing during the period of active service without further payment of dues or attendance at meetings. Time spent in the armed forces or FFA international program shall not be considered as elapsed time in determining the maximum period of four conventions following graduation from high school or leaving high school. Members using this waiver of service time for the purpose of maintaining active membership for application for advanced degrees of membership must resume active participation within six months after having been honorably discharged from military service or completing their FFA international program and indicate such a desire by paying dues and attending meetings.

Members participating in a six-month armed services program or participating in the FFA international program for six months shall be eligible for one full year of extended membership. No individual may retain active membership beyond his or her twenty-third birthday.

### **Section C**

Alumni Membership—Membership shall be open to former active members, collegiate and honorary members, present and former professional agricultural educators, parents of FFA members, and others interested in and supportive of the FFA.

### **Section D**

Collegiate Membership—Collegiate membership shall be open to students who are enrolled in agricultural courses or who are pursuing career objectives in the industry of agriculture or have an interest in the future welfare of the agricultural industry at a two- or four-year postsecondary institution having a collegiate FFA chapter.

### **Section E**

Honorary Membership—Farmers, school superintendents, principals, members of boards of education, chapter advisors, teachers, staff members in agricultural education, business people and others who are helping to advance agricultural education and the FFA and who have rendered outstanding service, may be elected to honorary membership by a majority vote of the members present at any regular meeting or convention.

Honorary membership shall be limited to the Honorary Chapter FFA Degree in the local chapter, Honorary State FFA Degree in the state association, and the Honorary American FFA Degree in the national organization.

## **Article VI. Degrees and Privileges of Active Membership**

### **Section A**

There shall be five degrees of active membership based on individual achievement. These are the Discovery FFA Degree, Greenhand FFA Degree, the Chapter FFA Degree, the State FFA Degree, and the American FFA Degree. The national organization shall set the minimum qualifications for each degree. The Discovery FFA Degree is intended for use in state associations and local chapters where middle school membership is offered. Receipt of this degree is not necessary in order to obtain the Greenhand FFA Degree or subsequent degrees.

## **Section B**

Discovery FFA Degree –To be eligible to receive the Discovery FFA Degree from a chapter, the member must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. Be enrolled in agricultural education class for at least a portion of the school year while in grades 7-8.
2. Have become a dues paying member of the FFA at local, state and national levels.
3. Participate in at least one local FFA chapter activity outside of scheduled class time.
4. Have knowledge of agriculturally related career, ownership and entrepreneurial opportunities.
5. Be familiar with the local FFA chapter program of activities.
6. Submit written application for the degree.

## **Section C**

Greenhand FFA Degree—To be eligible to receive the Greenhand FFA Degree from the chapter, the member must meet the following minimum qualifications:

1. Be enrolled in agricultural education and have satisfactory plans for a supervised agricultural experience program.
2. Learn and explain the FFA Creed, motto, salute and FFA Mission Statement.
3. Describe and explain the meaning of the FFA emblem and colors.
4. Demonstrate a knowledge of the FFA Code of Ethics and the proper use of the FFA jacket.
5. Demonstrate a knowledge of the history of the organization, the chapter constitution and bylaws and the chapter Program of Activities.
6. Personally own or have access to the Official FFA Manual and the FFA Student Handbook.
7. Submit written application for the Greenhand FFA Degree.

## **Section D**

Chapter FFA Degree—To be eligible to receive the Chapter FFA Degree from the chapter, the member must meet the following minimum qualifications:

1. Must have received the Greenhand FFA Degree.
2. Must have satisfactorily completed the equivalent of at least 180 hours of systematic school instruction in agricultural education at or above the ninth grade level, have in operation an approved supervised agricultural experience program, and be enrolled in an agricultural education course.
3. Have participated in the planning and conducting of at least three official functions in the chapter Program of Activities.

4. Have earned and productively invested at least \$150 by the member's own efforts or worked at least forty-five hours in excess of scheduled class time, or a combination thereof, and have developed plans for continued growth and improvement in a supervised agricultural experience program.
5. Have effectively led a group discussion for 15 minutes.
6. Have demonstrated five procedures of parliamentary law.
7. Show progress toward individual achievement in the FFA award programs.
8. Have a satisfactory scholastic record.
9. Submit a written application for the Chapter FFA Degree.

Other requirements may be established by the chapter and/or the state FFA association.

### **Section E**

State FFA Degree—To be eligible to receive the State FFA Degree from the state association, the member must meet the following minimum qualifications:

1. Have received the Chapter FFA Degree.
2. Have been an active FFA member for at least two years (24 months) at the time of receiving the State FFA Degree.
3. While in school, have completed the equivalent of at least two years (360 hours) of systematic school instruction in agricultural education at or above the ninth grade level, which includes a supervised agricultural experience program.
4. Have earned and productively invested at least \$1,000, or worked at least 300 hours in excess of scheduled class time, or a combination thereof, in a supervised agricultural experience program.
5. Demonstrate leadership ability by:
  - a. Performing 10 procedures of parliamentary law.
  - b. Giving a six-minute speech on a topic relating to agriculture or the FFA.
  - c. Serving as an officer, committee chairperson, or participating member of a chapter committee.
6. Have a satisfactory scholastic record as certified by the local agricultural education instructor and the principal or superintendent.
7. Have participated in the planning and completion of the chapter Program of Activities.
8. Have participated in at least five different FFA activities above the chapter level.

The percentage of the total state membership which may receive the State FFA Degree and other requirements may be established by the state FFA association.

Written records of achievement of all requirements, verified by the chapter FFA advisor, shall be submitted to the state association at least one month prior to the state FFA convention at which the State FFA Degree is to be received. The state advisor shall

provide for review of the records and submit a recommendation to the state association governing body, which shall nominate at the state FFA convention the candidates who have been found worthy to receive the honor. The State FFA Degree will be conferred upon the candidates subject to approval by the delegates at the state convention.

## **Section F**

American FFA Degree—To be eligible to receive the American FFA Degree from the National FFA Organization, the member must meet the following minimum qualifications:

1. Have received the State FFA Degree, have been an active member for the past three years (36 months) and have a record of satisfactory participation in the activities on the chapter and state levels.
2. Have satisfactorily completed the equivalent of at least three years (540 hours) of systematic secondary school instruction in an agricultural education program or to have completed at least the equivalent of 360 hours of systematic secondary school instruction in agricultural education and one full year of enrollment in a postsecondary agricultural program or have completed the program of agricultural education offered in the secondary school last attended.
3. Have graduated from high school at least 12 months prior to the national convention at which the degree is to be granted.
4. Have in operation and have maintained records to substantiate an outstanding supervised agricultural experience program through which a member has exhibited comprehensive planning, managerial and financial expertise.
5. Have earned and productively invested at least \$7,500 or have earned and productively invested at least \$1,500 and worked 2,250 hours in excess of scheduled class time. Any combination of hours times a factor of 3.33 plus dollars must be equal to or greater than the number 9,000. Hours used for the purpose of producing earnings reported as productively invested income shall not be duplicated as hours of credit to meet the minimum requirements for the degree.
6. Have a record of outstanding leadership abilities and community involvement and have achieved a high school scholastic record of “C” or better as certified by the principal or superintendent.

## **Article VII. Procedure for Selecting American FFA Degree Recipients**

### **Section A**

Applications for the degree must be approved by the state advisor or representative(s) thereof and be received by the national organization not later than midnight of June 30, or show by postmark or other reliable evidence to have been mailed to the national



organization on or before June 15, prior to the national convention at which the degree is to be received.

### **Section B**

Applications must be submitted on the official form provided by the National FFA Organization.

### **Section C**

The National FFA Board of Directors shall review the American FFA Degree applications and recommend those candidates meeting the minimum qualifications. Final approval of the candidates shall be given by the delegates present at the national FFA convention.

## **Article VIII. Emblem**

### **Section A**

The official emblem of the National FFA Organization shall include five symbols, namely: the plow, representing labor and tillage of the soil; the owl, representing wisdom; the rising sun, representing progress; a cross-section of an ear of corn, representing common agricultural interests; and an American eagle surmounting the cross-section of the ear of corn, representing the national scope of the organization. The emblem shall also include the letters "FFA" and the words "Agricultural Education."

### **Section B**

The emblem shall be uniform in all state associations and recognized units thereof. All members shall be entitled to display the emblem.

### **Section C**

Greenhand FFA Degree recipients shall be entitled to wear the official bronze emblem pin; Chapter FFA Degree recipients shall be entitled to wear the official silver emblem pin; State FFA Degree recipients shall be entitled to wear the official gold emblem charm; and American FFA Degree recipients shall be entitled to wear the official gold emblem key.

### **Section D**

Honorary Chapter FFA Degree recipients shall be entitled to wear either the official silver or gold emblem pin; Honorary State FFA Degree recipients shall be entitled to wear the official gold emblem charm; and Honorary American FFA Degree recipients shall be entitled to wear the official gold emblem key.

## **Section E**

Collegiate FFA chapter members and FFA advisors shall be entitled to wear the official gold owl pin.

## **Article IX. National Officers and Procedures for Election**

### **Section A**

The elected officers of the National FFA Organization shall be a president, four vice presidents (one from each of four regions of the United States established in the bylaws), and a secretary.

### **Section B**

The elected officers shall constitute the board of student officers. It shall be the duty of this board to advise and make recommendations to the National FFA Board of Directors with respect to the activities and business of the organization.

### **Section C**

A state FFA association may recommend one candidate for national office each year. The state's candidate shall be approved by the state advisor on a nomination form submitted to the national executive secretary on or before August 1. All candidates shall be notified as to their eligibility on or before August 15. Those declared ineligible may file an appeal with the national advisor not later than September 1. The FFA Governing Committee shall vote on any appeal and formally notify the candidate of their decision no later than September 15.

### **Section D**

The national officers shall hold the American FFA Degree at the time of their election and must be active members for the duration of their term in office. They shall be elected annually by a majority vote of the delegates assembled at the national convention. A member cannot hold a national office and a state office at the same time.

### **Section E**

A nominating committee consisting of nine official national convention delegates—one chairperson selected at large and two from each of the four regions—shall study and review the qualifications of each eligible candidate. This committee shall submit its nominations to the delegates assembled at the national convention.

## **Section F**

The president and the secretary shall be elected from the candidates at large. The position of the vice presidents shall follow a four-year rotational cycle. The region from which the second vice president is elected during the current year shall be entitled to the first vice president the next succeeding year, and so on for the other offices.

## **Section G**

National FFA officers shall serve from one national convention through the next succeeding national convention and shall not be re-elected, nor eligible for election to another national office. In the event a national convention is not held in any given year, the National FFA Board of Directors shall make provisions for the appointment of national officers for the next succeeding year. The National FFA Board of Directors shall have the power to appoint a qualified member to fill any office which becomes vacant between national conventions.

## **Article X. The National Advisor, Executive Secretary and Treasurer**

The national advisor shall be the senior program specialist for agriculture, agribusiness and natural resources, United States Department of Education, successor in office to the chief of the Agricultural Education Service. The executive secretary shall be a member of the agricultural education staff at the United States Department of Education. The national treasurer shall be an employee or member of a state agency that directs or supervises a state program of agricultural education under the provisions of federal vocational education legislation, and shall be designated by the National FFA Board of Directors.

## **Article XI. State and Chapter Officers**

### **Section A**

The officers of the state FFA associations shall be: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, reporter and sentinel. Other officers may be elected as deemed appropriate by the state advisor and/or state FFA governing body. The state supervisor of agricultural education shall be the state FFA advisor. An executive secretary, executive treasurer, executive secretary-treasurer, and/or other state FFA officials may be named by the state advisor subject to the approval of the state FFA governing body. All state FFA officers shall be elected annually by a majority vote of the delegates present at any regular convention of the state association.

## **Section B**

The officers of an FFA chapter shall be: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, reporter and sentinel. Other officers may be elected as deemed appropriate by the local advisor and/or governing body. The teacher(s) of agricultural education shall be the FFA advisor(s). Chapter officers shall be elected annually or semi-annually by the members present at any regular meeting of the chapter.

## **Section C**

If a state association has been chartered for two years or more, all state officers shall have attained the State FFA Degree. If a chapter has been chartered for two years or more, all chapter officers shall have attained the Chapter FFA Degree.

## **Article XII. Meetings and Conventions**

### **Section A**

Except in case of an extreme emergency declared by the National FFA Board of Directors, a convention of the National FFA Organization shall be held annually. The purpose of the national convention shall be to conduct the business of the national organization and to recognize outstanding achievements of FFA members and chapters. The time and place of the convention shall be determined by the National FFA Board of Directors.

### **Section B**

At the national convention an official delegate assembly limited to 475 delegates will convene. This delegate body will consist of two official delegates from each state association to be designated as chair and vice chair of the state delegation, plus additional official delegates based on the individual state association's percentage of national FFA membership. The delegates shall be selected by the state FFA association. A quorum shall exist when both the following conditions are met at the time business is conducted: a majority of the official delegates registered at the national convention are present and at least twenty-six (26) state associations are represented by official delegates. Business items shall only be considered when approved by a delegate committee, or by a two-thirds vote of the delegate body, except for proposed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws meeting the requirements outlined in Article XVII.

### **Section C**

Except in case of extreme emergency, a convention of the state FFA association shall be held annually prior to the national convention at a time and place to be determined by the governing body of the state FFA association. The state association shall determine the number and method of selection of delegates to the state convention.

## **Article XIII. Committees**

The president of the National FFA Organization shall appoint three regular committees annually: the Nominating Committee, which shall place in nomination the candidates for the board of student officers; the Auditing Committee, which shall review the auditors' report(s) on all FFA financial accounts; and the National Program of Activities Committee, which shall establish the annual goals and objectives of the national organization. Other committees may be appointed as deemed necessary.

## **Article XIV. National Board of Directors**

### **Section A**

Governing Body.

1. The governing body of the organization shall be the National FFA Board of Directors, which shall consist of: the national FFA advisor, who shall serve as chairperson; four state supervisors of agricultural education; and four staff members of the United States Department of Education with expertise and job duties in agricultural education. The national FFA executive secretary and treasurer shall serve as ex-officio members of the National FFA Board of Directors.
2. The terms of office of members of the National FFA Board of Directors and the method of selection of such members, other than the ex-officio members, shall be prescribed in the bylaws.
3. The National FFA Board of Directors shall meet at least once each year at such time and place as may be prescribed by the board and shall present an annual report.

### **Section B**

Governing Committee.

The chairperson and two members of the National FFA Board of Directors shall be designated by the board to serve as the Governing Committee and shall have the power to deal with items of business of the national organization. All official actions of the Governing Committee shall be reported to the National FFA Board of Directors.

## **Article XV. Dues**

### **Section A**

Annual membership dues of the National FFA Organization shall be established by a majority vote of the delegates at the national convention. The National FFA Board of

Directors shall submit its recommendation concerning dues to each state association at least 45 days prior to the National FFA Convention.

### **Section B**

The membership year of the National FFA Organization shall be from September 1 to August 31.

### **Section C**

Annual membership dues of a state FFA association shall be established by a majority vote of the delegates present at the state FFA convention.

### **Section D**

The annual membership dues of a chapter shall be established by a majority vote of the members at a regular chapter meeting.

## **Article XVI. Parliamentary Authority**

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the National FFA Organization in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with this constitution and bylaws, any special rules of order the National FFA Organization may adopt and any statutes applicable to this organization that do not authorize the provisions of this constitution and bylaws to take precedence.

## **Article XVII. Amendments**

### **Section A**

Proposed amendments to the National FFA Constitution and Bylaws may be submitted by a state FFA association, the board of student officers or the National FFA Board of Directors. Proposed amendments from a state FFA association must be submitted in writing to the national organization by January 1 for review by the National FFA Board of Directors. All proposed amendments to the National FFA Constitution and Bylaws must be submitted by the national advisor to the state FFA associations by March 1. The board of student officers shall present their recommendations concerning each amendment to the delegates at the national convention.

**Section B**

An amendment to the National FFA Constitution may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the official delegates at the national FFA convention. An amendment to the bylaws shall require a majority vote of the official delegates at the national FFA convention.

**Section C**

Amendments to the bylaws must not conflict with the National FFA Constitution.

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