**For Immediate Release**

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**National Chapter photos available to download at:** <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1CUxW78p5JrrFckxuluAFSYpMbKVHmfni?usp=sharing>

**FFA Chapters Take Action**

BROOKINGS, S.D. -- The **National Chapter Award is the highest honor an FFA chapter can receive** and recognizes chapters that actively implement the mission and strategies of the FFA. Top chapters were recognized at 95thSD FFA Convention, for their outstanding accomplishments. Chapters recognized have developed an active Program of Activities and conducted meaningful events. For the overall state award, a chapter must complete at least 15 activities: one for each of the five quality standards in each of the three divisions - Growing Leaders, Building Communities, and Strengthening Agriculture, and meet the minimum requirements outlined in the National Quality FFA Chapter Standards. Official results were:

**Superior Chapters**

Beresford, Bridgewater-Emery, Brookings, Howard, McCook Central, Parker, and Scotland

Chapters develop technical, human relations, and decision-making skills and promote the wellbeing of students, in the **Growing Leaders** area. Activities develop a positive attitude toward lifelong learning experiences and promote student involvement. Awards for Growing Leaders are sponsored by Sandra Nelson, and the winners were:

1st Beresford

2nd McCook Central

3rd Brookings

Chapters conduct activities to preserve natural resources and improve the welfare and well-being of the community, in the **Building Communities** area. Activities encourage members to become active in the community. Awards for Building Communities are sponsored by Sandra Nelson, and the winners were:

 1st McCook Central

2nd Howard

3rd Bridgewater Emery

Chapters conduct activities to develop and maintain positive relations among FFA and community leaders and increase agricultural education and membership, in the **Strengthening Agriculture** area. Activities are also created to enhance safety, promote agriculture, and improve the distribution of food. Awards in this area are sponsored by Wyatt and Zana DeJong, and the winners were:

1st McCook Central

2nd Bridgewater Emery

3rd Beresford

The **overall National Chapter Award** is the highest honor a chapter can receive and holds value outside of the FFA. The award is sponsored by Reinke Gray Wealth Management and Terry Rieckman in memory of John Rist, and the winners were:

 1st McCook Central

2nd Beresford

3rd Bridgewater-Emery

4th Howard

5th Brookings

A few McCook Centrals activities that earned them this award include: Members took action when the Derecho storm ravaged their community, assisting in cleaning up properties and making 46 trips of brush to the city dumpsite. They rent farmland as an educational field plot where members are involved from seed selection to harvest, connecting them with local stakeholders. They recognized community needs during the holiday season and provided 2 families Thanksgiving meals and donated 112 items to those less fortunate at Christmas. Members assist in the local backpack program, providing meal assistance on school breaks and helping deliver boxes of food to the elderly. They secured funding for a hoop barn at their local fairgrounds to house 20 animals of various species and provide hands-on opportunities for members who do not have their own livestock facilities. Saving Our Farm Youth was hosted during Farm Safety Week by several FFA chapters, with area 3rd graders learning farm safety tips. To increase agriculture knowledge, members secured and donated 81 books to the kindergarten classroom and taught weekly agriculture activities to elementary students. Educating the next generation of agriculturalists is a focus for their PALS program activities. The McCook Central FFA Chapter has 167 members and is advised by Mrs. Tracy Chase and Mr. Terry Rieckman.

**About the South Dakota FFA Association:** The National FFA Organization is a national youth organization of 850,823 student members as part of 8,995 local FFA chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. As part of the National FFA Organization, the South Dakota FFA Association encompasses 109 chapters with over 5,000 South Dakota FFA members. FFA strives to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. To discover more about the South Dakota FFA Association or the South Dakota FFA Foundation, visit them both at sdaged.org or on Facebook and Instagram.

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