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for immediate release

**SD FFA Member Recognized as National Star**

Hadley Stiefvater, a McCook Central FFA member, from Salem, SD, is an American Star in Agriscience finalist. The American Star Awards are the FFA’s highest achievement awards and represent the best of the best among thousands of American FFA Degree recipients. The Star awards recognize FFA members in 4 categories: Agriscience, Agribusiness, Farmer, and Agricultural Placement, who have developed outstanding agricultural skills and competencies through the completion of a supervised agricultural experience (SAE) program.

Stiefvater reflects on her start as an 8th grader with a required project. Her project on egg production in laying hens was so strong, she won her Agriscience Fair division at nationals! This sparked an interest in agricultural research, where she found things she was passionate about, and just kept doing more every year. She says, “Agriscience is an opportunity for students to complete real life agriculture-based research projects and understand the scientific process behind the role that research places in modern agriculture.”

Through her eight years with her SAE, Stiefvater’s additional studies included differences in injectable and oral iron for baby piglets, salmonella in dairy calves, sow gestation stanchions, and a team project on blockchain technology use in meat traceability. She followed up those research projects by working for Pipestone Systems as a research intern, working for a private livestock clinical research company, and working as a bacteriology assistant at the SDSU Diagnostic Lab. Stiefvater is a Senior at SDSU with Animal Science and Agricultural Leadership majors, and her goal after graduation is to work in the animal health and agritourism fields in rural South Dakota.

Stiefvater shares, “The best way to participate in agriscience is to get involved in the Agriscience Fair program and make connections with people who conduct research in those areas of the agriculture industry.” When asked about her path to the American Star program, she says,“It takes many hours and years of work to develop Star in Agriscience projects. Start with agriscience fair projects in 7th or 8th grade, build on your project and find ways to take on additional research with more intensity as you progress. You can then apply for the Star in Agriscience award with your State and American FFA Degrees.”

Stiefvater is excited to represent South Dakota FFA as an American Star in Agriscience finalist, showcasing the work she put into her SAE. As a finalist, Stiefvater recorded and submitted a summary of all her SAE experiences and answers to several questions. Her next step is to interview with a panel of judges to determine the winner, which will be announced during the 96th National FFA Convention & Expo, November 1-4th.

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