

Rusk Agriculture Department & Rusk FFA Chapter ***Student / Parent Information Packet***



Introduction:

This packet of information was developed to allow parents and students to have an understanding of the opportunities available through the Rusk Agriculture Department and the Rusk FFA. **It is our honor to announce that out of over 1,000 FFA chapters in Texas, the Rusk FFA has been ranked as the number 2 chapter in the state according to the National Chapter Award. The Rusk FFA also earned their 12th consecutive 3 Star rating at the National level, extending the Rusk FFA streak of the longest 3 Star rated chapter in Texas.** The 3 star national rating and Gold Emblem State rating are the highest ratings a chapter may receive. The Rusk FFA was also a State Gold Emblem Chapter according to the Golden Horizon Award. We hope that you the student and parents will take full advantage of all that the Rusk Agriculture Department and FFA has to offer. If you have any questions concerning the information provided, please do not hesitate to contact the agriculture instructors at 903-683-5401. We also ask that after reviewing the information provided, you and your student complete and return the student information sheet attached.

Thank you,
Kelley Anne Hutchinson, Jessica Sanderson, & Brian Martin
Agriculture Instructors

Chapter Highlights for 2017-2018:

- Received Gold Emblem status in both the National Chapter Award and Golden Horizon Award
- Jeb Besson won the State Star Chapter Award in Agribusiness earning a \$1,000 scholarship & the State Agriculture Sales Proficiency Award earning a \$1,000 scholarship
- 9 Rusk FFA teams competed in State CDE contest with 3 teams placing in the top 10
- Nicole Phifer named as the 19th Rusk FFA American FFA Degree Recipient
- 8 Lonestar Degree Recipients- Caidyn Boggs, Avery Kinney, Anna Sanchez, Bri Sanchez, Caleb Holcomb, Trey Martin, Annie Adams, & Drew Morton.
- Won Pineywoods District Leadership Development Event Sweepstakes for the 5th consecutive year
- Won 7 of the 8 \$1,000 scholarships for High Point Individuals at the County Judging Contests
- Won 1st in 5 of 5 Cherokee County Judging Contest (Hay, Wildlife, Land, Livestock & Forestry)
- Community Service: Kids Against Hunger (provided 10,968 meals to the hungry), Rusk FFA for a Cure (donated \$1,000 to American Cancer Society), Rusk FFA Week of Service, Stock the Stock Trailer (generated 12,551 food items for the Good Samaritan), Sole Hope, and Food for America.

Rusk Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources Department:

The Rusk Agriculture Department strives to produce students that are knowledgeable in the field of agriculture, have a good work ethic, skills in problem solving, pursues excellence, and possess a strong character rich in integrity. Students in all of our courses receive classroom instruction followed by hands on experience in the field of study they are enrolled in. We feel the skills and competencies obtained in our agriculture classes are applicable to virtually any future career but it is important to note that one in every six jobs in the United States is directly related to agriculture. It is also important to note that our courses are designed to prepare students for higher education and that a higher percentage of agriculture students nation wide attend college as opposed to those not enrolled. You might also be interested to know that agriculture students and programs in Texas generate over a half a billion dollars annually into the Texas economy and FFA and 4-H students invest almost a half of a million dollars for the Cherokee County Show each year. In addition, members of the Rusk FFA have generated over a quarter of a million dollars in scholarships over the past decade, averaging just over \$30,000 per year in scholarships.

The Agriculture Courses available are:

- Principles of Agriculture Food & Natural Resources (1 credit) (8th Grade)
- Advanced Animal Science (1 credit)
- Advanced Plant & Soil Science (1 credit)
- Agricultural Mechanics & Metal Technologies (1 credit)
- Agricultural Structures Design & Fabrication (1 credit)
- Agricultural Equipment Design and Fabrication (1 credit)
- Agriculture Mechanics Practicum I (2 credits)
- Agriculture Mechanics Practicum II (2 credits)
- Agricultural Power Systems (1 credit)
- Principles and Elements of Floral Design (1 credit)
- Livestock Production (1 credit)
- Horticulture Science (1 credit)
- Mathematical Applications in Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (1 credit)
- Wildlife, Fisheries & Ecology Management (1 credit)
- Problems & Solutions (1 credit)

Rusk FFA:

The National FFA Organization is the largest youth organization in the United States. It was started in 1928 as an organization for agriculture students and was called the “Future Farmers of America.” Today it is called the “National FFA Organization” and provides much more than knowledge and skill needed in agriculture production. The primary mission of today’s FFA is “the development of premier leadership, personal growth, and career success.” Through the FFA, students have the opportunity to develop a supervised agriculture experience program, compete in various leadership and career development events, serve in various leadership roles, manage financial matters, assume civic and personal responsibilities as well as other skills that are useful in all careers. The Rusk FFA was established in 1936 and has established itself as a perennial powerhouse within the FFA Organization. Students enrolled in agriculture classes are automatically inactive members of the National FFA Organization and will receive the FFA *New Horizons* magazine free of charge. Students may become active members and enjoy the full benefits of the organization by paying their local Rusk FFA dues of \$5.00.

Follow the Rusk FFA @:



Snapchat- ruskffa



Facebook Page- Rusk FFA



Twitter- #RuskFFA



Instagram- RUSK_FFA



Rusk FFA Website- www.ruskffa.com

Rusk FFA Remind- Text: @ruskffa to 81010

Benefits of membership:

- 1 year subscription to FFA New Horizons magazine
- access to FFA contest, conventions, and activities
- eligible to exhibit projects at local and state shows
- free entry and meal for member and family at local FFA banquet
- qualify for numerous scholarships & awards

Activities available to FFA Members:

- Supervised Agriculture Experience Project (Ex: Exhibiting Steer, Ag Mechanics, etc.)
- Leadership Development Events (Ex: Chapter Conducting, FFA Quiz etc.)
- Career Development Events (Ex: Livestock Judging, Forestry Judging, etc.)
- Speaking Development Events (Ex: Prepared Public Speaking, Extemporaneous Speaking, etc.)
- Leadership Conferences & Conventions (Ex: District FFA Convention, etc.)
- Community Service Projects (Ex: Habitat for Humanity, Primary Coloring Contest, etc.)
- FFA Offices (Chapter, District, Area, etc.)
- FFA Scholarships

To participate in any FFA activity, agriculture students must meet all criteria to be an eligible student. All agriculture activities will follow Rusk ISD guidelines for eligibility. Exhibitors must earn a minimum of \$50.00 for the chapter by way of selling items in chapter fundraiser (\$3.00 per item), the selling of ads or sponsors for the Rusk FFA Donkey Basketball game, or paying the fee out of pocket.

Lonestar FFA Degree (Texas State FFA Degree)

The Rusk FFA program is designed to allow its members the opportunity to receive the highest award given at the state level, the Lonestar FFA Degree. In order to receive this degree students must be enrolled in their sixth semester of agriculture education, participate in 10 different FFA activities, serve as an officer or committee chair, complete a minimum of 25 hours of community service, earn a minimum of \$1,000.00 or worked at least 300 hours in excess of class time, and attend State Convention to receive their award. Students who receive their Lonestar FFA Degree are eligible to receive an FFA letterman jacket.

American FFA Degree

FFA members with outstanding SAE's could also earn the American FFA Degree. Only 19 FFA members in the history of the Rusk FFA have earned this prestigious award: 1950- Laverle Middleton, 1982- Darvin Collins, 2007- Jennifer Hill, 2009- Joey Marchetti, 2012- Tommy Marchetti, 2012-Colton Kadlecek, 2013-Kailan Counahan 2014- Johnny Marchetti, Garrett Anderson, Caleb Dover, CJ Wood, and Trey Hamilton 2015- Christian Holman 2016- Zach Morgan & Lacey Wallace, 2017- Hayden Helm, Raymond Harvey, Nick Martin, & 2018- Nicole Phifer. To earn this degree an FFA member must: 1) Have received the State FFA Degree. 2) Have been FFA member for at least three years. 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 earned \$10,000 and productively invested at least \$7,500, or have earned and productively invested at least \$2,000 and worked 2,250 hours beyond scheduled school hours through their SAEs. 5) Have a record of participating in community service activities with a minimum of 50 hours in 3 different activities and 6) Have maintained a "C" grade average or better.

Supervised Agriculture Experience / Project Program:

Do I have to raise an animal to be in Agriculture classes and/or the FFA? The answer is NO! In fact, many of our most active members do not show projects. However, many students are interested in this phase of our program and it has consistently proven to build leadership and responsibility in those students participating.

The following is a guideline for students considering a livestock project:

1. The program must have the approval of the parents and agriculture teacher.
2. The managerial decisions and project maintenance is the responsibility of the student.
3. Students should maintain complete and accurate records on each project in their SAE online record book.
4. Before selecting a project the student should consider the following:
 - A. What type of project is best suited for my situation?
 - B. Do I have the facilities or place to keep this project?
 - C. Will I have the time to properly raise this project?
 - D. Do I have the funds to purchase and raise this project?

Cost Analysis: The following is a list of the different projects exhibited and an ESTIMATED expense of each project. Projects can vary in cost depending on the quality of animal purchased, type of feed fed, and animal health. These estimates also do not include constructing pens, purchase of equipment, or stock show travel expenses.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Estimated total investment</u>
HLS&R Commercial Steers (pen of three)	\$5,000 to \$6,000
Registered Heifer	\$5,000 to \$7,500
Market Steer	\$2,000 to \$3,000
Commercial Heifer (halter beef or dairy)	\$3,000 to \$4,000
Commercial Heifers (pen)	\$4,000 to \$5,000
Market Hog	\$400 to \$700
Market Goat or Sheep	\$350 to \$500
Broilers	\$200 to \$300
Rabbits	\$200 to \$300

Major Show Livestock Projects:

1. The Rusk FFA sanctions the East Texas State Fair, Fort Worth Stock Show & the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo.
2. Projects must be purchased with the approval of the Rusk Agriculture Instructors.
3. Registered projects must have papers in the exhibitors name prior to the State Validation.
4. Projects must be housed at a site approved by the Rusk Agriculture Instructors.
5. Fitting and management of projects is restricted to exhibitor, parent & agriculture instructor.

Cherokee County Show:

The Cherokee County Show Rules will be provided to those students participating in the show. However, the Rusk FFA has further developed guidelines for showing at the Cherokee County Show:

1. Exhibitors must comply with all Rusk ISD rules and guidelines at the show.
2. Exhibitors are expected to act in a manner that reflects the FFA Code of Ethics outlined in the FFA Manual
3. Exhibitors must participate in a minimum of one Rusk FFA community service project.
4. Exhibitor must attend County Show Chapter meeting in January
5. Exhibitors must complete thank you letters within one week of receiving buyer information and submit them to agriculture teacher's unsealed and in a stamped addressed envelope.

* For every day that thank you letters are late, the exhibitor's check will be held for one week. Thank you letters more than one week late will result in the profits from student's check going to the charity of the Rusk FFA's choosing.

Agriculture Mechanics:

Students enrolled in an Agriculture Mechanics class will have the opportunity to construct projects for local and state stock shows. The Rusk Agriculture Mechanics team will travel to Cherokee County, Houston, and San Antonio Agriculture Mechanics Shows. Only juniors and seniors will be allowed to attend the Houston and San Antonio Shows (Agriculture Instructors may waive this rule for qualified sophomore students). All projects must be teacher approved and will be allowed to show based on quality of project and exhibit availability. Student projects will be funded by the student (unless departmental projects) and he or she must pay 50% of the estimated cost prior to construction. Students are required to complete a bill of materials, project diagram (Houston & San Antonio must be completed in AutoCAD), and all phases of the project under the direct supervision of an agriculture instructor. No outside party including parents may assist students on their projects. Agriculture instructors may contact outside consultants for specialty projects as deemed necessary. Each project will be assigned a completion date and assigned a designated date to utilize the paint booth for finishing their project. Projects who are not finished at the assigned date may forfeit their show status. If a student is on a team agriculture mechanics project and becomes ineligible at the time of show and sale, that student will be ineligible to receive any profits, prizes or scholarships from the project. In addition, students not attending a show will not be eligible for profits, prizes or scholarships received at that show. Extreme circumstances, such as the death of a family member, preventing a student from attending a show may be given exemption from attending a show by agriculture instructors. All entry and hotel money deposits are non-refundable. Prizes won at major shows by teams are the property of the Rusk FFA to be utilized by all current and future Rusk FFA members.

Supervised Agriculture Experience Awards:

The Rusk FFA will be awarding SAE Awards for the following SAE's: Agriculture Mechanics, Beef Cattle Production, Dairy Production, Swine Production, Goat Production, Sheep Production, Rabbit Production, Poultry Production, Horticulture Production and Agriculture Research. FFA members must raise and exhibition a SAE project in one of the areas above to participate. Award winners will be announced at the annual Rusk FFA Banquet.

Rusk FFA District & Post-District Designation:

Instructional:

- FFA Day at the Capitol & Agriculture Tours
- Agriculture Field Trips, Workshops, or Clinics
- FFA Leadership Conferences

District:

- Livestock & Agriculture Mechanics Shows
- Cherokee County Judging Contest
- District Leadership Development Events
- Invitational Judging Contest
- Area CDE Events
- District Convention & Degree Check
- District Speaking Development Events

Post-District:

- Region Wildlife Career Development Event
- Area Leadership Development Event Events
- State Leadership Development Event Events
- State Career Development Events
- Southern Region Forestry Career Development Event
- National Land & Range Career Development Events
- National FFA Convention & Career Development Events
- Area Convention and Degree Check
- Area Speaking Development Events

Classroom, Show & Field Trip Policies:

1. No food, drink, or candy will be allowed in classroom unless authorized by ag instructor.
2. The use of alcohol & tobacco products is prohibited in accordance with district policy.
3. Students are not to be in the office without the permission of a teacher.
4. Safety glasses will be worn in the shop at all times.
5. No horseplay or running will be allowed in shop.
6. Appropriate clothing will be worn while in the shop. (Teacher will specify)
7. Students must obtain permission before using any machinery or material.
8. Students must check out tools from tool room and are responsible for loss, theft, or damage to any tool checked out in their name.
9. Students are responsible for cleaning work area and shop at the end of each class.
10. Students must adhere to district dress and conduct codes when on all trips.
11. FFA members are expected to act in a manner that reflects the FFA Code of Ethics outlined in the FFA Manual.
12. Students who participate in vandalizing or damaging the Rusk Agriculture Department facilities or equipment are subject to removal from the program.
13. Students attending an FFA event may only be picked up from that event by a parent or legal guardian.
14. Students attending an FFA function requiring official dress must be dressed according to the guidelines for official dress found in the FFA Manual. Young Men: White shirt, black slacks, black shoes, FFA tie and FFA Jacket. Young Ladies: White shirt, black skirt (below knee), black closed toe shoes, black hose, FFA scarf, and FFA Jacket.

Students are subject to all rules and regulations outlined in the Rusk ISD Student Code of Conduct in all agriculture classes, trips and activities. Students in violation of any of these rules and regulations outlined in the Rusk ISD Student Code of Conduct will be placed under disciplinary action by the Rusk ISD Administration. Students who violate these policies on a school sponsored trip may be sent home from the trip. Students will either be picked up by the parent or sent home at the discretion of Rusk ISD. Prior to leaving on all school sponsored trips, all student bags will be searched by a Rusk ISD employee. Students refusing to have their bags checked will not be allowed to attend the trip.

Student Information Sheet

Name: _____

Phone #: _____

Address: _____

Please check the boxes below that apply and sign.

- I have read and understand the requirements and opportunities available to my child in the Rusk Agriculture Department and the Rusk FFA.
- I give my child permission to travel on official school sponsored FFA and or Agriculture activities. In the event that I need to pick up my child prior to the students returning to campus, I understand that only a legal guardian may pick up my child at an off campus activity accompanied by a signed parent note of permission.
- I give the Rusk Agriculture Department and Rusk FFA permission to use the photo of my child in the local newspaper and local FFA website.

Parent Signature