

FFA Today

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Quarterly Times

It's Not Just About the Axes and the Wood Summer of 2021



Ryan Wicklund (left) and Ryan Setaro (right) competing as a crosscutting team at the Harwinton Fair Timber Team Competition.

By Kennis McCarthy
NHS Senior

The scent of fresh-cut lumber and sawdust fills your nose, chainsaws roaring, axes hitting wood, and the chatter

of athletes cheering each other on rings through the air. You might be wondering where you are. You are at a TimberSports Competition. The well-known company STIHL began their timber

sports series in 1985 and since then there has been an ever growing interest in the woodsmen competition.

Over the last ten years, three Connecticut high schools have integrated

timber sports into their extracurriculars and clubs. Woodland, Womogo, and Woodbury FFA (Nonnewaug) are the only three juvenile timber teams within the state. The three schools have gone and competed against each other in several competitions showing their skills in the events of the competition.

There are 5 events: Axe Throw, Crosscut, Bowsaw, Log Roll, and Pulp toss. Each event is timed and your skill, precision, strength, speed, and accuracy are all judged, and out of all the athletes the top 3 individuals or partners (depending on the event) get recognized and at the end of

the comp, all total points are added together to determine which team is the overall winner is of the competition.

Being a part of a team in itself is an amazing experience but being part of a timber team is just a whole other world. Everyone has their own strengths and weaknesses and we all push each other to do better. It's not only competing with your competitors but also with your teammates. Being at a competition is exhilarating and nerve-wracking your adrenaline is going your muscles are aching and you are cold and tired but there is nowhere you'd rather be,

being there in the middle of the action watching your team compete is such a surreal feeling, after practicing for weeks and months to finally compete and do better than you ever thought you would is such an amazing feeling.

Timber has become an important part of many people's lives, the competitions are lively and entertaining (even if you know nothing about timber). If you have never been to a timber competition I would highly recommend going to at least one, it's an amazing experience and I think everyone should get a chance to experience it.

4-H Hard Work and Dedication!

Summer of 2021

By Carolyn Daniell
NHS Senior

Last year was the first for the Nonnewaug 4-H club, and to say the least, it was interesting.



Sage Wotton, Michael Lynch, and Carolyn Daniell getting ready to show their rabbits Willow, Herb, MJ.

Once or twice a week we would come together as a group but would be split up

between teachers for the rabbits, led by Mr. Lavoie and the large animals, led by Mrs. Jedd. This allowed us to learn the most we possibly could out of our meetings. In the meetings, we would go through how to care for the rabbits especially to keep them ready for the fair season. Along the way we also learned how to judge/criticize rabbits, we looked for certain ticking in their fur, how long their ears are, how straight their face is, etc. Along with judging, we had to know how to show our animals and for rabbits we can walk them around like a cow, we have to keep them in

a certain position making them look pretty while describing their features. Then we have to flip them on their backs and count the examination of their features. Once we finish that we would have to answer a few quick questions about your rabbit, or the 4-H organization as a whole. It may be time-consuming and crazy sometimes but it's a great experience of learning how to work with your animal and be confident about it. The fairs were the best part about 4-H because we would spend the whole weekend there staying with our animals and teaching others about what

our organization does and why we do it. But then of course there is all of the fair food that you can't pass up.

Since the bunnies were born we were a part of their lives making sure they were safe and developing right on schedule. As someone who never had a rabbit for a pet, it was pretty amazing watching them grow and mature into the beautiful purebred Flemish Giants. During the school year of 2020-2021, we had two litters of rabbits, the first was born in late December and one of the students showed her a rabbit named MJ. The second litter was in May of 2021. A few students took 3 rabbits including Herb, Willow, and Daisy. They all came from the parents Penelope and King Candy, who we kept at the school where we learned how to handle them and care for them. We would trim nails, brush them, check their teeth to make sure they don't have malocclusion (overgrown teeth or crooked teeth). We would also tattoo the rabbits to be able to differentiate them since they all look similar. I wouldn't have thought I would love rabbits so much and everything revolved around them whether it's caring for them, playing with them, going to fairs, or spending time with my friends. This is one of my favorite extracurricular activities I have done.

By Madelynn Orosz
NHS Junior

The Nonnewaug 4H club competed against other youth showmen in the Litchfield County area. Students that participated showed a variety of species from our school's education farm including rabbits, beef cattle, sheep, an alpaca and a pig.

The first fair of the summer was the annual Litchfield County 4H fair where many Nonnewaug students; some from the Nonnewaug 4H club and some from other 4H clubs competed against each other in showmanship. All students were able to learn showmanship for different species from their fellow members who were experts on their respective species. Other fun activities throughout the weekend included a picnic, movie, tractor driving, and the Ag Olympics. This was the first fair experience for not only the students, but also Nonnewaug's animals. Students all came home with ribbons and some even won novice showmanship for their respective species.

The second fair for the 4H club was the Goshen fair. This was a very busy weekend as the large animal showman had full days of competition. The weekend led off with the beef cattle obstacle course with Madelynn Orosz and Lily the cow placing 2nd and

Gabby Danelli and Carnation the cow placing top 7. The following days included breed classes and ended with showmanship. Lily Milzak with Bo the sheep and Gabby Guerra with Lambie the sheep brought home best in breed and novice showmanship respectively during the sheep show.



Gabby Guerra resting with her show sheep, Lambie, after a long day of showing.

Students were also able to enjoy the food, music, rides and other aspects of the fair. All students again came home with ribbons and other prizes as well as valuable knowledge and new skills.

The third and last fair for the club was the Bethlehem fair. This fair was a great way to end a fun and exciting summer. Rabbit showman and the large animal showman came home with many ribbons after competing in breed and showmanship classes. Gabby Guerra and Lambie the sheep won showmanship as well as Gabby Danelli and Carnation. Students were also able to enjoy the food, music, rides

and fun the fair offered.

As part of learning how to show their respective

species, all participants provided care for their animals during each fair. This

included feeding, watering, bathing, drying, fitting, and cleaning up after them.

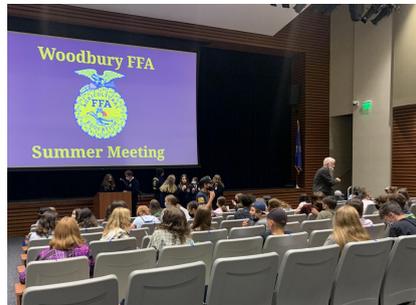
A Freshman's First Look in the FFA!

Sept. 02, 2021

By Chloe Walsh
NHS Freshman

The Summer Woodbury FFA chapter meeting was during the FFA Freshman Orientation. We were not completely sure what was happening as we walked into the auditorium. The meeting started and almost all of the freshmen were confused. According to Sofia Hynds "The FFA meeting was interesting, and very new to me". What we now know are important

practices of the FFA were completely new to us. We didn't understand that Danni Syrotiak, our chapter president, was tapping the gavel to pass a motion- all we knew was that it was loud.



We didn't understand the importance of where the officers stood or how it

correlated to the different parts of the FFA emblem. It was very beneficial to us to see these things because as Chloe Weaver puts it "It was a good introduction to how the FFA chapter meetings run."

Overall the Summer FFA chapter meeting helped us to learn what an FFA meeting looked like and was the first real introduction to parliamentary procedure for the majority of us. The meeting was very well organized.

All Fun and Games... And Some Ice Cream

Sept. 23, 2021

By Samantha Kostka
NHS Freshman

During the third week of school, new agriscience freshmen got to enjoy what could be the best experience they could ask for; the Woodbury FFA Freshmen Social. A majority of the incoming freshmen come from out of district and might not know a lot of people. When this opportunity arose, more than 25 students jumped at the chance to meet new friends and eat some ice cream. This was a great

chance for everyone to meet the Chapter and Sophomore Block officers and explore the ag building. During this afterschool event, everyone gathered into Ms. Gorman's room and split into groups of five.

In Mr. Belinsky's room students played an intense game of eye spy, which included a lot of shouting and excitement. In Mr. Birkenberger's room they played a new game that involved pointing at someone and saying their name, but it couldn't be the people next to

you. Once there were only three people left the game ended because the game would not work with less than four. Another room involved a game of kahoot. The challenge was that all the words were in French even though nobody knew french.

In Mr. Zielinski's room, participants played a memorizing game that involved saying everyone's name and a chosen adjective that started with the letter of their first name. The last room was Ms. Gorman's room. Students played a challenging

and competitive game of wax figures and whoever made it to the front of the room first won.



All of the Freshman and Officers having fun at the Freshman Social

At the end of the event, everyone got ice cream and enjoyed time outside talking to their peers and friends. Overall, that afternoon was well spent making new friends, amazing memories and getting to know the Woodbury FFA Chapter and the family we will spend the next four years with.

Corsage Day at Big E

Oct. 1, 2021

By Nora Galvin
NHS Junior



On October 1st of 2021 Mr. Birkenberger brought a group of students to the Big E in West Springfield Massachusetts. The group consisted of students in his greenhouse/floriculture classes and any students involved in the ag program who wanted to participate. The students came to school on Friday morning wearing Official Dress and got on the

Ag bus to drive to Springfield, Massachusetts. Every student was part of a group consisting of four to five people. When arriving at the Big E, we went to the Farm-A-Rama building. In the building there were horses being groomed, chicks hatching, informational booths about agriculture, landscaping dioramas, and floral arrangements. At the booth for corsages we set up the materials and placed our stuff. We had to work in shifts. The first group stayed back and started to prepare corsages. The rest of the students had the freedom to walk around the Big E as long as they remained in their groups or didn't wander by themselves. When walking around, we got a chance to check out the booths, food

trucks, and rides. While working at the booth, we worked hard to make bows and put the corsages together. We then laid them on the table and asked people if they would like a corsage. They got to take one for free and hear a bit about the FFA and how it all works. At some point we would even make special corsages with flowers the person picked out. At the end of the day, we packed up all the materials and cleaned up the booth we used. Two people took the flags and we participated in the parade that walked around the streets of the Big E. Overall, it was a great experience and a fun day. I highly recommend it to anyone thinking of doing it next year.

We Love Our Farmers

Oct. 16, 2021

By Casey Watson
NHS Junior

On October 16th, a few of our chapter officers Danni Syrotiak, Joe Velky, Ryan Wicklund, and I spent the day at the We Love our Farmers event on the Woodbury

green. Local farms such as Logues Dairy Farm, Kalenauskaus and many more got the chance to sell some of their fresh produce to recognize all the hard work our local farmers do all year for our community. My fellow officers and I had a stand of our own to bring awareness

about our chapter and what we have to offer. We answered questions, showed some examples of each Ag class, and even met the parents of some of our alumni. It was a great way to inform the community about what we do within the chapter!

Open House

Oct. 20, 2021



Mr. Birkenberger talks to 8th graders about horticulture and what he does here at Nonnewaug's Agricultural Program.

By Sage Samuelson
NHS Sophomore

About four weeks ago on the 20th of October the Woodbury FFA chapter hosted an open house in the Ag building for potential members for the class of

2026. This was very exciting for all those involved as we were unable to host such events for the classes of '24 and '25. These interested eighth graders and their families were able to explore the ag building and learn about all of our in depth

courses in all the different aspects of agriculture.

All of our FFA officers, Sophomore Block officers and many of the current FFA members volunteered to spend the evening working to answer questions about the program and advertise their

favorite aspects of the ag program. All of the potential applications and families asked wonderful questions, which our members were more than willing to answer. There were display items in

the natural resources room, tours of the shop and meet and greets with all of our wonderful animals and of course Ms. Gorman's wooden cow, which surprisingly few people wanted to milk. We

wish to thank all those that came to help and hope that some of the potential members who came will be participating on the other side come this time next year.

Woodbury FFA is getting Festive!

Oct. 21, 2021

By Mia Santos
NHS Junior



Everyone working hard and having fun carving their pumpkins!

On October 22nd, the FFA chapter team had an event for carving pumpkins. Within the selection of pumpkins we were able to

choose between a white or orange pumpkin. The pumpkin carving event had lots of character and creativity. The FFA event was an open invitation for grades 9-12 and allowed other students to socialize and meet new people. This also gave the underclassmen a chance to bond with the agricultural teachers. Both teachers and students had a great experience and time together whether that infers throwing pumpkin seeds at each other to comparing pumpkin creations. The pumpkin carving was fulfilling

and had a good energy. The FFA event was a place without judgement or negativity. The FFA is very social and inclusive. The environment of the FFA overall has a very open atmosphere and loving community. The pumpkin carving event was hosted by Mr. Birkenberger, Mr. Lavoie, and the Chapter Officer team. The pumpkins provided at this event were donated by Desantis and Logue's farms. The experience of this event was lovely and I am excited for next year's pumpkin carving event.

Trick or Treat Street Fun!

Oct. 23, 2021

By Devon Zapatka
NHS Sophomore

Trick or treat street was a great success. With fun music and a great turnout the night flew by. Almost everyone who had carved a pumpkin had their's showcased walkway

to the beginning of trick or treat street. We appreciate everyone's support as we used all of the assets we could.

I would like to thank everyone who donated candy for our stop along trick or treat street. We were able to sustain our stop as well as helping

other stops who ran out of candy before the end of the night. I believe that our stop along trick or treat street provided amusement for everyone that passed by. As a Sophomore Block Officer I believe it was a great experience running our stop and had a great night.

Nationals, Here We Come

Nov. 5, 2021

By Sarah Walsh
NHS Junior

Walking into Nonnewaug at 6:30 in the morning, it was unsurprising to see people hustling and bustling around, getting ready to go. Surrounded by official dress, we gathered up our supplies and loaded up into the ag bus. The Dairy Judging team, Poultry team, Floriculture team, Landscaping team, Horse Judging team, Livestock Evaluation team, and last but not least, the Meats Evaluation team that I got the chance to be a part of. We were off to UCONN, the state competition to compete for the chance to go to Nationals.

The UCONN campus was beautiful. Cow pastures decorated the landscape on

either side of us as the bus drove through. We unloaded our gear and gathered in the auditorium, anxious to see where we were going to go. All of the teams then split up, each of us going to our own individual place to compete in our activities. Meat Judging started with our general knowledge test, then the Beef Carcass Evaluation, then the Problem Solving, and then we were led to a different room to do Meat Identification, Meat cut Evaluation, and finally the Team Activity. Overall everyone on the team felt prepared for the tests and did a fantastic job, placing first at States and given the news they were off to Nationals! Tess Askoy (senior) placed first in the state, Chloe Bombero

(junior) placed 2nd, Samara Thomas (sophomore) placed 4th, and me, Sarah Walsh (junior), placed 7th. The girls did a fantastic job as did all of the rest of the competing teams that are a part of the FFA, with the Floriculture team and Landscaping team also placing first.

After the hours spent competing, the teams gathered for freshly made ice cream at the UCONN Dairy Bar. The sweet treat was the perfect thing for all of our teams who worked hard and the day was declared a success as we headed home, blasting country music on the bus. The FFA State Convention was a fun-filled day with success from all of the hardworking fall CDE teams that are a part of the Woodbury FFA.



Those competing at the UConn CDE Fair on the Ag Bus heading home from a long day of hard work.

Floriculture: 1st
Livestock Evaluation: 2nd
Nursery Landscape: 1st
Horse Evaluation: 2nd
Meats Evaluation: 1st
Poultry: 4th
Milk Quality: Top 10

Letter From Your Officers

By Michael Lynch
Chapter Student Advisor



Hi Woodbury FFA! Today I am going to be talking about not stressing over your future. Ever since I was a child, I have always been fascinated with the idea of working with animals. I have always had animals

growing up. Ranging from dogs, cats, rabbits, birds, fish, and amphibians. It has always made me happy to learn about them and watch them thrive. As I got older, I found a love for plants as well. Growing up, I would plant weeds in pots. That's how much I loved them. Later on, my dad built me a greenhouse so I can house all of my plants that I was growing at the time. This made me even more interested in plants.

Since I am an out-of-district student, I had to apply to Nonnewaug; just like most of you. Coming into Nonnewaug, I thought I wanted to be a vet. As I took more classes that I thought were out of my interests, I found that I actually had some interest in them. My sophomore year I took Vet, Aquaculture, and Landscaping. I liked all three of those classes. My junior year, I took just aquaculture. Now in my senior year, I am taking landscaping. I wish I had more years of High School so that I could take every single class. If I did have more years, I would definitely take vet again, aquaculture again, natural resources, and landscaping again.

So since I am taking landscaping this year, I am learning about plants (which I like). I could've taken the greenhouse but I decided on landscaping. Before I started college, I didn't even know what I wanted to do. I wanted to be an architect designer, then

I wanted to be a Vet Tech, and now I am here. It does not matter if you don't know what you want to go into, and if you did, that is great. If you don't, that gives you even more of a chance to find something that you love, because you can explore your options more!

By Alyssa Hodges
Chapter Parliamentarian

I know the second you join FFA the phrase "get involved" is said all of the time but it really is true. I came into the Ag program as a freshman from Oxford knowing absolutely no one. I had no friends and no clue what I was doing. Thankfully I listened to the teachers who said get involved because now I'm a chapter officer, running a community service committee, participating in multiple CDE's, while being a member of the timber team. Being involved in all of these extracurricular activities has helped me grow as a person and a leader. I have met so many amazing people through FFA and have made friendships that will last a lifetime.



Our school has something that others don't and we often overlook it. Teachers incorporate an education along with work experience you can't get at most schools. An agricultural experience paired with an amazing support system from teachers gives you the skills to prepare for the real world. As someone who took advantage of the opportunities FFA has provided I can say with certainty that getting involved makes the experience something you will never forget. FFA helped me find my voice and reach my full potential and I could not have done it without getting involved.