

ILLUMINATE

Minnesota FFA Association Convention

May 19 – 21, 2020



NEWS RELEASE

Contact:

Juleah Tolosky

Minnesota FFA Executive Director

Email: jtolosky@umn.edu

Phone: 518-832-0313

May 18-21, you may also contact:

Sherry Newell

Communications Volunteer

Email: snewellopitz@gmail.com

Phone: 320-428-4628

Minnesota FFA Star Farmer Hails from West Concord

Triton's Katie Fitzgerald wins organization's highest honor

VIRTUAL – (May 21, 2020) Katie Fitzgerald of the Triton FFA Chapter was named 2020 Minnesota FFA Star Farmer in the final day of the organization's virtual convention.

Fitzgerald is the daughter of David and Ann Fitzgerald of West Concord. Her FFA chapter is led by agricultural teachers and advisors Robert Ickler and Mitchell Dinse. The Minnesota FFA Foundation's sponsor for the State Star recognition program is Compeer Financial Services.

The 2020 award winner has raised and managed a 13-head herd of registered Angus and Shorthorn cattle as her FFA Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE). Fitzgerald has made breeding choices based on phenotypic and genotypic traits, while growing the herd from its start of three head four years ago.

Through FFA and Goodhue County 4-H, Fitzgerald has shown her animals at county, state and national exhibitions. She began a mentorship program for youth to learn more about the beef project and is active in the state and national Angus and Shorthorn Associations. Her responsibilities on the family farm include daily feeding, bedding and cleaning chores, along with halter training and monitoring cattle health.

"Being given the opportunity to exhibit cattle has provided me with a wide variety of learning experiences and broadened my horizons," said Fitzgerald. "I was fortunate to be a recipient of an Angus heifer through the Minnesota Youth Beef Experience Program."

"My working relationship with nutritionist LeeAnn Waugh has allowed me to learn more about proper feeding as well as utilizing educational clinics to learn new practices," she added.

In addition to her SAE, Fitzgerald has served as Triton FFA co-president and vice president. She has participated in Livestock Evaluation Career Development Events and was a member of the Triton choir and basketball teams, along with the Holden Lutheran Church Youth Group.

Fitzgerald plans to attend South Dakota State University to study animal science and agricultural business, aiming toward a career as a ruminant livestock feed nutritionist.

In an SAE program, students apply what they are learning in the classroom. A student designs a program to gain hands-on experience and develop skills in agricultural career areas which interest them. Students are supervised by agricultural education teachers in cooperation with parents, employers and other adults who assist them in the development and achievement of their educational and career goals.

Each year, 16 state finalists — four in each category — vie for the association's top awards: Star Farmer, Star in Agribusiness, Star in Production Placement and Star in Agriscience. The awards honor students who have developed outstanding agricultural skills through their SAE and earned the FFA State Degree.

Three other finalists vied for the Star Farmer distinction: Owen Aakre of the Hawley FFA, Alaina Chute of the Aitkin FFA and William Pell of the Jackson County Central FFA.

Links to watch the virtual award ceremonies can be found on the Convention App at <https://event.crowdcompass.com/mnffa2020> on desktop, or by searching Minnesota FFA on the Crowd Compass Attendee Hub app on mobile devices.

###

Editor's Note: A photo is available by emailing snewellopitz@gmail.com.

About Minnesota FFA

FFA is a national organization developing students' potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education with more than 700,000 members in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Minnesota FFA Association represents nearly 11,000 members and nearly 200 high school chapters across the state. Agricultural education engages students through hands-on learning in the classroom, work-based learning opportunities known as Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) projects and FFA activities.

You can learn more about the experiences of FFA members and supporters by visiting www.mnffa.org and www.ffa.org.