



The Alabama

# FFA NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ALABAMA FFA ASSOCIATION

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## WASHINGTON PREFERRED FARMING TO POLITICS

Everyone knows that George Washington gave seven years of his life without pay to command the Revolutionary Army and eight more to serve as the new country's first president. What isn't so well known is that he would have been much happier "under his own vine and fig tree." By his own admission, George Washington's first interest was farming. It was because of his interest in farming and his accomplishments as a successful farmer that FFA WEEK is celebrated during the week of George Washington's birthday. In addition, George Washington has been labeled the patron saint of the organization and has come to symbolize the FFA Treasurer.

Actually it was a small inheritance that launched Washington's career as a farmer; he was 11 when his father died. According to custom, Lawrence -- as the oldest son -- got most of the estate including Mt. Vernon. Washington's small inheritance was only a 280-acre Cherry Tree Farm plus a share of land at Deep Run.

Washington started accumulating land with money he earned as a surveyor. At 16, George had bought 550 acres; he added another 456 acres two years later and another 552 before he reached 21.

Lawrence died at the early age of 34, leaving Mt. Vernon to his young daughter who died. Lawrence's will then made George the owner of Mt. Vernon's 2,500 acres!

Washington resigned his military commission when he was 26 and soon married Martha Custis, a wealthy Virginia widow. At that time he owned about 5,000 acres of land which had not fared well under his brother's care during the campaigns.

Washington began to take farming seriously! He had a keen business mind, an eye for detail,

and a searching curiosity about anything new. He kept a daily diary from 1760 till his death in 1799, much of it dealing with his farming activities. The only major interruption in his diary came during the American Revolution.

Washington divided his huge estate into five farms: Dogue Run Farm, River Farm, Muddy Hole Farm, Union Farm, and the Mansion House Farm, where the big house still stands today.

The management system was quite modern. Each farm's overseer made weekly reports which Washington used for his notes, diaries, and account books. He made exacting notes on planting, harvest, and sale--a trait that is recognized in the FFA opening ceremony when the treasurer says, "I keep records of receipts and disbursements, just as Washington kept his farm accounts-- carefully and accurately."

As early as 1766, Washington realized the error in continued tobacco cultivation. He practically abandoned tobacco, the major colonial crop. Nothing was wasted at Mt.

Vernon; Washington used everything that was usable and bought nothing he could produce. For example, he tanned cattle hides and sold fish from his waters. Most historians credit Washington's farming success to an unusual ability for using by-products and conservation practices.

Some have called Mt. Vernon one of the earliest "experiment stations" in America. It's true that Washington tried various manure and water applications under controlled conditions. He experimented with countless new seeds, fertilizers, and management practices.

Washington called the life of a farmer "most delectable." "It is honorable. It is amusing, and, with judicious management, it is profitable," he said.

Perhaps his far-reaching vision and love of farm life are best expressed in his eighth address to Congress: "It will not be doubted that with reference either to individual, or National Welfare, Agriculture is of primary importance. In proportion as nations advance in population, and other circumstances of maturity, this truth becomes more pparent; and renders the cultivation of the soil more and more, an object of public patronage."

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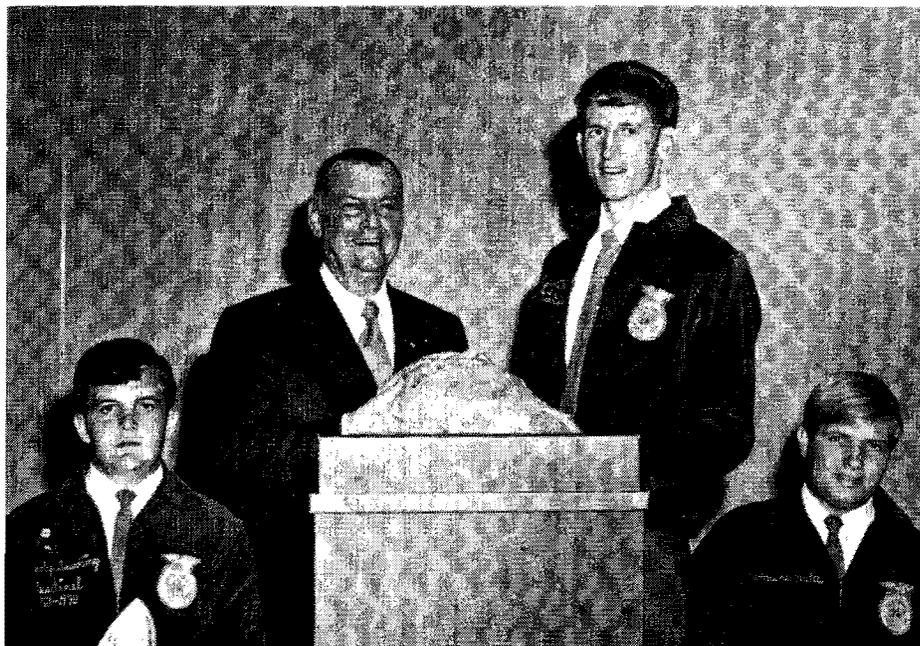
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John Tillman, 1970 State FFA Forestry winner presents a country ham to Prime F. Osborn, president, Seaboard Coast Line Railroad Company, in recognition of SCL's 26 years of cooperation with the FFA forestry program in Alabama.

Shown with them are Sandy Dowling, left, and Wayne Mills, right, state forestry winners from Florida and North Carolina, respectively.

## FORESTRY WINNER

## TAKES SEABOARD TOUR

The Seaboard Coast Line Railroad Company has sponsored the FFA youth forestry and leadership program in Alabama for 26 years.

Each year, the State FFA Agricultural Proficiency Award winner in Forestry not only receives \$250 but also travels (all expenses paid) to St. Louis, Missouri, as part of a three-day tour arranged by SCL for all state forestry winners in the Southeast.

John Tillman, 1970 Alabama FFA Forestry winner from Andalusia, along with state winners from Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia, traveled to St. Louis on October 9, for the tour which was climaxed by a special SCL-FFA forestry luncheon held in their honor. More than 125 corporate executives were on hand at the luncheon to hear the

young Southerners tell of their achievements in the field of forestry.

Other highlights of this year's tour included visiting the Purina Research Farm with luncheon courtesy of the Ralston Purina Company, attending a St. Louis Cardinals vs. New Orleans Saints football game at Busch Memorial Stadium, and sightseeing trips to the Gateway Arch, riverboats, etc.

The SCL tour ended in Kansas City where each winner met his own respective state delegation to attend the National FFA Convention.

The Alabama FFA is very proud to have sponsors such as the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad Company. We hope that more Alabama FFA members will take advantage of the programs they stand behind.

# SPOTLIGHTING . . . . .

## ROYCE JONES . . . . .

Royce Jones of Section, Alabama, has been working with electricity since he was, in his own words, "knee high to a switch box." Because of his knowledge of electrical wiring and repair, and his outstanding participation in FFA activities, Royce was selected winner of the Future Farmers of America Farm and Home Electrification Proficiency Award for the Southern Region.

Royce is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Rayford Jones and lives with them on a 77 acre general farm. He gained much of his experience in electrical work by working with his father, owner of an electrical and plumbing business. Today Royce is a partner in the business and shares equally in the work and management of the partnership.

In addition to the training received from his father, Royce has learned about farm electrification in the vocational agriculture classroom under the direction of his instructor and FFA advisor, Cecil M. Gant. He has also attended special classes in electrical wiring sponsored by his local electrical cooperative. Because of his training and his knowledge of electricity, Royce was asked to teach an electricity course for local migrant workers last year.

In the last four years Royce has had a wide variety of experience in electrical work. He has installed switches, outlets, and service entrances and has even done complete house wiring. Royce recently rewired his parents' home installing a 200 amp service entrance panel to replace the outdated 60 amp service.

Royce's interest in electricity extends beyond his daily work. He enjoys experimenting with electricity and has designed, built, and repaired many pieces of electrical equipment. Last year Royce and other members of the Section FFA Chapter designed and built a display depicting the proper use of lighting in the home study area. The display won first prize in the Alabama State Fair.

Royce has rewired the Section vocational agriculture shop and was in charge of electrical safety promotion in his chapter's safety program. He has earned the Star Greenhand award and was recipient of the State Farmer Degree. Royce has served as sentinel and treasurer of his FFA chapter. In addition, he has been on the Land Judging team and has participated in chapter and district leadership training programs.

Royce plans to continue his pursuit of an electrical career by studying electrical engineering in college. He is considering a minor in agriculture so that he can be an agricultural electrical engineer.

## MIKE MITCHELL . . . . .

A desire to work with plants and develop his own horticultural business led Mike Mitchell of Locust Fork, Alabama, to be named the Southern Region Agricultural Proficiency Award winner in Ornamental Horticulture. Mike is the son of Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Mitchell.

Mike began studying ornamental horticulture when he entered Gardendale Area Vocational School, where he had transferred because no such courses were offered in his local school. He decided on ornamental horticulture for two reasons: first, because he liked working with plants and second, because the horticulture program was most suitable to the seven acres of land he owned. Under the supervision of his vocational agriculture instructor and FFA advisor, Sherrill White, Mike's interest and ambition in ornamental horticulture grew into a full-time occupation.

Since he did not have greenhouse facilities at home, Mike did most of his work during the first year in the school greenhouse and with a local greenhouse operator. As his interest in horticulture grew, so did the desire to build his own greenhouse. During the summer between his junior and senior year Mike erected his own greenhouse and began establishing a nursery range on his seven acres of land. Today he is in business for himself and has already fulfilled several contracts to landscape homes and businesses as well as civic and municipal buildings and parks in the area.

With the business expanding steadily, Mike is now planning to build another greenhouse that will double the size of his present business. He is also purchasing additional land to increase the size of his nursery range. Mike also hopes to add new landscaping equipment and improve the quality of plants used in landscaping design. Last year he sold over 5,000 bedding plants and next year he plans a marked sales increase.

Although Mike's operation is by no means large scale, he owns all of his equipment, with the exception of a tractor which he shares 50 percent ownership with his father and a truck

which he recently purchased with a loan. Mike earned money to purchase the equipment, land and greenhouse by working for his father and grandfather and by doing custom work locally. He has complete operating and managerial responsibilities for his horticultural program and plans to make it a full-time business.

An outstanding FFA member, Mike served as president of the Gardendale FFA Chapter for two years. He also found time to serve on several FFA committees including the public relations committee and the tractor safety committee. He has been a delegate to the State FFA Convention for two years and has participated in and taken awards in the ornamental horticulture contest during the last two years.

## ELTON ROMINE . . . . .

Agricultural Mechanics is a favorite subject for Elton Romine of Rogersville, Alabama. Because of his interest and his outstanding performance in mechanics projects, Elton was recently awarded the Southern Region Agricultural Mechanics Proficiency Award by the Future Farmers of America.

The 17-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Howard Romine, Elton completed his senior year at Rogersville High School, where he had many opportunities to demonstrate his mechanics ability in the vocational agriculture shop.

Since his father works away from home, Elton assumed most of the responsibility for the operation of the family's 80 acre crop and livestock farm. In addition, Elton has worked on his uncle's cattle farm during the summer months. On both his home farm and his uncle's farm, Elton is responsible for the care and maintenance of the farm buildings and machinery.

Through his projects at home and in the school shop, Elton has learned a wide variety of skills including welding, woodworking, machine work, electrical wiring, and spray painting. He has applied these skills profitably in several projects including construction of a stock trailer, several gates and fences, and cattle sideboards for the pickup truck. In addition, he has repaired plows, cultivators, and the tractor in which he owns half interest.

Recently Elton completed work on a farm shop on his home farm. The shop, which is a wood frame design

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SPOTLIGHTING . . . . .

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with a concrete floor, took over 400 hours of labor to build. With the help of his father Elton built the entire structure from the concrete floor to the installation of siding, rafters, roofing, and electrical wiring.

Elton has held three offices in the Rogersville FFA Chapter; these include reporter, vice-president, and president. Under the direction of his vocational agriculture instructor and FFA advisor, Ross Smith, Elton has been active on the Livestock Judging team and has participated in FFA Public Speaking Contests for the last three years.

**JIMMY BRANNON . . . . .**

Jimmy Brannon, a 1970 graduate of Geneva County High School in Hartford, Alabama, was recently named Southern Region winner of the Future Farmers of America Agricultural Proficiency Award for Placement in Agricultural Production. The award came about as the result of Jimmy's interest in agriculture--which had led to his being employed on the Sycamore Duroc Farm.

Jimmy, who is the son of Mr. and Mrs. E. L. Brannon, enrolled in vocational agriculture and joined the FFA when he was a freshman in high school. Since his family did not live on a farm, Jimmy took advantage of an offer to carry out his supervised occupational experience program on the Sycamore Duroc Farm, owned and operated by his vocational agriculture instructor and FFA advisor, Paul C. Dean.

Through his work on the farm, Jimmy has learned a great deal about the management of an intensive hog operation. He has become especially proficient at performing minor veterinary work such as treating minor infections, clipping needle teeth, vaccination, and delivering pigs.

In the Hartford FFA Chapter, Jimmy has held the office of secretary and has been active on several committees. He was a member of the Livestock and Dairy Judging teams for the last two years and has also been involved in district officers training schools.

**DUE DATES**

**MARCH 1 . . . . .**  
 American Farmer Degree applications to district supervisor.

# - - - CHAPTER NOTES - - -

**Note to Chapter Reporters:**

By now you should have received forms for your convenience in submitting chapter news to The Alabama FFA NEWS. We do hope you will make use of them whenever your chapter has a newsworthy activity. --- JBM

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Members of the Sparkman FFA have elected Kathy Lewter as their chapter sweetheart. David Atnip was selected by the FFA as their beau.

The chapter is busy planning its Building Our American Communities program. The officers appointed John Elliott and Ted Reynolds as chairman and co-chairman of the project. Some suggested activities so far include getting rid of solid waste throughout the community and having a two or three day clean-up in which everybody in the community would get involved.

Sparkman FFA is proud to have a new American Farmer in their ranks. Tommy Scott received his degree at the National FFA Convention this year.

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The Moore Academy FFA Chapter is boasting of having its largest membership ever on record for the chapter. Thirty-one new Greenhands were initiated into the chapter at the first of the school year.

The chapter recently had a candy sale and made more than 30% profit for the treasury. Lamar Free was top salesman. He sold \$19.00 worth of candy. Top Greenhand salesmen were Melvin Taylor, Ronald Woodruff, and David Taylor.

In late November the chapter sponsored a turkey-shoot and cleared \$94.00.

The Moore Academy FFA has 19 members from the

Alabama Boys Sheriffs Ranch. Johnnie Fuller, a 9th grader from the Ranch, was elected sentinel for this year.

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Goodwater FFA Chapter recently bestowed Honorary Chapter Farmer Degrees upon Mr. C. O. Westbrook, principal of Goodwater High School, and Mr. Manson K. Roper, executive vice-president, City Bank of Goodwater.

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The Selma FFA officers have spent several hours every week recently working on their latest project - expanding the chapter's hog parlor. With 20 pigs being fed out at present, drainage was becoming a problem; so the boys all pitched in to build concrete drainage ditches.

Officers include: Mike McClound, president; Duke Brady, vice-president; Billy Reedy, secretary; Mike Brady, treasurer; and Bill Pate, reporter.

\* \* \* \* \*

**"Involved In America's Future" is the theme for National FFA WEEK, February 20-27.**

**WHAT IS A COW ???**

A cow is a mobile animated machine, housed in unprocessed leather. One end is equipped with a mower-grinder, bumper head lights, wing flaps, and fog horn. At the other end is a milk dispenser and movable fly repellent. Centrally located is a conversion plant of a combination storage and fermentation vat, through converters in series, an intricate arrangement of conveyor tubes, a central heating plant, cooling system and pumping plant.