



# The Alabama FFA REPORTER

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## Your President's Message

By Stephen Cobb  
State FFA President

On behalf of the 1978-79 State Officers, I would like to thank you for honoring us with the opportunity to serve and represent FFA and Vocational Agriculture/Agribusiness in the state of Alabama. It is a pleasure for me to serve as your 1978-79 State President.

As I write this, I am filled with many wonderful memories of my first months in office, and filled also with much excitement and anticipation of working with each of you in the months to come. During my first six months in office, I have had the opportunity to represent you from Montgomery to Washington, D.C., and from Guntersville to Kansas City, Missouri.

Since the State Convention in early June, I have had the opportunity to meet Future Farmers from many states, but I have yet to find a state whose members can match the quality and enthusiasm of those right here in Alabama. This is a landmark year for the Alabama FFA Association, it is our **GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY!** For fifty years the Alabama Association of Future Farmers of America has been hard at work building fine leaders and outstanding citizens. We have been very successful, and the reason is **YOU**—the local FFA member! Your enthusiasm and hard work has been, and will continue to be, the deciding factor in the success of our association. We can't stop now—each of us has an important role in the future of our wonderful organization. Perhaps your part is to be a chapter officer, or a member of judging teams, a public speaker or a proficiency award applicant, a hard-working greenhand, or even a State Officer. Each part is vitally important and I urge each of you to do your best. My mother has always told me, "A job worth doing is worth doing right!" Your part in the FFA is certainly worth doing, so let's do it right!

Having recently returned from the 1978 National Convention, I am vividly aware of the many opportunities offered by the FFA. I am also aware that many members and chapters in our state are not taking full advantage of these wonderful opportunities. Fellow FFA members, now is your chance. Someone is going to benefit from the many activities, awards, and programs of the FFA. Why can't that someone be *you*?

Remember, to have a successful organization, we must have successful members, and the first step to becoming a successful member is **GET INVOLVED!** Hard work will make the difference between success and failure. The surest way to fail is to never try! Don't be discouraged, get involved. Work hard, and success will surely follow!

### About Stephen Cobb

Steve is currently a senior at Jacksonville High School and is a member of the National Honor Society and Mu Alpha Theta. He is also a semifinalist in the National Merit Scholarship competition and has been a member of the Jacksonville High School wrestling team.

His FFA experiences include Public Speaking, Forestry Judging, Building Construction, Dairy Judging, Livestock Judging and Chapter Secretary.

Stephen enjoys hunting, fishing, horseback riding and farming. Upon graduation, Stephen plans to enter Auburn University and study agricultural engineering.



Stephen Cobb

### AGRICULTURE DAY

April 20, 1979

SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE  
AUBURN UNIVERSITY

Make your plans to attend

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# Auburn Collegiate FFA



Three past presidents of the Auburn University Collegiate FFA were recently recognized for service to the organization.

Pictured, (left to right), are **Boyd Scebra**, Associate Dean for Education, Auburn University; **Ed Robison**, Extension 4-H Agent for Lauderdale County, President for 1976-77; **Joe Brown**, Vocational Agribusiness Teacher at Wetumpka High School, President for 1975-76; **John Western**, District Sales Manager for Monsanto Chemical Company in Kansas, President in Fall/Winter Quarters, 1977-78; **Bill Alverson**, Assistant Dean for Agriculture, Auburn University; and **George Cargile**, Undergraduate President for Spring Quarter, 1978.

## Silas FFA Project A Success

Last September 23 a group of FFA members supervised by Mr. Wyman Clark and Mr. Woodie Pugh of Southern Choctaw High School rented a 13-acre field located near the school. On this plot of land was planted 61 pounds of rye grass per acre. Mr. Clark relates the following information:

"When we planted, we fertilized at the rate of 270 pounds of ammonia nitrate and 270 pounds of 8-24-24 per acre. While we were waiting for our rye grass to get tall enough for grazing purposes, we were busy repairing the fence around the field and building a catch pen.

"On December 12 we purchased 24 calves from Meridian Stockyard, and on December 14 we purchased 19 calves from Linden Stockyard. Our 43 calves averaged weighing 222 pounds each and cost an average of \$67.09 each. When our calves arrived, we vaccinated them for shipping fever before we turned them off the trailer into the catch pen.

While in the catch pen for three days, the calves were fed hay and water, and they were also sprayed for lice before they were turned out to graze the rye grass. We also fed the calves minerals and protein blocks. During February and March when there was little grass, we fed them bales of hay," Mr. Clark also explained.

On February 10 the FFA members fertilized the grass with 300 pounds of ammonia nitrate per acre. On March 1 the calves were put in the catch pen and they were wormed, vaccinated, dehorned, and sprayed. On March 24 they applied another 300 pounds of ammonia nitrate per acre on their pasture. Later on April 3 they made a back rubber out of old sacks and kept it saturated with burned motor oil.

They experienced some misfortune in their project as one calf was killed on the highway by a truck, one calf died, and one calf ran away and was not located.

On May 31 the FFA members carried forty calves to the Linden Stockyard. They were pleased that the average weight of each calf at selling time was 365 pounds and the average price paid for each calf was \$197.00. The gain per acre was 440 pounds.

The manager of Linden Stockyard, Mr. Matheson, cooperated by sending a trailer to the school to haul the calves to market. He stated further that he would help in any way he could with a program of this nature.

This program was broken down into 190 shares of stock which were offered to the FFA members of \$25.00 per share. On May 31 when the program was completed, each share was worth \$40.50.

Mr. Clark states that he would personally like to recognize and thank each person who helped to make this program a success.

## 1978 — Hog Show Winners

### GRAND CHAMPION BOAR

1978 Fair	FFA Member	Chapter	Breed
Alabama State Fair	Johnny McDaniel	Reform	Duroc
So. Al. State Fair	Keith Howell	Hartford	Yorkshire
Nat'. Peanut Fest.	David Archer	W.S. Neal	Spot
Greater Gulf State	David Archer	W. S. Neal	Spot

### RESERVE CHAMPION BOAR

Alabama State Fair	Johnny McDaniel	Reform	Duroc
So. Al. State Fair	Keith Howell	Hartford	Yorkshire
Nat'l. Peanut Fest.	Johnny McDaniel	Reform	Duroc
Greater Gulf State	Keith Howell	Hartford	Yorkshire

### GRAND CHAMPION GILT

Member	Chapter	Breed
Hartford FFA	Hartford	Duroc
Hartford FFA	Hartford	Duroc
Hartford FFA	Hartford	Duroc
Keith Howell	Hartford	Yorkshire

### RESERVE CHAMPION GILT

Hartford FFA	Hartford	Duroc
Hartford FFA	Hartford	Duroc
Hartford FFA	Hartford	Duroc
Melinda Hall	Slocomb	Duroc

# Alabama Participants in the 1978 National FFA Convention

## Regional Award Winners:

Agricultural Processing .....	Phillip Dollar, Springville
Crop Production .....	Jeffrey D. Peek, West Limestone
Dairy Production .....	Mark Richards, Millport
Fish and Wildlife Management .....	Russell Ralston, Selma
Home and Farmstead Improvement .....	Tim Watts, Eclectic
Horse Proficiency .....	Andy Elkins, Mt. Hope
Placement in Agricultural Production .....	Michael E. Reeves, McAdory
Swine Production .....	Johnny Kittle, Crossville

## National Chapter Contest:

Crossville FFA Chapter .....	Silver Emblem Rating
Scottsboro FFA Chapter .....	Silver Emblem Rating
Fyffe FFA Chapter .....	Bronze Emblem Rating
Grant FFA Chapter .....	Bronze Emblem Rating

## BOAC (Building Our American Communities):

Boaz FFA Chapter .....	Bronze Emblem Rating
Crossville FFA Chapter .....	Bronze Emblem Rating

## Safety Award:

Jackson "Gold" FFA Chapter .....	Bronze Emblem Rating
Scottsboro "C" FFA Chapter .....	Bronze Emblem Rating

## National FFA Band:

William C. Shoots .....	Foley FFA Chapter
Tony White .....	Ider FFA Chapter
Steve Carter .....	Troy FFA Chapter

## American Farmer Degree Recipients:

Perry Abernathy, Sparkman FFA Chapter; Randel Baker, Crossville FFA Chapter; Steve Bowdoin, Geneva FFA Chapter; Charles Caraway, Louisville FFA Chapter; Alfreda Childress, Foley FFA Chapter; William Clark, Geneva FFA Chapter; Gary Coker, Gardendale "Blue" FFA Chapter; Tommy Conner, Geneva FFA Chapter; Michael Dickman, Bay Minette "Gold" FFA Chapter; Timothy Ellis, Enterprise FFA Chapter; Paul Ellis, Castleberry FFA Chapter; Steven Farmer, Wetumpka FFA Chapter; Robert Gantt, Wetumpka FFA Chapter; Tim Hale, Fyffe FFA Chapter; Kelvin Harbison, Albertville FFA Chapter; David Hicks, Russellville FFA Chapter; Gregory Jennings, Centre FFA Chapter; Rickey Jolley, Ider FFA Chapter; Don Kessler, Ider FFA Chapter; Joey Kreauter, Wetumpka FFA Chapter; Michael Lipscomb, Foley FFA Chapter; Roger Lucas, Vernon FFA Chapter; Mack Maddox, Danville FFA Chapter; Thomas Majors, Excel FFA Chapter; Donald Martin, Geneva FFA Chapter; Dennis Earl Massey, Coffee Springs FFA Chapter; Mike Mayfield, Russellville FFA Chapter; Dennis Wayne Mims, Geneva FFA Chapter; James Minor, Albertville FFA Chapter; DeLorese Morgan, Gardendale FFA Chapter; Jeffery T. Morgan, Crossville FFA Chapter; Ricky Oswald, Pleasant Home FFA Chapter; Danny Percival, Wetumpka FFA Chapter; Marcus Pressnell, East Limestone FFA Chapter; Mark Richards, Millport FFA Chapter; Diane Rider, Bay Minette Area Vocational Center; Jimmy Riebeling, Foley FFA Chapter; William Spencer, West Limestone FFA Chapter; R. Eric Summerford, Falkville FFA Chapter; Greg Summerlin, Geneva FFA Chapter; Robert Tice, Jr., Enterprise FFA Chapter; James Welborn, Pisgah FFA Chapter; George A. Woerner, Foley FFA Chapter.

## Regional Public Speaking Contestant

Greg Pitts .....	Scottsboro FFA Chapter
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## National FFA Judging Contest Entries:

Livestock Judging .....	W. S. Neal FFA Chapter
Agricultural Mechanics .....	Rogersville FFA Chapter
Horticulture .....	Semmes FFA Chapter
Dairy Judging .....	George P. Austin FFA Chapter

## Honorary FFA Degrees:

Mr. J. E. Smith, District Specialist, Agribusiness Education, Huntsville; Mr. H. N. Lewis, Livestock Specialist, Agribusiness Education, Auburn; Mr. John L. Adderhold, Teacher of Agribusiness Education, Pleasant Home; Mr. Gary G. Moss, Teacher of Agribusiness Education, Curry; Mr. Roswell H. Smith, Jr., Teacher of Agribusiness Education, Rogersville.

## Other Participants:

National Officer Candidate .....	Bill Gibson, Curry
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## State FFA Officers:

Stephen A. Cobb, President, Jacksonville FFA Chapter; Jim Baker, Vice-President, Eutaw FFA Chapter; Patti Dunn, Secretary, Smiths Station FFA Chapter; Demetrius Daniel, Treasurer, Wedowee FFA Chapter; Coleman A. White, Reporter, Curry FFA Chapter; Greg Chander, Sentinel, Rogersville FFA Chapter.

## Coordination of the Alabama delegation:

Mr. J. C. Hollis, State FFA Advisor; Mr. C. W. Reed, FFA Executive Secretary; Mr. J. E. Smith, District Specialist; Mr. A. H. Halcomb, Subject Matter Specialist; Mr. H. N. Lewis, Livestock Specialist.

# When I Look at the Farmer

by Greg Pitts

Scottsboro "A" FFA Chapter  
1978 State Public Speaking Winner

I shocked the horn-rimmed glasses off my English teacher the other day. Let me tell you about it. My class was assigned to identify the person—doctor, lawyer, researcher, etc.—whom we felt was contributing the most to our society and then to develop an essay about that person. Just to get us interested in the assignment, the teacher asked each student whom he would write about. When I announced that I felt the farmer was currently the number one contributor to mankind, I was bombarded with mistaken observations from members of my class. "Farming is a declining, unimportant occupation," they said. "Farmers are parasites of society." "Farmers are ignorant and can't do anything but farm." What gross misconceptions!

When I look at the farmer, I find that he has always been the cornerstone of civilization. "Civilization began when man planted his first seed and tamed his first animal. Civilization advanced from valley to valley, country to country, hemisphere to hemisphere as men have shared seeds, tools, skills, knowledge, and hopes."<sup>1</sup> Since the dawn of time, the farmer has wrestled the land and squeezed life from the soil.

When I look at the farmer, I see tomorrow's breakfast with a grin on his face. The farmer is the meat and potatoes of our nation. Today, hunger is a stranger to most Americans. It was not so long ago that the grain elevators that tower over the rich farmlands of the prairie states were stuffed to bursting. The American farmer had done his job so well that our government paid farmers to let their lands lie fallow. The Green Revolution, it was said, was taking care of the rest of the world. But no more! The stork has outrun the plow in so much of the world that people may soon populate themselves out of existence. "Suddenly mass starvation at a scale never seen before has become a nightmarish possibility, and a shock of recognition has jolted the land of the supermarket culture, the reducing salon, and the three-hour lunch: the world may be running out of food."<sup>2</sup> As never before, the farmer is called upon to put his expertise to work. Instead of being a declining industry, I contend that farming is the future; that if we live, farming will be alive with us.

When I look at the farmer, I see an efficiency expert. Already our agriculture feeds 25% of the world's four billion people with only one tenth of one per cent of the total world population working on our farms.<sup>3</sup> Stated in different terms, each American farmer today produces enough food and fiber for fifty-eight people. According to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Bob

Bergland, this figure could easily be one hundred if we gave farmers the incentive to produce more. Our farmers are producing two-thirds more per man-hour than in 1960 and over six times as much as in 1930.<sup>4</sup> What a performance record! The farmer was an ecologist before the word was ever coined. He knows that if he does not conserve his land and water, he is doomed. The beautiful ponds and pastured hillsides we see around the countryside are evidence of the farmer's conservation practices. His crops and grasses help hold the earth together. His dams catch and control run-off water which prevent floods, and his trees cleanse the air and produce the oxygen which we breathe. How can anyone regard the farmer as a parasite when the very food that fills our stomachs, the clothes that warm our backs, and the clean air that fills our nostrils are benevolences from the farmer. Why, the farmer is a saviour of our society!

When I look at the farmer, I see a highly skilled individual who by necessity is a sharp businessman. Some farmers are college graduates in the fields of business, veterinary medicine or even engineering. A farmer may be called upon to be a plumber, a carpenter, a truck driver, an agronomist, and even a marketing specialist—all within the same working week. In order to hold down his costs, a farmer must be as self-sufficient as possible. Even then, American farmers averaged spending \$26,000 on farm production in 1973, and inflation has moved that total upward.<sup>5</sup> The farmer is day laborer and capitalist, handyman and boss, toolmaker and mechanic. In spite of his extensive knowledge and skill, in the end, the farmer is still a speculator, gambling on weather, disease, and insects and hoping his basic marketing tool—the law of supply and demand—will treat him fairly. He throws his seed like dice on a giant gambling table of land. He bets his and his tractor's muscles and his know-how on the heat of the sun and turn of a raincloud. Ignorant? Can't do anything but farm? Why, this fellow is the jobs of America riding a tractor. Armies march on his muscles; cities eat on his labors. He fills the market place. He makes the wheels of commerce whirl.

When I look at the farmer, I see a very important person. "Shut down America's cities but leave her farms, and the cities will spring back up again," said William Jennings Bryan. The farmer is only in the morning of his challenge. If the farmer is to grow even more food, which is clearly both the need and the prospect, he will do it mainly through increasing his productivity—that is by raising yields on land he currently farms.<sup>6</sup>

But the typical farmer regards challenge not as an adversary but as a catalyst necessary to spark action and success. I am confident that modern agriculture is capable of producing enough food to eliminate famine and malnutrition wherever they exist.

When I look at the farmer, I see the most useful man in America. Only a lack of knowledge or understanding of his roles keeps the farmer from the glorified status he deserves. The cornerstone of civilization, the future kept alive, efficiency personified, the potential saviour of society, the jobs of America riding a tractor—that is what I see when I look at the farmer.

<sup>1</sup>Wayne D. Rasmussen, "Valley to Valley, Country to Country," *Farmer's World, The Yearbook of Agriculture, 1964*, p. 1

<sup>2</sup>"Running out of Food?" *Newsweek*, 84:56-60, November 11, 1974.

<sup>3</sup>"The Whole Truth," *Progressive Farmer*, Vol. 91, No. 8, May, 1976, p. 77.

<sup>4</sup>"U.S. Farmer is Most Productive," *Alabama Cooperative News*, March, 1977, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup>John S. Meeks, "American Farmer, Myth or Miracle," *Gold Kist News*, Vol. 26, No. 7, January, 1976, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup>William A. Hewitt, "A Look at Who Feeds the World," *The American Farmer*, Vol. 50, No. 7, January, 1976, p. 7.

## Bibliography Available Upon Request



Greg Pitts

## Editor's Note —

Greg placed second in National Competition during the 1978 National FFA Convention held in Kansas City, Missouri.