

NPPC chief announces retirement

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

After 31 years with the National Pork Producers Council, including the last 20 as CEO, Neil Dierks has announced his plan to retire by the end of the year.

The NPPC Board of Directors has initiated a search for a new CEO, according to a press release from NPPC.

Dierks will remain in his role as CEO until the search is completed and will serve as a strategic counselor during a transition period.

“Over the last 40 years, Neil has made countless, lasting contributions to the U.S. pork industry and established NPPC as a leading national advocacy organization and the global voice of the U.S. pork industry,” said Jen Sorenson, NPPC president and communications director with Iowa Select Farms.

“He announces his plan to retire from NPPC at a time when the organization is in a stronger position than ever before to fulfill its advocacy mission,” she said.

Dierks said he has enjoyed his service as CEO of NPPC.

“The chance to interface with producers and others in the pork industry and beyond and to work with producer leaders and the talented NPPC staff has been the highlight of my career,” he said.

After leading field service and state legislative outreach for the Iowa Corn Growers Association, Dierks joined NPPC in 1990 to manage World Pork Expo.



Neil Dierks

New Washington FFA state officers share goals for coming year and beyond

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

Washington FFA's new state officer team was announced during the annual convention in May, broadcast from Beasley Coliseum in Pullman.

Each will travel throughout the region for the next year to speak to the state's more than 9,750 FFA members; business and industry leaders and the general public.

The team will lead personal growth and leadership training workshops for FFA members and help set policies that will guide the future of FFA and promote agricultural literacy, according to the organization.

The Capital Press reached out to the newly elected officers through email to ask their plans for the year, and beyond. Replies have been edited for length.

Alyxandra Bozeman, president, White River

How does it feel?: For the last four years of my life I knew that I wanted to be a state officer, and now that I have made it to where I wanted to be, I am so grateful and excited.

Goals: Connect with students across the state and help them see their potential through FFA.

Ag background: As far back as I can remember I wanted a horse, and when I was 12 I was given my first horse. After getting her I joined 4-H, which gave me the first push into agriculture. After a few years I then started high school I got roped into competing in FFA, and once I put on the blue corduroy jacket I was hooked.

Why get involved in FFA? Favorite part?: If you want to be a doctor, a lawyer, or a farmer, FFA has something for you. My favorite part of FFA is the impact that it makes on students' lives.



The 2021-2022 Washington FFA State Officers are, from left, Madison Wolfe, secretary (Pullman); Kinsey Nelson, treasurer (Walla Walla); Andrew Miles, sentinel (Finley); Caitlyn Garvey, reporter (Yelm); Ainsley Carpenter, vice president (Deer Park); and Alyxandra Bozeman, president (White River).

Career/college goals: I plan to attend a university to pursue a degree in either agricultural education or some field of agriculture management. My ideal career would be one where I get to work hands-on in the action of it all and at the same time I am making a positive impact.

Message to members: Enjoy every opportunity that you are given. This last year has been a whirlwind for everyone and it has shown me that we need to harness those opportunities that we are given in FFA.

Ainsley Carpenter, vice president, Deer Park

How does it feel?: I am so excited and proud that I get to have this opportunity to reach out and be a role model for the Washington FFA.

Goals: To meet as many new people as I can.

Ag background: I come from three generations of FFA members, and all of us have grown up on a farm! I come from a military family (Army) so I grew up in places like Louisiana, Germany, and Kansas. In all the places I have lived in we have always gotten into the agricultural opportunities that are present there.

Why get involved in FFA? Favorite part?: I encourage people to get into FFA mainly

because of the sense of family, along with the friends you develop throughout your years in this organization. My favorite part of FFA is how many opportunities we have, from career experiences, to raising livestock, there is no end to what we can do and accomplish.

College/career goals: In fall of 2022 I will attend Washington State University and major in zoology. I want to focus my studies into herpetology, the study of reptiles and amphibians. After graduating I would love to get a career as a wildlife zookeeper, working with the animals I love everyday.

Message to members: Have fun and do as much as you can.

Anything else?: FFA provides everyone the opportunity to go and achieve great things in a high school setting. Without FFA I don't know who the person I would be, but I know I wouldn't be as happy as I am today.

Madison Wolfe, state secretary, Pullman

How does it feel?: It feels incredible to get to serve this organization another year as I have gotten so much from it and can't wait to give back.

Goals: Help transition this organization back into having an in-person year in the safest, most efficient

way possible.

Ag background: My grandparents farm wheat and I have started my own herd of cattle.

Why get involved in FFA? Favorite part?: Getting involved in FFA opens you up to so many other opportunities in leadership for the future. My favorite part is getting to travel and meet members from across the country.

College/career goals: My goal is to get my master's in kinesiology to become an athletic trainer.

Message to members: Take every opportunity to get involved and grow as a leader.

Caitlyn Garvey, reporter, Yelm

How does it feel?: For me it means the world because I am able to serve members and represent agricultural industries.

Goals: Teach students and community members about the importance of agriculture in and out of the classroom. I also want to leave an impact on members just as past state officers have left on me.

Ag background: I grew up in Madison, Ala., which had lots of agriculture around but was in the middle of a transition toward technology and engineering. I grew up always around animals and that has grown into now showing pigs and lambs

which has taught me a variety of life lessons.

Why join? Favorite part?: When I first entered high school I was a very quiet and reserved person but my freshman science teacher introduced me to FFA and the different opportunities that allowed me to find a true passion. I have two favorite parts of FFA. One is the time spent teaching members, younger students, and community members about the importance of agriculture and FFA. As well as the trips that I had the chance to go on whether it be going to state convention, floral contest, and everything in between.

College/career goals: I would like to attend Washington State University to pursue a career in agriculture education after my year of service! I would like to come back to the Yelm community and impact students just as my agriculture teachers impacted me.

Message to members: My message to FFA members is to never give up on something you hope to accomplish. There are many paths that you can take that will help you to achieve your goals.

Kinsey Nelson, treasurer, Walla Walla

How does it feel?: I'm looking forward to having the next year to serve, alongside five other amazing individuals, this organization.

Goals for the coming year: Continuing to grow my leadership skills. I also want to continue to spread truths about agriculture and agricultural education.

Ag background: I grew up on my family's wheat farm. Along with growing up on a farm, I have experience working with animals. We have had cats, dogs, and rabbits at home. I also rode and showed horses competitively in local horse shows as well as mountain trail competitions.

Why get involved in FFA? Favorite part?: FFA has a place for everybody. While in FFA, you are a part of one big family. Being in FFA has given me the opportunity to see the multiple different aspects of agriculture ranging from rural to urban agriculture. FFA has helped me see what all agriculture has to offer.

College/career goals: I plan to attend Washington State University and major in animal science. After receiving my bachelor's degree, I plan to apply for Washington State University's veterinary school. After college I plan to become a veterinarian and work mainly with large animals.

Message to FFA members: Take advantage of the opportunities that cross your path. FFA has opened many doors for me and I hope that it can do the same for them as well.

Andrew Miles, state sentinel, Finley FFA

How does it feel?: The best way I can describe the feeling is honor, and excitement, to see what this year will bring.

Goals: To be the best I can be and to help others achieve their highest potential.

Ag background: I was born on a dryland wheat farm and raised around cattle. I cannot remember a day I was not involved in agriculture.

Why get involved in FFA? Favorite part?: I got involved in FFA so I could interact with others who have similar interests as I do. My favorite part of FFA is competing and learning — along with the camaraderie of the members along the way.

College/career goals?: I plan to earn a bachelor's in applied management with an emphasis in agriculture from Columbia Basin College.

Message to members: Don't be afraid to try new things; because it is better to try than to know you did not try.

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