

# Business & Ag

## High School's FFA over 70 strong

By **Todd Arriola**  
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The Baker High School Future Farmers of America (FFA) Chapter, at over 70 strong, has shown an increase each year in both interest and membership, and emphasizes leadership skills and community involvement.

Some of the Chapter's efforts are immediately apparent upon entering the classroom where Agricultural (Ag) Leadership is taught, among other subjects. Two State competition award banners, one for Livestock Judging Novice and one for State Vet (Veterinary) Science, and 15 District competition award banners just from 2014 alone can be seen, a monumental achievement in itself, among banners spanning previous years, and numerous plaques that adorn the walls.

Fourteen students were present for Ag Leadership class on Monday, including Melissa Foltz, Chapter Vice president, Kylie Skidgel, Chapter Secretary, Jake Bobo, Chapter Treasurer, Aiden Coomer, Chapter Historian, Gussie Cook, Robbie Davis, Carley Johnson, Kourtney Lehman, Hannah Lingo, Alicia Maldonado, Hanna Miller, Hannah Oliver, Lane Skidgel and Ashley Whiting. Other officers are Morgan Stilaacci, Chapter President, and Bryson Thomas, Chapter Sertinel, with the Chapter Reporter position open at this time.

Seth Bingham, 39, teaches the class and seven other subjects, including Veterinary Science, Greenhouse Management, and Basic through Advanced Welding. In his 14th year of teaching, Bingham has taught at Baker High School for the last two years, and previously at different locations in Utah and Oregon.

Bingham explained the differences in the award banners, pointing out that the District ones included the schools in Baker, Union and Wallowa Counties in the competitions. Looking at the two 2014 State award banners, he said, "To get two in one year is awesome."

Hanna Miller, 17, a senior and FFA member for the last 2 1/2 years, said,



Photo courtesy of Tami Foltz

Members of the BHS chapter of FFA posed for this impromptu photo. (Not all members were present.)

"Being in FFA has helped me to decide what I want to do, because I've always wanted to do something in Ag, but I didn't know what, exactly." Miller was a part of the Vet Science group that attended the FFA National Convention in Kentucky last November, and this experience helped solidify her interest in Ag Journalism.

"I would probably be local, but I wouldn't mind going to other places, either," she said, speaking about employment in that field of work. She said the District Ag Sales competition was held recently, in which she placed first. Miller noted the diversity of experiences the agricultural world has to offer, and said there are many opportunities available, from hands-on to communication and office work experiences.

"We don't have any newsletter in FFA specifically, but being a part of FFA leadership, I've taken on a couple of projects that involve writing," she said. As a part of Ag Leadership class, Miller said, each student has two or three projects to work on, and she was involved with the organizational efforts with a Turkey Shoot competition last fall, and also the Salt Lick competition.

She mentioned one of the goals of the FFA, to become more involved with the community, including Helping Hands fundraisers, Drive-Thru BBQ fundraisers, and other fundraisers

and projects that would benefit the community, and showcase the group's diverse talents and efforts.

Melissa Foltz, 16, a junior, FFA member for the last three years, and Chapter Vice President, said, "I've been involved with vet science, horse judging, livestock judging, ag sales, and speaking (among others)." She said after the group placed first last May at the state level in Vet Science, they competed at the national level, and received a Silver ranking (the rankings are Bronze, Silver, and Gold), and "We did well," she added.

Foltz was part of the organization for the Robbins Farm Equipment Celebration last year, along with the Salt Lick competition, Drive-Thru BBQ fundraisers (which has raised a large amount of funds throughout the years), and Helping Hands fundraisers. "I definitely want to get into the agricultural industry. I wanted to be a vet for a while, but I'm also thinking research, or agricultural journalism. I think it would be cool to write for a magazine," she said.

Foltz raises, shows and sells rabbits, and as part of the FFA group at the Baker County Fair last year, won Best In Show, Grand Champion Rabbit Showman, and Round Robbin. She also raises and sells lamb ewes to FFA groups and 4-H groups.

She's also one of the FFA greenhouse managers, and noted that the profits from

that project provide significant financial support to the FFA. The greenhouse, which is in the initial stages of operation for this year, normally is open April through June.

Foltz said, "I don't think our community, or even the school population, know exactly what we do in FFA. There are so many different aspects of our chapter, and FFA in general, that people don't know about," noting the importance of the comment, an idea echoed by several individuals in the group, and Bingham.

Along with the obvious association, the showing of animals, she said, there is public speaking, community relations/involvement, leadership skill building, and other associations that aren't so obvious. Foltz said the skills learned and the experiences can be used for future goals which don't necessarily have to be related to agriculture, though that is the group's major focus and passion.

Bingham said the FFA's next Helping Hands Drive-Thru BBQ fundraiser is scheduled for Friday, February 6, 2015, from 5 to 7 p.m., at the U-shaped driveway by the southern entrance of Baker High School.

Tickets, available for purchase prior to or at the fundraiser, are \$12 each, and the meal will include tri-tip, baked potato, garlic bread, green beans and a brownie.

### — WEEKLY HAY REPORT —

Friday, January 2, 2015 — Eastern Oregon

Prices trended generally steady compared to the same quality last week with weak demand from the dairies and particularly the export market which has seen very little trading with more stringent regulations coming from China. Trade activity was very light with the holidays coming up and inclement weather hindering some trade. Several producers have sold all that they plan to sell for this season while some have product they are holding onto until after the new year to sell.

(Tons/Price range/Avg.)

**Eastern Oregon: No new sales confirmed**

USDA Market News Service—AMS.USDA.gov

### — CATTLE MARKET REPORT —

Wednesday, December 17, 2014

Vale, Oregon

(No new sale since last report due to holidays.)

Cattle sold through the auction: 1,428

#### Steer Calves

300-400# Bulk 350.00 - 373.00 Top 380.00  
400-500# Bulk 273.00 - 338.00 Top 352.50  
500-600# Bulk 243.00 - 269.00 Top 294.00

#### Heifer Calves

300-400# Bulk 271.00 - 323.00 Top 335.00  
400-500# Bulk 231.00 - 278.00 Top 285.00  
500-600# Bulk 223.00 - 260.00 Top 263.00

#### Yearling Steers

600-700# Bulk 219.00 - 239.00 Top 240.00  
700-800# Bulk 205.00 - 214.00 Top 216.00  
800-900# Bulk N/A Top N/A  
900-1,000# Bulk N/A Top N/A

#### Yearling Heifers

600-700# Bulk 170.00 - 213.50 Top 214.00  
700-800# Bulk 168.00 - 182.00 Top 192.50  
800-900# Bulk 153.00 - 171.00 Top 172.00  
900-1,000# Bulk N/A Top N/A

Thin Shelly Cows 69.00 - 88.00  
Butcher Cows 89.00 - 104.00  
Butcher Bulls 93.00 - 117.00  
Stock Cows 1,325.00 - 1,785.00

ProducersLivestock.com

### — LOG PRICE REPORT —

Price per 1,000 board feet: Northeast Oregon

#### Delivered to Elgin

Doug Fir / Larch 6"+ \$370/m  
White Fir/Sp 6"+ \$380/m  
LPP 6"+ \$350/m

#### Delivered to La Grande

P. Pine 6-11" \$290/m  
12-17" \$340/m  
18-23" \$390/m  
24"+ \$420/m

#### Delivered to Pilot Rock

12-17" \$390/m  
18-23" \$440/m  
24"+ \$480/m

#### Delivered pulp

\$28/ton to Elgin  
\$28/ton to La Grande  
Courtesy of Arvid Andersen,  
Andersen Forestry Consulting

### — PRECIOUS METALS REPORT —

#### Price per ounce, USD

**Gold:** \$1,213.10  
**Silver:** \$16.58  
**Platinum:** \$1,218.25  
**Palladium:** \$790.70

Bloomberg.com

### — AG COMMODITIES —

**Corn:** \$399.00/bu/USD  
**Wheat:** \$585.25/bu/USD  
**Soybeans:** \$1057.25/bu/USD  
**Oats:** \$303.00/bu/USD  
**Rough Rice:** \$11.68/cwt/USD  
**Canola:** \$450.00 CAD/mwt  
**Live Cattle:** \$166.53/lb./USD  
**Feeder Cattle:** \$221.25/lb./USD  
**Lean Hogs:** \$79.18/lb./USD

Bloomberg.com

## Thomas Angus ranch ranks 5 in top 100 list

By **Brian Addison**  
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Thomas Angus Ranch of Baker City, Oregon ranked number five on the Beef Magazine's national list of top 100 seedstock bull sales for 2014.

Thomas Angus Ranch sold 1,000 bulls during February, March, and October of last year as beef prices reach near-record highs.

In a beef market that is bullish, no pun intended, Thomas Angus Ranch sold the fifth highest number of bulls of any ranch in the United States through private treaty negotiations, at auction, and through contract.

At the 1,000-bull mark, Thomas Angus Ranch

eclipsed sales compared to all other ranches in Oregon.

Lorenzen Ranches out of Pendleton ranked 51st on the national list auctioning 300 Red Angus bulls last year. Flying U Angus Ranch in Powell Butte, Ore., ranked 64th selling 250 bulls between September and April last year via private treaty. VF Red Angus from Junction City, Ore., ranked 71st on the list, auctioning 225 Red Angus bulls in March, 2014.

Topping the 2014 national list of bull sales was Jorgenson Land & Cattle from Ideal, South Dakota moving 3,750 bulls all through private treaty sales.

## Forest Access for All holds first meeting of year



Brian Addison / The Baker County Press

Wanda Ballard, secretary of Forest Access for All, waits at the beginning of the first AFA meeting of 2015, held January 3, at the Sunridge Inn. Officers for this year will be: Tork Ballard (President), Marty Stroy (Vice President), Wanda Ballard (Secretary), Bobbie Danser (Treasurer), Carrie Mathews (Public Relations). The group's annual banquet was set for May 16, 2015. Visit the new site, forestaccessforall.org, for more information.