Amie McDaniels

PRESS RELEASE Communications Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 410-939-9030 (office)

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**MARYLAND FFA MEMBERS AWARDED NATONAL AMERICAN FFA DEGREE**

**(HAVRE DE GRACE, MARYLAND)** – November 9, 2021- Nine Maryland FFA members received the prestigious American FFA Degree, given annually by the National FFA Organization.

The American FFA Degree is bestowed in recognition of years of academic and professional excellence. This year 3,863 American Degrees were awarded during the American FFA Degree Ceremony at the 94th National FFA Convention & Expo. Representing six Maryland FFA Chapters, the following Maryland FFA members have been selected:

**Cassie Bell**, Southern FFA Chapter

**Avery Dull**, Westminster FFA Chapter

**Robert Hahn**, Catoctin FFA Chapter

**Hannah Hartness**, Catoctin FFA Chapter

**Helen Leadingham**, Boonsboro FFA Chapter

**Ryan Leister**, Francis Scott Key FFA Chapter

**Elsie McKenzie**, Francis Scott Key FFA Chapter

**Sierra Wean**, Francis Scott Key FFA Chapter

**Samantha Wilt**, North Garrett FFA Chapter

Each recipient of the American FFA Degree receives a gold American FFA Degree key and certificate after being recognized at the national convention.

Sponsored by Case IH, Elanco Animal Health, NAU Country Insurance Company, Pepsico Inc, RAM Trucks and Syngenta, the award recognizes demonstrated ability and outstanding achievements in agricultural business, production, processing or service programs.

To be eligible, FFA members must have earned and productively invested $10,000 through a supervised agricultural experience (SAE) program in which they own their own business or hold a professional position as an employee. Recipients must also complete 50 hours community service and demonstrate outstanding leadership abilities and civic involvement through completion of a long list of FFA and community activities. Less than one percent of FFA members achieve the American FFA Degree.

The Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation is a 501c3 non-governmental nonprofit established in 1989. Through the Maryland FFA, teacher workshops, scholarships, grants, Mobile Labs and Showcases, and revenues from the Ag Tag license plate sales, the Foundation pursues its mission to promote the understanding and appreciation of the importance of agriculture in everyone’s lives. The Maryland FFA Association staff is partially funded through a $50,000 federal Perkins grant facilitated by the Maryland State Department of Education. The Maryland FFA Association has 2,000 student members in 42 local chapters throughout the state.

For more information, visit [www.mdffa.org](http://www.mdffa.org) or contact Naomi Knight at [nknight@maefonline.com](mailto:nknight@maefonline.com)

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