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Growing Interest in Agriculture

For some THS students, a day on the farm is a vacation.

By [Lisa Acerbo](#) | [Email the author](#) | March 9, 2011

<http://trumbull.patch.com/articles/growing-interest-in-agriculture>

[Trumbull High School](#) students in the Agriscience and Biotechnology program celebrated National Future Farmers of America (FFA) Week Feb. 21-25 with programs including a Mad Plaid Day, a "Go Green" Day and a farm friend day.

National FFA Week gave students a chance to educate others in the high school about the importance of agriculture and show the school's spirit. According to the FFA website, FFA was founded in 1928 and the week of George Washington's birthday has been designated as National FFA Week since 1947.

Pam Brelekovic, Agriscience Department Chair and Equine Science Teacher, said the record winter weather, leading to the axing of February vacation, may have helped.

"FFA Week is always held the week that we have winter break, so it is difficult to have any activities celebrating the event. If there is a silver lining to being here for vacation week, it is that our students have the opportunity to be together and recognize that they are part of a larger picture as far as FFA and Agriscience Education," she said.

Normally, students would have been on winter break during Presidents' Week, but this year school was in session in more ways than one. Officers met and organized the different activities including a "Go Green" day, farm friend day, Mad Plaid day and "Ag. Pride Day" on Feb. 25 when officers wore official FFA dress.

Program students enjoyed showing their FFA pride throughout the week.

Sarah Griswold, a senior majoring in the Equine Science program, said of Mad Plaid day, "Wearing plaid for National FFA week definitely gave us a good 'plaiditude.'"

Also on Feb. 25, student officers met with THS Principal Robert Tremaglio, to discuss the importance of FFA and the Agriscience and Biotechnology program at the high school.

Students discussed how the program developed leadership skills, built relationships and furthered expertise needed for the future of Connecticut's economy.

Students attending the Agriscience and Biotechnology program automatically become members of the FFA. Students are also elected to officer positions for each year. This year's team of officers includes: President Liz Tomasco; Vice President Teighe Christiano-Maher; Treasurer Miles DeAngelis; Secretary Alyssa Zabin; Historian Maggie Quinn; Parliamentarian Dominique Martin; and Reporter Alyssa Marini.

Martin, the parliamentarian for the Trumbull regional chapter of the FFA said, "I really enjoy going to Ag. and being an active member of the FFA. The FFA allows me to build leadership skills, meet new people, and also participate in career development events.

"The best part was when the Trumbull horse judging team, which I am a participant in, placed first in the state at UConn," she added. " Even though we are from a suburban area and there is less access to agriculture than other regions in Connecticut, we were able to beat all the other schools with hard work and a dedicated team. The FFA has given me so many opportunities and is definitely a great organization."

The FFA works to develop leadership, personal growth and career success in many ways. Students can participate in career development events such as creed speaking in which students recite the FFA creed, extemporaneous or prepared public speaking, food science, veterinarian technician, environmental science and natural resources, or horse judging.

This year's Horse Judging Team, consisting of members Katie Dicine, Ed Donini, Michelle Mitchell and Martin placed first in the state and will move on to regionals in September 2012 and the national competition held in Indianapolis in October 2012.

All Agriscience and Biotechnology students must also complete a Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE), which promotes learning by doing.

Freshman year, students develop a project with the help of their teachers. Projects must fall under one of four categories: entrepreneurship, placement, research or exploratory. Some current projects include working for or running a lawn care service, caring for or working with horses at a barns in the area, working for an local agricultural businesses such as Plasko Farms in Trumbull or Benedict's in Monroe or conducting an experiment.

FFA is the largest youth organization in the nation and is open to all students even if they do not go to an agriscience-based program.