



National FFA Center
6060 FFA Drive
P.O. Box 68960
Indianapolis, IN 46268-0960
Phone: 317-802-6060
Fax: 317-802-6061

*The FFA Mission: FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for **premier leadership, personal growth and career success** through agricultural education.*

NATIONAL FFA ORGANIZATION

April 30, 2012

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
U. S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary:

On behalf of the nation's 540,000 FFA members, we congratulate and salute the U. S. Department of Agriculture on its 150th anniversary. As USDA celebrates its sesquicentennial, the nation can look back with pride at the many contributions made by the men and women who have served the Department since its creation by President Abraham Lincoln. Along with the Homestead Act and the establishment of the Land Grant agricultural university system, President Lincoln's actions ensured the security and prosperity of the nation.

Since its founding in 1928, the National FFA Organization has shared a common goal with the USDA in securing the next generation of innovators to provide food and fiber for the nation. The Department has been instrumental in helping FFA and school-based agricultural education recruit and prepare young Americans for important careers in the science, business, and technology of agriculture. Meeting the challenge in providing a stable, secure, safe and abundant food supply will require even closer collaboration.

The extraordinary successes of the USDA have come to us through the selfless service and ingenuity of its human resources. We are pleased to have played a role in the educational process that prepares leaders for the Department and our agricultural industry.

In the opening line of the time-honored FFA Creed, agriculture students express optimism and embrace the work in providing for a rapidly evolving food and agriculture system for the nation: "I believe in the future of agriculture, with a faith born not of words, but of deeds." The creed echoes the words of President Lincoln just before he created the U. S. Department of Agriculture. "Let us hope that by the best cultivation of the physical world, beneath and around us, and the intellectual and moral world within us, we shall secure an individual, social, and political prosperity and happiness, whose course shall be onward and upward, and which, while the earth endures, shall not pass away."

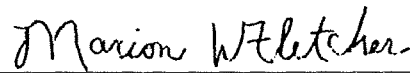
Congratulations to all our friends at the USDA!

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
Page Two
April 30, 2012

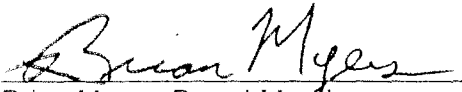
Sincerely,



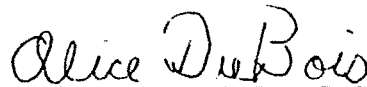
Steve Brown, National Advisor
U.S. Department of Education



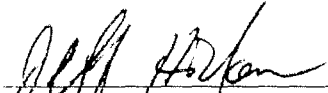
Marion Fletcher, National Treasurer
Arkansas, Agricultural Education



Brian Myers, Board Member
Florida, Associate Professor & Chair



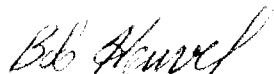
Alice DuBois, Board Member
Louisiana, Agricultural Educator



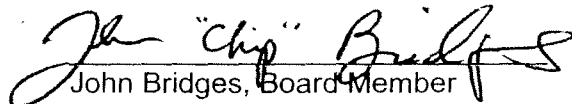
Jeff Hicken, Board Member
Wisconsin, State FFA Advisor



Karen Hutchison, Board Member
Delaware, Education Associate



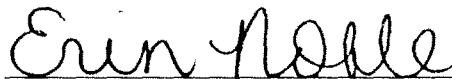
Bob Heuvel, Board Member
California, State FFA Advisor



John Bridges, Board Member
Georgia, Program Manager



Matthew Gonzales, Board Member
California, Toyota Motor Sales



Erin Noble, Board Member
New Jersey, FFA Executive Secretary