

National FFA Week

February 22-26, 2010

By Kevin Bottrell
Colby Free Press
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FFA members across the country are celebrating National FFA Week. FFA is a national organization of students that promotes agriculture education, civic leadership and career training. There are chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. This year's theme is "LOL: Lead out Loud."

For FFA Week, Colby FFA chapter will have an appreciation breakfast from 6 to 8 a.m. Thursday at Colby High School. Breakfast will be free and the members will do all the cooking, so come on by.

Spring will be a busy time for the club. New advisor Tom Rundel, who also teaches agriculture at Colby High School, says he has chosen to focus the club in a few areas, rather than try to compete in every area offered by FFA.

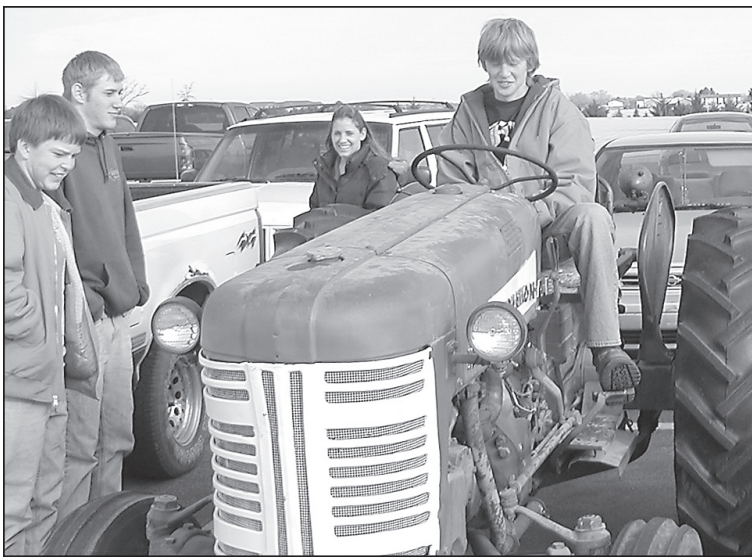
"There's a million things to do," he said.

Rundel got the members together and they decided on ag mechanics, livestock judging and agronomy.

Ag mechanics involves learning different skills, such as welding, carpentry and electrical wiring, needed on a farm. Rundel said competitors are also asked to identify tractor parts and fluids.

Rundel said the first ag mechanics competition of the spring will be at 8 a.m. next Wednesday at the Northwest Kansas Technical College in Goodland.

Livestock judging involves being able to pick the best animal out



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press
Matt Lindberg got behind the wheel of a tractor on "bring a farm vehicle to work day" during last year's FFA Week.

of a group. Rundel said the judges are typically given a group of four animals and have to rank them, then come up with a set of reasons to defend their choice. The criteria are different for each type of animal, such as market cows, dairy cows, lambs, chickens and many more.

Rundel said he will train the livestock judging team on real animals. He is working with Colby Community College to allow the FFA members to go with the college's team and train alongside them.

The first livestock judging contest will be at 8 a.m. Wednesday, March 24, in Oakley. Agronomy involves identifying plants, evaluating soil and identifying plant diseases. Rundel said the FFA members will be able to use the greenhouse at the ag shop

to practice.

The agronomy team will compete in Hays on April 14.

Although FFA is no longer "Future Farmers of America," it is still tied to agriculture education. The Colby Chapter has 21 members. Rundel said all of them are enrolled in his agriculture courses, including ag construction or plant and soil science.

He said these classes all involve hands-on activities. The ag power class is rebuilding a tractor and the ag construction class built a shed and is busy building another.

"We have the laboratory right here," he said.

Rundel said the FFA members ran the concession stands at Colby High School football games in the fall and raised enough money to nearly be self-sufficient.



Colby FFA members Seth Bredemeier, Kristan Mehl and Michelle Schroeder had a lot of fun as they made pancakes at last year's FFA Appreciation Breakfast. The members do all the work at the free breakfast, cooking, serving and cleaning. FFA advisor Tom Rundel said the breakfast has been moved this year from the high school ag shop to the Colby High School commons because they are expecting more people.

FFA Appreciation Breakfast

Help the Colby High School FFA Chapter in their celebration of National FFA Week by attending an appreciation breakfast from 6 to 8 a.m. Thursday at Colby High School.

Colby FFA Spring Schedule

March 3	Ag Mechanics Spring Meeting	Goodland	9 a.m.
March 24	Livestock and Horse Judging	Oakley	8 a.m.
April 3	Livestock Contest	Phillipsburg	9 a.m.
April 14	District Livestock Contest	Fort Hays State	8:30 a.m.
April 14	Agronomy and Horticulture	Hays	1:30 p.m.
April 27	Livestock Contest	Cheylin	9 a.m.
May 2-4	State FFA Contest	Manhattan	
June 1-4	State Convention	Manhattan	



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