Missouri Ag Ed Family;

Challenging times to say the least. I believe the best way to keep a positive attitude during difficult times is to keep things in perspective. Even though our Ag Ed world has been turned upside down, we as a profession are being asked to do things we never imagined possible. I think it’s important to reflect on how others are being impacted. Health care workers in cities at the epicenters of the pandemic are being asked to provide life-saving care without the necessary resources to do so. Families in parts of the country have lost family members. Record numbers of Americans are filing for unemployment. No one knows exactly how things will play out over the next several months. We can only hope that closing schools and limiting social contact will lessen the impact of the virus. As a profession we will determine how best to adapt to the challenges we have been given.

Next Steps
State staff is continuing to gather information, monitoring Governor’s directives, CDC recommendations, DHSS recommendations, host site restrictions and student travel restrictions as we plan for upcoming FFA events. Over the next couple of weeks we hope to develop a clearer picture of the situation so more detailed contingencies can be shared.

National Officer Candidate and State Officer Mentor applications are still due on May 8th. The interviews have been rescheduled for Thursday, May 21st at the Missouri Cattleman offices in Columbia.

State Officer Selections on the area level will be completed in the next couple of days using an online virtual process. Currently, the state level state officer interviews have been rescheduled for May 21-23 at Cattleman’s in Columbia. Details will be shared with candidates and teachers as we get closer to the interview date.

State Convention discussions are currently focused on the possibility of having a one day convention this summer either in person or virtual. The program would focus on recognizing achievements of FFA members and chapters, while providing our state officer team the opportunity to celebrate the conclusion of a challenging FFA year. By September we expect to have a clear financial picture of convention related expenses the FFA will have incurred, even though our scheduled event in April has been cancelled. At that point we will determine how to proceed with reimbursement or invoicing of fees.
**Proficiency Awards** are currently being judged. Plans are for first and second place winners to be announced via press release and potentially video release around our original convention time.

**National Chapter Awards** are currently being judged. Results by category earned (Gold, Silver, Bronze) will be emailed to teachers once results are finalized and announced via press release and potentially video release around our original convention time. Plans are to announce final placings at a possible state convention event this summer.

**Agriscience Fair** 2020 will be presented and judged online, NO face-to-face event. Students should submit their written reports on JudgingCard May 1st. Currently we are planning to judge using zoom on May 12th. Students will present online, not in person. Students will need access to a webcam, microphone, and internet and will sign up for a time to visit with judges. No boards will be created or judged this year, but a simple google slides or Powerpoint can be used as a screen share in zoom. Plans are for state winners to be announced via press release and potentially video release after the May judging.

**State Star Farmer, Placement, Agribusiness and Agriscience** applications are currently being judged. Using a process similar to National Star selection the top 4 candidates (finalists) in each category will be determined and all candidates will be notified. Once finalists have been selected a date and time for the finalist interviews will be set. Finalists will be interviewed by a panel of three judges via Zoom meeting, not in person. Students will need access to a webcam, microphone, and internet. Plans are for final four to be recognized via press release and potentially video release around our original convention time, winners announced at a possible state convention this summer.

**Career Development Event and Leadership Development Event** options are being explored. We understand the preference is to have an in person state CDE and LDE events at some point. We also realize there is a good possibility having in person events may not be an option this year, therefore we are exploring the ability to host these events through a virtual platform. As soon as information is available, details will be shared.

**LEAD Conferences** for Chapter Officers have been cancelled. We are currently working on developing a virtual training program that can be used by schools for officer training later in the year. All LEAD Conference registration fees received will be returned to chapters.

**Leadership Camp** committee met via conference call last week to discuss the potential issues that could impact our summer leadership camp. State Park Group Camps currently plan to reopen May 1st. We will be contacting schools registered for camp later in April to identify concerns either from their school leadership or parents that will impact attendance. We ask that schools hold onto any camp registration payments for now.
Public Speaking Academy is hosted by the University of Central Missouri. We are currently waiting to see what restrictions they may have in place in June. We ask that schools hold onto any registrations and payments related to PSA for now.

Area Officer Institute status will be determined by the same factors as camp. We plan to contact area advisors to discuss area officer participation concerns related to AOI. We are currently looking at the possibility of rescheduling AOI in late summer.

HYMAX discussions are similar to Leadership Camp. In addition we are exploring a possible rescheduling of HYMAX later in the summer. We ask that schools hold onto any registrations and payments related to HYMAX for now.

HYPE is held on the University of Missouri campus. We are currently waiting to see what restrictions they may have in place in June.

National Application Deadlines:
American Degree and American Stars - May 1st 2020 (no change) - In order for state staff to properly review the applications prior to forwarding to NFFA and still allow time for local schools to make any necessary corrections we plan to stay on the original timeline for American Degrees.
National Chapter (Gold) and Proficiency Awards (State winning) – July 1, 2020 (change from June 16). Robin Horstmeier will be providing feedback on the applications as she has in the past. The one-on-one conferences will be done via zoom meetings rather than in person.
Agriscience (State winning) – July 1, 2020 (change from June 16) Our Agriscience advisory committee will be providing feedback on the state winning projects.

National FFA Updates

Washington Leadership Conference Status
We continue to prepare for Washington Leadership Conference beginning in June as planned but understand this may change. We will communicate any change in WLC schedule as soon as possible. Remember, registrants may now cancel for full refund minus $50 deposit up to 30 days ahead of their scheduled check-in date. Previously, the full refund deadline was 60 days. Registrants for Week 1 of WLC (beginning Tuesday, June 2) can now cancel minus deposit for a full refund until May 3.

2020 National FFA Convention & Expo Chapter / State Housing Delayed
The opening of chapter and state housing for the 2020 National FFA Convention & Expo is now Wednesday, June 10. This allows our attendees to have more time to prepare and assists our hotel partners as they navigate an uncertain time. The no-penalty cancellation date for housing reservations will also be extended to Wednesday, Aug. 19.
Shop FFA
Despite the temporary closure of the Shop FFA distribution center in Ohio, our customer service team – working remotely – stands ready to support you. If you’re planning to order awards or items for later this spring or summer, we recommend getting your order in the queue to ensure it can be processed as soon as the distribution center reopens. We will continue to offer a $200 cap on freight charges for any award orders shipped via ground.

FFA Scholarships - Changes in Timeline and Additional Announcements
April 15, 2020 – FFA Advisors and State Staff notified of winners electronically
May 1, 2020 – Winners and their parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by email of their scholarship
In order to ensure that scholarship winners receive their notification during this unprecedented time, recipients this year will also receive their award notification via mail by May 15, 2020
The award letter will also provide information on how to call in to accept the scholarship if student’s do not have access to internet/computers
May 1, 2020 - Acceptance portal opens (this date has not changed)
September 15, 2020 – NEW DATE Acceptance portal closes
This adjustment allows for students to have access to computers either from a library or their school to accept their scholarship.

Closing Comments

Just as soon as we are comfortable sharing the details of either an alternative date, alternative method, or a notice of cancelation, we will share that information with everyone. As we look ahead we realize that using alternative methods to determine state winners in some events could be a challenge. Whether virtual or in person 2020 state CDEs and LDEs are going to be different from what we have come to expect. Optimistically, if we are able to return to normal FFA activities by late summer we should feel fortunate.

Leon Busdieker
State Advisor
Missouri FFA Organization