

## Media Release

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## **NEWS RELEASE — FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, Oct. 1, 2020

### **Gilbert High student wins state FFA competition, earns chance at national title**

LEXINGTON, S.C. — Growing up on a small farm, Ellie C. Harman showed animals in 4-H competitions and gained an appreciation of the farming industry. But the Gilbert High School sophomore never wanted to pursue farming or any agricultural-related work until a few months ago. That’s when she decided to participate in an FFA competition that’s changed her perspective and possibly her future.

In June, Harman won the South Carolina FFA Creed Speaking Leadership Development competition. This fall, she competes for the national title.

Future Farmers of America — today known as the National FFA Organization — was founded by a group of young farmers in 1928 to prepare future generations for careers in agriculture. Today FFA includes more than 760,000 student members in more than 8,700 chapters nationwide.

The Creed Speaking contest is open only to first-year FFA members. As part of the competition, participants must memorize and recite the FFA’s creed, then answer questions from a panel of judges about the organization, its mission and purpose, and the agriculture industry.

“They want you to truly understand what the creed represents, not just memorize the words,” said Harman. “As I studied and researched, I learned that the average age of the American farmer is 57 years old. That really hit me. If young people don’t choose to become farmers, what will we do in the future?”

Harman said she is now considering a career in the agricultural industry — perhaps not as a farmer, but in the business aspects of the profession.

“I just really want to be involved and see how I can help.”

Harman competed against eight others to earn the state title this summer. The organization conducted the competition and interviews virtually because of COVID-19 restrictions. Later this fall, she will compete virtually against as many as 51 other members representing each state for the national-level honor.

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