



# North Dakota FFA

## State Star Award Overview and Process

### **Overview**

An outstanding North Dakota FFA member applying for the State Degree can be presented a North Dakota Star Award based on an exceptional Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program and FFA involvement. There are four award areas that reflect the diversification of the supervised agricultural experience programs and FFA member populations in North Dakota. Members must apply for the State Degree and Star Award in the same year. Candidates are selected based on the quality of their State FFA Degree and State Star applications. SAE records must be a minimum of two years in the same area and include records in the previous year of the application year, ending on December 31.

### **Judging**

A committee of judges scores every application in each star award area using the appropriate American Star Award rubric. Upon completion of all applications, judges select up to four finalists in each award area. Each finalist is awarded an onsite visit to their SAE location(s) for an additional evaluation and interview by a second team of judges. The annual winner in each star award area is selected from the four finalists.

### **Awards**

A North Dakota Star Award is the highest award given in North Dakota FFA. Only four members are able to receive the award each year. State Star Award finalists are recognized on stage during the Wednesday night FFA State Convention session and presented a state finalist plaque. The winner is announced at that time and is presented with \$1,000.00, a state winner plaque, and a traveling trophy.

### **Star Award Areas**

#### **State Star in Agribusiness**

The State Star in Agribusiness is awarded to the FFA member with the top non-production entrepreneurial agribusiness supervised agricultural experience in North Dakota. The member must demonstrate outstanding achievement in an entrepreneurial agribusiness SAE that focuses on agricultural sales, service, or other entrepreneurial endeavors along with active participation in the FFA, and an exemplary scholastic record. Examples include but are not limited to, lawn care services, crop consulting services, and services marketing agricultural products.

#### **State Star in Agricultural Placement**

The State Star in Agricultural Placement is awarded to the FFA member with the top agricultural placement supervised agricultural experience in the North Dakota. The member must demonstrate outstanding achievement in an agricultural employment SAE, can include work-based learning, and does not have to be a paid position. However, the applicant must have enough earnings and investment from their SAE to qualify to receive the State FFA Degree, along with active participation in the FFA, and an exemplary scholastic record.

### **State Star in Agriscience**

The State Star in Agriscience is awarded to the FFA member that demonstrates the top agriscience-based supervised agricultural experience in North Dakota. The member must demonstrate research aimed at developing a higher order of scientific knowledge and skills through their own actively engaged research, as well as those members who may be cooperating on research projects with others. The member must demonstrate outstanding achievement in agriscience, active FFA participation, and an exemplary scholastic record.

### **State Star Farmer**

The State Star Farmer is awarded to the FFA member that demonstrates the top entrepreneurial agricultural production supervised agricultural experience in North Dakota. The member must demonstrate outstanding achievement in an entrepreneurial production agriculture SAE and active participation in the FFA, and an exemplary scholastic record.

### **Application Award Area Tip:**

Candidates who have SAE(s) of multiple types must determine their strongest and complete the Star application with ONLY that information. Information from all SAE types may be included in the State FFA Degree application. When filling out the Star only pages, candidate should only discuss the SAE(s) that qualify in the Star category they have chosen to apply in. Mixing SAE(s) from other categories only confuse the judges and lower the application score. When completing the Star application, please reference the American FFA Degree & American Star Award Handbook as a reference, specifically the American Star Award section. The North Dakota FFA State Degree Handbook should be referenced for the State FFA Degree application.

## **State Star Award Finalist Selection Process**

1. There are four award areas in which application can be made: State Star in Agribusiness, State Star in Agricultural Placement, State Star in Agriscience, and State Star Farmer.
2. The immediate year following graduation is the final year to apply for a State Star award.
3. Individuals wishing to compete for Star Awards must complete the Generic Chapter/GH/State Star Application in AET. All Star applications will be submitted via AET to the State FFA Association Office for evaluation. Three letters of reference are not required. Insert a page stating, "Page Left Blank Intentionally Because References Are Not Required". The STAR application cannot be changed to remove this section.
4. During the state review, the top four finalists in each award area will be identified as the Star Finalists. A committee will interview the Star Finalists at their SAE location(s) to determine the Star Winner in each area. If an onsite visit cannot be conducted by the committee, a narrative video of the SAE location(s) can be requested by the committee.
5. The purpose of the interview is to validate information, assess applicant's knowledge, determine the extent of the applicant's involvement in decision-making, and appraise the overall quality of the candidates supervised agricultural experience program.
6. The interview will be conducted at the location of the SAE. The time allotted for the interview and tour of the SAE location is 60 minutes. The interview will start with the finalist providing a self-introduction and overview of their SAE. Finalists should provide a concise, clear, and detailed description of their SAE related to the award area, what they personally did to start the SAE, and the SAE's current status. Next, the finalist will provide a tour and explain the details of the SAE. The judges will ask questions throughout the entire 60 minutes.
7. The interview committee lead (state association staff) will notify the advisor as to the date, time, place, and details of the visit. The advisor, parents, and employer are welcome to be in attendance during the visit but are not permitted to participate in the interview process unless asked by the interview committee.
8. The interview committee may be comprised of retired agricultural education teachers, farm management education instructors, sponsors, industry representatives, alumni representatives, foundation staff, and state association staff.
9. The member should wear clothing they deem appropriate for the interview setting and SAE location(s). The use of FFA apparel or FFA official dress (if applicable) is encouraged as photos taken during the interviews may be utilized at FFA state convention, but the member's attire will not be part of the evaluation process. The advisor must submit a headshot photo of the finalist in their official FFA dress to the state association office. The picture will be used in the state convention program.
10. After all interviews are completed, the interview team will discuss and select the State Star in each award area.
11. Star award finalists and winners will be announced on stage during the Wednesday night session at FFA state convention. Only the advisor of the state star award winner in each area will be notified of the results upon completion of the judging. The advisor of the state winner will be asked to share remarks, including a summary of the winner's SAE, on stage during the Wednesday night session at the FFA state convention.

# **State Star Award Finalist Questions**

The purpose of the interview is to validate information, assess applicant's knowledge, determine the extent of the applicant's involvement in decision-making, and appraise the overall quality of the candidates supervised agricultural experience program.

The following questions are a sample set to help finalists in preparing for their onsite interview.

## **State Star in Agribusiness & State Star Farmer (Entrepreneurial Applications)**

1. How did you decide which females/males to keep for breeding and which to sell?
2. How did you decide which animals to purchase to bring into the herd?
3. How did you determine which crops and varieties to plant?
4. How did you finance the purchase of your equipment? (mower/tractor/sprayer/planter)
5. What is the difference between current and non-current inventory?
6. Ask the member to explain the basic feeding, growth rates, feed per pound of gain, fertilizer program for crops, marketing program for crops/market animals, birth weights, adjusted weaning weight, EPD information, crop management practices for their SAE.
7. How did you arrive at the numbers you show as the bartered value of inputs and expenses in the application?
8. How did you determine the value on the purchased breeding livestock and your raised breeding livestock?
9. How did you determine the starting value on the machinery and equipment when you began your SAE?
10. How do you measure progress in your efficiency factors? How do you use those factors to make management decisions in your SAE?
11. When should you classify raised breeding livestock as a current asset?
12. Depreciation – what items in your SAE are eligible to be depreciated? What is the benefit(s) of depreciating an item?
13. If the member had an exceptionally good or bad year, ask: What contributed to the exceptionally good/bad year. What did you do to take advantage of the good year (or overcome hardships, production loss, and/or financial loss) the following year?
14. What is your greatest accomplishment? What is your greatest hardship?
15. Why did you select the breed/variety/specie, machinery, etc., that you did?
16. Describe the component(s) of your enterprise that you believe you have improved the most. Examples but not limited to: Nutritional; Herd Health; Fertilizer; Pest Management; Marketing and Advertising; Financials; Efficiencies; Pounds/Bushels per Acre; EPD; Cost of Production, Variety Selection, Soil Management, Crop Rotations, Breeding Selection and Culling. How do you plan to improve other components?
17. What services do you hire/contract out and why?
18. How did you determine your production costs?
19. How do you determine your breakeven costs?
20. What % of return on investment do you strive to attain?
21. Did you ever conduct market research to determine a service or need in your community?
22. How did you determine the appropriate fee to charge for your agricultural services?
23. Have you created a business plan? Explain the process.
24. Describe the benefits of being an entrepreneur? Disadvantages?

### **State Star in Agricultural Placement**

1. How has your work/involvement made the place you work (nursery/farm/store/etc.) more profitable or helped to improve it?
2. Briefly explain your current duties/responsibilities and explain how those duties have changed since you started your SAE.
3. How has this position influenced your agriculture knowledge?
4. What is the greatest skill you have gained or learned because of the position?
5. What has been the greatest challenge you encountered in this SAE?
6. If you were the employer/owner (not the employee) at this business, what is the first change you would make in the business? Why would you make that change?
7. Ask specific questions about the worksite and duties – For example, if a member worked on a beef farm, he/she should know some beef requirements/skills, etc. Same for a meat processor, a cropping operation, a lumber yard, agronomy center, retail, etc. If a member works in a service industry, they could be asked about customer satisfaction and working with or communicating with current and potential customers

### **State Star in Agriscience**

1. How did you get started in this research area?
2. How will this research affect the agricultural industry? How will it affect your school?
3. How have you applied this research in other areas of agriculture?
4. How has this research influenced your education path and career goals?
5. What is the greatest skill you have gained or learned because of the research?
6. What has been the greatest challenge you encountered during the research?
7. How did you acquire the necessary samples and equipment to conduct this research?
8. How has your research influenced you to expand research into other areas?

### **General Questions**

1. How did you get started in this SAE?
2. What advice would you give to others in getting started in this SAE?
3. If you could start over in your SAE, what would you do differently?
4. What is the most important thing you have gained from this SAE?
5. How does your college/school/work tie in with this SAE?
6. What are your plans in this SAE? What are your plans in agriculture?
7. What has changed in this SAE since December 31<sup>st</sup>?
8. How has your SAE had an impact on future educational and career goals?
9. What business agreements and/or partnership agreements do you have for this SAE?
10. How have you maintained your SAE with all your extra-curricular, FFA, community, and educational activities?
11. Who has had the greatest influence on your SAE? Have you told them, “Thank You”?
12. Describe the factors that have led to success in your SAE?
13. Is there anything else you would like to tell the committee?
14. Skills – It is important to have questions that challenge the member to discuss the skills they report having learned/developed in the application. Utilize the skills, efficiency factors, and photo pages to select a couple of skills, factors, and tasks that the member reports completing. Ask them to discuss how they use the skill, what they’ve learned, etc.

### **Questions to Avoid**

Please do not ask questions about the following topics.

1. Records – member record books are private information and are not required for the interview. Do not ask to see the records unless the member provides the information. The financials provided in the state degree and star application are applicable for questions.
2. Specific details relating to the family unit or support from the family unit. Entrepreneurial applications involving the family unit maybe discussed for any agreements regarding the sharing of machinery, inputs, costs, etc.
3. Family Situation
4. Personal Appearances
5. Political Views
6. Government Policy – unless the policy is directly related to the member's SAE.