

# West Virginia FFA...

## Educating Future Generations of Agriculturists

**F**or the past 75 years, the West Virginia agricultural education program has provided students with superior instruction in the food, fiber and resource systems. Agricultural education and its student organization, FFA (formerly known as the Future Farmers of America) have a proud tradition in developing leaders and preparing students for agricultural careers.

West Virginia's vocational agriculture program began when Congress passed the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917, providing funds for teaching vocational agriculture. Nine high schools in West Virginia employed agriculture teachers and began programs in vocational agricultural education in the fall of 1917. Those schools included Clay County, Griffithsville, Hundred, Middlebourne (Tyler County), Milton, Nicholas County, Ronceverte, Sherrard and Shinnston.

The Future Farmers of America was founded in 1928 at the Baltimore Hotel in Kansas City, Missouri. In 1929, West Virginia became the twelfth state to receive its state charter from the National FFA Organization.

Several changes have occurred since FFA's early beginnings reflecting diversification of the membership and agriculture itself. For example, national delegates voted to allow women to become members in 1969. And, in 1988, the delegates at the national FFA convention voted to adopt the name change from Future Farmers of America to The National FFA Organization.

Today, the West Virginia FFA Association serves nearly 5,000 secondary members in 59 local chapters. Agricultural education is available in 48 high schools, 11 technical centers and 6 middle schools in the Mountain State.