SPONSOR REPORT

COLLEGE AGGIES ONLINE
Agriculture Engagement and Scholarship Program
**FALL 2016 COLLEGE AGGIES ONLINE PROGRAM**

The Fall 2016 College Aggies Online (CAO) program had 344 participants from 70 different universities in the individual division. In the club division, there were 31 agricultural clubs participating. These students represented 36 different states. Over the course of the competition, students generated more than 1,880 social media posts reaching 2.3 million people. There were also 56 campus and community activities reaching 15,000 people.

![Map of USA](image)

**QUOTES FROM 2016 PARTICIPANTS**

- “College Aggies allowed me to test my skills and continued to challenge me to go above and beyond. The competition was intense and the resources and mentors were essential. There’s no better way than to learn by doing and College Aggies does just that.”
- “I enjoyed networking with other passionate agriculturalists throughout the country and learning more about various aspects of agriculture to create weekly social media posts.”
- “I improved my confidence when talking face to face with students on hot topics.”
- “I feel more confident in my content creation and in speaking with others about agriculture.”
- “I’ve always been passionate about telling my ag story, but CAO gave me the tools to do it more effectively.”
- “I learned tips and tricks during the webinars and had the opportunity to practice them though the assignments.”
- “Our club has improved our advocating skills and become more confident in talking with students about beef.”
ABOUT COLLEGE AGGIES ONLINE

College Aggies Online, created to help train the next generation of agriculture leaders, is an initiative of the Animal Agriculture Alliance that connects college students from across the country who are interested in promoting agriculture. Participants receive training and instructions from industry experts and engage on social media by posting information about current and emerging issues facing farmers and ranchers and telling personal stories. The competition is held every fall and runs for approximately nine weeks between September and November.

Each week, individual participants receive assignments, called ‘Aggies Homework’, focused on a specific social media platform or a segment of the agricultural community. CAO participants engage with the public by utilizing Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, LinkedIn and Instagram as well as by authoring blog posts. While the individual participants are assigned tasks each week, participating clubs are able to pick and choose from a variety of challenges. This year, club challenge options included visiting local elementary schools, hosting an ‘Ag Day’ event on their college campuses and hosting a food drive in advance of the holiday season.

Participants are assigned points throughout the competition based on the quality and originality of their content in addition to social media engagement (likes and shares of Facebook content, retweets or replies on Twitter, etc.). The top three scoring individuals and clubs receive a scholarship along with an invitation to attend Alliance’s annual Stakeholders Summit.

The CAO participants receive resources and support from the Alliance, including talking points, tips on engaging with consumers and sample content. In 2016, industry experts served as program mentors and helped to provide participants with feedback and guidance.
**1st place**

Topanga McBride, junior in agricultural communications and agricultural economics, Kansas State University

*Connection or background in agriculture:* My grandfather has a Milking Shorthorn dairy in Arizona. My family moved to Colorado when I was 3 and wanted to maintain a connection to agriculture so they started a hobby farm. My grandfather gave me my first heifer when I was 8, which I showed through 4-H. I also raised pigs for a few years. We currently have show animals and some steers, as well as dairy cows housed at a nearby dairy. I originally had no intentions of pursuing a career in agriculture. I went to a high school where there was no connection to or understanding of agriculture and it was my experience educating my peers and teachers about agriculture that helped me realize my passion for agriculture.

*Future career goals:* In the broadest sense, my future career goal is to be in a role that allows me to help the general population lose their fear of the fridge. I see myself achieving this through a public relations or corporate communications position for an agricultural/food business/organization.

**2nd place**

Brianna Gwirtz, junior in agricultural communications, The Ohio State University

*Connection or background in agriculture:* I grew up on a small grain farm in Shelby, Ohio where we raise corn, soybeans and wheat. I was a very involved member of both 4-H and FFA. I raised my own boer goats to show at the county fair, and also showed beef cattle. I also worked for an apple orchard for 4 years. I attended Ohio State ATI for two years where I graduated with an Associate Degree in Livestock Sciences, specializing in small ruminants. I am currently at The Ohio State University studying agricultural communications with a minor in animal sciences. I will graduate in May 2018.

*Future career goals:* My future career goal is to work in communications or outreach for an agricultural company, particularly an animal agricultural company.

**3rd place**

Erica Ballmer, masters student in youth development and agricultural education, Purdue University

*Connection or background in agriculture:* I discovered my passion for agriculture through spending time on parent’s family farms, showing dairy cattle at the county fair, being an active member of both 4-H and FFA and participating in community parades with my mom’s family’s antique Farmall tractor collection.

*Future career goals:* In the future, I hope to pursue a career in a 4-H Youth Development role with cooperative extension services or in a marketing/communications role at an agricultural company.
TOP CLUBS:

1st place – Agriculture Club, Western Illinois University

The Western Illinois University Ag Club is comprised of students from the Communicating Agriculture Issues course. This course is focused on promoting agriculture, but is also a writing intensive course where a great deal of time is spent improving written communication. Students in this class come from varied agriculture backgrounds, but by participating in different challenges, they were able to increase their knowledge in areas they knew little to nothing about. They may not be experts in each area, but now have a base level of knowledge to discuss with consumers.

2nd place – Advocacy Class, Northwest Missouri State University

The Advocacy Class consists of 25 students studying Agricultural Education, Agricultural Business and Agricultural Science. The course is designed to prepare students to be advocates for the agriculture industry. Students gain the ability to recognize and understand various public perspectives regarding the agriculture industry. Students learn to develop and disseminate material to inform the public concerning the nature of plant and animal production.

3rd place – Gator Collegiate Cattlewomen, University of Florida

Gator Collegiate Cattlewomen is a club at the University of Florida open to any female students at UF and Santa Fe State College that are interested in and dedicated to supporting the beef industry. They assist the Florida Cattlemen's Association and the Florida Cattlewomen's Association with several events throughout the year working to educate, not only consumers, but members as well.
SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Brianna Gwintz

October: Harvest time and Breast Cancer Awareness month! What do these things have in common? There is a myth that soybeans, due to having such a high amount of phytoestrogen, can lead to breast cancer. However, this is not all true. According to Dr. Marji McCullough with the American Cancer Society, soybeans may even help reduce the risk of cancer. “They [soybeans] also have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties and may work in other ways to reduce cancer growth.” The Susan G. Komen Foundation has a ton of great answers to any sort of question you may have about soybeans and cancer.

http://www5.komen.org/KomenPerspectives/Answersquestionsaboutsoyandbreastcancer.html

kyliephilips

Beef to books! We all have those long nights of studying when exams roll around where you need to eat something satisfying to keep you going all night. On nights like these I rely on the protein powerhouse BEEF to give me the stamina to make it through. An easy

Topanga McBride

I'm glad we have #antibiotics for when I'm sick, as well as when my cows are. Great quote from @AskDrDorman. bit.ly/2dN1hGc #cao16

"Antibiotics have been used in farm animals for decades for the same reason they are used in humans – to treat or prevent or control diseases that cause pain and suffering.”

- Dr. Josh Dorman, Veterinarian
@AskDrDorman
Our family has been raising pigs since 1970. Just like the 60,000 other pork producers nationwide we value antibiotic stewardship.

Here is a link for more information on the National Pork Board thoughts on a strategy of responsible antibiotic use. http://www.pork.org/national-pork-board-delivers-strategy/... #CAO15 #RealPigFarming

What goes into your burger? Early mornings, sweat, tears, and a whole lot of family... #CAO16 #feedtheworld #ranchfamily

Get to know GMOs. What is a GMO?

GMO stands for "genetically modified organism." Organisms (plants, animals, etc.) that are called "GMO" have had their genetic material altered using genetic engineering.

According to the USDA, in 2011:

- 94% soybean
- 90% canola
- 88% corn
- 90% cotton

Of the U.S. crop yield contained GMOs.

Did you know? At least 60% of the American food supply contains GMOs.

16 likes
Ruby was born on the morning I left for Kansas State University. (It seemed only fitting that she would replace me!) When she was born, her mom, Ayla, spent time cleaning her off and welcoming her into the world. After, my mom helped dry her off and fed her a full bottle of colostrum (first milk from a cow) to ensure that Ruby would have a strong immune system. Ayla was then taken to the milk barn, as she was swollen with milk, and Ruby headed back home with us so we could keep a close eye on her and ensure she received the nutrients and attention she needed. Lots of care goes into raising dairy cows and my mom has done an amazing job of doing so. I think this picture captures it perfectly: two moms who love their calf. #CAO16

How #hens are housed? @UEPCertified breaks down the options. Regardless, all options ensure health & safety. #cao16

Choices in Hen Housing - UEP Certified
Today’s housing provides hens with protection against the weather and predators, while improving food safety, the environment and hen well-being.
uepcertified.com

bgwirtz14

60 likes
bgwirtz14 Myth: Shearing sheep harms the animals and can kill them. Truth: Shearing sheep helps prevents heat stroke, improves mobility, and prevents fly strike. There are accredited sheep shearsers in every state that help farmers quickly and safely shear their flock. Would you want to carry around 2-30 lbs of extra hair every year? No! That's why it's important for sheep to be shorn annually. #cao16 #WoolWednesday #sheepfarming
Why Meat?

1. It serves as a complete source of protein (has all necessary amino acids)
2. Is a good way to obtain vitamin B and the only way to get vitamin B12 (Vitamin B helps with energy release from food)
3. It contains iron in a more readily available form than plant-based sources to prevent anemia

Do you eat meat regularly and if so what’s your favorite? (mine’s beef)

#CA016

Topanga McBride @reallifetopanga · Nov 17
#OverheardAtThanksgivingDinner "So ready for a nap! Darn tryptophan." Don't blame the turkey! It's simply overeating that causes 😴 #CA016

jessica_farms When most people eat #Turkey they eat turkey from the Broad Breasted White Breed. Commercial producers use them because with white feathers, plucking processes won’t leave undesirable dark pigments on the skin. NWAgAdvocacy They are bred for more breast meat and males cannot fertilize female eggs. Eggs must be Artificially inseminated and domestic turkeys can’t fly. Both of these toms (males) are strutting, where their feathers are puffed up. Wild turkeys are able to fly for short distances up to 55 mph! Wild turkeys taste different than domestic turkeys because of their diet and have more dark meat due to more activity in their muscles. #CAO16 To find out more about commercial turkey production visit
The MSU Collegiate Cattlewomen (CCW) hosted a tailgate at the last home football game in Bozeman, MT. The event was held in the Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity’s tailgate spot in the student tailgate section catering to students, alumni and visitors to the game. CCW members cooked and served beef chili and cornbread muffins and provided chips and salsa for tailgaters. Conversations about beef and agriculture were fostered with all who ate. MSU CCW handed out BEEF facts that were provided by the state of Montana’s Cattlewomen and the Beef Council. These included pamphlets, pens and notepads.
The Dairy Day was held October 22 at the Western Illinois University (WIU) Fallen Soldier 5k. The club was set up on Hanson Field at the race finish line. Club members gave the runners chocolate milk, handed out towels that said "Drink Milk", provided pamphlets and stickers that promoted milk and had banners promoting chocolate milk.
WIU Ag Club, in partnership with WIU Athletics, McDonough County Farm Bureau, Ag in the Classroom, Birkeys Farm Store, Inc. and Martin Sullivan, Inc. held an Ag Day on September 10th. This event was held at the first home football game of the WIU football season. More than 500 individuals visited the Ag Day event. In addition to equipment, information was given out about livestock and a fun game that related the game of football to agriculture was played with kids. Pork producers were on hand to cook tailgate favorites as well.
The Milk-A-Cow booth was set up in the heart of the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis, MO. The club engaged with youth and adults about the daily life of a dairy cow and how to properly milk. Club members interacted with kids of all ages. Parents even joined in on the fun of petting and milking cows!
Six members of Alpha Zeta took part in the Aggies at the Capitol challenge. Deans Eatman, a North Carolina State University graduate, provided the tour. Members observed a portion of an Oversight Committee Meeting. While in the Capitol Building, members of Alpha Zeta met three important legislators: Marvin W. Lucas, John A. Torbett and Ben Clark. Representative Lucas is the Vice-Chairman of the Agriculture Committee and a member of the Wildlife Resources Committee. Members of Alpha Zeta relayed their love and concern for agriculture in politics, primarily relief for the largely agriculturally based eastern part of the state ravaged by Hurricane Matthew. Concerns were also raised about the effect of the wildfires burning over 40,000 acres in the western part of the state and how it would affect Fraser fir harvest and distribution. Eatman provided the members an overview of how appropriations functioned and their priorities. Senator Clark is a member of the Appropriations on Natural and Economic Resources Committee. He described how it was similar and different to the appropriations committee where Representative Torbett serves.
Alpha Zeta members visited the Governor Morehead School of the Blind. They brought a wide assortment of agricultural commodities, including carrots, cotton, apples, oranges, pig feed, peas, Fraser fir and a horse halter. The students felt the commodities and guessed what they were. Alpha Zeta members then provided facts about them. The students enjoyed the class and kept asking questions so they could learn more!
The MSU Collegiate Cattlewomen worked within the Can the Griz Food Campaign at MSU to raise money and canned goods for the Gallatin Valley Food Bank. This included meat from the MSU Meat Lab, money raised during football games and canned food donated by members of the community. Members volunteered at the food bank, gathering and organizing food and at the Community Kitchen, another resource for those facing poverty in the community. The club donated 1,115 pounds of food to the Community Kitchen.
On November 8th, club members took students to visit the WIU Livestock Farms. To promote the farm tour, they generated flyers to post around campus and hand out to friends. They also created email blasts that reached students across the university, with the goal of catching the interest of as many non-agriculture students as possible. About 50 students attended the event. Overall, the group felt that the event was very successful. Not only did they educate WIU students about livestock production at the WIU Farms, but they provided a positive image of animal agriculture. They said they greatly enjoyed the project and it demonstrated how truly rewarding it can be to “advocate for agriculture.”
On October 31st, the Collegiate Cattlewomen passed out candy with myths and facts about agriculture to students on campus. They set up a station in Turlington Plaza. They passed out 450 pieces of candy.
On Thursday November 4th, the club’s booth was set up behind the Malpass Library and Stipes Hall. There were approximately 50 to 70 students who stopped by the booth. They compared the protein in three ounces of beef sirloin and three ounces of pork chops to non-animal protein foods. They handed out samples of each. Most students were pretty surprised with what they had to present. As a whole, the event was a great success!