



2024 COLLEGE AGGIES ONLINE IMPACT REPORT

Agriculture Engagement and
Scholarship Program



ABOUT COLLEGE AGGIES ONLINE

College Aggies Online (CAO), held for nine weeks in the fall, is an initiative of the Animal Agriculture Alliance to develop life-long advocates for agriculture. Participants receive training throughout the program from social media-savvy farmers and industry experts via a discussion forum and weekly feedback on submitted work. The Alliance provides the students with talking points, tips on engaging with consumers, sample content, and links to resources and tools.

Participants engage on social media by posting about current and emerging issues facing farmers and ranchers and telling personal stories. Participating collegiate clubs and classes host events on their campus to engage with peers about animal agriculture. Individuals and clubs earn points based on the quality and quantity of their work. The top five individuals and top three clubs received a scholarship along with weekly and club challenge prizes awarded throughout the program.

2024 PROGRAM

The 2024 CAO program had 278 individuals and 13 collegiate clubs participate. In total, \$20,000 in scholarships were awarded to participating individuals and clubs. Over the course of the program, individual participants shared 2,244 posts about agriculture, nearly double the number of posts compared to 2023. The clubs hosted 36 campus and community activities reaching nearly 5,500 people.

Prior to the program, participants rated their confidence communicating about agriculture online and in person as 6.1 and 6.8 out of 10, respectively. Following the program, they rated confidence levels as 8.6 and 7.7 for both. Survey respondents unanimously said they would recommend the program to a friend.

The 2024 CAO program would not have been possible without the support of program sponsors and mentors. The 2024 sponsors include: Dairy Management Inc., CHS Foundation, National Pork Industry Foundation, National Corn Growers Association, John K. Vanier Foundation, Institute for Feed Education and Research, National Pork Board, Culver Franchising System, LLC, Domino's Pizza Inc., Ohio Poultry Association, and National Chicken Council.

The 2024 mentors who advised the students each week included:

- Jessica Peters, Pennsylvania dairy farmer
- Emily Schaapman, Dairy Girl Fitness
- Paul Montgomery, United Egg Producers
- Hannah Keck, U.S. Poultry & Egg Association
- Brandi Buzzard, Kansas cattle rancher
- Maci Loving, National Cattlemen's Beef Association
- Jason Menke, National Pork Board
- Kristen Quintanilla, Charleston Orwig Collective
- Laycee Gibson, National Turkey Federation
- Natalie Kovarik, Nebraska cattle rancher
- Kylee Deniz, Oklahoma Pork Council
- Madison Wyman, American Feed Industry Association
- Morgan Young, National Institute for Animal Agriculture
- Logan Hall, Animal Agriculture Alliance

STUDENT TESTIMONIALS

- “I was able to advocate for a very underrepresented industry that I have a strong passion for. I advise others in the ag community to be a voice for farmers and help break the barrier between farmers and consumers!”
- “My biggest takeaway from my experience with this program is the importance of showing consumers different aspects of the agricultural industry they may not have previously been aware of. I thoroughly enjoyed my time sharing stories, recipes, facts, and information.”
- “I have always had a passion for ag and what it provides for so many people. Through College Aggies Online, I have been able to share my love for agriculture while educating other producers and consumers about where their food comes from. I personally have learned even more about the different sectors within the agriculture industry. I have loved getting to communicate with people through this program that I probably never would have talked to otherwise. College Aggies provides an amazing experience for the next generation of agriculturalists to learn and educate. I would recommend anyone, farm or city kid, to get connected through CAO to better the ag industry for the future!”
- “We thoroughly enjoyed competing and raising awareness about agricultural issues through the events. We have loved competing in College Aggies in the past, and this year was no different! Thank you for this opportunity!”
- “This has given me the opportunity to broaden my knowledge on animal agriculture. Because of this challenge, I have been able to learn about species that I didn’t know about. Even more so, I have been able to learn more about the species that I actively work with today. This is a challenge that I would recommend to all college students.”



TOP INDIVIDUALS:

1st PLACE (\$3,000)

Emma Zaicow, Purdue University

Emma is a second-year veterinary medicine student at Purdue University. She received her bachelor's in animal sciences from Purdue University in 2023 and aspires to practice large animal medicine as her future career. Emma is four generations removed from agriculture, but she has nurtured a growing passion for animal agriculture, food safety, and food security since beginning her collegiate career. It is this same passion that has led her to pursue a career where she can ensure that those in her community and beyond have reliable access to safe, nutritious, and hearty animal protein sources. The College Aggies Online program has offered her a means to establish advocacy and communication skills that will see her through a lifelong career in championing animal agriculture.



2nd PLACE (\$2,000)

Kylie Diaz, West Texas A&M University

Kylie is a PhD student on a graduate assistantship at West Texas A&M University, where she is studying agriculture with an emphasis in horticultural science. She received her bachelor's and master's degrees from the same university in plant, soil, and environmental sciences, where her research focused on utilizing UAV technology to monitor winter wheat growth in dryland systems. Since 2018, Kylie has actively competed in individual and club divisions of College Aggies Online, where she claims to take away something new each year she participates. Outside of her academic and professional pursuits, Kylie and her husband farm corn and milo in the Texas Panhandle alongside their one-year-old daughter, Malena.



3rd PLACE (\$1,500)

Taylor Sondgeroth, Auburn University

Taylor is a graduate student at Auburn University obtaining a master's in animal sciences. Sondgeroth graduated with her bachelor's in May 2024 with degrees in equine animal sciences and agricultural communications. With her passions for agriculture and creativity, she hopes to work for extension services upon graduation to bring agriculture to the next generation.



4th PLACE (\$1,000)

Rachel Robinson, Auburn University

Rachel recently graduated with a bachelor degrees in pre-vet animal sciences and music at Auburn University. She hopes to attend Auburn's College of Veterinary Medicine in the fall of 2025.



5th PLACE (\$500)

Alexis Main, Oklahoma State University

Alexis Main is a graduate teaching and research assistant at Oklahoma State University. Alexis was raised on a small farm in Modesto, Ca. by her parents, Reed and Roxanna Smith. She currently lives in Perkins, Ok. with her husband, Bryce Main. She graduated with four associate's degrees in agricultural sciences from Modesto Junior College and then received her bachelor's degree in animal sciences with a focus in business from Oklahoma State University in 2020. Alexis is currently a PhD candidate at Oklahoma State studying immunology and animal well-being with research focusing on beef cattle and pigs. This was her fourth year participating in College Aggies Online. Her passion has been to help improve agricultural literacy in her community, maintain and improve animal welfare, and learn more about the industry that feeds and clothes the world.



TOP CLUBS

1st PLACE (\$2,000)

Les Voyageurs, Louisiana State University

Les Voyageurs club members serve as the official student ambassadors of the Louisiana State University College of Agriculture and engages in recruitment events with prospective students, retention events with current students, and networking with alumni.



2nd PLACE (\$1,000)

Block & Bridle, Tarleton State University

Block & Bridle at Tarleton State is a student organization focused on enhancing professionalism of students who will be the leaders in the animal agriculture industry.



3rd PLACE (\$500)

Pre-Vet Club, Oklahoma State University

The Pre-Vet Club aims to give students the opportunity to grow, learn, and succeed in undergrad before entering an accredited Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program. They create and participate in social, philanthropic, community, and educational events each academic year to help students find a career path or become a well-rounded DVM applicant.



SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Every week students were tasked with posting on Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly known as Twitter), and/or TikTok about a specific animal agriculture theme. Here are examples of top posts selected each week by program mentors.

Week 1: Dairy



IS LACTOSE FREE MILK STILL DAIRY?

AGRIALLIES Advocacy

agriallies • Follow

agriallies Edited • 12w
Did you know?

Lactose-free milk is still 100% dairy! 🥛 ✨
It packs all the same nutrients as regular milk and has a naturally sweeter taste without any added sugar.

Cheers to the delicious and digestible goodness of dairy! 🥛 💪

Check out the link in our bio to learn more about lactose free dairy!

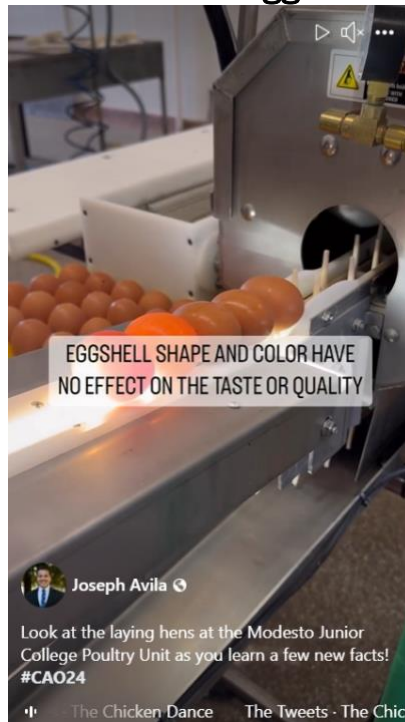
#CAO24 #DairyFacts #DairyWeek
#Nutrition #ASMR

No comments yet.
Start the conversation.

5 likes
September 14

Add a comment...

Week 2: Eggs



Week 3: Broiler Chickens

3 Ways Chicken Farms Improve Sustainability



midwestsouthern • Follow
Thurston Harris • Little Bitty Pretty One

midwestsouthern 10w
DYK? Poultry farming uses continuous improvement practices to produce sustainably!

Here are 3 ways poultry farms improve their environmental footprint:

- ⚡ Using solar panels allows poultry farmers to reduce energy use.
- 🌿 Heavy use areas help create biosecure farms that are safe for both birds and farmers.
- 🌳 Buffer areas help reduce runoff and water loss.

These are just three of many ways that poultry facilities improve their sustainability with practical management!

3 likes
September 25

Add a comment...

Week 4: Sustainability



Alexis Main

October 5 · 🌐

💡 Sustainability 💡 - it's not just a buzzword!

-
-

As a whole, agriculturalists strive for constant improvement, especially in the area of sustainability to be able to provide for those today and also for many generations to come.

Animal agriculture is more efficient and sustainable than it ever has been before. In other words: producing more and using less.

With less than 2 % of the population represented in agricultural production, farmers and ranchers provide 🍌 food, ⛽ fuel, and 🧶 fiber to ALL of us!

Sustainability can be broken down into three pillars of commitment:

- 🧑 Social responsibility
- ✅ Economic viability
- 🌱 Environmental stewardship

📱 Swipe through to see what commitments are included in these 3 pillars!

#cao24 #sustainability



Week 5: Pigs



jda05 • Follow

jda05 8w
24 / 7 / 365

Because of auger systems in place in most barns on a pig farm, pigs have access to food and water at all times and can eat WHENEVER they want! What a way to live! 🐷🐷🐷

#CAO24

No comments yet.
Start the conversation.

65 likes
October 11

Add a comment...

Week 6: Turkeys



Emma Zaicow
October 16 · 🌐

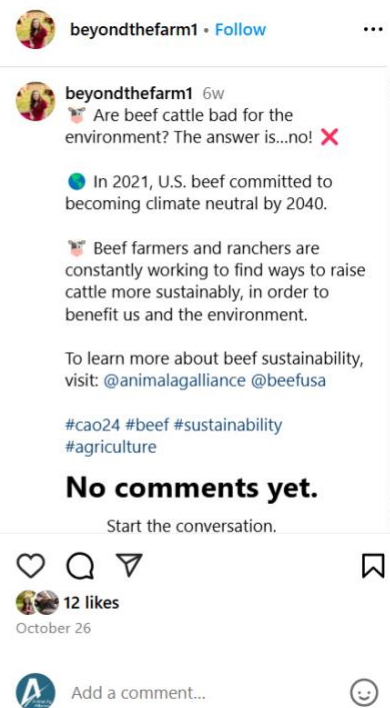
Wild turkeys 🦃 are often depicted as the turkeys associated with Thanksgiving, but that couldn't be further from the truth!

Broad-Breasted White turkeys grow more breast and white meat and have meatier thighs 🍗 than their wild counterparts. This is why they are the turkey of choice to raise on farms!

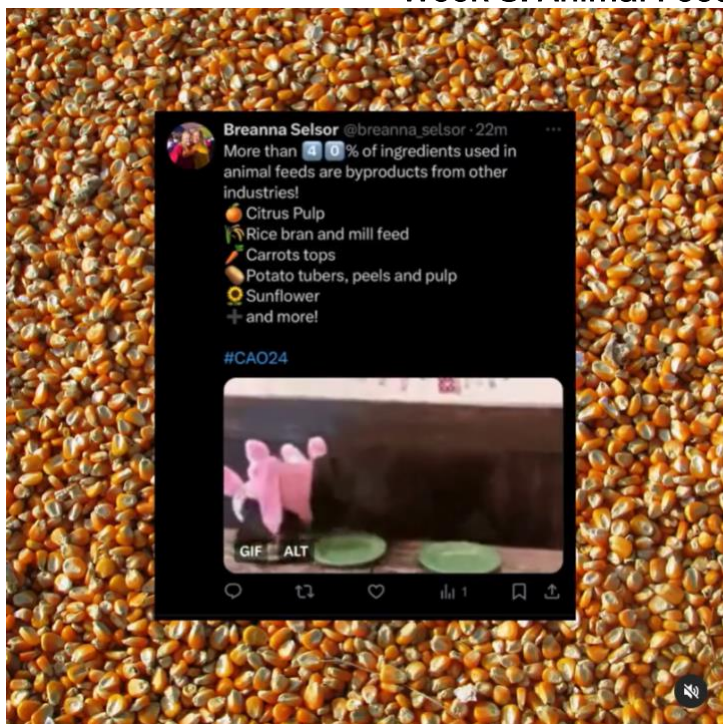
Sources: @NatlTurkeyFed

#CAO24 #CollegeAggiesOnline

Week 7: Beef





Week 8: Animal Feed



Week 9: Students' Pick



 **dr.zaicow_dvmstudent** • Follow ...

 **dr.zaicow_dvmstudent** 4w
🗨️ Animal rights groups collectively make over \$800 million dollars annually by using powerful and sometimes manipulative imagery to appeal to the wallets of folks who care for the wellbeing of animals.


💡 The more prolific groups spend \$100s of millions annually on marketing which bleeds into mainstream media.


💡 Stay informed and learn how to navigate manipulative media! Not everything you see on the internet is true.

Source: @AnimalAgAlliance

#CAO24 #CollegeAggiesOnline

🤍 💬 📌

 131 likes
November 8

 Add a comment... 😊

CHALLENGES

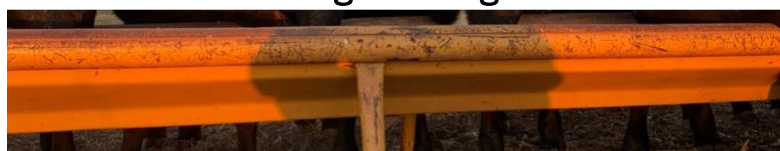
Every other week, individual participants were tasked with a different challenge to help them craft their communication skills. Here are examples of the top challenge submissions selected each week by program mentors.

Video Challenge



[View full video here.](#)

Blog Challenge



Calves from my PhD research trial eating their morning grains

The Undeniable Superpower of Cattle



Alexis Main

Graduate Research and Teaching Assistant at Oklahoma State University



September 28, 2024

Like most nights, we sit down at the table (or on the couch if you are like me) for dinner with our plates filled whether it be hamburgers, steaks, cheese, and so much more. We often don't really question how that came to be - it came from the grocery store, right? Wrong. While you may have bought it at the supermarket, the nutritious food that feeds our families came from the farmers, the livestock, and the resources behind them. What you may not know is the incredible steps behind it.

[Read the full blog post here.](#)

Carousel Challenge



Joseph Avila

October 12 · 🌐

...

Food labels are so important to understand what it truly means when something says "organic," "antibiotic free," and so on! Stop paying more for a label that is normal practice in agriculture!

#CAO24 #foodlabels



[View the full post here.](#)

CLUB EVENTS

Clubs and classes hosted events to engage in conversations about animal agriculture with their peers. Here are a few of the events hosted during this year's CAO program.

Aggies at the Capitol

Familiarizing yourself with the legislative process in your state is a great way to elevate the importance of agricultural issues to your representatives. For this challenge, clubs were tasked with connecting with a state agriculture association to learn more about important agriculture issues in their state and then visiting their state legislature.

The Louisiana State University Les Voyageurs had the opportunity to visit the state capitol, where they connected with state legislators and learned about the legislative process, particularly in relation to agricultural policy.



Campus Dining Collaboration

This challenge encouraged clubs to develop a relationship with their campus dining leaders so they can turn to the club as a resource when they have questions about how food is produced.

Members of Louisiana State University's Les Voyageurs club toured the campus's Performance Nutrition Center. They had the opportunity to engage in one-on-one discussions with executive chef Michael Johnson, gaining valuable insights into his management of the dining facility. Throughout the tour, members discovered his commitment to delivering safe, healthy meals while upholding sustainable practices.



Campus Event

For this challenge, participating clubs were asked to host an agriculture event on campus to engage with peers who are not familiar with agriculture.

Members of the Tarleton State University Block & Bridle club tabled in front of the library on a main path on campus. They had candy with ag myths and their respective truths taped to them to pass out to students and share more information with them about food and agriculture.



Community Event

In this challenge, clubs were invited to reach out beyond their college campuses and host an agriculture event in their community to engage with people about agriculture.

The Dairy Science Club at the University of Georgia participated in the Oconee Fall Festival which is an annual event hosted at the Oconee Elementary School for students all over Athens-Clarke County, Georgia. Their students halter broke calves and brought them to the festival for over 800 children to pet. They introduced the students to the animals, as well as the dairy community. They loved learning how their favorite products are made like ice cream and milk.



Connecting with Kids

This event challenges clubs to engage with grade school students (K-12) to become better informed about the daily impact of agriculture.

The Oklahoma State University Pre-Vet Club had toy veterinary tools and helped kids learn to use them to doctor stuffed animals at a local community event.



Food Drive

Food banks are always in need of donations and support. For this challenge, clubs were encouraged to raise awareness about food insecurity and encourage donations to a local food bank.

Members of the Les Voyageurs at Louisiana State University volunteered with the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank to participate in the 2.5-hour Fifolet Halloween Parade. This parade is held annually in downtown Baton Rouge. Upon arriving at the event, the Les Voyageurs team members donated canned green beans, rice, and southern-style greens. Members then followed a map that took them through the downtown Baton Rouge area, where they connected with youth and their families.



Movie or Guest Speaker

For this challenge, clubs were encouraged to engage with students not involved in agriculture by inviting them to watch a movie promoting agriculture or listen to a speaker emphasizing the accurate and positive message of agriculture.

Dr. Berry Whitworth, senior extension specialist and BQA state coordinator, spoke with the Oklahoma State University Pre-Vet Club. He offered insight into his background of animal science and veterinary medicine. He explained to the members in depth about the Oklahoma beef quality assurance program and what they do for farmers.



Scary Food Myths

Just like consumers, college students are getting a lot of information about food from social media and unfortunately, there is also a lot of misinformation online about food and farming. The Scary Food Myths challenge asked participating clubs to share facts about meat, dairy, poultry, eggs, and seafood with peers on their campus.

Members of the Les Voyageurs at Louisiana State University set up a booth on campus during one of LSU's largest student events of the semester, Fall Fest. They handed out candy with myths about the food industry attached and clarifying truths. Topics covered included hormone use in the poultry industry, antibiotics in meat, and agriculture's overall contribution to climate change.



Undeniably Dairy

For the Undeniably Dairy challenge, students were asked to share the nutritional benefits of dairy with students on campus who may be disconnected from agriculture.

Members of Les Voyageurs at Louisiana State University set up a table on campus during National Chocolate Milk Day, taking advantage of the high traffic on the Louisiana State University's Quad to engage with students and visitors. To capture the attention of people passing by, they had one of their members dress in a cow costume. This immediately drew curious students and faculty to stop, take pictures, and join the fun. This created the perfect opportunity for their team to hand out free chocolate milk and share educational information about the dairy community and the nutritional benefits of milk.

