

Dear Senator Harp,

3/21/11

My name is Megan Williams and I am a sophomore in the Ellis Clark Regional Agriscience and Technological program in Woodbury. I live in Woodbury and I attend this regional agriscience school choice program; I grew up with horses, chickens and gardens. Ever since I was born, agriculture was a part of my life. When my sister, Sarah, went to this school she had the weekend job of taking care of the animals. While she had this job, I would accompany her and soon fell in love with the animals. After that, I wanted to learn more about the program; I went with Sarah and my mom to one of the Woodbury Chapter FFA meetings and decided that I wanted to be one of those students running the meeting in the blue jacket. Now, I am president of the Sophomore Block and strive to be a chapter officer during my senior year.

Becoming a junior officer though, is not the only participation in the FFA that I have acquired. During my freshman year I participated in the Creed competition which requires the speaker to recite the FFA Creed in front of a panel of both judges and friends and then answer various questions. Before this competition, I was a quiet girl who never spoke out. Now I am vibrant and enjoy speaking in front of a class. The FFA has taught so many life skills to not only me, but to others as well.

My future plans right now are undetermined, but I have been looking into food science and biological engineering.

I have worked at Alpaca Connection for a year and this job serves as my SAE, or supervised agricultural experience. In it I have learned about an alpaca's conformation, what they eat, the medicines they need (I have even administered shots) and I have taught customers at the winter store about the animals. Along with the farm, I work at the school watering the plants in the greenhouses and clean horse paddocks at a small farm down the road from where I live. In addition, I work with my horse, Dodge. I currently compete in horse trials at the elementary level but my goal is to be in at least the beginner novice [preferably novice] by the end of this summer.

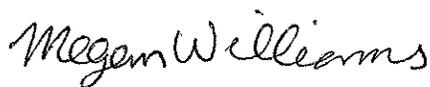
I am writing this letter to encourage you to **please urge the Appropriations Committee to pledge 9 million dollars of the school choice funding increases proposed in the Governor's budget to the state's 19 regional (vo-ag) agriscience programs.**

Our agriscience programs have been drastically underfunded for over 20 years as compared to the magnet schools, charter schools, vocational technical schools and the other school choice funding programs. (Please see attached flyer with details)

This will allow hundreds of more students like me to enroll in these successful programs so they will have the same positive experience I am having now.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Megan Williams