

My name is Emily Von Edwins and I am a member, and president, of the Lebanon Regional FFA Chapter. Four years ago I joined the agriscience program at Lyman with the desire to be an equine veterinarian. Having a strong background in the horse industry already, I thought the program would further advance my knowledge and provide me with great opportunities in preparation for my future career. Naturally my SAE project revolved around riding, training, and showing horses. While I loved all farm animals I believed horses were my only true passion, however, this quickly changed. Within my first year in the ag program I was introduced to a variety of different livestock, I took interest in all of the large animals from sheep to cows. It was then that my focus began to shift away from strictly horses and I decided to work towards a career as a large animal veterinarian. I began to take a great interest in dairy cattle and was able to be the fifth place team in the nation for dairy judging this past year, a competition that taught me a great deal about the dairy and cattle industry and sparked my interest for showing dairy. Being enrolled in the large animal and vet science classes in the ag program gave me even more opportunities that many potential veterinary students do not receive until college. From palpations and vaccinations to physical exams and sutures, I was able to learn a variety of skills. As my SAE project changed these skills were only enhanced further, I began working at Colchester Veterinary Hospital working as a doctor and technician assistant while having the opportunity to gain even more advanced beneficial skills. Being enrolled in the ag program has provided me with so many great opportunities in preparation for my future, not only with the career aspect, but also in public speaking and leadership. I feel that I am better prepared for the professional world because of my responsibilities and exposure the ag program has provided me with. Please increase funding for these agriscience programs so that more students like myself can benefit from these great programs like I have.