

Hello and good morning. My name is Robert Peterson and I represent the Woodbury FFA Chapter from Woodbury, CT in Litchfield County. I am 17 years old and an officer in my chapter. I am a junior at Nonnewaug High School and I am currently taking all Honors and AP courses. I am here today to share some of my experiences with you that were only made possible through our Agriscience program. I joined 3 years ago as a freshman with aspirations to become a veterinarian. This first year I took plant and animal science, tractor driving, and FFA to learn about our organization. As my sophomore year rolled around I became more interested in different fields the Woodbury Chapter could offer me. After a tough decision, I settled on landscaping and Vet Science, where I learned a lot of lessons the main one being Veterinary Science was not the field I wanted to go into. I had found a new calling, Environmental law. I still intend to take vet courses to expand my knowledge, but I would now apply the information learned in a much different way. Throughout high school I have had the opportunity to work at the Abbey of Regina Laudis in Bethlehem Connecticut, the only Benedictine Monastery for women in America. This was encouraged through our FFA's SAE program, or supervised agriculture experience. This makes all students in our program work or volunteer for 200 hours over the course of each school year in an agriculture related organization or business. At the Abbey, I work in all types of Agriculture. I have learned to hay a field in order to feed the many animals at this self-sustaining abbey. I have also learned to care for their herd of sheep, and Dutch belt Dairy cows, as well as learning to drive a team of oxen. How many attorneys do you know that can say they are experienced in oxen driving? This program gives me distinct uniqueness in my life experiences that will help set me apart from other non-ag related students as I begin the application process for colleges. After high school, I

hope to attend either Boston College or West Point Military Academy where I plan to major in Environmental Law and political science and minor in Environmental science. If our Ag program is given more funding, then more students will have the opportunity to participate in local CT Ag programs such as our Woodbury FFA Chapter. Every year our chapter receives about 180 applications, but our lack of state funding limits us to just 90 students! With your help we can allow for more students to benefit from ours and all agriculture programs for students across the state, helping us achieve our goals in life. Thank you for your time.