

Good Evening. My name is Erin Dlubac, and I am a senior at Rockville High School's Agriculture Education program. For my SAEF, I work with horses, and I am also employed by the Town of Vernon as a livestock caretaker. I am responsible for taking daily care of all of the animals located at the Ag Center.

Four years ago, when I entered my Freshman Agriculture Education class, I did not have the slightest idea what to expect. The National FFA Organization was foreign to me, and the only thing I knew about agriculture was that it involved farming and animals. When I saw a sign-up sheet in the hallway for an Equine Judging team, I decided to take my education to a new level. I was apprehensive about joining the team, but after one practice, I was hooked. I began to understand how valuable that the material I was learning about in Agriculture Education is. After earning success in a state level Equine Judging competition, I was inspired to continue to take my education with agriculture further. I took advantage of many opportunities presented to me, such as competing in extemporaneous public speaking, joining my FFA chapter's officer team, participating in an Animal Health Club, and taking a job as a livestock caretaker. My entire life became centered around the agriculture industry, and I was loving every second of it. My life would be dramatically different if I had never taken the Agriculture Education course. Inspired by all that I had learned, I realized that I could not imagine having a career that did not involve this industry. By combining my passions of science and agriculture, I know that a career as an equine veterinarian is perfect. I am excited for all of the opportunities ahead of me.

Please increase funding for agriscience programs by adopting the ECS Task Force School Choice Funding recommendations into the Governor's Proposed Budget to ensure that other students will also have the opportunity to gain personally from Agriculture Education programs.