

Good evening! My name is Katie Yetter and I am the President of the Northwestern Regional FFA Chapter. Currently, I am a senior studying Floral Design. I have been enrolled in the plant science track for 2 years, where I took Greenhouse Production as a junior. My Supervised Agricultural Experience Program consists of working in our school's greenhouse and I also work on Crafty Ledge Farm, a small diversified livestock farm. Being involved in various aspects of agriculture, I have had the opportunity to broaden my horizons with both plant and animal sciences. While my future is not "set in stone", the FFA chapter at my school and agricultural education program has contributed to countless positive attributes in my life. The most prevalent one is my public speaking ability. This past fall, I earned the title of Connecticut FFA's 1st place Extemporaneous Public Speaker, where I was able to move on and compete at the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana, against other state winners from across the country. I earned a bronze medal and had such a tremendous learning experience preparing for the national contest. Over the past 4 years in Ag-Ed, I've noticed the ease I now have speaking before an audience. Besides public speaking, the FFA has numerous other leadership events that encourage students, like myself, to reach out and help our local communities. FFA contests provide an opportunity for us to learn skills within agriculture such as dairy cattle judging or plant identification, life skills are learned and scholarships are awarded.

Upon graduation in June, I plan to join the Marines in order to serve my country and earn a degree in biomedical engineering. Community service is a large part FFA chapters. Locally, we find pride in helping our community. For example, this fall my chapter donated all of our Apple Cider production proceeds to Hurricane Sandy Relief in Connecticut and conducted a winter clothing drive where we donated all clothing to our neighboring towns. Those who are

involved with the surrounding communities are giving back to the generations who have helped us. As the FFA motto states, "Living to serve", my chapter fulfills this duty. The Northwestern Regional FFA Chapter strongly believes that the 19 agriscience centers in the state of Connecticut need more budget funding. We are the leaders of tomorrow. With the current budget, we are forced to turn away eligible students in some of our schools, who could one day benefit from all the opportunities and later, shape the future of American Agriculture. With more money, more teachers could be hired to teach more students and proper equipment could be bought to help with hands on experiences. I stand before you today wearing my blue and gold corduroy jacket with pride. **With all of this said, please increase funding for Agriscience programs by adopting the ECS Task Force School Choice Funding Recommendation into the Governor's Proposed Budget.**