



NATIONAL
FFA ORGANIZATION

Individual Challenge Events Replace National-Level CDEs and LDEs at 2020 National FFA Convention & Expo

This fall, the National FFA Organization will offer individual experiences and challenges for all FFA members focused on career and leadership skills in place of all traditional national-level Career Development Events (CDEs) and Leadership Development Events (LDEs) previously scheduled for the 2020 National FFA Convention & Expo. The changes are in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“This was a heart-wrenching, yet objective decision given the facts of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Dr. James Woodard, National FFA Advisor and Board Chair. “The board of directors unanimously agreed with the change and supported the opportunity to reach a broader number of FFA members.”

National-level CDEs and LDEs will return at the 2021 National FFA Convention & Expo.

Individual Challenges Provide National-Level Opportunity to All FFA Members

All FFA members – including 2020 graduates – are encouraged to compete or participate in the individual experiences and challenges to be offered this fall. The events are currently being planned and will be provided in-person at the national convention and virtually. All events will align with the high-quality, rigorous Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (AFNR) Career Cluster Content Standards.

“Our team gave full support to this decision,” said National FFA President Kolesen McCoy. “The individual challenges open an equitable window of opportunity for members to learn, compete and earn national recognition in a unique way this year.”

The experiences will be designed for individual participation and will include member recognition based on accomplishments. The total number of events, specific logistics and timeline will be announced this summer, allowing for agricultural educators to incorporate the challenge events as part of their interactive classroom/laboratory instruction this fall.

Pandemic Effects Force National-Level CDE and LDE Change

Replacing national-level CDEs and LDEs at the 2020 national convention was decided after National FFA sought nationwide feedback from state FFA associations, agricultural education partner groups and the National FFA Board of Directors. Survey and response data indicated numerous state associations faced difficulty in hosting state-level CDEs and LDEs due to the pandemic. Many had canceled qualifying events entirely.

“It’s clear that hosting CDEs and LDEs this fall faced much uncertainty from now up until the scheduled opening of the national convention,” said Christine White, National FFA chief program officer. “Rather than substantially alter the competitive integrity of our CDEs and LDEs for one year or face disruptive last-minute changes or cancellations, we chose to focus on providing a meaningful career and leadership development experience for all FFA members.”

To accommodate impacted 2020 national CDE and LDE qualifiers, state associations were provided additional flexibility in 2021 by the board of directors. FFA members eligible to compete at the 2020 national convention are now eligible in 2021. State associations can determine their preferred method for selecting 2021 national qualifiers.

National FFA will also use the traditional awards process during the 2020 National FFA Convention & Expo to recognize all individuals and teams declared for national CDE and LDE competition this fall despite being unable to compete.