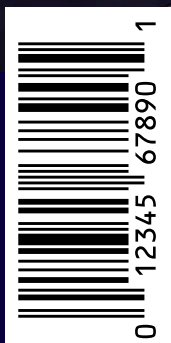


Macks Creek FFA in Indy

MAGAZINE

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**TOMORROW'S
LEADERS:
TODAY'S LESSONS**
99th National FFA Convention



From exploring agricultural innovations to building lifelong memories, the National FFA Convention gave Macks Creek FFA members an unforgettable opportunity to discover new possibilities, develop leadership skills, and experience the future of agriculture beyond the classroom.



Small Town. Big Opportunities.

The Big Picture

MACKS CREEK, MO — Eight members of the Macks Creek FFA Chapter traveled to Indianapolis, Indiana, October 21-24, 2026, for the 99th National FFA Convention & Expo, joining a reported 72,907 FFA members from across the United States for one of the nation's largest annual gatherings of agricultural youth.

Representing Macks Creek were Senior Brooklyn Green; Juniors Michael Egan, Devon Laxton, and Leigha Jensen; and Sophomores Aaron Hufferd, Matthew Hufferd, Gracelyn Deckard, and Landon Rains, accompanied by FFA Advisor Ms. Montana Plattner and chaperone Mrs. April Green.

This four-day adventure was more than a trip away from the classroom. Students explored agricultural careers, developed leadership skills, built friendships, and experienced firsthand what it means to belong to an organization dedicated to the future of agriculture. For eight students from a small rural Missouri community, being among more than 72,000 fellow FFA members was a reminder that their hometown may be small, but their opportunities are anything but limited.

What Is the National FFA Convention?

The National FFA Organization, formerly known as the Future Farmers of America, prepares students for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education. Agriculture reaches far beyond traditional farming. Its careers include animal science, biotechnology, agricultural engineering, business, food science, natural resources, technology, and communications. FFA's motto — "Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live, Living to Serve" — expresses a commitment to developing knowledgeable, responsible, service-minded leaders.

At the convention, students attend motivational sessions, connect with businesses and colleges, explore career paths, witness national competitions, and meet FFA members from across the country. These experiences open doors that cannot be replicated within the four walls of a classroom.



Day Two: A Sea of Blue Jackets

Thursday began before sunrise as students put on Official FFA Dress and headed to the First General Session at Lucas Oil Stadium. Blue corduroy jackets from all 50 states filled the venue, reflecting the convention's reported 72,907-member attendance and the broad reach of agricultural education.

The opening session featured U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins, National FFA Advisor Dr. Travis Park, and keynote speaker Scott McKain. Messages emphasized leadership, growth, opportunity, and service.

At the National FFA Expo, students spoke with agricultural businesses, industry representatives, colleges, and universities. They explored emerging technologies, education options, and careers, while networking with fellow members from different backgrounds.

That evening, Ms. Plattner introduced UNO No Mercy at the hotel. A card game became an hour-and-a-half-long contest of laughter and friendly competition. There was no clear winner, but plenty of chapter fellowship.

Day One: On the Road

The adventure began Wednesday, October 21, with a 5:30 a.m. departure from Macks Creek. After brunch, the group stopped at Park North Golf Club for practice swings and a few laughs.

Next came an educational tour of Marcoot Jersey Creamery in Greenville, Illinois. Students learned how a family-operated creamery turns milk into value-added products for both people and dogs, offering a real-world look at entrepreneurship, dairy production, and connecting producers with consumers.

The visit included animal time and ice cream. After arriving in Indianapolis and checking into the hotel, the chapter continued its Olive Garden dinner tradition, ending the day with pasta, breadsticks, and memories.



Day Three: Racing & Rodeo

Friday offered one final chance to explore the Expo, revisit exhibits, make purchases, and meet additional industry representatives.

The group then toured the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and its museum, learning about the history, engineering, technology, and innovation behind racing. The stop showed how mechanical skills and problem-solving connect across industries.

After changing at the hotel, students attended the Three Hills Rodeo, enjoying bronc riding, bull riding, and professional rodeo competition. The experience connected their interest in livestock and western traditions with a major sporting event.

A Texas Roadhouse dinner, complete with rolls, good food, and laughter, capped off the evening.

Day Four: Bringing It Home

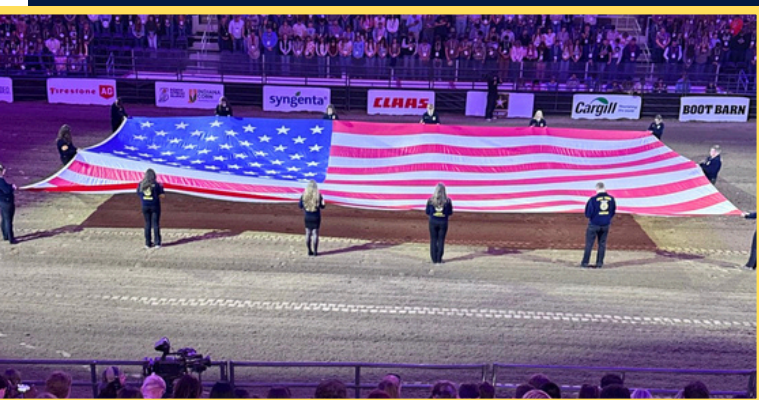
On Saturday, October 24, the chapter packed up and returned to Missouri. After four busy days, students came home with more than souvenirs: new agricultural knowledge, exposure to careers, stronger friendships, and memories that will outlast their years in the blue jacket.



More Than Just a Trip

Attending National Convention can be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Students represent their home, school, and community while stepping outside their comfort zones, meeting people from other places, gaining independence, and growing in confidence.

Agriculture is not limited to livestock, crops, or machinery. It depends on scientists, engineers, veterinarians, educators, entrepreneurs, and leaders. The convention lets students see those possibilities firsthand instead of only reading about them.



“As an agricultural educator and FFA advisor, one of my biggest goals is to show students that **their opportunities are not limited by the size of the town** they come from,” said Plattner. “We come from a small rural community, but these students have **just as much potential** to make an impact on the agricultural industry as anyone else.”

Plattner also highlighted the informal moments — conversations on the road, laughter at dinner, and watching students become more confident — as important parts of building character and leadership.



Thank You, Macks Creek

The Macks Creek FFA Chapter extends sincere appreciation to the parents, families, school administration, community members, businesses, and supporters who made the trip possible. Fundraising, financial contributions, encouragement, and continued support of agricultural education help provide opportunities beyond the classroom.

The chapter looks forward to applying the knowledge, inspiration, and experiences gained in Indianapolis throughout the school year.

FFA is about more than agriculture. It is about developing the next generation of leaders, building character, creating opportunities, and preparing young people for a future filled with possibilities.

Editorial note: Advisor quotations are draft language for approval before publication. Attendance is as provided by the chapter.

