

# Lauren Ann Benfer

**Preferred First Name**

Lauren

**High School**

Clay Center Community High School

**Chapter Name**

Clay Center FFA

**Chapter Number**

KS0029

**Semesters of Agricultural Education Completed**

14

**Years in FFA**

4

**In what level of education are you currently enrolled?**

High School

**If you will be enrolled in post-secondary education following election to state office, where will you be attending?**

Southeast Community College

**Anticipated College Major**

Livestock Management and Production

**Career Objective**

After graduating from high school, I plan to attend Southeast Community College to major in Livestock Management and Production. This will help me learn about the proper way of taking care of animals on a production standard. After completing my degree, I plan to come back to work on my dairy farm.

## FFA and Agriculture Education Experience

**Supervised Agriculture Experience Program and Scope**

My SAEs are in Dairy Production Entrepreneurship and Dairy Production placement.

Entrepreneurship: It centers around my herd of 21 Brown Swiss cows and one Holstein cow. I started at the age of eight, by leasing from my dad, where I now own my own herd. I keep my cows at my family's farm. Placement: I have a work exchange with my parents where my hours doing chores for the entire dairy are exchanged for feed and maintenance of my cattle.

**FFA Leadership Experience: (Office/Committee Assignment, Organization/Group, Year Held) - List up to 5**

Junior Officer, Clay Center FFA Chapter, 1 year (2023-2024); P.R. Specialist, Clay Center FFA, 1 year (2024-2025); Sentinel, Clay Center FFA Chapter, 1 year(2025-2026); Farm Safety Day Committee, Clay Center FFA Chapter, 3 years (2023-2025); Strengthening Ag Program of Activities Co-Chair, Clay Center FFA Chapter, 3 years (2024-2026)

**FFA Activities: (Chapter, District or National Events; CDEs; LDEs; Leadership Programs; and other FFA sponsored activities) - List up to 10**

NCD Greenhand Conference (One Year)

NCD Dairy Cattle (Four Years)

NCD Parlaw (Three Years)

NCD Rituals (Three Years)

NCD Employability Skills ( Three Years)

NCD Livestock Evaluation (Four Years)

NCD Horse Evaluation(Three Years)

Kansas FFA State Convention (One Year)

National Convention (One year)

Washington Leadership Conference(WLC)(One Year)

**Other Leadership and Service Activities: (Community, School, 4-H, Church, Sports, Clubs, etc.) - List up to 10**

4-H - Member (10 Years), Club President (One year), Club Vice President (One year), Club Secretary (One year), Club Reporter (One year),

Club Parliamentarian (One year), Club Historian (One year), Club Recreation (One year), Jr. Leaders Secretary (Two year), Council Secretary (One year), Council Vice President (One Year)

Clay Center Weslan Church- Member (Six years), Nursery assistant (4 Years), Children's Church Assistant (2 years)

## **Essay Questions**

### **What is your biggest accomplishment up until now? How has it shaped you and your leadership style?**

One of my biggest accomplishments was in September of 2025, at the Kansas State Fair. I received the Junior Reserve Supreme Cow. Through the Kansas FFA SAE Grant I received and additional money of my own I was able to purchase this heifer to add to my herd. This opportunity has allowed me to leave an impact on others while educating them about the dairy industry. During the Kansas State Fair, I have been able to teach over 600 people about the dairy industry over my four years at the fair. I have been able to mentor two different families about how to show dairy cattle. During this past state fair, several fair attendees came to me with questions while I was working with my cattle. Some of the questions were about how much milk she produces in a day to how my cow is getting fitted on her topline. There were also a lot of "Can I pet your cow?" questions. These questions and others have been a driving force behind my desire to mentor other families in 4-H and FFA who are interested in raising dairy cattle. As an upperclassman, I have been able to mentor two families within the dairy cattle project. I have been able to teach the basics of showmanship and how to clip dairy cattle, and they have also been able to learn more information throughout time. Being able to mentor has made me more whole, and it has helped me communicate with the kids and their parents. I have been able to teach them how to show dairy cattle properly. I will also get to mentor a good friend of mine this upcoming summer, where she is leasing out a few dairy cattle from my family farm. While I got to mentor all younger ages, I now get to mentor someone my age, and it will be a fun experience. The dairy industry has also helped me set up to be successful in life. Being the current Kansas Brown Swiss Queen, I have been able to travel to shows across Kansas and talk to Brown Swiss breeders. It has also led me to show and be able to hand out awards at the Heart of America Brown Swiss Show. I have also been able to talk to my community about the importance of dairy cattle and all the products that they make. Throughout this whole process of showing, it has shaped me into who I am today. It has taught me how to stay strong when faced with challenges. It has taught me to show others what is possible with a heifer that was fourth out of five in her class the year before, to a Supreme Champion cow. Most importantly, it has taught me how to be a leader when no one else wants to lead the youth.

### **If elected, how would you positively influence the Kansas FFA Association?**

If elected to a position on the officer team, I would like to get outside of my comfort zone, grow my public speaking skills, and share my love for agriculture with others. I have always been a kid who gets out of my comfort zone, but I do it cautiously. If elected, I am getting out of my comfort zone, and I am ready to learn how to better myself and help better the future of agriculture. While I have always had to do a speech for a final in high school, I have never done the LDE portion. Teaching others about agriculture and what it is all about is something that is special to me. Although I have not done a speech through FFA at a leadership development event, I have done it as a semester final project. I am very proud of myself because I have challenged myself to do research and present over challenging topics. Instead of participating in the public speaking LDE, I have opted to compete in the Employability Skills LDE. This LDE has challenged me to do my best and I am proud of the skills that I have obtained. I am proud of myself for still working to develop some public speaking skills in that event.

Every fall, my FFA Chapter hosts the 4th and 5th graders for a Farm Safety Day. This event has happened over the last 30 years. I have led kids around, and I have also led the animal safety station for the last three years. This has taught me a lot about public speaking and presenting to younger students. I have been able to communicate about agriculture positively and share my love for the industry.

My love for agriculture has grown over the last four years during my participation in FFA. It has taught me how to be more responsible, have patience, and find fulfillment in the opportunities that I am presented with. This has challenged me to advocate more to a diverse population. With that in my mind, I want to get out into other communities and tell everyone about FFA and the agriculture industry.

FFA has been a family to me. It will always be something that I love. Even if I am not selected for a position on an officer team, I will continue to support the Clay Center FFA Chapter and the Kansas FFA Association as an alumni. The opportunity to serve Kansas FFA as a state officer will continue to challenge me to get out of my comfort zone and share about the agriculture industry with others.