

# William Riley Sturgis

**Preferred First Name**

Riley

**High School**

Riverton High School

**Chapter Name**

Riverton FFA Chapter

**Chapter Number**

KS0151

**Semesters of Agricultural Education Completed**

8

**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?**

Kansas State University

**Anticipated College Major**

Food Science and Industry

**Career Objective**

Research and Development Food Scientist

## FFA and Agriculture Education Experience

**Supervised Agriculture Experience Program and Scope**

I have two SAEs, Unpaid Beef Placement and Diversified Livestock Entrepreneurship. My Unpaid Beef Placement began in 2023 when I got the opportunity to work at Elliott Brothers Livestock. Over the last three years, I have been able to gain more responsibilities in assisting with their herd of 47 Hereford cattle. My second SAE began in 2024, when I raised three crossbred pigs and oversaw the entire operation from materials to sale. In the fall of 2025, I invested in a Hereford steer in that SAE.

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

District President, Southeast District, 1 year (2025-2026)

Chapter President, Riverton FFA Chapter, 1 year (2025-2026)

District Reporter, Southeast District, 1 year (2024-2025)

Chapter Secretary, Riverton FFA Chapter, 1 year (2024-2025)

Chapter Reporter, Riverton FFA Chapter, 1 year (2023-2024)

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

Kansas FFA State Convention - 4 years

National FFA Convention and Expo - 4 years

Southeast District Milk Quality CDE - 4 years

Southeast District Prepared Public Speaking LDE - 4 years, (State Qualifier - 1 year)

State Milk Quality CDE - 3 years, (3rd place team, 9th individual - 1 year)

Southeast District Nursery Landscape CDE - 3 years

Southeast District Employability Skills LDE - 3 years, (State Qualifier - 1 year)

Southeast District Extemporaneous Public Speaking - 3 years

Southeast District Dairy Cattle Evaluation CDE - 2 years

Kansas FFA District Officer Conference - 2 years

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

National Honor Society (2 years), Chapter Vice President (1 year);  
Math League (3 years), Club Vice President (1 year);  
Science Club (3 years), Club President (1 year);  
FCCLA ( 3 years);  
FBLA (2 years);  
Concert Band (5 years);  
Jazz Band (3 years);  
Marching Band (2 years);  
Scholars Bowl (2 years);  
Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks Hunter Education (2 years)

## Essay Questions

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

Prior to my freshman year, I was very shy and kept to myself most of the time. I never did anything outside of school and did not pursue sports; all I would do was go to school, go home, play video games, and repeat. However, once my freshman year came, my sister encouraged me to join FFA. Begrudgingly, I did. Though I never planned on doing as much as I have today. I thought that FFA was going to be just another elective, yet, when our greenhand conference came around and it was time to compete in creed, I jumped at the opportunity. It was the very first time I was completely engaged in something; anytime I could practice the creed, I was. I was saying the creed in the car, at night, even in the shower. After what felt like months of practicing the creed, it was finally the day, greenhand conference. I was beyond nervous, my first time in the blue jacket and it felt like a pivotal moment. I waited what seemed like forever to present the creed to the group of judges. I left the room feeling mediocre, but later found out I had made it to finals. I said the creed one last time and waited for the results. Name after name was called, and suddenly I was the only name left. I had won, for the very first time, I had won something.

That leads us to today, where my continued interest in FFA has shaped and developed me into the leader I am. Without it, I truly believe that I would be the same reserved kid I was freshman year. It led me to pursue leadership positions, such as chapter and district office. When I began serving as an officer at both levels, I had always taken a backseat within team settings primarily out of habit. However, being elected the president of my chapter and district this past year, that all changed. After settling into the position over the summer, I realized that I would have to get out of the backseat and step up as a leader in all avenues. While it took some time to adjust, I began using all the skills that I had developed and observed over the past three years. Leading discussion, ensuring all voices are heard, and truly living up to the calling. This truly cemented my leadership style and who I have become through FFA. While winning the district creed my freshman year may seem insignificant to some, it remains my biggest and proudest accomplishment as it is what propelled me to seek things outside of my comfort zone and become engaged in the most pivotal years of my life.

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

Over the past three years, throughout my district and chapter officer positions, I've been able to impact this organization and the people in it. Each year during our chapter officer retreat, I would always end with my primary goal for that year, to encourage and help more members to find new opportunities and their niche in FFA. Since I was a very shy and quiet kid in my freshman year of high school, it was through the encouragement and persistence of the chapter officers that I became involved. Ever since then, I've been able to see firsthand how impactful it is to encourage those around you. There are handfuls of members I know that were just like me my freshman year; however, with encouragement and convincing, they have been able to realize the true impact of this organization.

Over the past three years, when I would focus on encouraging members to seek leadership positions or become engaged, there was one gap that never changed. The engagement and involvement of young men in this organization. Out of the five leadership teams I've been on, only one included another male. Which, does not take any value away from these other four teams; however, it is an example of how few males are pursuing leadership positions within this organization. Even recent Kansas FFA State Officer teams reflect that, as you would have to go back six years to find an officer team that had more than two male state officers. That leaves a six-year gap for members, which allows young males to possibly not envision themselves in that position. Personally, I've questioned if I was in the wrong place before; however, that's why I plan to build up all members while serving as an example for those young men who may think they don't belong in leadership positions. While I may not solve this problem in its entirety, I would love to be that role model for future young men.

As a Kansas FFA State Officer, I would continue to use the experiences I've had in my chapter and district officer positions to encourage members to fully involve themselves in the organization on a much larger scale. I find that simply being a member in FFA is very different from truly being involved in FFA. In my experience, you get out what you put in tenfold, as the growth and development I've gained through being involved in FFA is what makes me the person I am today. That's why I find it so important to ensure that each member is more than just a member, but an active voice within their chapter and community.