

To the Senate Finance Committee,

Good afternoon. I am an Ohio Agricultural Education Teacher here in Ohio and I have taught at Amanda-Clearcreek Schools for 31 years now. I am writing on behalf of HB 96, 5th Quarter funding for Agricultural Education Teachers here in Ohio. Currently HB 96 is included in the state budget for \$600,000 dollars. We would like to have that amount increased to \$1.2 million each year over the next two years. This funding will go to help the over 500 Agricultural Education Teachers in over 300 schools here in Ohio better serve their over 30,000 Ag Ed/FFA Members each year. This funding is used to help Ag Teachers work with their students outside of the normal school day, where the vast majority of all of the FFA Activities and leadership development activities take place. I have worked with thousands of students over the last 31 years outside of the normal school day hours and I believe this time has helped our students grow and learn in so many more ways than normal classes during regular school hours. Thank you very much for your consideration.

I will attach examples below:

Agricultural Education and FFA Facts Related to 5th Quarter:

1. How many FFA Members are there in Ohio? As of the 2024/2025 academic year, there were over 30,000 FFA Members in 332 schools throughout Ohio.
2. A Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) is a work-based learning program that provides students with the opportunity to gain real-world experience in the agriculture industry. SAEs are designed to help students develop skills and knowledge relevant to agricultural careers and apply what they learn in the classroom to real-life situations.
3. Nationwide, FFA members earn collectively each year from their work experiences nearly \$4 billion.
4. Career Development Events (CDEs) are competitions that help students develop skills for careers in agriculture. CDEs are often held at the local, state, and national levels. (CDEs) help students develop the abilities to think critically, communicate clearly, and perform effectively in a competitive job market.
5. Each year, approximately 10,000 Ohio high school and middle school FFA members participate in at least one CDE, while some participate in multiple events.
6. Thousands of Ohio FFA Members also participate in countless hours of Community Service each year.

- The Agriculture Education Fifth Quarter Grant is a state-funded grant to support year-round, Work-Based Learning instruction for students enrolled in agricultural education. The grant assists local schools and career centers with supplemental fiscal resources for the delivery of extended instruction to develop student Work-Based Learning through an organized, supervised agricultural experience.
- The Agricultural 5th Quarter project provides a stipend to agricultural education teachers for work done with students outside of the normal school day as well as during the summer months, as their school year does not end when summer starts. They are helping students with their supervised agricultural experiences (SAEs), taking students to FFA contests, FFA Camp, and many other events throughout the summer months as well as throughout the school year any time outside of the regular school day.
- Current funding is \$1.2 million over the biennium. OAAE humbly suggests raising funding to \$2.4 million in the FY26-27 Operating Budget (HB 96). Funding levels have not been raised in over a decade, and must be increased to reflect the increased costs and time that these teachers are experiencing.
- The average award per teacher is only \$2500 *for the whole year*. Many agricultural teachers work more than a 40-hour week with their students throughout the entire summer and school year without any other pay. Many are forced to find secondary employment.