

To the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Taylor Ryan, and I have proudly served as an Agricultural Education teacher at Indian Valley High School in Ohio for the past five years. I am writing in strong support of House Bill 96 and the proposed increase in funding for the 5th Quarter Agricultural Education program.

Currently, HB 96 is included in the state budget at \$600,000. We respectfully request that this amount be increased to \$1.2 million annually over the next two years. This funding would directly benefit more than 500 Agricultural Education teachers in over 300 schools across Ohio, positively impacting over 30,000 Agricultural Education and FFA students each year.

The 5th Quarter funding enables teachers like myself to engage students beyond the traditional school day—when the majority of FFA activities, leadership training, and career development events occur. Over the past five years, I have worked with hundreds of students during these extended hours. These experiences have proven essential in helping students develop practical skills, leadership abilities, and career readiness far beyond what can be accomplished in the classroom alone.

Increased support for this program is an investment in the future of Ohio agriculture and the young leaders who will shape it. I urge you to support this critical funding increase.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

I have attached 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.