



NATIONAL  
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June 5, 2026

Tennessee Association of Agricultural Educators, Board of Directors  
Chase Murray, State President  
Steve Stephens, Middle TN Vice-President  
Terri Lea, West TN Vice-President  
Amanda Massengill, East TN Vice-President  
Ann Johnson, Secretary  
Haley Williams, Treasurer

Dear Tennessee Association of Agricultural Educators,

Thank you for sharing your concerns and perspectives regarding the National FFA Organization, as raised in your letter dated April 17, 2026. We appreciate the important role agricultural educators play in delivering meaningful, life-changing experiences for students every day, and we value the passion and commitment reflected in your letter. We agree with your letter that the focus of the National FFA should remain firmly rooted in agricultural education, and we have been unwavering in our support.

Indeed, the National FFA Organization remains deeply committed to its mission of developing students' potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success. We recognize the importance of trust between National FFA, state associations, agricultural educators, students, alumni, and stakeholders. Maintaining that trust requires ongoing communication, transparency, thoughtful governance, and a willingness to listen to differing perspectives across our organization.

We disagree with the assertion in your letter that National FFA's focus has shifted away from its foundational purpose. We understand your concerns and similar concerns that you correctly stated, "were raised at multiple levels." We believe these concerns focused on isolated, historical, and anecdotal events that were not reflective of the overwhelmingly positive impact National FFA has on students who have become profoundly successful leaders, as demonstrated by its nearly 100-year history, nor indicative of any systemic deficiency at the National FFA. Nonetheless, National FFA took concerns seriously and approached each inquiry with the utmost integrity and transparency. We provided a written narrative and appropriate context for each inquiry and fully responded to all questions without objection or evasion. For example, we provided over 5,000 pages of documents to the U.S. HWM Committee and 12,000 pages to the Indiana Attorney General. We also made our responses available to FFA members.





NATIONAL  
FFA ORGANIZATION

It should be noted that over the past several months, as National FFA has responded to these inquiries, there have been numerous expressions of support for FFA and our leadership from FFA members, teachers, state staff, alumni, agricultural industry supporters, and many others. We are not aware of any instances in which our sponsors and/or broad external support have not aligned with the FFA mission and strategic priorities of National FFA. We believe that the credibility and integrity of the National FFA and its leadership remain intact, and we will endeavor by all necessary means to support National FFA membership and strengthen its agricultural programs. Our Board of Directors and National FFA staff have maintained focus on this mission delivery throughout these recent inquiries.

Regarding your specific letter, as promised during my April 23 conversation with Chase Murray, the April 17, 2026, "TAAE Statement of Concern and Confidence" letter was discussed as an agenda item at our May 12 National FFA Board of Directors meeting in Indianapolis. This response will focus on the items included on page 4, paragraph 2, namely, "to take immediate and deliberate action to review leadership decisions, organizational priorities, and governance practices, and take necessary steps to restore alignment with the mission of agricultural education and rebuild trust among educators, students, and stakeholders."

One action taken by National FFA, even before the receipt of your letter, was to correct any misperception that may have been created in FFA's March 20, 2026, response to the U.S. HWM Committee, relating to events at the 2021 National FFA Convention & Expo. Your letter correctly asserted that claims of racism by a Tennessee chapter were determined to be unfounded. If any misperception was created in National FFA's March 20, 2026, letter, it was corrected on April 16, 2026, when National FFA submitted a supplemental email statement to the HWM that provided:

On March 20, 2026, the National FFA Organization submitted its formal written response to the February 3, 2026, request for information. Although we believe the submission was accurate, it has come to our attention that language used in two instances in the letter was not as precise as it could have been and could potentially be misconstrued by readers. This email is being sent as an effort to clarify those two instances.

The first instance appears on page 10, first full paragraph, which currently reads:

*Meanwhile, amid national tensions, FFA experienced racial and behavioral incidents, including on stage actions, at the 2021 National FFA Convention & Expo, that violated the National FFA's Code of Ethics.*





NATIONAL  
FFA ORGANIZATION

While actions considered by some to be offensive did occur on stage, the on-stage behavior ultimately was not determined to be a violation of the National FFA's Code of Ethics. The remainder of the sentence was correct. To be more precise, the submission should be changed to read as follows:

*Meanwhile, amid national tensions, FFA experienced racial and behavioral incidents at the 2021 National FFA Convention & Expo that violated the National FFA's Code of Ethics.*

[discussion of second correction is not relevant and is omitted]

Your letter incorrectly asserted that FFA's March 20, 2026, response implied that "students from Tennessee violated FFA's Code of Ethics." To be clear, no FFA members or chapters were identified in any incident. The purpose of including the event description was not to single out any group, but to provide proper context that National FFA was addressing specific safety concerns raised by FFA members. As an organization, National FFA, we must ensure the safety of our members, guests, and participants at the National FFA Convention & Expo, and it was proper to address the claims.

Your April 17, 2026, letter also asserted "inconsistencies" related to the "alleged improper removal of a National FFA Officer" while "inappropriate conduct by multiple senior staff has gone unaddressed." Public discourse has incorrectly caused this assertion to be repeated and believed, but FFA is legally unable to address the facts that show the fallacy of this conclusion. It is publicly known that a National FFA Officer was removed many years ago for actions determined at the time to violate National FFA policies, but the matter was privately resolved under confidentiality provisions that prohibit National FFA from making any further comment. Furthermore, your assertions that "inappropriate conduct by multiple senior staff has gone unaddressed" are incorrect; however, for legal privacy reasons, these incidents cannot be discussed by National FFA.

On the organizational issues raised in your letter, our commitment to FFA's role in agricultural education at the national level begins with the strategic plan. We are nearing the conclusion of our strategic planning process. The process involved input from nearly 200 professionals, including agricultural teachers, state agricultural education staff, alumni and supporters, agricultural teacher educators, CTE directors, and agricultural industry professionals. All 2025 National FFA Delegates were invited to provide input. Over 170 student delegates completed the online survey. Our strategic planning team met with the Student Input on Strategic Direction for 2027-2031 Committee as part of the delegate





process. A record of the delegate committee recommendations is available on the [Delegate Experience webpage](#).

While National FFA's strategic plan has not yet been finalized and approved by our Board of Directors, it aligns with the mission of agricultural education. The three main goals are:

1. Expand member experiences in agriculture, food, and natural resources career pathways.
2. Strengthen mission-delivery excellence through alignment, innovation, and resources.
3. Leverage data insights to enhance member experience and expand impact.

The Board of Directors operates through committees to address the organization's major initiatives, including the strategic plan, student safety, delegate processes, and student leadership and voice at the national level. Board members both solicit open input from their representative organizations and provide specific feedback to our National FFA staff on these and other programs.

Our Board of Directors and leadership team remain firmly focused on agricultural education and student leadership development. We review policies, governance, and organizational practices consistently and with accountability. We expect professionalism from our National FFA Officers while supporting their growth as student leaders. Through ongoing engagement with teachers, state staff, national committees, and agricultural education partners across the country, we remain connected to the needs and priorities of agricultural education.

The Board of Directors and the National FFA Leadership Team have previously addressed several concerns raised in your letter. The Board Policy Committee is evaluating and clarifying policies related to religious and faith expression for National FFA staff, the Board of Directors and Trustees, Board of Student Officers, and part-time facilitators working at the national level. The current policy aligns with guidance from the U.S. Department of Education, most recently issued on February 5, 2026. I want to emphasize that these policies do not dictate the policies or practices of state associations and local FFA chapters concerning religious expression. Those are state and local decisions.

Our Student Voice Committee was established by the 2024-25 National FFA Officers and the Board of Directors to explore the role of the National FFA Officer team on the Board of Directors. To evaluate and amplify national-level student leadership, the committee reviewed prior board meeting minutes and developed a timeline of the evolution of our current Board of Student Officers and Board of Directors, which act as *one* board. The





NATIONAL  
FFA ORGANIZATION

committee plans to gather additional input from former National FFA Officers about their experiences.

In 2024, the Board of Directors formed the Delegate Representation Committee in response to delegate recommendations aimed at enhancing the delegate process. The committee first sought feedback from state FFA staff at the July 2024 State Officer Summit. Based on that and subsequent feedback, National FFA staff now offers four online meetings with state officers and delegates before the State Officer Summit to help participants understand the process and ensure that numerous delegate committee proposals are submitted. In the past three years, proposals for delegate committees have risen from 0 in 2023 to 14 in 2025. Staff created a podcast series and educational materials for delegates.

We appreciate TAAE taking the time to formally share its perspective. Feedback from agricultural educators and other stakeholders is important as we continue to strengthen the organization and ensure we serve state associations and local chapters effectively.

Thank you for your continued commitment to agricultural education and the students we collectively serve. I look forward to our conversations at the NAAE Region V Conference in Wilmington, N.C., next month. In the meantime, if you have additional ideas, please let me know at [nationalboardchair@ffa.org](mailto:nationalboardchair@ffa.org) or [boardofdirectors@ffa.org](mailto:boardofdirectors@ffa.org).

Here by the owl,

Dr. Travis Park  
National FFA Advisor and Board Chair