

# Ty Ankrom's Here's What I Think ...

Anytime a Pickaway County student is recognized, it's cause to be proud.



Last week, that pride was doubled as two Westfall FFA chapter members were lauded for their years of hard work. The FFA chapter is a satellite program of Pickaway-Ross Career & Technology Center.

Austin Wippel, a junior at Ohio State University and a member of FFA since 2009, received the American Star Farmer award, one of the most prestigious awards presented by the National FFA to a student.

Austin has been running a straw business since he was a teen, starting with 5,000 small square bales of hay.

Today he raises 65 acres of corn, soybeans, wheat and alfalfa hay in rotation. Between the hay and straw, he handles an average of 23,500 small square bales of hay and straw per year.

Austin said winning the American Star Farmer award is a big honor.

"It was extremely exciting," he said, of hearing his name called at the National FFA Convention & Expo, held Oct. 28-31 in Louisville, Ky.

Winning the award is a culmination of sorts for Austin's FFA career. But his farming will continue. He will graduate from Ohio State in 2017 with a degree in agronomy and return to work on the family farm in Orient.

He encourages other FFA members to put in the effort that's required for success.

"Don't be afraid to make the most of the opportunities that come your way," Austin said.

Maggie Hovermale, a senior in Pickaway-Ross' Veterinary Science Technologies program, did just that and was recognized as the national winner in the Agricultural Processing Proficiency Area.

Maggie has worked at Honey-



Maggie Hovermale, second from left, and Austin Wippel, second from right, received high honors from the National FFA last week. Shown with them are their advisors, Rachel Scior, left, and Rick Metzger, right.



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run Farms in Williamsport and is involved in the processing, bottling, labeling and distribution of products.

During the 2014 summer, Honeyrun had her work at the North Market in Columbus and she cited the sales and customer experience as a great accomplishment in her award application, highlighting that she increased Honeyrun's sales by 7 percent.

Maggie said winning the award was very rewarding and has renewed her passion to interview for a state FFA officer position.

"My mom (Joy) has always told me since I was little I could do anything if I put my mind to it and then put the hard work into it," Maggie said.

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