

# Growing their own Future



*Many don't think about farming as being an entrepreneurial venture, but this couldn't be further from the truth. Today's modern farm is definitely business oriented! FFA helps prepare young farming entrepreneurs for today's highly competitive agricultural industry. They have many success stories. Here are two...*

**Rachael Arkfeld** figured out early on that if you want to run a successful business, you have to develop a product that stands out from all the others. She owns and operates Arbor Country Meats, a specialty sausage enterprise that produces and markets an apple-flavored bratwurst.



Her idea for the product stemmed from an increasing demand in her community for specialty products that represent her city's main claim to fame—apple orchards.

“In the spring, the community has a celebration for Arbor Day, which brings about 8,000 people to town. In the fall the community celebrates the apple harvest with a celebration called Apple Jack which brings another 6,000 people to town,” Arkfeld said. “The visitors and the community itself have an appreciation for locally grown and produced products such as my apple bratwursts.”

Through her business endeavor, Arkfeld has already, at a very young age, mastered the advanced business principles of product and market development. She also credits her high school agriculture classes and FFA with some of her success: “Through the combination of my agriculture classes and entrepreneurship projects, I have had the opportunity to gain hands-on experiences, and to apply knowledge that I gained in the classroom to the real world of marketing,” she said. Rachael is currently a freshman at Coffeyville Community College in Coffeyville, Kansas where she is studying Agricultural Education.

While attending Lourdes Central Catholic High School, in Nebraska City, Nebraska she was actively involved in FFA, 4-H, band, color guard, Big Brother/Big Sister, history and science fairs, track and the student council. She was also the National Honor Society chaplain and the captain of her speech team.

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Right before **Clayton Carley's** freshman year of high school, he realized that he was going to need money for college, for a car, and for funding many of his other activities and endeavors. It wasn't long before he had a plan. He sat down with his parents to discuss the idea of setting up his own vegetable stand.

Clayton's family had always grown sweet corn. Many times they would have extra and would share it with their friends and neighbors. Many people would remark that the Carleys' sweet corn was the best they'd ever tasted. This gave the Clayton the idea that he could gain a lot of market share, thanks to his superior product. So, he found a prime location and set up "The Sweet Corn Shack." Business the first year was a little shaky, but as word spread throughout the community about the quality of Clayton's product, and his excellent customer service skills, business began to boom.



Clayton says that he's learned a lot from his business. His endeavor has not only had a positive impact on his life, but on the community as well. "I will never forget when a customer came to me and said that he was very impressed with how I sold my corn and was nice to my customers and had a strong work ethic and determination," Clayton said. "He said that he had mostly lost hope in the future because of what he sees in teenagers these days, but because of what I have done in the FFA, it has restored his hope." Clayton will graduate from Crescent-Iroquois High School in 2010. In addition to his FFA activities, he plays soccer, is active in Awana, and teaches Sunday school at his church. □

