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LINCOLN, NE (July 10, 2020) --Awards were presented to 11 FFA members for their speaking skills and knowledge of cooperatives during a special awards ceremony on July 2, 2020. Normally the FFA Cooperative Speaking Event is held during the State FFA Convention in April. Due to the pandemic, this year's event was conducted via Zoom on June 26.

This disruption certainly has impacted many things, and we want to thank the Nebraska Department of Education, the State FFA Association, the State Ag Teachers, and the students involved for finding a way to continue this event.

Each contestant in the Cooperative Speaking Competition was judged on a six- to eight-minute prepared speech on a topic dealing with cooperatives and their benefits to the local, state and national economies. Participants were selected for the competition at district contests throughout the state over the past several months.

The competition is sponsored by the Nebraska Cooperative Council Education Foundation in an effort to help develop leadership skills and increase understanding of the cooperative system. 2020 marks the 69th consecutive year that the Council or the Education Foundation has supported the Nebraska FFA Association.

Jadyn Burenheide from the Howells Dodge FFA Chapter took top honors in the 2020 competition and received a trophy, first place medal, and check for \$250 from the NCC Education Foundation. Second place went to Abby Scholz of the BerMis Chapter along with a medal and check for \$125. Third place went to Hailey Goering of the Humphrey FFA Chapter who received a medal and check for \$75.

Also receiving medals in the competition and the FFA chapters they represent were:

Gold - Grace Popken, Mead

Silver - Jenny Goesch, Boyd County; Brynn Holtmeier, Meridian; Kaylee Noel, Shickley; Alex Worthing, Arthur;

Bronze - Cody Maricle, Boone Central; Kendall Stemper, Alma; Morgan Wallinger, Stuart

Rocky Weber, NCCEF President, indicated that "The Council is proud to provide support for these students as they develop their leadership and communication skills while at the same time learning about the value cooperatives bring to Nebraskans all across the state."