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Cal Poly Students Win Awards at National FFA Convention

Two Cal Poly students won proficiency awards recently at the 2008 National FFA Convention.

The organization gave out 48 awards in its National Agricultural Proficiency Awards Pageant at the convention, which took place Oct. 22-25 in Indianapolis, Ind.

Andre Alves, a first-year Agribusiness student, won the award for Agricultural Mechanics Design and Fabrication - Entrepreneurship/Placement. And Cameron Lange, a second-year Horticulture and Crop Science student, won in Environmental Science and Natural Resources - Entrepreneurship and Placement.

The National FFA Agricultural Proficiency Award program helps students cultivate skills in specific areas of agricultural entrepreneurship and placement through hands-on work. Proficiency competitions are based on each student's supervised agricultural experience program, in which they work at a profitable agricultural enterprise under the close supervision of their FFA advisor. Students are encouraged to keep meticulous records of their projects and are then evaluated on their projects' merits.

Alves, a member of the Kingsburg FFA in California, worked at Wildwood Express truck yard, where his duties included fabrication of trailers and equipment and helping to perform upgrades on big rigs. Later, he worked at Kingsburg Cultivator, a manufacturer of specialized farm equipment, where he installed hydraulic components on machinery.

Lange worked at Access Research and Consulting, a research facility specializing in environmental safety. The Fresno-Central FFA member's duties included research plot setup, chemical application, soil sample collection and water collection and observation.

The students' wins culminated lengthy processes in which they won awards at the sectional, regional and state levels. Four students from around the country competed at the national level in each of the program's 48 proficiency areas, going through interviews with a panel of judges. Winners took home plaques and \$500 awards, in addition to \$500 they received for qualifying.

FFA, formerly Future Farmers of America, is a national youth organization with more than 500,000 members preparing for careers in agriculture. There are 7,439 FFA chapters around the U.S. and its territories. For more information, visit www.ffa.org.

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