

Lucy Barney

Year in School – 12

Rigby High School

Idaho

Whether pulling calves while in ice puddles, working draft horses each day, or chasing water in the dead of night, ranching and agriculture have been a major part of my childhood and youth. Although the sacrifices and hardships take a toll, I have learned to love the rewarding enriching agricultural lifestyle. Farming is becoming less and less common, and many misconceptions are considered true by a growing majority of Americans. As James Douglas once said, “Agriculture is the backbone of our nation”. During high school, I have devoted many hours and skills toward advocating for agriculture through the Rigby FFA program. I understand the issues that farmers are facing because my family has faced them directly. I have worked hard to balance my schoolwork and farm chores – and combine them in a way as well. I will be receiving my associate degree from CSI in April, right before I graduate high school in May. I plan to major in biochemistry and hope to go into the bioengineering field to address sustainable agriculture and the genetic engineering of crops.

Farmers struggle with many issues including water management, debt, tanking prices, severe weather, suicides, and more. Independent small farming is not a viable career choice nowadays. Farming and ranching create a stressful lifestyle and often must be supported with another flow(s) of income. So, what can be done about the declining rates of farming and the declining way of life for farmers? I have spoken with various organizations and political officials e.g. Farm Bureau, Jerald Raymond, Rod Furniss, Van Burtenshaw, and Scott Bedke. These men have similar and different views on various agricultural issues. An important thing to be obtained would be to address misconceptions about the field with the students of my generation. I recently competed at the National FFA Convention in Agricultural Communications. I connected with leaders in agriculture corporations such as Zoetis, John Deere, and Corteva. This experience taught me how I can use many resources to showcase agriculture through the eyes of a true agriculturist. I have worked for three years at multiple elementary school agriculture education events in the Rigby community. Many youth do not understand where their food comes from and may not care because of this nationwide illiteracy. By instilling an understanding of the

agriculture industry, I can help these citizens vote in a way that supports the land, farmers, and the people.

The need for agricultural advocacy drives me to obtain a degree in agricultural bioengineering. This will allow me to solve agricultural issues in the field and advocate on a local and national level. Additionally, a proper job will support the small farm or ranch I plan to acquire and work on with my future family. As a seventh generational farmer, I do not wish the hard work of my ancestors and family to be forgotten. I am excited to continue resolving misconceptions and advocating for agriculture as I continue my education in bioengineering.