



Melissa Rae Arp
Days Creek FFA
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I was sweating bullets and whether it was from the anxiety or the heat I will never be quite sure. I was standing in the poorly covered arena after 3 continuous hours of standing around in FFA Official Dress during the 90 degree heat. My black steer beside me was just as hot if not more, his 2 inches of hair made sure that he looked great but he was always over heated. Just like he was taught how to do he stood next to me head up no matter how much he wanted to put it down. Curious George, my 1210 pound market steer had been on his feet for about 5 hours at this point. How I had earned the trust and loyalty of this amazing animal was beyond me. During the 10 months we were a team we had attended 3 different shows and he was now going through the ring for one of the last times. We were synchronized to every footfall, the final walk was the most agonizing thing I have ever done. I never thought I wanted to win so badly. When the judge smacked George on the rump, he didn't even jump. George picked his ears up and got more pep in his step, he knew he had won, I don't know how but he did. The judge went on to pick the Reserve Champion Market Steer which was shown by Andrew Beattie and had been at our backs the entire show. Andrew and I racked up 2 big scores for Team Corduroy. Back in the stall talking to Andrew I couldn't have been happier that it was him in that stall with me. Sharing this huge achievement in my life with a fellow FFA member was one of the most rewarding experiences I have to date.

Now I would like to be able to share another huge achievement with all of you. Becoming a State Officer has been one of my goals since I could remember. My family has been huge in the FFA; I swear some times that they are lifetime sponsors, even now that my dad is my advisor. I started in 4-H and when I became a freshman in high school I became an official FFA member, hand-me-down FFA corduroy jacket and everything. That faded blue jacket, while worn in and comfortable, just doesn't hold the same memories as your own personal jacket does. I would like to be able to make the Oregon Association Jacket hold its own memories, one that I would make and share with you, my fellow FFA Members.

Respectfully yours,

Melissa Rae Arp