

## Nelson

wasn't in any CDE's," Feiring stated. "I didn't really see him much for practices, so I tried to make sure I reached out, [but] he had it all covered. He did most of it on his own. I made sure I gave him the link for when it [was] time to apply; [made] sure he knew when the deadline was and just kind of checking in on him."

"[For me] it was just be there for moral support; be there for him during convention and check in with him and see how it's going," he continued. "I knew he would do good, and I got lots of compliments from the other FFA advisors that were running the screening committee. They [said] he was very impressive."

Despite having served as New Salem FFA's President this past year, Nelson said that thoughts of doubt in his candidacy crept into his head as he met the other candidates vying for a state officer role.

"When I went into the screening committee and I met all the wonderful candidates, I had this moment of 'am I really one of the choices here?' Everyone was such an incredible person, incredible speaker [and] held themselves together so well that I doubted my own ability to succeed," he stated.

Though he shared a sense of pride and gratefulness in the history he made, Nelson says he doesn't feel any added pressure as State FFA President other than to simply do his best for New Salem and North Dakota FFA.



2026 - 2027  
**Maksim Nelson**  
ND FFA President

graphic | North Dakota FFA

"New Salem as a community is so welcoming [and] so incredible that I know at the end of the day, I'll give it my best and they'll be proud of me for it," he said. "I don't think there are expectations that I have to meet other than to give my best, and hopefully, best case scenario, I start some sort of New Salem president chain."

Whether or not he will be the only New Salem FFA member to be named state President remains to be seen, but Nelson's appointment to the position is already having a positive ripple effect within the local chapter.

"There are already kids thinking about running for state office now that I probably wouldn't have thought [of] if Maksim wouldn't have got elected," Feiring said. "...I think as far as this corner of the state, when we start getting kids, whether they're

from Glen Ullin or Mandan, when you start getting those kids running, it kind of has a domino effect...I'm guessing you'll see an uptake next year from this area of kids running just because we have somebody from this area that's an officer."

Following the conclusion of the convention, Nelson spent the ensuing week in Bismarck for officer training. He'll go through leadership training in Bismarck again before embarking on a statewide tour in early July. Thereafter, he'll be in Washington D.C, then he'll make an appearance at the State fair. In late August, he'll officially begin his first semester of college at North Dakota State University.

As he reflected on the busy year ahead of him, Nelson again stated his gratitude for the opportunity that lies before him. When asked

Continued from page 1

what he envisions for his tenure as ND FFA President, he shared in his hope of making sure members across the state feel seen and heard by the FFA.

"I was one of those kids where I really didn't know where my home was in high school," he said. "I thought it was in football for a long, long time, but then FFA really shined through. That was where I felt at home. That was where I felt like I was putting my best effort towards to do something productive."

"If I can change one kid's life into thinking that FFA is their home, I will be a happy president," he added. "I want kids, no matter what background they come from, if they live on a farm or if they live in town, if they maybe don't have the best home life, I want them to feel embraced and welcomed by the FFA, because at the end of the day, I do think this is the best organization that a kid can be a part of. It teaches you so many different skills, so many different lessons, and just how to be a good human. If I were to leave anything behind to the members of FFA, it's that they are welcome and that this is an opportunity I think everyone should try their hand at. And if it turns out after a year or two of trying it, it's not for you, at least you put in that effort because I do think that this organization is worth the effort."

## New Salem FFA at State



photos | New Salem FFA

**THE NEW SALEM FOOD SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TEAM** won gold at the State FFA Convention in Fargo. From r to l: Payton Doll, Gold; Hannah VanderWal, Gold; Raeyne Cornett, Silver; Zoe Robinson, Silver, Keely Norton, Gold.



**THE NEW SALEM MEATS EVALUATION TEAM** won gold at the State FFA Convention in Fargo. From l to r: Gentry Hoovestol, Gold; Sophia Voigt, Gold; Natalee Gappert, Silver; Kylie Wolf, Silver; Cody Koeplin, Silver.



**THE NEW SALEM MILK QUALITY AND PRODUCTS TEAM** were named state champions of the ND State FFA Convention in Fargo. From l to r: Alexa Heid, Gold High Individual; Allison Lennick, Gold; Makynna Nelson, Gold; Harper Elijah, Gold 2nd place; Norah Broderson, Gold; Kinsley Barclay.



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