

## Senior Field Studies Fact Sheet

**General Information:** Senior Field Studies is a program inviting high school seniors from Bear Creek High School in Jefferson County to explore different facets of communities in Colorado. It is a semester long course focusing on experiential learning. The students visit and participate in various environments that surround them: urban, suburban, rural and wilderness.

The Colorado Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee sponsors the rural segment of Senior Field Studies. The rural portion consists of a student living with a Farm Bureau host family for one week. **In 2019, students will be visiting the country from April 11<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> (seven nights) to experience farm and ranch life first hand.** This program is a tremendously valuable opportunity to educate future voters about the issues that face agriculture and rural America in a unique and impactful way.

The rural portion of Senior Field Studies has been a huge success for many years and students often consider it the highlight of their semester. It has proven to be a great way to improve communications and build understanding between rural and urban communities. Thank you for considering this. We hope you will join us by hosting a student or more.

**About the Students:** These students are from a wide variety of backgrounds and are of different races and nationalities. They are not necessarily interested in a career in agriculture, but are studying farming, ranching and rural living to add depth of understanding and perspective. They will discuss agriculture in their classroom with a CFB staff person and Roxi McCormick, the State Women's Leadership Committee Chair. Some of the objectives of the rural live-in experience include understanding your daily rhythms, gaining knowledge of the challenges farmers and ranchers must deal with on a day-to-day basis, participate in the daily chores, understand how politics affect the agricultural industry and to compare and contrast rural lifestyles with that of their urban/suburban counterparts.

Senior Field Studies is for both college bound and non-college bound students and designed for seniors who have satisfied all other curriculum requirements for graduation. Each student must contribute more than \$1000 to participate.

All of the students are required to obtain a medical examination prior to the course. They are covered by school liability, just as they would be for any sports activity, and you are not liable for accidents that might occur while they are at your home.

**Hosting a Student:** Host families are encouraged to treat their student as one of the family. You should try to keep your student busy through work activities that directly relate to your operation. This may include driving a tractor or truck, calving, fertilizing, fence fixing, bookkeeping, etc. The idea is to give the student the same work you or a hired hand would do (with the exception, they should not be overworked). If you host a female student, be sure to let her participate in the majority of the farm chores just as you would a male student. You might want to allow your student some choice in work activities that might fit their interest or talents. Try to strike a balance so the student is involved and busy with all family activities and doesn't feel like free labor.

**Preparing for the Week:** The students are informed that you, as their host family, are in charge. Most of them have not spent time on a farm or ranch before. Most of them will not have the same work ethic as you do. Some will jump right in and help and others may need some prompting, so do not feel uncomfortable giving them direction. It is a new environment for them and they will be away from their peers, so hopefully, you will become their friend as well. Please take time to establish your House Rules with your student as soon as they arrive.

The schools will assign each student to a family at the end of March, based upon the information provided in your application. Please be specific when filling out your application. Describe your operation in detail and try to describe what an average day on your farm or ranch might be like.

After the students are assigned to a family, they will write/email their host family to tell them a little about themselves prior to their visit. Host families should respond to tell their student about the family, more about the farm or ranch operation, specific items to bring, etc. It is also a good idea to talk to your student on the phone before the visit - to establish further contact and help the student and your family feel more comfortable when they arrive.

**During the Week:** Allow time for interaction and discussion between the student and your family. The experience will be much more meaningful to the student if you explain more than how to do things, but why you do them. Students will also need appropriate time to themselves and for homework due after the experience such as essays, notebook and a field journal.

If there is time, host families may want to let the student experience some activities in the community such as schools, water meetings, meetings of various organizations, sales, visits to other farms, etc. The students will expect to attend church, if the family attends. Many counties also sponsor a potluck dinner for the students and host families so the students can share their experiences with everyone. Do not feel obligated to "entertain" your student. They expect to work, keep busy and experience your way of living.

Each area of the state that is hosting students will have a coordinator. The teacher will arrange the date, time and place the students will arrive and depart with the coordinator and he or she will notify you. You can always contact your coordinator if you have any questions. If you should have any problems while the student is in your home, you can phone their teacher or the Farm Bureau state office.

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