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Barn completion celebrated

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For *The Lebanon Reporter*

More than 85 students, volunteers and friends of Dull's Tree Farm gathered together Sunday afternoon in Thorntown to celebrate the end of days of hard work, and their love of agriculture. Last week, the students and volunteers had one goal in mind – to breathe new life into an old barn. The restoration, sponsored by Campbell's Soup and the Future Farmers of America (FFA), was part of a national event used to help promote agriculture awareness.

"Our goal was to give something back to production agriculture and we thought, what better than the iconic symbol of the barn," said Lucy Whitehead, program manager for the National FFA Alumni Association.

Owners of more than 25 barns nationwide applied for the opportunity to have their barns restored as part of part of Campbell's "Help Grow Your Soup" campaign. The barn at Dull's Tree Farm was one of the final five barns selected. The other farms selected were in North Carolina, Michigan and Maryland. Campbell's donated a gift of \$250,000 to help



PHOTO BY KERI LAWRENCE

FFA Students recite the FFA Creed during the celebration at the end of a barn renovation project at Dull's Tree Farm. From left are Rachel Lloyd, Jaclyn Bush, Kyrsten Dunham, Katye Choate and Mitchell Powell.

restore the barns. A portion of the donation also went to the Ag Educators Fund.

"The Campbell's Soup Company and the National FFA joined together because they're trying to educate the world about where their food comes from," Whitehead said. "They were looking for an organization to partner with that really pushes Ag Education. And that's what FFA is all about."

The barn, which dates back to 1888, has been in the Dull

family since 1950. Restorations involved fresh coats of paint and much-needed structural repairs.

"It's been here a long time, and I don't think it's looked this good probably since 1888," said Kerry Dull, who runs the farm alongside her husband, Tom.

The Dull's Farm, though most well-known for its annual crop of Christmas trees, is a fully-functioning farm that harvests corn and soybeans. The barn restora-

tion was the FFA's way of saying thank-you to the Dulls and all the farmers who bring food to the nation's tables.

"We wanted to do something as a community-service project for those individuals in production agriculture. So, we came up with the idea of pulling in FFA chapters and allowing them to go in and do community service, which actually fulfills a part of the FFA motto of 'Living to Serve,'" Whitehead said.

Serve is exactly what they did. No contractors or paid staff were hired for the restoration. All the work was done by students and volunteers from three FFA chapters in Indiana and Illinois.

"The two states just bonding together and working – I mean it was just awesome to pull everything off and get everything built," said Calvin Lynch, president of the Cissna Park FFA Chapter in Cissna Park, Ill.

Along with Cissna Park, the Western Boone and Clinton Prairie FFA chapters brought team members to aid in the project. Projects such as the barn restoration have helped FFA students learn valuable lessons, which will help them in years to come.

▼ Turn to **BARN**/ Page 5