

# New Mexico Activities Association Student-Athlete Spotlight

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## Lightfoot Places Third at National FFA Convention

By Tyler Dunkel, NMAA Sports Information Director

Mackenzie Lightfoot, a freshman at Roy High School, has been around the Future Farmers of America program since she can remember, as her father, Clay Lightfoot is an agriculture teacher and FFA advisor at Roy.

Lightfoot has competed in Agriculture Science since the seventh grade. Agriculture Science is a broad multidisciplinary field of biology that encompasses the parts of exact, natural, economic and social sciences that are used in the practice and understanding of agriculture.

In mid-October, Lightfoot traveled to the 89th National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana and placed third overall, presenting her project titled "How to Keep Mold At Bay." The project tested the effects of commercial and natural preservatives on homemade mozzarella cheese to see which one would improve the shelf life of the cheese.

"The findings of my project were pretty interesting. I found that the commercial preservative worked better than the natural preservative."

Lightfoot first presented her project at the State level, winning first place, then she submitted her project at the National level and was one of 15 students invited to Indianapolis. There, Lightfoot again presented her findings to a panel and was awarded third place for her efforts.

"It was a great feeling to win the state competition for the second year in a row but I was nervous going to Nationals. I felt that my project this year wasn't as scientific as the year before so I wasn't sure if I would finish better than I did the year before, which was ninth overall."

"When they called my name as the third place finisher I was really surprised. It was a good feeling to know all my hard work had paid off. To place higher than the year before was also a great feeling."

Lightfoot believes that Agriculture is our country's future and the FFA program not only teaches students about agriculture but helps groom leaders, through leadership training.

"FFA is very important to me. Students learn public speaking and leadership skills and I truly believe that the future of America will be built around our younger leaders. I love FFA because it has transformed me from a shy little seventh grader to being a leader in my school."

Her father, Clay (Lightfoot), has been a big influence and inspiration to her and is a driving force behind her success thus far.

"My father's influence has been a major part of my success



and involvement in FFA. I have watched him over the years help groom and mold other students into leaders and good citizens. He has truly impacted not only my life but so many others as well.”

Lightfoot is also involved in FFA Sports and Student Council at Roy and is the freshman representative.

“Being a part of the student council at Roy is just another opportunity for me to be in a leadership role and I have really enjoyed being a part of the organization and representing my school.”

She plans to attend college after graduating high school and, although that might be a little over three years into the future, Lightfoot has her eyes set on the future.

“After high school I plan to go to college and graduate with an animal science degree, becoming either a veterinarian or an agriculture teacher and FFA advisor.”

Regardless of the path Lightfoot takes, one thing you can bet on is she will be at the front of the pack, leading the way.