Fact Sheet – O'CONNOR FFA CONTEST

Students develop project to extend life of flower bouquets, hope to patent idea

About: Two James Madison FFA members have created a device they believe will help to extend the life of flowers in floral shops. Hannah Taylor and Ashley Walker created a device to reduce the amount of bacteria in floral buckets, which led to longer shelf life of cut flowers. The device uses an air pump provide air near the bottom of floral buckets. There are no other devices on the market or in the industry like the prototype created by the two FFA members at their local ag program. They have not only presented their findings to judges in various contests, but have also presented them to the H-E-B floral department who has expressed interest in providing the device to their floral producers. The girls have acquired a patent attorney, and are currently working to raise money to pay for a patent that will allow them to refine their product and get in the hands of floral stores and possible into homes all over the country to help preserve the life of flowers.

Where/When: After interning at their local H-E-B floral department, Taylor and Walker conducted their experiment at the James Madison AMP in the fall of 2017. They were able to use equipment at the AMP to conduct their research, analyze data and write their research paper. The students competed at several science fairs including the agriscience fair at the Texas FFA State Convention, National FFA Convention, the Alamo Regional Academy of Science and Engineering (ARASE) fair, and the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF). The students have also presented their science fair to H-E-B in hopes their device will be used by H-E-B's floral providers. Along with these presentations, news of their device and research has been aired or published in all 50 states.

Purpose: The purpose of their research was to provide a way to extend the shelf life of cut flowers in the floral industry. They found that 45 percent of all cut flowers are discarded due to spoilage. They wanted to find a way to make the flowers last longer for the $105 billion floral industry.

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