

Sunshine Leadership/Career Development Academy



A career development program for current and former 4-H and FFA members across South Louisiana.



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A Note from Rob Richter, President/CEO, Sunshine Quality Solutions



Pictured: Cade LeJeune, Louisiana FFA, Grace Vest, Sunshine Quality Solutions Marketing, Rob Richter, Sunshine Quality Solutions President/CEO, Raquel Manuel, Louisiana FFA Foundation.

Dear Current and Former 4-H and FFA Members,

I'm excited to invite you to join the Sunshine 4-H and FFA Leadership & Career Development Academy. As President/CEO of Sunshine Quality Solutions, we are thrilled to be able to provide an opportunity to address our industry's need for future employees.

This academy offers a unique chance to invest in your future. We acknowledge your potential and dreams, offering tools, knowledge, and experiences to turn them into reality.

In a rapidly changing world, hands-on learning is crucial. Our academy allows you to step into the world of farm equipment, grasp industry intricacies, and develop skills for now and your career ahead.

This is more than a program; it's a commitment to growth and success. The academy is your career launchpad, where passion meets mentorship, guiding your education and profession.

Each academy step builds your future. Join us to impact the farm machinery industry, growing into a confident leader ready to innovate agriculture's future.

This isn't just the start of a job; it's the beginning of your career journey. Your dedication will shape our industry's future, supported by us every step.

Embrace this opportunity, witness your growth, and celebrate success. Your journey with Sunshine Quality Solutions is a story of empowerment and achievement.

Welcome to the Sunshine 4-H and FFA Leadership & Career Development Academy. Let's create a bright and innovative future together.

Warm regards,

Rob Richter

Rob Richter
President/CEO

Sunshine Quality Solutions

Sunshine Quality Solutions was formed on October 4th, 2016 with the merger of Sunshine Equipment and Quality Equipment. This merger brought our valued customers over 80 years of combined experience and knowledge, in supporting the Agricultural and Turf Care industry in southern Louisiana and southern Mississippi. With 17 locations throughout southern Louisiana, “Sunshine” offers optimized parts and service support, volume pricing on equipment, and a much more robust equipment inventory. Sunshine Quality Solutions continues the principle of keeping our customers first, which is why we say: “We don’t want you to be a customer for a day; we want you to be a customer for a lifetime!”

LOCATIONS OF SUNSHINE QUALITY SOLUTIONS



Transforming Your Interest into a Career

VISION AND GOAL OF ACADEMY

The Sunshine Quality Solutions 4-H and FFA Leadership & Career Development Academy is a one-of-a-kind educational and career experience for young people to invest in their future by gaining hands-on learning experiences in the farm equipment industry. The goal of the academy is to be able to identify, mentor, and track participants through their educational journey and into a career in the farm machinery industry.

OVERVIEW

According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which hears every day from their member companies—of every size and industry, across nearly every state—our country is facing unprecedented challenges finding workers to fill open jobs. Recent data shows more than 10 million job openings, but only 6 million unemployed workers! The need for skilled workers affects all areas of Louisiana, especially the agricultural sector. Agriculture is the largest economic base for the state of Louisiana and it demands a broad and diverse professionals from technical mechanics to sales, finance, and engineering.

The Sunshine 4-H and FFA Leadership/Career Development Academy is a new, innovative program that engages Louisiana's two largest agriculture youth organizations, with Louisiana's largest supplier of agriculture farm machinery, for the purpose of developing future employees. The goal over the two-year program is to create a cohort of young people who are committed to entering the farm machinery industry after the completion of high school, an Associates of Applied Science program, or a baccalaureate degree.



QUALIFICATIONS OF ACADEMY

The academy is open to both College (LSU, McNeese, and Southeastern) and High School Juniors who have a targeted career goal of entering into the agricultural machinery industry as a long-term career.

Selected Academy members must plan on being an active, engaged employee at a Sunshine Quality Solution Dealership close to the young persons home/school. Youth will be employed full-time during the summer months and may be given the opportunity to work after-school, and/or times throughout the year (Christmas Holidays, etc).

Academy length will be a two-year cycle, with the sessions and trips being the first year, and with employment being two years. Academy will include some travel during the time to participate in professional development opportunities at other dealerships and/or sites throughout the southern part of Louisiana. A valid drivers license and ability to travel by yourself is a positive.

For the first academy a maximum number of 5 to 7 will be selected, following years the numbers will be increased to potentially serve all Sunshine Quality Solutions Dealerships.

What Careers Does Sunshine Quality Solutions Offer?

At our John Deere Dealership, young individuals have the exciting opportunity to explore a diverse range of employment areas, including:

- **Parts:** Engage with the heart of our operations by managing inventory, assisting customers, and ensuring the smooth flow of essential components.
- **Service:** Embark on a journey of technical expertise as you diagnose, maintain, and repair cutting-edge machinery, making a real impact in our customers' operations.
- **Sales:** Cultivate your communication skills while connecting with customers, understanding their needs, and providing them with innovative solutions that drive success.
- **Accounting:** Join the behind-the-scenes team, where you'll contribute to financial stability by managing budgets, transactions, and ensuring the dealership's fiscal well-being.
- **Integrated Solutions:** Immerse yourself in technology by assisting customers with precision agriculture solutions, harnessing data to optimize efficiency and sustainability.
- **Crop Advisors:** Become a trusted advisor to farmers, offering insights on best practices, crop management, and strategies to maximize yield and environmental stewardship.
- **Marketing:** Unleash your creativity by crafting engaging campaigns, developing digital strategies, and shaping the dealership's image in the ever-evolving agricultural landscape.
- **Human Resources:** Human resources managers plan, coordinate, and direct the administrative functions of an organization.

These diverse areas offer a dynamic range of opportunities to launch and advance your career, allowing you to contribute your unique skills and passions while being an integral part of our John Deere family.



Take the First Step from Interest to Career

IS THIS OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU?

The academy is not just an experience in agriculture mechanics, it is truly your first step to a career. By applying for this opportunity, you are committing to potential employment beyond high school, trade school, or college.

Upon being selected for the academy, you will begin your development experience by participating in professional development opportunities such as John Deere training seminars, resume development, skills test, and mentoring by leadership of Sunshine Quality Solutions.

As your academy time ends, the desire is for you to transition into one of three career areas supporting your new career, just options include:

High School Students

1. Joining the Sunshine Quality Solutions team upon graduation.
2. Attend a John Deere Certified trade school to earn approved certifications and associate degrees.

or

3. Earn a baccalaureate degree in an agriculture degree.

College Student

1. As a junior in college and have the desire to entering the career field of the agricultural machinery industry for the purpose of financial, sales, consulting, marketing, or management.

**The important decision that YOU need to make
IS THIS THE CAREER FIELD I WANT TO BE IN?**



Take the Second Step and Complete the Application



So you have thought about it and you can see your future in the agriculture machinery industry! The next step is to apply for the academy.

To complete the application, you will need to following the steps outlined below:

1. Develop a cover letter and resume.
2. Secure three letters of recommendations. Letters should be from individuals who can speak about your work ethic, your character, your ability to learn, listen, and be a self-starter. Select those who are honest and who can attest to how of an outstanding candidate you would be.
3. Complete the online form which includes information about yourself, a pdf copy of your resume, and your letters of recommendations. The online form website is below and at the end of this packet.
4. Be prepared to participate in a face-to-face interview with individuals from Sunshine Quality Solutions, Louisiana 4-H, and Louisiana FFA.
5. If "hired" into the Academy, be ready to sign your agreement and start your future!

COMPLETE YOUR APPLICATION ON LINE AT:

<https://fs10.formsite.com/lsuagcenter/sunshine/index>

Academy Structure

The approximate two-year academy is an opportunity for youth to gain value skills in all aspects of the agriculture industry with the goal of identifying a core group of youth entering the farm machinery industry pipeline. The course will consist of eight face-to-face educational sessions, a travel experience to a production facility of John Deere, summer internships, a junior college tour, and a Louisiana university tour.

JUNIOR YEAR IN COLLEGE OR HIGH SCHOOL

Session 1 Academy Overview and Orientation

- Career Aptitude Test / Personality Assessment
- Overview of the Farm Machinery Industry in America
- Careers within the Farm Machinery Industry
- Introduction to the Sunshine Quality Solutions Management (Career Pathways)
- Creating your Journal of the Sunshine Quality Solutions Experience

January 2024

Donaldsonville or Baton Rouge

Session 2 Partners in Louisiana Agriculture:

- Dr. Mike Strain, LDAF Commissioner
- Speaker of the House
- Lt. Governor
- Representatives from LA Commodity Boards and Commodity Associations
- LA Farm Bureau

March 2024

Donaldsonville

Trip 1 Visit to University or Community College

- University of Arkansas - Beebe for Parts and Service
- Louisiana four year university for Sales, Finance, Marketing

April 2024

Session 3 Level 1 Hands-On Experiences

May 2024

Donaldsonville

Summer 1 Internship in a Sunshine Quality Solutions Dealership

June 2024 to Mid-August 2024

Trip 2 Visit to John Deere Production/Assembly Facility

July 2024

Thibodaux

Academy Structure

SENIOR YEAR IN COLLEGE OR HIGH SCHOOL

Session 4 In the Field with John Deere <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mechanical side of the industry. (Small groups who would shadow shop individuals at one of the Sunshine locations). 	October 2024 Determined by crop and geographic location of academy participants.
Session 5 Level 2 Hands-On Experience	November 2024 Jennings
Session 6 Marketing, Finance, Customer Service, and Dealership/Employee Goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning about the store front the various aspects of learning about products, selling, finance, customer service and human resources. Turf Grass/Lawn Equipment. 	January 2025 Covington
Session 7 Climbing the Corporate Ladder <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to interview for summer internships at local Sunshine Solutions. Career opportunities and preparing for those careers 	March 2025 Location TBA
Session 8 Celebrating the Future <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using participants journal, each will give a 10 min presentation on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What they learned What sparked their interest How has their perspective or future plans changed Program Graduation Participation Evaluation Sunshine Signing Day 	Early/Mid April 2025 Location TBA

Other Educational Opportunities:

- In-House Professional Development
- John Deere Field Days
- AgCenter Ag Precision Field Day(s)

Laying the Foundation Through your Cover Letter

A quality cover letter lays the foundation for a potential employer to learn about you, the skills that you are going to show in your resume, and what sets you apart from other candidates in the job pool. A cover letter should be brief, no more than one page, and should be written so it helps the employer remember you over other candidates.

Four main elements of a great cover letter:

- **Opening** - explain why you're writing. State the position you are seeking and the source of the job opening.
- **Main body** - highlight your qualifications and link them to the company's or in this case, the academy's needs. Show that you know something about the industry, the company, and why you are interested in pursuing this particular career.
- **Closing** - provide information on how the employer can get in touch with you and extend the wish to meet with them.
- **Thank** the employer for their time and effort.

Information to Include:

- Write and individualized cover letter for each resume you are submitting.
- Address the letter to the person you want to contact, preferably the one doing the hiring.
- Type letter on a 8 1/2 X 11 sized paper.
- Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Convey person warmth and enthusiasm.
- Keep your letter short and to the point.
- Describe how your skills and abilities will benefit the company.
- Provoke the employer to read your resume.
- Keep a copy for your follow-up records.
- Sign your letter

CHRIS CLOVER

100 River Road

Somewhere, LA 12345

Telephone: 123-456-7890 ~ Email: c_clover@Iluv4h.com

August 1, 2023

Mr. Rob Richter

President/CEO

Sunshine Quality Solutions

2300 LA-70

Donaldsonville, LA 70346

Dear Mr. Richter:

I am eager to apply for the Sunshine Quality Solutions 4-H and FFA Leadership & Career Development Academy, an opportunity I recently became aware of through my 4-H Agent in Acadia Parish. Growing up in a third-generation farming family, where rice and soybeans have been cultivated, nurtured, and harvested using John Deere farm machinery, has been a true blessing. This agricultural background has instilled in me a strong work ethic and an unwavering attention to detail. Over the years, both my father and grandfather have entrusted me with increasing responsibilities related to our farm machinery, reflecting the skills I've honed.

As I've matured, I've taken on the responsibility of maintaining and repairing our farm machinery. This hands-on experience has piqued my interest in pursuing a career in farm machinery and equipment repair after completing high school and junior college.

The Sunshine Quality Solutions 4-H and FFA Leadership & Career Development Academy appears to align perfectly with my aspirations of launching a career in equipment repair. I am confident that I can effectively represent not only my 4-H club but also embody the values of Sunshine Quality Solutions. A perusal of my resume will reveal my consistent dedication to hard work and assisting those around me, making me an ideal candidate for this academy.

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss my attributes further in an interview. Please feel free to reach me via phone at 123-456-7890 or by email at c_clover@Iluv4h.com. Thank you for dedicating your time and consideration to this valuable opportunity that extends to 4-H and FFA members throughout Louisiana.

Sincerely,

Chris Clover

Chris Clover

Building Your Resume

A resume is a tool used to show off a person's strengths, skills, and talents. It is what makes a person stand out when looking for a job, applying to college, or trying to get scholarships. Having a good resume is what often lands a person their first real job.

Basic Resume Tips:

- Use no more than two different fonts, and no more than 3 different font sizes
- Follow a pattern of font use (e.g. headers, body, titles)
- Leave plenty of white space, use 1" margins
- Use bullet points and phrases rather than full sentences (except in the Personal Development Statement)
- Maximum of 1 page
- Highlight your 4-H experiences and the skills you have acquired from these experiences.

Information to Include:

- Name, Address, Phone, and Email in the Heading
- Personal Development Statement/Objective: Up to three sentences that describe what you stand for and what you aspire to become. It is a broad statement of your goals in life, not simply what you want to do for a job or career.
- Education and Professional Development: Include highest grade level achieved, any extra trainings, and specialized courses you may have participated in.
- Employment Experiences: Include all employment experiences held, both paid and unpaid.
- Skills
 - Leadership Skills
 - Citizenship Skills
 - Other Skills
- Certificates, Licenses and Honors: List the name and date of the certificate, and who awarded it.

A Resume should be a summary of accomplishments not only in 4-H and/or FFA, but throughout life, highlighting skills, talents, and strengths from all experiences.

CHRIS CLOVER
100 River Road
Somewhere, LA 12345
Telephone: 123-456-7890 ~ Email: c_clover@Iluv4h.com

OBJECTIVE:
Dedicated and enthusiastic high school sophomore with a passion for agriculture machinery, seeking admission to the John Deere 4-H and FFA Career Academy. Eager to cultivate my interest in agricultural technology and machinery, I am committed to gaining hands-on experience, industry insights, and technical skills that will pave the way for a successful career in the field. With a solid foundation in academics, a strong work ethic, and a deep appreciation for innovation in agriculture, I am excited to embark on this transformative journey to become a future leader in the agriculture machinery industry.

EDUCATION:
John Deere High School, Mechanicville, Louisiana.
Graduation Date: Expected May 2024
Area of Interest: Agriculture, FFA, 4-H, and Student Council

SKILLS:

- Mechanical Aptitude
- Technical Proficiency
- Problem Solving
- Attention to Detail
- Diagnostic Skills
- Electrical Knowledge
- Hydraulic Systems
- Technical Documentation
- Safety Consciousness
- Communication Skills
- Time Management
- Continuous Learning
- Customer Service
- Physical Stamina
- Adaptability
- Team Collaboration
- Problem Prevention

EMPLOYMENT:

- **Cloverville Auto Parts Store, Cloverville, Louisiana, January 2023 - May 2024**
Responsible for assisting customers in identifying, sourcing, and providing the necessary parts and components for their automobile repairs and maintenance.
- **Smith Auto Body and Repair, Smithville, Louisiana, April 2021 - December 2022**
Responsible for diagnosing mechanical issues, performing repairs, and restoring the appearance and functionality of vehicles to ensure they are safe and roadworthy.

LEADERSHIP ROLES:

- County 4-H Honor Club President (2014)
- District 4-H Advisory Group Member (2013)
- Church Youth Retreat Leader (2012)
- Student Council Representative (2012)

HONORS AND AWARDS:

- State 4-H Record Book Finalist (2023)
- All District Basketball Team (2023)
- State 4-H Livestock Ambassador (2022)
- State FFA Star Award Winner (2022)
- Parish Winner – 4-H Achievement Public Speaking Contest (2020)
- Valid Louisiana Drivers License

Time to Sign Up!

STEPS TO APPLYING FOR YOUR NEW CAREER IN THE AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT INDUSTRY:

1. For those still in high school have a conversation with your parents/guardians, FFA advisor, and/or 4-H agent and express your desires to pursue a career in agricultural equipment industry. Get their feedback, thoughts, and help you plan your pathway in this career.
2. Prepare your resume. Once your resume is complete have someone you trust to read it very carefully to ensure the grammar is correct, it has no mis-spelled words, and it represents you in a positive view.
3. Contact three individuals who can prepare you letters of recommendation. Provide them with a date that you need the letter and provide them a copy of your resume so they can reference some your highlights from your resume.
4. Once you have received your letters of recommendation, complete the online application form at: <https://fs10.formsite.com/lsuagcenter/sunshine/index> by the deadline of **October 31, 2023**.
5. After the deadline for applications have passed, a review committee will identify those candidates who they would like to interview. You will be notified throughout the process what the status of your application is.



Online Application Worksheet

Here is what you are going to need to complete through the online academy application form:

- First/Last Name
- Address
- City, State, Zip
- Phone (your phone number)
- Email address (your PERSONAL email - preferable not your high school email)
- Grade in High School
- Member of 4-H, FFA, or both
- Date of Birth
- Name of High School
- Name of 4-H Agent or Ag Science Teacher
- 4-H Agent or Ag Teacher's Email Address
- Do you have a current driver license? (Yes/No)
- Do you have reliable transportation that can be used for a job? (Yes/No)
- Rate the areas you would like to pursue in the academy: parts, service, sales, accounting, integrated solutions, crop advisor, marketing (refer to page 3 for a definition of each of these areas).
- Why are you interested in the Sunshine 4-H and FFA Leadership/Career Development Academy? (max 1000 words)
- What are your career goals? (Include such things as graduate from high school, enter the work force, attend trade/community/junior college, attend a four-year university, etc). (max 1000 words)
- What personal attributes, assets, skills, knowledge, or background that you feel potentially set you apart from other individuals who may be applying for this opportunity?(max 1000 words)
- What do you hope to get out of the Sunshine 4-H and FFA Leadership/Career Development Academy? (max 500 words)
- Required document uploads:
 - Cover letter
 - Resume
 - 3 letters of recommendation



COMPLETE YOUR APPLICATION ON LINE AT:

<https://fs10.formsite.com/lsuagcenter/sunshine/index>