



**By Carolyn Lee**

***The Imperial Republican***

When an announcer called Paula Leibbrandt's name as the winner of the State Star award in Agribusiness during the State FFA Convention in Lincoln last Friday, she didn't immediately respond.

"I heard 'Chase County,' but then they didn't pronounce my last name right," so she just stood there on stage for a beat.

Leibbrandt is the first Chase County Schools FFA student to receive the high award since Jim Tomky in 1981.

Other State Star winners from CCS have been Tab Martin, Mike Moreland and Merlin Prior.

Leibbrandt was one of 22 finalists in three divisions competing for the State Star. There were seven in her Agribusiness division.

The 18-year old based her application for the State Star on her SAE project for FFA, or the raising and selling of sweet corn. That was also the basis for her proficiency application.

For four years, Leibbrandt has taken her sweet corn from planting the seed, hoeing the corn and picking it to selling it in area towns.

When she started her project, Leibbrandt planted 2.2 acres of corn. Last year she planted three acres, which was a lot more corn, she said.

Last summer she hired help to sell the corn in Imperial, so that she could sell in other towns to double her income.

She charged \$4 per dozen for her corn.

On her journey to the State Star, Leibbrandt first applied at the district level, and wrote an essay about herself.

Once chosen at that level, she proceeded to the state level of competition.

Last Friday, she was interviewed by judges, attended a dinner with her parents and ag advisors, and then attended the Friday night session, during which the State Star was awarded.

She received a plaque, and will now go on to national competition next fall.

The senior also plans to obtain her American Degree at the national convention, to be held in Indianapolis, Ind.

Leibbrandt is the daughter of Terri and Tim Leibbrandt.