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the LEADER



If you're still not sure, here's one final testimonial from Stanly County's Charles & Karen Herlocker, Class of 2017-18:

“On our family farm I am the third generation. My youngest fourth generation farmer is 14 years old. He tells me I do pretty good for [someone in his 50's]. He also tells me I talk too much in a crowd. He says, ‘Dad, I just can’t do that.’ I think it proves the point that with any organization future leaders are a must. We must be willing to engage with friends, local, state and national leaders to be a voice for agriculture. Get involve with LEAD and you won’t be disappointed. It will bring out the leader in you.”



PREPARING TO LEAD

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The deadline to apply for the 2021-22 LEAD Class is September 1, 2020. To learn about the LEAD Program and to apply, visit ncfb.org/l-e-a-d.

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We've all probably heard the old adage, "Failing to prepare is preparing to fail." This is as true in farming as it is for grassroots organizations like Farm Bureau because our long-term success depends on the plans and decisions we make today. As an advocacy organization it makes sense that this shows up in our policy development process, where we are trying to prepare for both current challenges and emerging issues. But Farm Bureau is more than a policy book, it's people – farmers who have been called to lead and give voice to the concerns of their colleagues.

That's why leadership development is so important to North Carolina Farm Bureau. We can't just have good ideas, we must have good leaders. We are incredibly blessed to have so many born leaders throughout NCFB, which has undoubtedly played a significant role in how our reputation has grown and strengthened during the past 84 years. Great leaders have intangible qualities that help them lead; qualities like decisiveness, an infectious personality, and the ability to motivate others. But experience shows us that not all leadership skills are innate qualities for everyone, and great leaders are willing to work just as hard at turning their weaknesses into strengths. How do they do it? Through self-evaluation, open-mindedness, and a willingness to learn. As John F. Kennedy said, "Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other."

The need for great ag leaders is exactly why NCFB has and will continue to invest in leadership development programs like LEAD (Leadership, Education, Activity, Development). NCFB's LEAD Program develops, fosters and enhances the skills of individuals and couples (ages 36-52) who are actively engaged in production agriculture. LEAD is a two-year journey that requires numerous hours of classroom instruction, farm and agri-business tours, activities, and open discussion designed to broaden the knowledge and leadership capabilities of the participants.

THE LEAD PROGRAM WILL NURTURE AGRICULTURAL LEADERS TO:

- Better articulate their views in a respectful and professional manner
- Project a positive image for Farm Bureau and agriculture through knowledge, wisdom, and integrity to unselfishly serve our communities
- Inspire others by being humble in their approach, but bold in their actions

Mac Hodges, NCFB's Team Leader for the program, put it this way: "The LEAD Program's goal in a nutshell is to provide each participant the necessary training and tools for them to be able to go out and be positive advocates for agriculture. The LEAD Program has proven its effectiveness by yielding results – producing an abundant source of leaders in rural communities, churches, and Farm Bureau. To date, we have seen nearly 100 graduates of the LEAD Program serve on county boards and state advisory committees. We presently have five graduates serving on our state Board of Directors, ten County Presidents and 13 state women's committee members in our 16-year existence."

WHY EXPERIENCE THE NCFB L.E.A.D. PROGRAM?

- Sharpen your communication skills and understanding of global agriculture
- Travel to Washington, DC to engage with your congressional representatives and share issues you are currently facing
- Learn how to identify, manage, and build strategic relationships
- Communicate with state legislators on behalf of your industry segment
- Become authentic, visible, and approachable
- Through dynamic presenters, discover your strengths and how to grow into the leader you want to become
- Work with your county to develop policy positions for your Farm Bureau to advocate
- Network with farmers from across the state developing lasting friendships

SO WHAT DO LEAD GRADUATES HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES?

"We still look back on our two years in the LEAD Program as one of the most rewarding opportunities that we have ever been given."

– Tommy & Vickie Porter (Cabarrus), Class of 2007-08

"The classes and workshops were challenging, but necessary to equip us with good communication skills to advocate for our farm and all agriculture."

– Buddy & Allison Clement (Sampson), Class of 2011-12

"The LEAD Program helped me step out of my comfort zone and helped broaden my knowledge of agriculture in North Carolina."

– Anthony Locklear (Robeson), Class of 2005-06

"Participating in the LEAD Program was ideal in terms of building self-confidence. I can truly say at its core the LEAD Program prepared me and will prepare you to be the best leader you can be."

– Dalton Dockery (Columbus), Class of 2013-14

While strong leadership can and will continue to assist NC Farm Bureau in achieving its goals and missions for years to come, it's an area where we must be committed to continually invest. Leadership development programs like LEAD will help identify a new generation of agriculture leaders and equip them with the skills needed to navigate NC Farm Bureau and agriculture through unpredictable challenges.

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