



# **LEAD Program Objectives**

*Leadership Education Advocacy Development*

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**The North Carolina Farm Bureau LEAD Program is a leadership development program. Its purpose is to develop, foster, and enhance the skills of individuals and couples (between the ages of 36 and 60) actively engaged in production agriculture. The two-year course consists of classroom instruction, farm and agri-business tours, activities, and open discussion designed to broaden the knowledge and leadership capabilities of participants.**

**After completion of the LEAD program, participants should be able to successfully articulate the message of the importance of agriculture with legislators, media representatives, the non-farming general population, and others. Participants can expect to advance their linguistic skills and should be able to demonstrate high levels of communicative competency through exposure to multiple business and social situations throughout the course of the program term.**



# LEAD Program Testimonials

*Leadership Education Advocacy Development*

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***"Participating in the NC Farm Bureau LEAD program was the turning point in my advocacy journey. Reflecting on my growth from before the program to where I am today, I am amazed! The program equipped me with invaluable skills that have empowered me to advocate effectively for agriculture, become a strong leader, share my story with others, and to be a part of policy development that benefits agriculture. Many of the opportunities I have had, and continue to pursue, can be directly attributed to my participation in LEAD. My only regret is that I did not participate sooner!"***

*Linda Pryor, LEAD Class of 2022-2023*

***"Our LEAD experience was more than we could ever have imagined. The resources they provided and the connections we made set us up to be successful in any avenue that we travel in the future. Our trip to Ireland and England was the 'icing on the cake' for the program!"***

*Chris & Sarah Clayton, LEAD Class of 2024-2025*



# What You Can Expect

*Leadership Education Advocacy Development*

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## What YOU Can Expect

An ideal participant in the LEAD program will be one who desires the opportunity to develop and enhance their leadership skills, to refine their communication practices in order to reach both a more broadened and a more specific audience, to further their knowledge of legislative processes, and to network and learn more about production, commodities, and techniques utilized in the agricultural industry.

While enrolled in the LEAD Program, you can expect to receive:

- Numerous networking opportunities with peers and other farm families/agriculturalists
- Chance(s) to introduce yourself to your legislators, and speak on behalf of your farm or agricultural business about issues that affect you
- Detailed information and updates about challenges the agricultural industry is facing
- Tools, resources, and practical application training that will enable you to speak confidently and eloquently about topics of interest to you
- More information about the total Farm Bureau organization, including an opportunity to take part in our policy-development process from start-to-finish
- Strategies and concepts that can be implemented on your farm or agribusiness to boost communication and enhance your professional image
- LEAD dress shirt, and other branded promotional items

***There are challenges and there are opportunities. Every situation can be both; the distinction lies within your mindset. To be challenged is to be expected. But the ability to use a challenge for growth is what builds a leader.***



# LEAD Program – Tentative Dates

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## NC Farm Bureau LEAD Program Dates 2026-2027

### Year 1

- ✓ **First Session: Jan 20<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026 (Wilmington/Wrightsville Beach, NC)**  
*In this first workshop you'll unveil strengths and weaknesses and learn how to utilize them effectively. Meet NC Farm Bureau, participate in leadership training and teambuilding activities, and undergo professional etiquette training to present yourself at your best. You'll tour local farms, the Port of Wilmington, learn about coastal NC agriculture. Get ready to ramp up your public speaking skills- you'll have numerous opportunities to do just that during the course of this program!*
- ✓ **Second Session: Mar 2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026 (Raleigh, NC)**  
*In this workshop we will see agribusinesses across the Triangle region, network with former LEAD participants, and get a deeper understanding of the Farm Bureau organization and structure. You'll also be introduced to American Farm Bureau in this session, and take a deep-dive into understanding the cultures that many farmers routinely come into contact with.*
- ✓ **Third Session: Jul 2026 (Raleigh, NC)**  
*This workshop will expose you to our policy development process, and show you how our "grassroots" method ensures that our process will always be rooted in what matters to the farmers in our 100 counties. You will receive industry and legislative updates, and take a behind-the-scenes look at county government, and what it takes to BE an elected official. A visit to the NC General Assembly is included in this session.*
- ✓ **1<sup>st</sup> YR Homework On Your Own: Summer and Fall Assignments:**  
*Attend (1) County or District Policy Development meeting and attend (2) County Farm Bureau Annual Meetings (no speech is required at this time). Contact your Field Rep to locate these functions in your region and secure your attendance slot.  
Each participant in the program will also be responsible for contacting NCFB's Communications Department and scheduling a time to be interviewed. NCFB Comm Dept may reserve the right to limit the number of interviews each year, and they will be scheduled on a first come, first served basis. Participants that are unable to schedule their interviews in the first year of the program should be prepared to schedule in the second year. Interviews are a requirement for graduation from the LEAD Program.*
- ✓ **Fourth Session: Sept 13<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026 (Washington, DC)**  
*In this workshop you will see how Farm Bureau works at the national level; you will network with your elected officials, and broaden your understanding of how the lawmaking process comes to fruition. This workshop includes a tour of the nation's Capital and other historical sites.*

✓ **Fifth Session: NC Farm Bureau Resolutions Committee Meeting, November 30<sup>th</sup> – December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026 (Raleigh, NC)**

*This min-session takes you further into our policy development process, setting the stage for the policy discussions that will take place State Convention. \*Six participants will attend day 1 of the Resolutions Committee Meeting, and six participants will attend day 2.\**

✓ **Sixth Session: NC Farm Bureau Annual Convention, December 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026 (Greensboro, NC)**

*Our policy development process culminates each year at NCFB State Convention when delegates from all 100 counties come together to vote on our policy for the coming year! In this workshop you'll reflect on your first full year of the LEAD Program, develop a greater understanding of our YF&R and Women's Leadership Programs, judge a YF&R contest, and network with other members of the Farm Bureau family.*

**Year 2:**

✓ **Seventh Session: Jan 20-22, 2027 (Participant-Hosted; Location TBD)**

*This workshop is participant-hosted, and includes farm tours in that geographic region. We will delve into farm safety, and take a closer look at NC Farm Bureau programs.*

✓ **Eighth Session: Mar 2027 (California Tour)**

*Focus on US agricultural issues and farming on the west coast. You'll be introduced to California Farm Bureau, and see the differences between our state Farm Bureau organizations, and how we can work together to shape the policy that affects agriculture on a national level. This California tour will focus on the beautiful Central Coast region, where you will see familiar commodities grown by unfamiliar methods, as well as gain exposure to specialty crops native to CA.*

✓ **Ninth Session: Jul 2027 (Raleigh, NC)**

*This special session kicks off with our LEAD reunion; a chance to meet and network with graduates from prior years! The workshop will be a refresher of the first step of our policy development process, which begins each year with Policy Review Day. We'll talk best practices when giving testimony in front of lawmakers and learn what Tobacco Trust offers farmers.*

✓ **2<sup>nd</sup> YR Homework On Your Own**

*You will work with your group to complete graduation project assignments this time. You will also need to complete the following assignments independently: attending two (2) Policy Development meetings and one (1) County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting (speech/presentation on LEAD Program is required). Each participant in the program will also be responsible for contacting NCFB's Communications Department and scheduling a time to be interviewed. NCFB Comm Dept may reserve the right to limit the number of interviews each year, and they will be scheduled on a first come, first served basis. Participants that are unable to schedule their interviews in the first year of the program should be prepared to schedule in the second year. Interviews are a requirement for graduation from the LEAD Program.*

✓ **Tenth Session: \*Educational Tour: Sept/Oct 2027 (location TBD)\***

*This international tour will give you the opportunity to see agriculture in another country. We try to incorporate iconic sites on educational tours as well; truly a "once in a lifetime" trip!*

✓ **Eleventh Session: Nov 2027 (Asheville, NC)**

*This session delves into professionalism in all situations and effective communication with the non-farming population. Tour Western NC farms, and see beautiful Biltmore. This is a celebratory time to reflect on what your tenure with LEAD- by now you can effectively speak up and speak out for the agricultural industry! Group projects will be presented in front of the class, and one will become a resource for County Farm Bureaus to use to carry out the mission of the organization for years to come.*

✓ **Twelfth Session: GRADUATION: NC Farm Bureau Annual Convention, Dec 2027 (Greensboro, NC)**

*The LEAD Program concludes with a graduation ceremony during NCFB State Convention, and dedication of the group project that will become a resource for County Farm Bureaus to carry out the mission of the Farm Bureau organization for future generations.*



# LEAD Program Application Instructions

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Thank you for your interest in NC Farm Bureau LEAD Program. Please follow these steps as you complete the application.

1. The applicant must be a current NC Farm Bureau member and actively engaged in agriculture.
2. Each person **MUST COMPLETE** an individual application, even if both you and your spouse are applying.
3. Please answer every question on the application as thoroughly as possible. Initial acknowledgements are required in participant responsibility section. Incomplete applications will not be accepted. The selection committee will base its selection of participants on information obtained from the application.
4. If additional space is needed to answer a question, attach a separate sheet.
5. A \$1000 fee per individual is due upon acceptance into the program (participants will be notified by Nov 1<sup>st</sup>). The deadline for the fee is November 30. Checks are to be made payable to "NC Farm Bureau Federation" with **LEAD Program** on the subject line.
6. The **COMPLETED** application must be signed and submitted by **September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025**. Your submitted application will be automatically forwarded to your Field Representative and Jessica Tripp, NCFB LEAD Program Team Coordinator.
7. Questions? Please contact:

Jessica Tripp  
NCFB LEAD Program Team Coordinator  
[jessica.tripp@ncfb.org](mailto:jessica.tripp@ncfb.org)  
(919) 306-5719



# LEAD Program Application

Leadership Education Advocacy Development

Farm Bureau Membership Number \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Name (for nametag) \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Web Address \_\_\_\_\_

Social Media Handle(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile Number \_\_\_\_\_

Other Phone (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female

Shirt Size (button-up shirt)	Men's (loose fit)	_____ Size	_____ Regular	_____ Tall
	Women's (tailored fit)	_____ Size	_____ Regular	_____ Petite

Food Allergies and Dietary Requirements:

- \_\_\_\_\_ None
- \_\_\_\_\_ Peanut allergy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tree nut allergy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fish allergy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Shellfish allergy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Egg allergy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Milk allergy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Soy allergy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Corn allergy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wheat allergy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Diabetic
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lactose intolerant
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gluten Intolerant
- \_\_\_\_\_ Vegetarian
- \_\_\_\_\_ Vegan

## Driver's License/Passport Information

**Each participant in the LEAD Program must maintain a valid NCDL and current passport. Applicants should provide a color photo of BOTH their North Carolina Driver's License and US Passport to this application. \*If you do not currently have a US Passport, you must be willing to obtain one per travel requirements outside of the US.\***



**A. Production Agriculture History**

Describe your production operation or agribusiness you own or are employed by (*be as specific as possible and include duties and responsibilities*).

**B. Other Employment History (*list in chronological order with most current first*):**

Name of Employer	Position Held	Date Employment Began	Date Employment Ended

**C. List organizations/groups in which you are or have been a member and the leadership roles you have assumed in each (*mention ag-related and non-ag related activities*):**

Organization/Group	Year	Leadership Role

**D. What do you consider to be your most noteworthy accomplishments?**

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**E. List colleges attended and/or short courses completed:**

Name of School	Enrollment Date	Graduation Date	Degree Earned	Major / Minor Field
Describe other educational experiences.				

**F. List awards/honors you have received (*include ag-related and non-ag related activities*):**

Awards/Honors	Year

**What are your leadership strengths and how do they qualify you as an emerging farm leader?**

**H. Leadership Development Program**

Why do you want to participate in the LEAD Program?

**I. Are you willing to serve/get involved in your County Farm Bureau?**

Please discuss how you plan to apply what you glean from the LEAD Program in your County Farm Bureau's total program.



# LEAD Program Expectations

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## Your Responsibilities – What We Expect

*Initials are REQUIRED (highlighted area) for each expectation!*

NC Farm Bureau has made a significant commitment both financially and through staff time to make this a worthwhile program.



Attendance is a graduation requirement of this program. You are expected to attend all classes. NCFB reserves the right to terminate enrollment of any participant who fails to qualify for graduation based on attendance and/or participation requirements.



Participants are required to complete projects and/or assignments as determined by the LEAD Program Team Coordinator. These projects/assignments may include, but are not limited to; individual's leadership project, presenting at or participating in designated conferences on behalf of the LEAD program, Zoom meetings, or conducting virtual farm tours of participant's farming operation for legislators (if requested).



You are representing North Carolina Farm Bureau during your entire course. You must exude a high degree of professionalism in every setting. You are responsible for your own actions.



Dress code for each session will be business casual unless otherwise specified by the LEAD Program Team Coordinator.



Feel free to speak up, but respect others and their opinions. You have the right to disagree, but do not be disagreeable. *If you bring a challenge to the table, you must also bring a solution.*



Be in class on time, and in proper dress. Silence electronic devices during class periods.



Notify LEAD Program Team Coordinator immediately of any conflicts, emergencies, etc. that may require special attention.



Spouses who are not participants in NCFB LEAD Program may attend functions as identified by the LEAD Program Team Coordinator. Any extra costs incurred will be the responsibility of the participant.

## NCFB LEAD Program Application Acknowledgment

**I have read, understand, and agree to the above.**

Applicant Name \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### County Farm Bureau President

NC Farm Bureau LEAD Program is designed for members who demonstrate leadership potential in agriculture. The LEAD Program selection committee requires a recommendation by the County Farm Bureau President and NCFB Field Representative before the applicant can be considered. Please sign below if you would like for the selection committee to consider this candidate.

County FB President Signature \_\_\_\_\_

NCFB Field Representative Signature \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_