Leadership in Action

Every two years, LEAD Maryland experiences a bit of an up-tick in activity as one class’ formal training program draws to a close while another’s begins. This past year was one such year. Our Class 8 fellows graduated in March, 2015, concluding their two year program; ending highlights included a very successful symposium and memorable trip to South Africa. Whilst this class was wrapping up, Class 9 was ramping up and officially began its fellowship program and leadership journey in February, 2015. We are energized by the bevy of activity that is inherent in “winding down” and “ramping up” successive classes. As we measure and reflect on the expected success of our newly graduated fellows, we are also given opportunity and time to evaluate ourselves and our program to assure we give our next class equally ample chance for personal growth and leadership development.

The LEAD curriculum is ever-evolving, but one of the hallmarks of the program is hands-on experience. Ken Kesey, American author (One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest), is credited with saying, “You don’t lead by pointing and telling people some place to go. You lead by going to that place and making a case.” I can hardly think of a more appropriate reflection for the LEAD Maryland program.

As each class makes its unique journey through the LEAD fellowship program, its members can count on the certainty that their experience will be hands-on and active. This is by design to enrich and encourage the development of leaders who have a practical knowledge not only of how agriculture functions in Maryland, but in the world at-large. More importantly, the practice of agriculture is partnered with the need to know and understand how this industry works with the operational, legislative, and regulatory world around us. Practical exchanges, in Washington D.C., Annapolis, and at sites from Deep Creek Lake to St. Mary’s City to Salisbury and dozens of points within Maryland to countries across the globe are what prepare LEAD Maryland fellows to become the leaders of Maryland agriculture tomorrow.

LEAD Maryland fellows graduate prepared and equipped to face and lead in the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Accomplishment of this is not to be taken for granted as it requires the participation and planning of many, as well as financial and personnel resources of others.

I would like to thank Ken Korando, out-going LEAD Maryland President, for his years of service and leadership to the foundation. Under Ken’s leadership, the class practicum/symposium was instituted and has become a hallmark example of “leadership by doing.” I would also like to thank our Foundation staff, Susan Harrison, Debbie Stanley-Simpkins, and Debby Dant, for their support and diligence in helping our program evolve to fit the needs of our fellows and Maryland agriculture.

And finally, I thank all of our program partners, sponsors, and grantors for their continued support of the Foundation and its educational program. Every gift or grant is fully appreciated and essential to the mission of our program to build the leaders of Maryland agriculture to ensure its success tomorrow.

Vanessa Finney
President
LEAD Maryland Foundation, Inc.
Fellows completed a study tour in South Africa, January 2015. Because it is important for leaders to understand other perspectives on public issues, and to see other ways of approaching problem-solving, the LEAD study tour is an important part of program curriculum. LEAD travel experiences change the way Fellows see themselves and their abilities. Fellows build self-confidence for accepting new leadership responsibilities.
This symposium was the LEAD Class VIII’s group practicum of the fellowship curriculum and was held December 3, 2014.

Fellows focused on the past, present, and future of Maryland agriculture and how farmers are leading the region in food revolution. Keynote speakers included Michael T. Scuse, Under Secretary for the USDA Farm and Foreign Agriculture Services, and Chef Bryan Voltaggio. The symposium participants were invited to learn and join discussions through the following breakout sessions:

- **Get the Facts on Food Labeling and Nutrition:** presented by a registered dietitian and farmer to inform and educate participants on changes in nutrition labeling and an explanation of “Facts Up Front Labeling” along with a brief definition of GMO and organic labeling.

- **Buying and Sourcing Local Foods:** how to buy local, why to buy local, how it affects agriculture and local economies, and the ripple effect to others in the agriculture industry and beyond.

- **How Agriculture Technologies are Saving the Bay:** for a better understanding of how farmers are doing their part in protecting and conserving natural resources for future generations using modern practices and technology.

- **Ag Genomics at the Crossroads:** two opposing experts in the field of biotechnology help sort through the myths and realities of the genetic tools used today and their impacts on creating the food and fiber on which we depend.

- **Lunch with a Farmer:** sharing a meal of locally sourced food and conversations at each table for consumers to talk with a farmer.

Thank you to the many speakers, funders, participants and volunteers who helped to make the symposium a success and an excellent educational experience for the Fellows. Congratulations to Class VIII Fellows for a job well done!
Join the Next Class of LEAD Fellows

LEAD Maryland Foundation will be accepting applications in 2016 for the next class of LEAD Fellows. The new group, Class IX, will participate in 2017-2018. Applications will be available online and accepted June 1 - October 1, 2016. Applications are due no later than October 1, 2016.

LEAD Fellowships provide:

- Public Issues Education;
- Personal growth and leadership development opportunities;
- Communications and problem-solving skills training;
- Support, direction, and resources to help emerging leaders succeed in serving agricultural, natural resources, and rural community sectors;
- Opportunities to learn more about Maryland, and to meet and network with leaders throughout the state!

LEAD seeks a diversity of applicants with careers, service, or interests in:

- Production agriculture—rural, suburban, and urban agriculture;
- Natural resources, forestry and other natural resource-based industries;
- The environment;
- Food: processing, sourcing, distribution, marketing, service and retail;
- Rural communities, services, and rural development; and
- Business, communications, education, government, science, technology, nonprofits, land use, conservation, and others within or serving agriculture, natural resources, and rural communities.

Class X Fellows will:

- Participate in a series of multi-day seminars throughout Maryland and Washington DC in 2017-2018;
- Complete a travel study tour; Travel destinations for previous classes: Netherlands, Cuba, Brazil, China, Estonia & Russia, Vietnam, Chile, South Africa, and India.
- Attend a 1-day symposium, led by LEAD Class IX. Class X will also complete a group project;
- Pay a $4,200 fee (tuition); many fellows secure sponsors; an invoice for four installments will be issued.
With a mission of developing leadership for the future of Maryland agriculture, natural resources, and rural communities, the LEAD Maryland Foundation (LEAD) seeks to bring together a diverse mixture of fellows, representing many sectors of Maryland's agriculture community, to create the ideal class. In turn, LEAD reaches out to many different sources to assist in the program's funding. Like many others, this organization's success is dependent upon its stakeholders, and the board of directors and fellows wholeheartedly thank the program's many dedicated sponsors, grantors, and contributors. With tuition covering roughly twenty percent of a fellow's education, personal development, and skills training provided through the program, LEAD could quite simply not exist without the generous support of so many organizations, businesses, and individuals.

Much focus and planning is exercised by the Board and staff in producing reasonable financial forecasts and then working within its framework to retain fiscal responsibility throughout the year. The organization experienced slightly positive growth in its financial position for the fiscal year ended June 2015. This growth was realized net of two significant line-item expenses, the biennial international study tour (South Africa, February 2015) and Class VIII's Symposium, "Image of Agriculture—Ag Evolution, Food Revolution" (December 2014).

Maryland agriculture and our rural communities will continue to face challenges that require the sort of engaged, confident, and knowledgeable leaders that LEAD Maryland seeks to develop. Accordingly, the Board continues to proactively explore strategies to enhance the organization's financial position in addition to developing new partnerships and strengthening relationships with current donors.

Kurt Fuchs
Treasurer
LEAD Maryland Foundation, Inc.
Thank you for Funding the LEAD Program!

**University Sponsor**
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$52,500
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$15,000
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Maryland Soybean Board
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$10,000 – $11,000
American Farm Publications/The Delmarva Farmer
Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation (MAEF)
Maryland Agricultural Education & Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF)
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Maryland ACRES
Maryland Arborist Association

In Kind
In Kind Gifts are important to the LEAD Maryland Foundation. We especially thank the following for Noncash Charitable Gifts, July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015:

- AgFirst Farm Credit Bank
- American Farm Bureau Federation
- Edwin Remsberg
- Farm Credit of the Virginias
- Hog Slat/Georgia Poultry
- Marshall Riverbank Nurseries
- Maryland Department of Agriculture
- Maryland Farm Bureau
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- University of Maryland Extension
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Jonathan Quinn
Mr. Bill Jeanes
Nancy Wallace
Terrie Shank
Vanessa Finney
William Rices
LEAD Class VIII International Study in South Africa, March 3, 2015: A Supplement to The Delmarva Farmer

Thank you for purchasing advertisement space from American Farm Publications for The Delmarva Farmer’s 24-page supplement, published March 3, 2015. American Farm Publications presented an impressive donation of $10,150 to the LEAD Maryland Foundation. Thank you to The Delmarva Farmer team, to LEAD Volunteers, Fellows, and Alumni, and thank you to all advertisers!

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Class VIII Graduation, Class IX Welcome, and LEAD Alumni Reunion Event

The LEAD Maryland Foundation Class VIII Graduation, Class IX Welcome, and LEAD Alumni Reunion event was held March 14, 2015, in Annapolis. Thank you for gifting items and/or purchasing items in the silent auction held during the event, raising $3,140. Funds were applied to the First Fund.** Thank you Cricket Goodall, Barrie Reightler, Ann Merryman, and your team of additional volunteers for your fantastic work in organizing the auction!

Amanda Heilman
Amy Cawley
Ann Merryman
Anna Linthicum
Barrie Reightler
Bill & Colette McCollum
Bill Schrodel
Bronwyn Fry
Butler Gallery
Christopher Black, Catoctin Mountain Orchard

Cricket Goodall
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Terrie Shank
Valerie Mason
Wendell Meekins
Zach Evans

Many people—serving as volunteers, program alumni, or representing other organizations, government offices, businesses, or employers—made significant gifts of time, travel, planning, speaking, presenting, teaching, training, leading tours, hosting, and otherwise adding value to LEAD’s educational programming and to the organization’s volunteer committees and board. Thank you for giving your time and services, we appreciate these precious gifts, too!

Thank you to the many people, employers, organizations, and family members who have invested into the success of the LEAD Fellows by providing scholarships or otherwise assisting with paying program participation fees (tuition). Though payments of the fees are the responsibilities of the Fellows and cannot be recognized as charitable contributions, your support is important and appreciated!

**The First Fund provides program alumni and friends of LEAD Maryland an opportunity to personally invest into the success of the new LEAD class. Funds are used to defray expenses of the first seminar, thus we call this the “First Fund.” The February 2015 First Fund raised $11,190. Thank you to all contributors!

Our apologies if any donations have been inadvertently overlooked. Please bring corrections or additions to our attention. Thank you.
Board Members (June 30, 2015)

Bill Brown Representing Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc.; Poultry Extension Agent, University of Delaware; Poultry Grower

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Susan R. Harrison Executive Director, LEAD Maryland Foundation, Inc.; and Associate Agent, University of Maryland Extension

Debbie Stanley Simpkins Program Director, LEAD Maryland Foundation, Inc.; and Faculty Extension Assistant, University of Maryland Extension

Debby Dant Administrative Assistant, LEAD Maryland Foundation, Inc. and University of Maryland Extension

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