Since 1985, over 400 people have completed the LEADNY Program. According to a recent survey, 89% of our alumni go on to serve in a wide variety of leadership roles in community organizations, not-for-profits, government agencies, elected office, boards of directors, advisory committees, and agribusiness management. In fact, most alumni typically serve in 3-5 leadership roles following graduation, and many have upward mobility in their careers as well.

It is difficult to look at the leadership of virtually any food or agricultural organization in the state and not see at least a few LEADNY alumni serving in leadership roles. Most of our alumni would attribute much of that success to their participation in our program, with 98% reporting being either very satisfied or satisfied with their program experience (well above the national average for similar programs around the country).

“For me, participating in LEAD New York had more influence on my farming operation than my 4-year degree in agriculture.”
—Class 11 alumnus

“We can all remember significant events that have impacted our lives positively. For me, participating in the LEAD New York Program and experiencing its benefits has been a seminal event.”
—Class 1 alumnus

“The take-home lesson for me is the vital role that networking plays in becoming a great leader. Networking helps in the business environment and is essential in becoming an active leader in my community, especially local government. The networks gained through LEAD classmates, alumni, and seminar speakers are priceless. They have allowed me to become a better leader and an active member of my community.”
—Class 12 alumnus

“Having participated in a variety of leadership development programs throughout my career, I can tell you that LEAD New York is clearly one of the best.”
—Class 16 participant

“In all of the meetings I go to, I can always tell who the LEAD alumni are in the room. They ask better questions, think more strategically and make positive contributions.”
—Former NYS Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets

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What you will learn

It has been said that things that are worth doing usually aren’t easy. That is true of LEADNY as well. Our program is demanding, but our alumni will tell you that it was worth every minute. In fact, many graduates wish the program was longer. Perhaps the greatest benefit anyone takes away is the personal and professional network they build – classmates, alumni, speakers, tour hosts – serve as resources that can be called upon for years to come. Some will become life-long friends.

We will also help you improve important leadership skills like public speaking, listening, meeting management, debate, critical thinking and conflict management. These skills will help you serve as a more effective leader in a variety of leadership roles throughout your career and personal life.

You will also learn to “think globally, act locally.” While many participants are already very knowledgeable in their specific industry sector, LEAD helps them see where they fit in to the bigger picture. You will learn about aspects of the food, agriculture and natural resource sectors that you never knew existed. And you will be surprised at how much you have in common with them.

Finally, the outcome that surprises our participants the most is how much they learn about themselves. Through a variety of assessment instruments, peer feedback, coaching, and reflection, your level of self-awareness will grow dramatically. You will learn who you really are, what is really important to you, and what kind of leader you want to be. Our program helps you develop the skills, knowledge and networks you need to get there.

About the program

Demographics:
- 25 to 30 participants in a typical class
- minimum age for participation is 25 years
- average age of each class is 38
- background of class members
  - 33% involved in production agriculture
  - 33% from for-profit agribusinesses
  - 33% from non-profits, government agencies, or educational sectors
- participants come from NYS and the Northeast from a wide variety of industry sectors
- diversity of participants is one of the strengths of our program

Tuition:
Tuition is a fraction of the true cost of participation, as each class is generously supported by alumni, corporate donors, foundations and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Application/Selection Process:
Selection into the program is through a competitive process every other year. To learn more and to obtain an application, please visit www.leadny.org.
Successful applicants are admitted to the first year of our program, called “Leadership Fundamentals”:
- Seminars take place from October–April and are held in a variety of locations throughout NYS. Most seminars are 3 days in length (typically Thursday–Saturday), and total time commitment for this year is 25 days.
- “Leadership Fundamentals” focuses on:
  - raising participants’ self-awareness
  - building essential leadership skills
  - improving their knowledge of industry issues

After successful completion of “Leadership Fundamentals,” participants are invited to apply for the second year of the program, called “LEAD Fellows”:
- Seminars still take place from October–April, but most of the 30-day time commitment takes place outside of New York, with trips to Canada, Washington DC, and an international study tour.
- “LEAD Fellows” focuses on:
  - global issues
  - developing critical thinking and analysis skills
  - refining each person’s leadership style and philosophy

About the program

Class 15—South Africa
Class 14—Turkey
Class 15—South Africa

Class 16—Oswegatchie, NY