American Agriculturist Foundation Makes Major Gift to LEAD New York

$333,000 Donation will benefit the Program in Perpetuity

The American Agriculturist Foundation (AAF) has been a long-time and significant supporter of the Empire State Food and Agricultural Leadership Institute (LEADNY). A recent endowment contribution of $333,000 solidifies that support for the long term.

In 1935, the stockholders of the American Agriculturist magazine created the American Agriculturist Foundation (AAF). All of the magazine stock was transferred to the Foundation with the charge to continue to develop an independent farm journal while all profits not used to improve the publication were to aid farm youth seeking to secure an education. In 1975, when the publication was sold and separated from the Foundation, the assets of the Foundation increased. Since then, the American Agriculturist Foundation has operated as an independent organization making strategic investments in qualified organizations capable of strengthening the agriculture industry of the Northeastern United States and building capacity among current and future leaders of the industry.

Previously, the AAF has supported the LEADNY program in a number of significant ways. Earlier gifts were used to fund special projects of the program, including an Advanced Leadership Forum in the late 1990s, a Biotechnology Conference in Binghamton in 2001, Local Leadership Enhancement Programs, and a marketing campaign to help improve application rates to the leadership program. More recently, AAF funds have been used to support international study tours and conferences hosted by LEADNY. “The AAF has always been a generous annual supporter of our program” said Larry Van De Valk, Executive Director of the program, adding “This gift, when combined with $167,000 in earlier AAF endowment contributions, means that we will have a half million dollars of AAF money working to support our program long into the future. For that strategic investment, we are very grateful.”

LEAD New York is a leadership development program for adult professionals in the food, agriculture and natural resource industries. It consists of seminars, workshops, and field travel experiences both in and out of New York State, including an international study trip. The program focuses on leadership skill development, enhanced self-awareness, civic engagement, a greater understanding of issues facing our food system and rural communities, and cultivating leadership networks. Currently, there are over 400 LEAD New York alumni. These individuals serve in leadership positions in private business, local, state and federal government positions, not-for-profit organizations, and educational institutions.

For more information, contact Larry Van De Valk, Executive Director of LEAD New York at 607-255-7907 or at ljv4@cornell.edu. Additional information is also available on the LEAD New York website at www.leadny.org.

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