

*****NEWS RELEASE*******CONTACT:**

Larry Van De Valk
607-255-7907
lv4@cornell.edu

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LEAD New York Announces Seventeenth Class**Program Accepts New Members for Leadership Development Program**

The Empire State Food and Agricultural Leadership Institute, or LEAD New York, is pleased to announce the members of its 17th class. “We are very excited to share the roster of our newest cohort.” said Larry Van De Valk, Executive Director of the program, adding “Members come from every corner of our state, plus Connecticut; and we have representation from industry sectors that we have not seen in years. This is a very strong, diverse class.”

The guiding principal in the selection process is to try to assemble the right mix of participants in the final roster – including as much diversity as possible. As such, the new class has 10 men and 20 women; is dispersed from Buffalo in the west, to Lowville in the north, to Riverhead in the east, and NYC to the south, with many points in between. About 1/3 of the participants are producers, 1/3 come from the for-profit agribusiness sector, and the remainder come from the not-for profit or educational sectors. Age range of the participants is 25 – 51, and the average age of the cohort is 33 years old. This group will bring valuable, diverse perspectives to class discussions, as they represent a wide array of specific industry sectors.

Name	Employer
Blanchflower, Olivia	GrowNYC/Greenmarket
Bowgren, Tyson	Wagner Millwork
Brightly, Joseph	Brightly Farms
Carpenter, Katie	NY Ag in the Classroom
Colangelo, Anthony	Dehm Associates
Critelli, Jamie	Floral Beauty Greenhouses
Dembeck, Dylan	Minkus Family Farms
Flansburg, Christopher	BCA Ag Technologies
Gallagher, Jean	Farm Credit East
Gianforte, Luke	Gianforte Farms

Gonzalez, Raquel	NYS Dept. of Ag. and Markets
Huson, Jennifer	Dairy Farmers of America
Jensen, Eileen	NY Animal Agriculture Coalition
Jilek, Katrina	Ag. Stewardship Association
Kenny, Claudia	NYS Ag. Mediation Program
King, John	Crop Production Services
Kreher, Jeannette	Kreher's Farm Fresh Eggs
Lockwood, Patricia	Farm Credit East
Long, Emmaline	CY Farms
Marcus, Jessie	Peconic Land Trust
Oakes, Christopher	LynOaken Farms
Penny-Stroop, Danielle	Novus International
Reeves, Karin	Reeves Farms
Ryan, Erika	Kelly & Sellar Ryan, PLLC
Stout, Stephen	Agricultural Consulting Services
Thompson, Natasha	Food Bank of the Southern Tier
VanHorn, Kristin	Schuyler County Planning
Williams, Lauren	NY Farm Bureau
Zaleski, Jaclyn	NY Farm Bureau
Zick, Christina	CoBank

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 nearly 500 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. As one LEAD New York alumni stated, "LEAD New York was an eye-opening experience for me. I not only made lifelong friends, I also learned key skills that have proved useful throughout my career. LEAD New York changed my perspective and has helped me be a more knowledgeable advocate for agriculture."

For more information, contact Larry Van De Valk, Executive Director of LEAD New York at 607-255-7907 or at lv4@cornell.edu. Additional information is also available on the LEAD New York website at www.leadny.org.

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