



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GOAL: Growing Our Ag Leaders

Maryland Farm Bureau's new leadership program

Davidsonville, MD (July 8, 2016) – Maryland Farm Bureau (MFB) announces a new leadership program, Growing Our Agriculture Leaders (GOAL), to recruit and train future county Farm Bureau leaders. The 2016 GOAL participants are Jay Douthit of Kent County, Alan Eck of Queen Anne's County, Brian Thomas of St. Mary's County, Charlie Cox of Calvert County, Sam Roop of Frederick County, Aaron Lantz of Garrett County and J.D. Repp of Washington County.

"Meeting and networking with other agriculture leaders across the state and nation is often cited as one factor that led current Farm Bureau leaders to their positions," said Chuck Fry, President of Maryland Farm Bureau. "We are looking forward to seeing how this program will grow these participants into Farm Bureau leaders and Maryland agriculture advocates."

The inaugural GOAL team spent two days touring the Eastern Shore of Maryland on June 14 and 15 to gain a better understanding of agriculture drivers east of the Bay. The team was also able to meet and learn from past and present Farm Bureau leaders and explore the inner workings of Maryland Farm Bureau.

The first tour stop was Amick Farms Poultry Processing Facility in Hurlock, MD. Here, the team was able to see each step of the poultry process from start to finish in a state-of-the-art facility. This is a significant learning experience for our GOAL team because poultry is the number one agriculture commodity in Maryland.

Team members then visited Emily's Produce in Cambridge, MD to learn about what MFB has done for their farm and produce stand. An episode of Maryland Public Television's *Maryland Farm & Harvest* was being filmed at Emily's Produce at the same time our GOAL team was visiting. MFB is a strong supporter of *Maryland Farm & Harvest*.

GOAL team members ended the first day at Layton's Chance Winery in Vienna, MD with a tour, dinner and wine tasting. Layton's Chance is owned and operated by the past Dorchester County Farm Bureau President, William Layton, who diversified his grain farm to include a very successful vineyard and winery.

On the second day of tours, GOAL team members traveled to Horn Point laboratory in Cambridge, one of the largest oyster hatcheries on the East Coast. In the last decade, they have raised and placed over one billion oysters back into the Chesapeake Bay.

The final stop was at the University of Maryland Wye Research Farm in Queenstown, MD. MFB Vice President John Draper gave members a tour of the farm, showing various research projects like variety trials, long-term phosphorus draw down and a sprayer demonstration hosted at the farm for the U.S. EPA.

The next GOAL event will be held in Washington, D.C. on July 12 to visit the American Farm Bureau Federation to learn about important national policy issues and visit Capitol Hill to meet with Maryland legislators the last week of session before they go into summer break.

For more information about the GOAL program, contact Parker Welch at pwelch@mdfarmbureau.com or call 410-922-3426. To join Maryland Farm Bureau, visit www.mdfarmbureau.com

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Maryland Farm Bureau is a private, non-profit membership organization. It is controlled by its members through the democratic process and is financed by voluntary membership dues. Its strength comes from the active participation of over 36,000 member families that belong to the state's 23 county Farm Bureaus. For the last 100 years, Maryland Farm Bureau has served to promote and protect Maryland agriculture and rural life.