



The Empire State Food and Agricultural Leadership Institute

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LOCAL FOOD AND AGRICULTURE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM MEETS IN BATAVIA

Thursday, December 19, 2007 - LEAD NY (Empire State Food and Agriculture Leadership Institute) recently convened its third session of the year in western New York. The three day event included work sessions that were held in Batavia, NY and facility technology tours in Genesee, Livingston and Ontario Counties. The nationally recognized leadership program's twelfth class tours included several progressive western New York farms, food and beverage industry leaders, innovative agribusinesses as well as the well respected Agri-Business Child Development program.

The goals for the Batavia session included studying trends in production agriculture, considering the impact of technology in agriculture, meeting industry leaders and identify their leadership traits and styles. The class room sessions were centered on continuing training of personality temperaments and organizing information for oral presentations.

All thirty members of the Lead NY class as well as three visitors from our Canadian counterpart, the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP), were able to see a broad spectrum of the food and agriculture industry located in western New York. The production agriculture tours included viewing a large dairy with a rotary parlor and methane digester in action, a progressive and diversified crop farm that utilizes GPS technology and an inspiring dairy operation that is in the process of starting a separate organic dairy farm. The final production tour provided a view of four robots milking a dairy herd in Ontario County.

The food industry tours included the O-AT-KA Milk Cooperative which has made substantial investments into value added milk products and the new \$96 million

Barilla pasta manufacturing and distribution facility. Agribusiness tours included stops at Oxbo International Corporation a leading manufacturer of specialized harvesting equipment and the unique feed and fertilizer facility owned by Commodity Resource Corporation.

The tours combined with presentations by Farm Credit of WNY and a food chain discussion panel which included a grower, packager/marketer and distributor provided the LEADNY class with a strong overview of the food and agriculture community in western New York. Most importantly the tours allowed the group to examine a variety of strong leadership qualities possessed by these industry leaders.

LEAD New York is a two-year leadership development program for adult professionals in the food and agricultural industry. Thirty adults participate in monthly training sessions throughout New York, and take study tours to Washington DC, Ottawa Canada, and an international destination. The program strives to enhance participant's leadership skills, understanding of food system issues, civic engagement and leadership networks. For more information about LEAD New York, visit www.leadny.org, or call 607-255-7907.

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