



The Empire State Food and Agricultural Leadership Institute

Contact: Peter J. Martini (315)382-2419  
Vineyard Manager, Martini Vineyards/  
Anthony Road Wine Company  
Member LEAD Class 12

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## NEW YORK STATE AGRICULTURE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM MEETS IN ROCHESTER

Thursday, Nov. 1, 2007 LEAD NY (Empire State Food and Agriculture Leadership Institute) convened its second session of the year at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in downtown Rochester, New York. The nationally recognized leadership program's twelfth class visited several Rochester area businesses in order to challenge their paradigms of what a consumer can be. Trips to Wegmans, Food Link, and Saint Peter's Soup Kitchen showed participants many variations in the types of consumers of food/agricultural products. Class member Jonathan Burns of Burns Family Farms LLC in Hornell, New York stated, 'The visit to Saint Peter's Soup Kitchen really put things in perspective, making me realize how fortunate we are and how we may be able to help improve the lives of others who may not share our good fortune'. Many members of Class 12 were moved into action, Karen Barie-Keough of Cargill Animal Nutrition in Jamestown, New York sought out a soup kitchen in her hometown and volunteered there soon after her visit to Saint Peters. The class also is planning some direct assistance for Saint Peters, inquiries about donations can be sent to Peter Martini via e-mail at [peter@martinivineyards.com](mailto:peter@martinivineyards.com).

A panel discussion at Rural Opportunities Incorporated (ROI) offices in the historic Sibley House started an important and lively discussion on labor issues facing the food and agriculture industry. The topic of labor reform is an important one for the Food and Agriculture industry. Many interesting and emotionally charged points were made during the panel discussion which included, Stuart Mitchell (LEAD Class 3) of ROI, Mike McMahon of EZ Acres Farm in Homer, New York, and Tom Maloney, a labor expert from Cornell University. This was the beginning of a discussion to be continued

in subsequent LEAD sessions. After some 360 degree assessment review, the class toured the Baker Commodities rendering facility in Penfield, and adjourned looking forward to the next session to be held in Batavia, New York in early December.

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](http://www.leadny.org), or call 607-255-7907.

###