



EMPOWERING YOUNG LEADERS.

AFA Leaders Conference Welcomes 850 Student Leaders to Fuel the Future of Food and Agriculture

Kansas City, MO — November 6–9, 2025 — A more sustainable future of agriculture will be shaped by systems thinking, collaboration and relationship development. At the 2025 Agriculture Future of America (AFA) Leaders Conference, 850 student leaders showed up ready to grow. Drawn from 108 universities and selected from a record-setting applicant pool, these students demonstrated the rising demand for professional growth opportunities. With 421 industry leaders present, it's clear the agriculture industry is committed to investing in the next generation of leaders.

The conference's four-track structure supported students at every stage of their collegiate journey. Students dug into leader development, career readiness, financial literacy and cultural competence. The cohort itself reflects the diversity needed to sustain the future of agriculture with 71% women, 15% underrepresented minority students and 209 first-generation college students.

"Students don't just learn about the industry and the myriad of meaningful careers. They develop skills and key relationships that will help them thrive in the future," said Mark Stewart, President and CEO of AFA. "Students have the opportunity to connect with mentors, secure internships and gain confidence in who they want to become."

Throughout the three-day event, industry professionals joined roundtables, networking socials and keynote sessions that intentionally paired students and employers whose values and career goals align. The Opportunity Fair brought together 80 employers spanning the full breadth of agriculture — technology, animal systems, food and nutrition, crop sciences, finance, policy and beyond. Employers collected resumes and hired talent on the spot, filling internships and launching students into their first careers.



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Why it matters

The agriculture and food system needs leaders who are prepared, adaptive and connected. AFA is helping the industry:

- Strengthen its early-career talent pipeline
- Expand diversity of background and thought
- Build relationships that lead to long-term workforce stability

This is more than professional development. It's succession planning for the entire food and agriculture system.

About Agriculture Future of America (AFA)

AFA builds bridges for young leaders to foster engagement and innovation in food and agriculture through premier leader and career development experiences. With program participation increasing 28% in the last five years, AFA has provided 26,000 leader development experiences to college leaders and young professionals from more than 200 colleges and universities throughout 43 states since its inception in 1996. AFA has awarded more than \$11.5 million in academic and leader development scholarships. For more information about AFA, visit agfuture.org.

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