



AGRICULTURE FUTURE OF AMERICA

BUILDING BRIDGES MAGAZINE



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Growth happens
together.

On the Cover: Leaders Conference Delegates network with Diana Kander, a 2024 Leaders Conference Keynote Speaker. Delegates are presented with various opportunities to interact with speakers and other industry professionals at all AFA Experiences.

Invest in What's Next

In today's fast-changing world, recruiting great talent isn't enough. To stay competitive, the ag industry must invest in developing that talent. That's where Agriculture Future of America (AFA) comes in.

Since 1996, AFA has worked to build a stronger future for food and agriculture by equipping college students with the skills, confidence and connections they need to lead. Founded by the late R. Crosby Kemper Jr. and other Kansas City business leaders, AFA was built on a bold belief: that investing in young leaders is investing in the future of our industry.

Through strategic partnerships with companies, foundations and individuals who share this vision, AFA cultivates a pipeline of skilled, motivated and purpose-driven professionals ready to meet the challenges of sustainability, innovation and global competitiveness.

Our programs focus on core leadership competencies — like communication, personal assessment, change management and lifelong learning, while instilling professionalism, intrapreneurship and a commitment to continuous growth.

By connecting students with hands-on experiences and meaningful industry engagement, we're not just preparing them for the workforce, we're preparing them to lead it.

“AFA has been transformational for me. It's been a constant source of growth. Every experience, big or small, has shaped me.”

Callie Robinson
University of Tennessee - Knoxville



President's Message

As I reflect on the past year, one word rises to the surface: momentum.

At Agriculture Future of America, we've seen remarkable growth — not just in numbers, but in reach, impact and opportunity.

In the last year, more students than ever before applied to AFA programs, signaling a rising demand for the kind of purpose-driven, career-shaping experiences we uniquely offer. From campuses big and small, across 49 states, students are raising their hands, eager to lead, eager to serve, and eager to shape the future.

We continue evolving to meet that energy. We've expanded and refined our programming to align more deeply with what students need and what the future of the workforce demands.

We remain committed to offering transformational experiences that don't just prepare students for jobs, but prepare them to lead.

To our partners, thank you for your dedication to developing the next generation of leaders. You fuel opportunities and ensure students are equipped to lead, innovate and shape the industry.

Thank you for being an integral part of the AFA family. Here's to more milestones, more connections and more transformative moments in the year ahead.



PRESIDENT & CEO
MARK STEWART ED.D.

“From campuses big and small, across 49 states, students are raising their hands, eager to lead, eager to serve, and eager to shape the future.”



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AFA Partners



R.C. Kemper Charitable Trust
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Charitable Foundation



For a complete list of partners, visit agfuture.org/partners/industry

What We Do

At AFA, we understand that the industry needs a well-prepared, skilled and motivated talent pipeline to drive sustainability, innovation and competitiveness. Our commitment isn't just about offering leadership and career programs; it's about empowering exceptional college students nationwide to become a driving force.

We achieve this through a rigorous selection process, ensuring that we identify and nurture the most promising talent. Our programs bridge the critical gaps often found between academic learning and real-world application, making the transition into the workforce seamless and effective. By partnering with industry leaders, we provide students with unparalleled opportunities to connect with their future — whether that means exploring new sectors, relocating across the country or stepping into their first professional roles.

Everyone Belongs in Ag

AFA provides a place for all who are interested in ag to find their voice.

34%

**Of Students Served Have
“Non-Traditional” Ag Majors**

15%

**Of Students Served
Identify as “Non-White”**



Our Approach

Leadership Development: We offer scholarships and programmatic experiences that help students develop the personal and professional skills necessary for careers in food, agriculture, and natural resources.

Career Preparation: Through hands-on experiences and strategic industry partnerships, we equip students with practical knowledge and give them a head start on their career trajectories.

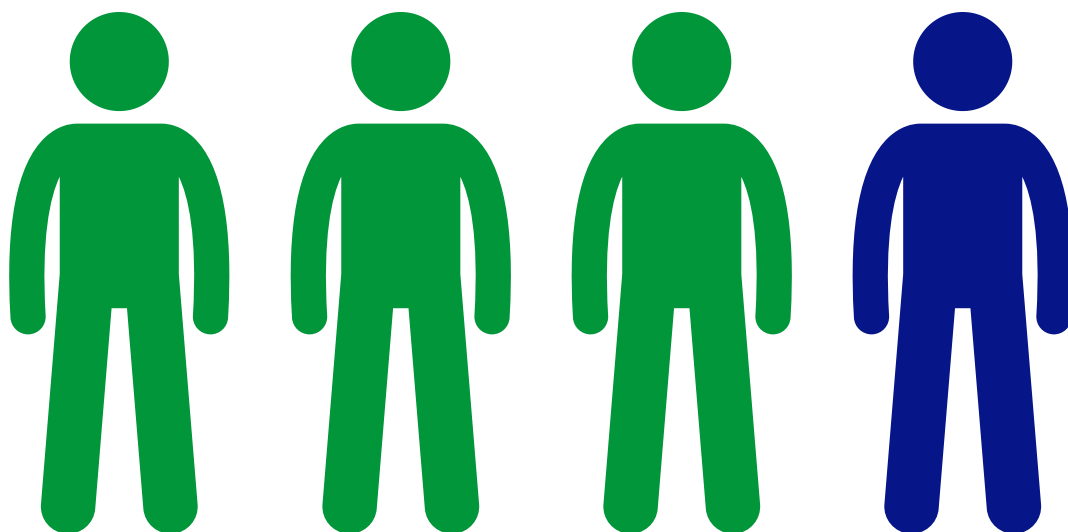
Talent Pipeline: By supporting and nurturing these future leaders, we help maintain a steady flow of skilled professionals ready to tackle industry challenges like food security and sustainability.

For 29 years, AFA has been growing the future of agriculture from coast to coast, and everywhere in between.

By partnering with AFA, you're not just investing in students, you're championing a generation of leaders who reflect the full landscape of American agriculture. From rural communities to urban innovation hubs, they're shaping the future of food, natural resources and sustainability.

Together, we're building a stronger, more connected industry — one student, one region, one future at a time.

**1 in Every 4 AFA
Students Is A First
Generation
College Student**



We Build Transformational Leaders

We empower student leaders interested in food and agriculture careers who are seeking strong career direction and community find their place in the industry.

We connect industry partners to inspirational young leaders who will become their employees and customers. We strive to give back and raise the tide of agriculture.

AFA Student Leaders

AFA Student Advisory Team members are integral in the design and facilitation of AFA Leaders Conference and AFA Leader Institutes, alongside representing AFA among their peers and industry professionals while serving as the student voice of AFA.

AFA Ambassadors promote AFA to peers, university faculty and staff and industry professionals. The health of AFA's relationship with a campus relies heavily on the work of Ambassadors. These students organize campus meetings to increase awareness of AFA programs and interact with industry professionals at various events and meetings on behalf of AFA.



“Because of AFA, I feel as though I am building deeper connections that will help me be more successful in the industry.”

Savannah Mauk
Oklahoma State University



Scan to learn more about AFA Student Leaders.

Leader Development Competencies

The future of agriculture needs bold, thoughtful leaders. That's why every AFA experience is built around six key leadership competencies, skills that help students thrive in diverse teams, navigate complex systems and drive meaningful change. From career management to cultural EQ, these competencies are woven through everything we do to equip students to lead with confidence and purpose.

“These students are talented and they are really excited about the future of the industry.”

Elizabeth Galbreath
Merck Animal Health



Based On Assessment Data,

99%

Of Leaders Conference Delegates Report Growth in at Least One Key Soft Skill for Early Career Success.

Relationship Development



Building and fostering healthy relationships.

Cultural EQ



The capacity to perform across diverse environments with an inclusive bias.

Systems Thinking



The ability to innovative influence systems through critical thinking and problem solving.

Interpersonal IQ



The ability to relate with sensitivity and influence. A built-in bias toward leading and learning.

Collaboration



The ability to work effectively with others toward a common goal.

Career Management



Using exploration to manage you and your teams.

AFA Scholarships

At AFA, our mission is to empower young leaders in agriculture. Scholarships are a crucial part of this mission, providing financial support and unparalleled opportunities for growth and networking. By investing in education and development, we're investing in the future of agriculture.

To date, AFA has awarded more than

\$11 million

in Leader & Academic Scholarships.

How are Applications Evaluated?

Recipients are selected based on career goals, leadership and community involvement and financial need. Some scholarships are awarded based on specific criteria: For example, living in a particular community area.

If you are interested in supporting students, sponsoring a scholarship, or have questions, please contact Traci Via at traci.via@agfuture.org.

“Receiving an AFA scholarship has allowed me to focus more on my education and less on financial stress, helping me invest fully in opportunities that will shape my career in agriculture.”

Allison Britton
South Dakota State University



Community Partnerships

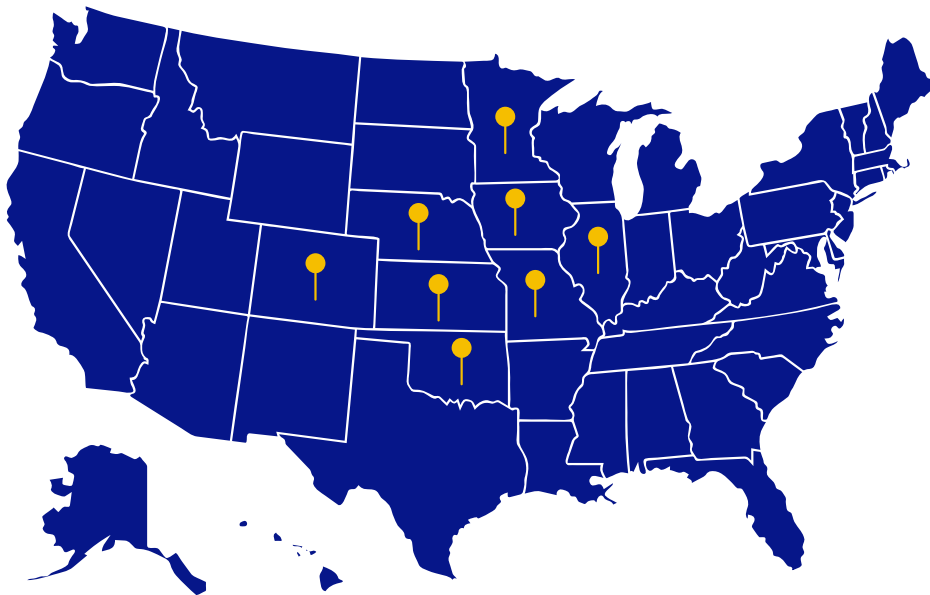
Community partnerships are a collaboration between AFA and a local community to support and develop high-potential students pursuing ag-related careers.

How Does It Work?

1. Local communities raise funds to support scholarships
2. AFA matches those funds to double the impact
3. Students are selected locally through an application and interview process
4. Scholars attend an AFA Experience for leadership training and career development

50% Of AFA Scholarships
Awarded in 2025 Came From
Community Partnerships

States with current community partnerships:



**Want to support the next generation of ag leaders right from your hometown?
Contact Michael Curry at michael.curry@agfuture.org or Brian Friedman at
brian.friedman@agfuture.org.**



The Weathers Society

The Weathers Society recognizes individuals who have developed an estate plan or other deferred gift arrangement with AFA that will ultimately benefit AFA scholarships, programs and students. The society celebrates commitment to empowering upcoming leaders in the agriculture and natural resources industries.

What is Planned Giving?

Planned giving is a win-win for you and AFA. It's the transfer of assets during your lifetime or through your estate plan. This thoughtful approach may offer tax benefits and usually involves non-liquid assets gifted via will, trust or other planned gift arrangement.

How Can It Be Done?

Planned giving is simple, and you don't need to be wealthy to do it. From naming AFA in your will to donating real estate, stocks or even a life insurance policy, there are many easy options. Almost any asset—business holdings, savings accounts or property—can be part of your planned gift.

Want to Leave a Legacy?

Interested in making an impact on the future of agriculture? Need help determining what type of gift you want to give? Contact Brian Friedman, at brian.friedman@agfuture.org or 816-406-1464



Introducing CORE Synergy

The agriculture industry faces increasing challenges, from feeding a growing global population to addressing sustainability. Meeting these challenges requires a steady stream of skilled, well-prepared individuals entering the workforce. To cultivate the talent needed, AFA and MANRRS (Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences) have created CORE Synergy, a joint effort trailblazing in its approach to fuel and empower current and future agricultural and natural resource practitioners and leaders. Through CORE Synergy, the two organizations and BASF will provide transformational training opportunities that equip participants with practical skills and knowledge, preparing them to tackle the most pressing issues in agriculture.

 **BASF**
We create chemistry



MANRRS



“We believe that the future of agriculture is built by cultivating innovative leaders who are passionate about making a difference. Together we are committed to empowering the next generation to address the challenges of tomorrow’s agriculture industry.”

Mark Stewart
AFA President & CEO





News Worth Opening

Magnetic Ag is the ag news source that doesn't put you to sleep. We cut through the noise with twice-weekly emails delivered on Tuesday and Friday that include must-know stories across livestock, crops, agtech, policy, and more — all served with a side of wit. Serving a loyal audience of farmers, students, agribusiness leaders and innovators, Magnetic Ag is where agriculture turns for insight that sticks.

Why AFA & Magnetic?

Magnetic Ag is more than a newsletter — it's a trusted voice in the agricultural space and a powerful extension of the AFA mission. As part of the AFA family, Magnetic Ag amplifies timely conversations, spotlights innovation and elevates the next generation of ag leaders. It's not just about information, it's about building a community that's informed, inspired and ready to lead.

Why Advertise with Magnetic?

Want to get in front of ag leaders and decision-makers? Advertising with Magnetic Ag puts your brand in front of 30,000+ active subscribers — including farmers, students, startup founders and industry executives through a newsletter known for its witty, trusted voice. Partner with a platform that delivers real reach to the people shaping the future of agriculture. Contact Braeden Coon, at braeden.coon@agfuture.org to get started.

30,000+ Subscribers

30%+ Open Rate

“Magnetic Ag has been great to cut through the noise and get a quick feel for where the industry is at.”

Paige Stevenson
Bunge North America



The Cultivating Leaders Podcast

The Cultivating Leaders Podcast extends AFA's mission into earbuds across the country. Designed for emerging professionals and seasoned leaders alike, each episode features candid conversations with changemakers across food, agriculture and natural resources. From navigating career transitions to leading through complexity, listeners gain practical tools and bold perspective to lead with clarity and purpose. It's more than a podcast, it's a platform for lifelong learning and leadership growth, powered by the voices shaping the future of our industry.

Meet Some of Our Guests:



JULIE ANNA POTTS
President & CEO,
Meat Institute

What if real leadership isn't about having the answers but rather about having the courage to ask better questions?



TEDDY BEKELE
CTO, Land O'Lakes

Technology in agriculture isn't about the most expensive tractors — it's about solving real problems.



MATT PLITT
CEO, Valent USA

What does it take to build a lasting, meaningful career in agriculture? Leading with intention, embracing change and finding purpose.



DIANA KANDER
NYT Best Selling Author,
Keynote Speaker

A journey of being a self-proclaimed “negative” leader to embracing humility as her greatest superpower

Available on your favorite
streaming app



**LEARN MORE
& SUBSCRIBE**

Leader Institutes

Turning an interest in agriculture into a meaningful, future-focused career can feel overwhelming, but AFA Leader Institutes help make that journey clearer.

Passion Meets Possibility

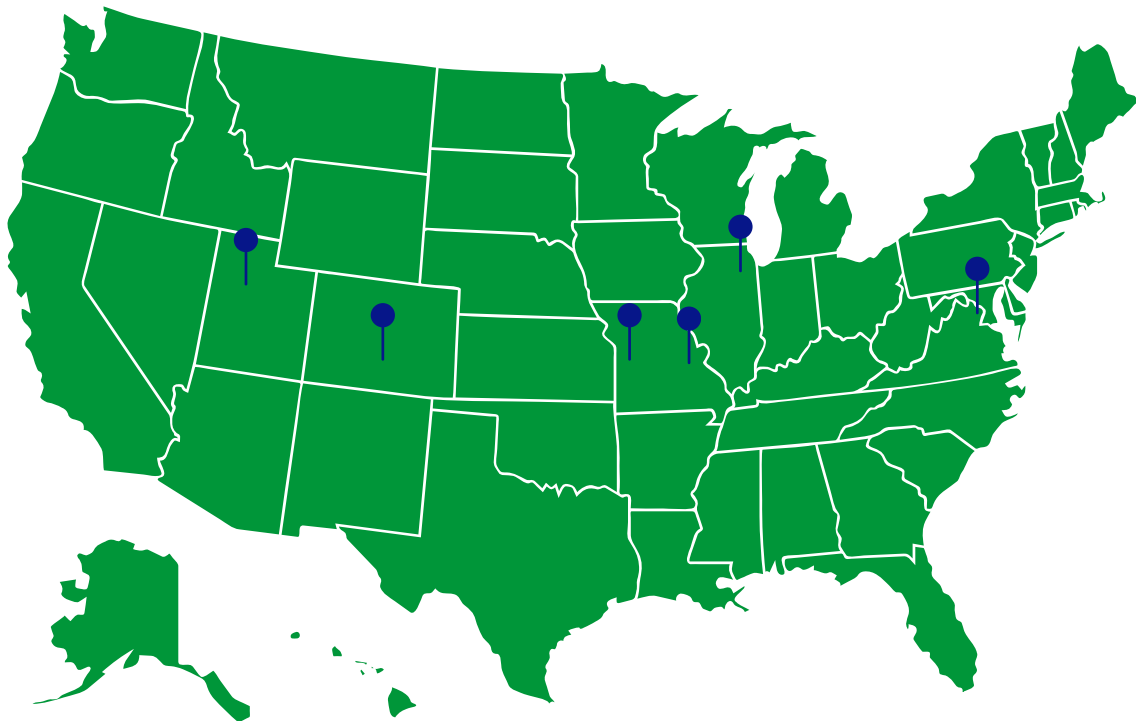
Through immersive, hands-on experiences, AFA Leader Institutes give students the opportunity to explore key sectors of the agriculture industry, connect with peers and professionals from across the country, and discover where their skills and passion can make the greatest impact.

Curated Experiences

Each AFA Leader Institute is intentionally designed around a specific sector of the agriculture and food industry — ranging from policy and sustainability to animal, food systems, plant science and technology. This tailored approach allows students to dive deep into a focus area that aligns with their existing interests or sparks new ones.

See where we've been:

Animal - Kansas City, MO | Food Systems - Chicago, IL
Plant Science - St. Louis, MO | Policy - Washington D.C.
Precision Ag - Denver, CO | Sustainability - Salt Lake City, UT



The Impact

AFA Leaders Institutes use a selective application process to ensure each experience delivers maximum value for both students and industry partners. With limited seats available, AFA is intentional about curating a cohort of highly motivated, diverse student leaders who are ready to engage deeply, ask meaningful questions and contribute to a dynamic learning environment. This intentional selectivity creates a more personalized, high-impact experience where students can build stronger connections with peers and professionals, and industry partners can invest in top talent with confidence.

292

**Students Have Attended
an AFA Leader Institute
in the Last Year**

45

**Hands-on Industry Tours
Were Experienced in
the Last Year**

6

**Unique Cities Visited
Coast to Coast to
Explore Diversity in Ag**

“For the first time, I am surrounded by peers who share my passion for agriculture, where that passion made me part of the majority. AFA created a collaborative space to explore every corner of the industry.”

Lexi Bodlak
University of Nebraska - Lincoln





Stewards for Animals

At the AFA Animal Institute, students don't just learn about the animal agriculture industry — they experience it firsthand. Through immersive tours of leading livestock operations, veterinary health companies and animal nutrition innovators, students gain a 360-degree view of the careers shaping this vital sector.

From food security to biomedical breakthroughs, delegates engage in conversations that matter with industry leaders who are solving today's challenges and driving tomorrow's innovations. The Institute cultivates not only future professionals, but passionate advocates ready to care for animals, communities and the world they serve.



Animal Institute delegates got hands-on processing experience at Clarks Custom Meat during the 2025 event.

77

Delegates Experienced Hands-on Learning and Industry Discussions



I found this experience extremely valuable in expanding my knowledge of careers, opportunities and issues in the animal ag industry. From the tours to roundtable topics, there was a diverse set of activities where I feel I gained different things from.

Hannah Lanphere
Iowa State University

LEFT: Delegates learn about the process of making a Greenies Pet Chew at Mars Petcare.



Beyond Farm to Fork

The AFA Food Institute immerses students in the heart of the global food system — an industry that touches every person, every day. Through behind-the-scenes access to food companies, including meat packing facilities, sensory labs, roasteries and grain processors, students gain an authentic understanding of how food moves from concept to consumer.

From sampling products on tour stops to engaging in deep conversations about innovation, sustainability and workforce needs, delegates build critical connections with industry leaders and peers alike. This hands-on, high-impact experience not only informs their career path, it empowers them to help shape the future of food.



LEFT: Delegates pour hot water over coffee beans at the Starbucks Roastery. ABOVE: Delegates go behind the scenes at Vienna Beef.

32% Of Delegates Major in Food and Animal Sciences

“Great networking experience. You get to learn not only about the food industry, but also the potential that we have as students pursuing careers.”

Julia Ringhausen
University of Missouri - Columbia



RIGHT: Delegates explore during a tour of Ardent Mills, an AFA Partner.



Discover Rooted Innovations

At the AFA Plant Science Institute, students go far beyond the textbook — immersing themselves in the science, strategy and innovation driving today's plant systems. Through dynamic farm tours, visits to cutting-edge seed labs and regionally rotating programming, delegates explore diverse ecosystems and experience how plant science adapts across the country.

They connect directly with industry professionals to discuss emerging technologies, sustainability efforts and career pathways spanning research, production, policy and beyond. By uniting curious minds from across the nation, the Institute cultivates the next generation of agricultural innovators ready to feed, fuel and sustain a growing world.



LEFT: Delegates explore the GROW Gallery at the St. Louis Science Center. ABOVE: Delegates spend time in a research growth chamber at Bayer, an AFA Partner.



**1 in Every 4
Delegates
Majors in
Plant Science**

“This institute helps you network and get a greater understanding about the opportunities within plant science. It gets you out of your comfort zone and allows you to make friends from around the nation.”

Kindall Johnson
University of Florida

LEFT: During a tour of Bayer, an AFA Partner, delegates explored their virtual farming simulator technology.



Growing & Connecting

At the AFA Policy Institute, students gain a front-row seat to the decision-making that shapes the future of agriculture. Held in Washington, D.C., this immersive experience equips delegates with the knowledge, confidence and context to navigate agricultural policy and advocacy.

Through interactive panels, high-level discussions with policymakers, and real-world simulations, students explore the complex intersection of food, farming and legislation. More than a learning experience, the Institute empowers young leaders to find and use their voice — to influence, collaborate and lead in one of the most impactful arenas in agriculture.



Delegates participate in crucial conversation on policy and innovation while eating lunch while visiting ADM, an AFA Partner.

36%

Of Delegates Major in Agricultural Business

AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

- Capitol Hill Visits
- Policy Perspectives Panel
- Policy Careers
- Roundtables
- Industry Tours

RIGHT: Delegates spend time touring and participating in policy conversations at John Deere, an AFA Partner.





Innovation Meets Impact

The AFA Precision Agriculture Institute places students at the forefront of innovation, where data, technology and on-farm application intersect to shape the future of production agriculture. Held in conjunction with Commodity Classic, this immersive experience exposes delegates to emerging tools, digital platforms, and real-time decision-making strategies revolutionizing the ag industry.

Through hands-on learning, roundtable discussions with ag tech leaders, and peer-to-peer collaboration, students explore a rapidly evolving field while making meaningful connections with industry professionals. The Institute cultivates talent that's not only tech-savvy, but ready to lead the charge in smarter, more sustainable agriculture.



LEFT: Delegates interact with AFA Partner Valent at Commodity Classic. ABOVE: FMC, an AFA Partner, hosts delegates in their Commodity Classic booth.



**1 in Every 4 Delegates
Majors in Ag Systems
or Engineering**



“Both the opportunity to attend Commodity Classic and the different AFA roundtables were amazing. I truly enjoyed learning about all of the ag tech and how companies are working to help farmers enhance their efficiency.”

Halley Blades
University of Missouri

LEFT: Delegates spend time networking and learning at Commodity Classic. They meet with various agriculture companies including AFA Partners.



Environmental Challenges

The AFA Sustainability Institute equips students with the knowledge and leadership skills needed to drive meaningful change in conservation and natural resource management. In collaboration with the National Association of Conservation Districts, this immersive experience exposes delegates to the critical intersection of sustainability, policy, and production agriculture.

Through on-site learning and industry engagement students explore diverse career paths while grappling with the real-world challenges shaping the future of land, water and resource stewardship. The Institute prepares leaders to not only participate in sustainability conversations, but to lead them with purpose and clarity.



LEFT: Delegates explore brine shrimp research at Inve Aquaculture. ABOVE: Delegates present their work during an interactive group activity.

46

Delegates Experienced Hands-on Learning and Industry Discussions

“As an undergraduate research assistant who is researching sustainability, I will be able to utilize what I have learned and the connections I made within my project. I learned more here than what a textbook could provide.”

Macie Miller
Texas Tech University



RIGHT: Delegates spend time preparing planting beds during a tour stop.

Leaders Conference

At AFA Leaders Conference, students don't just attend, they level up. This four-day experience equips college students with the skills, confidence and connections to lead in a rapidly evolving agriculture and food industry. Organized into four distinct Tracks aligned with academic year, the Conference meets students where they are and challenges them to grow. Delegates develop six essential leadership competencies: relationship development, collaboration, career management, cultural EQ, interpersonal IQ and systems thinking. Through interactive sessions, real-world scenarios and guided reflection, students leave with a clearer sense of purpose—and the tools to pursue it.

A Measured Investment

Leadership isn't just a title, it's a measurable skill set. AFA Leaders Conference participants can earn a digital badge that recognizes their growth in AFA's six core leader competencies and their commitment to lifelong learning. Each badge — Motivated Learner, Skilled Learner, Committed Learner or Accomplished Learner — represents not only the delegate's year in school, but their developmental progression. Backed by pre- and post-Conference assessments, this credential signals to employers and industry partners that these students are serious about their growth, intentional about their leadership and ready to contribute.

Skills and Connections Meet

Beyond professional development workshops, students explore topics often overlooked in traditional curriculum like finance management, body language, and how to navigate career pivots. Just as important, they network with hundreds of students and industry professionals from across the country, expanding their perspective and sharpening their communication skills. Whether it's a hallway conversation with a recruiter or a roundtable dialogue with a C-suite leader, delegates leave with contacts and confidence.



Shaping Futures

For many students, the AFA Leaders Conference is a turning point. Through career exploration sessions, industry panels and exposure to internships, graduate programs and employer partners, delegates discover new possibilities and clarify their goals. They engage in meaningful conversations about the future of agriculture, from sustainability to innovation, and hear directly from those shaping it. This isn't just a conference, it's a catalyst. For industry partners, it's a front-row seat to the next generation of talent, and a unique opportunity to invest in the future of agriculture from the ground up.

Industry Impact, By the Numbers

Delegates have access to:

463 Industry Professionals

105 Agriculture Companies and Organizations

“The thing that sets AFA apart is that relationship between the employers, which are the partners, and the students.”
Luke Altermatt
Cargill



Network of Top Talent

Each year, AFA Leaders Conference brings together a diverse and exceptional group of students selected through a competitive application process. These delegates represent the best and brightest in agriculture and food systems: motivated, curious and committed to leading with impact. Coming from colleges and universities of all sizes across 49 states, they reflect the rich diversity of our industry's future. Whether from a land-grant university or a small liberal arts college, every delegate earns their place through demonstrated leadership, academic excellence and a drive to grow. Together, they form a national network of talent ready to shape what's next in agriculture.

807 Delegates

102 Colleges and Universities Represented

49 States Represented



“Attending AFA Leaders Conference has been one of the best experiences of my career. I am so immensely grateful to AFA and their partners for giving me this opportunity to attend.”

Alexis Camara
West Texas A&M University

Why Should Your Organization Be Here?

For industry professionals, AFA Leaders Conference is more than a recruitment opportunity, it's a front-row seat to the future of agriculture. By engaging directly with top-tier student leaders from across the country, companies and organizations gain early access to emerging talent that's skilled, values-driven and eager to make an impact. From formal networking events to small-group roundtables, these moments spark meaningful conversations, uncover fresh perspectives, and build authentic connections. Whether you're looking to recruit, mentor or share your story, the return on investment is clear: influence the next generation while strengthening your own workforce pipeline.



Your voice matters in shaping the next generation of agricultural leaders. Whether through networking, panel discussions, roundtable conversations or career exploration sessions, there are multiple ways to engage with delegates at AFA Leaders Conference. Your presence helps students see what's possible, and helps your organization stay connected to emerging talent ready to lead with purpose.

If you are interested in participating in AFA Leaders Conference please contact Traci Via at traci.via@agfuture.org.

Valent enjoys connecting with all the attendees and collaborating on future innovations that will shape our industry and advance sustainable agriculture.

Matt Plitt
Valent



A Lifelong Organization

At AFA, leadership development doesn't end with a diploma, it evolves into a lifelong journey. Participation in any AFA experience grants students automatic admission into the Alliance Alumni Network, connecting them to agricultural thought leaders, change agents and innovators committed to shaping the future of food, agriculture and natural resources. AFA alumni gain exclusive, no-cost access to continued learning opportunities, professional development programs and industry connections that are unmatched anywhere else in the sector. Whether they're stepping into their first job or leading at the executive level, AFA alumni stay engaged, informed and energized, fueling impact across every corner of the industry.

79%

**Of AFA Alumni Are in
Ag-related Careers**

Lasting Impact

The AFA experience builds more than skills, it builds community. Through the Alliance Alumni Network, graduates are empowered to create lifelong relationships, give back to the next generation and continue their leadership journey. At the heart of this effort is the National AFA Alliance Advisory Council, a ten-member volunteer body that champions alumni engagement year-round. From fostering connections to supporting AFA's mission, the council plays a key role in keeping alumni involved, inspired and aligned with AFA's commitment to developing the next generation of agricultural leaders.

Leadership Across Borders

Through Destination Alliance, AFA alumni take their leadership journey global by immersing themselves in agriculture through an international lens. This exclusive opportunity allows alumni to explore how tradition and innovation collide across borders, while gaining new perspective on the global food system. In 2024, the experience took participants to Spain and Portugal, offering firsthand exposure to Mediterranean production systems, export strategy and agritourism.

In 2027, the journey continues in Vietnam and Thailand, where alumni will examine emerging markets, rice and aquaculture systems, and the cultural forces shaping agriculture in Southeast Asia. With immersive tours, candid discussions with international leaders, and cross-cultural learning at its core, Destination Alliance equips alumni with the tools to think globally, lead locally, and stay at the forefront of agriculture's evolving landscape.





Level Up Your Leadership

AllianceX is where high-potential professionals and the industry's most visionary leaders converge to shape what's next in agriculture. With only 100 seats available, this selective two-day experience delivers high-impact, high-touch development for those ready to level up. From emerging technologies to global ag policy, participants engage in meaningful conversations with executives, entrepreneurs and changemakers leading across the food and agriculture value chain. But AllianceX is more than a leadership summit, it's a launchpad for transformation. Attendees build real relationships, explore fresh ideas and leave with the tools, confidence and connections to accelerate their career and leadership journey.

Rooted in Ag, Inspired by Place

AllianceX isn't just about content. Each year, the event moves to a new city, spotlighting the unique agricultural identity and energy of that region. From Louisville in 2023, to Milwaukee in 2024, and Ft. Worth in 2025, each location brings a fresh lens to the future of food and agriculture. In 2026, AllianceX heads to Nashville, where tradition and innovation collide in one of ag's most dynamic crossroads. By stepping outside conventional conference rooms and into spaces that reflect the spirit of the city — like Milwaukee's historic Grain Exchange Room — AllianceX creates immersive environments that elevate conversation, inspire connection and ground the experience in place-based meaning. This isn't just an event, it's a celebration of agriculture's local roots and national reach.

“What I think makes AllianceX different from other industry conferences is that it is not just focused on the business and traditional leadership aspect of growth and learning. It marries these with big ideas in personal and professional growth.”

**Kiah Twisselman
Burchett**
AFA Alumni



BRIDGE BUILDER AWARD



**2024 WINNER
ELLEN ZIMMERMAN**

What is the Bridge Builder Award?

AFA honors one exceptional alumni each year with the Bridge Builder Award. This prestigious award celebrates those who continue to engage with AFA and are making notable contributions in their careers, communities, or the agriculture, food and natural resources industries.

The Bridge Builder Award not only celebrates our distinguished alumni in the industry but also pays tribute to the core principles upon which AFA was founded. Inspired by the timeless poem "The Bridge Builder" by Will Allen Dromgoole, this award embodies AFA's enduring mission to construct bridges that transcend our programs and experiences. AFA continues to forge connections that inspire and uplift, ensuring that our legacy of bridge-building thrives for generations to come.

Building Bridges Across Generations

Ellen Zimmerman has spent her career connecting people, perspectives and possibilities across the global food and agriculture industry.

As director of industry relations for the U.S. Grains Council, Ellen leads membership strategy, cultivates funding partnerships and directs the execution of large-scale meetings that unite stakeholders across borders. She also works closely with the Council's international offices, ensuring U.S. priorities are effectively communicated and global engagement is rooted in shared understanding.

Ellen's career reflects a commitment to service, strategy and storytelling — core values she's carried through roles at the American Seed Trade Association, American Postal Workers Union and Ohio Corn & Wheat.

From member engagement to executive communications, event planning to leadership development, she's helped elevate the voices of farmers, companies and communities alike. Her early work at RFD-TV and her entrepreneurial ventures only underscore the grit and creativity she brings to every role.

An alumna of The Ohio State University with a degree in agricultural communication, Ellen is deeply committed to giving back.

She has served in multiple volunteer roles with Agriculture Future of America, including as a member of the National AFA Alumni Advisory Council. She also supports alumni efforts at Ohio State, Ohio FFA and locally volunteers to maintain the historic Kenilworth Gardens in Washington, D.C., where she resides with her husband, Daniel.

Ellen embodies the spirit of a Bridge Builder — someone who not only opens doors for others but walks alongside them.

Her leadership continues to shape the future of agriculture by ensuring more voices are heard, more connections are made and more young professionals are equipped to lead boldly.



We Need YOU

At AFA, our mission is made possible through the strength of our partnerships. We depend on the generosity of donors, the dedication of volunteers, and the collaboration of industry partners to deliver high-impact experiences that prepare the next generation of leaders in food, agriculture and natural resources. From financial support to mentorship, every contribution plays a vital role in connecting students to opportunity, amplifying their potential and ensuring a thriving, values-driven workforce for the future. This work doesn't happen alone — it happens together.

The Impact of Every Dollar

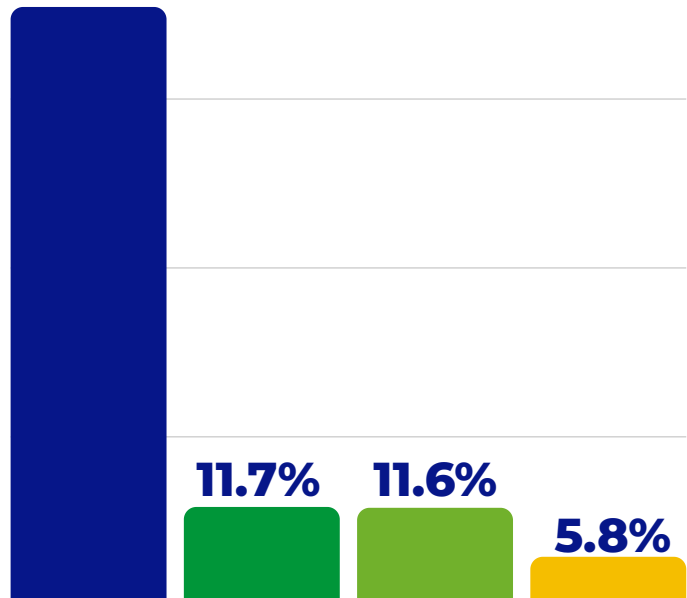
Donations to AFA are a direct investment in the future of agriculture. Your support fuels the full scope of our mission from delivering high-quality leadership development programming and awarding life-changing scholarships, to advancing fundraising initiatives and sustaining the operational strength of our organization. These contributions ensure we can continue to innovate, expand our reach and remain responsive to the evolving needs of students and the industry. Every dollar makes a difference, and helps us grow leaders who are ready to meet the moment.

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For more information contact: traci.via@agfuture.org