During fiscal year 2015, the AFA Alliance saw a variety of new programs and developments. From a regional seminar, the annual Forum and the addition of nearly a dozen new lifetime members, the Alliance is vibrant and growing.

Creating New Value

Traditionally, Alliance members have come to Kansas City for in-person training in November and convened online for additional opportunities throughout the year. In 2014, the Alliance introduced a new platform to bring together young agriculture professionals. AFA Alliance Regional Seminars are day, or day and a half, training events hosted in a concentrated area of membership. The first Regional Seminar was held in Omaha, Nebraska, June 20-21, at Union Pacific Railroad’s headquarters. Hosting this event in a regionally desirable area lifted barriers for some who had not attended an AFA Alliance event since graduating from the collegiate program.

“The first regional Alliance event was extremely rewarding,” said T.J. Masker, who works for Premier Crop Systems, LLC. “Surrounded by a group of like-minded peers, we were able to learn more about an industry that is so important to agriculture, the railroad.”

Masker was one of those who had not attended an Alliance event since their involvement in AFA’s collegiate program. Jerad Hutchens, who was working with the GSI Group, also found himself in this situation. “I was looking for some extended education, and personal and professional development resources with people who were close to my age,” Hutchens said. “The Seminar was a way to get back involved with AFA and likeminded people in the agriculture industry.”

Both Masker and Hutchens said they enjoyed learning about the role Union Pacific and transportation play in the agriculture industry, as well as engaging in FranklinCovey’s Speed of Trust workshop.

“I hadn’t really researched or studied transportation at all,” Hutchens said. “In my position, I was doing more within transportation so the Regional Seminar was a good way to learn more.”

Eleven new lifetime members joined the AFA Alliance this year. The planning committee, which governs the Alliance alongside support from AFA staff, is hard at work making sure Alliance programs meet the needs of these members throughout the course of their careers.

In addition to the new Regional Seminar, the 2014 Forum program provided unique opportunities based on where members are in their careers. Saturday morning, attendees in the first five years of their careers participated in FranklinCovey’s Five Choices to Extraordinary Productivity workshop, while those with more experience participated in the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership’s Choosing Servant Leadership program.

Giving Back

Alliance members are serious about the organization’s values. They live these out in various ways. From the portion of their membership fees that go to The Brian Perry Memorial Fund that sends two students to AFA Leaders Conference each year, to individually providing support and time to AFA programs, Alliance members are making a difference in the preparation of young leaders.

Throughout the course of the year, 54 members gave back to the AFA collegiate program by volunteering in a variety of ways. Many have scored application essays for AFA Leaders Conference, AFA Leader and Academic Scholarships and the AFA Leader Institutes. Others have served as speakers and tour hosts for the AFA Leader Institutes.

One member who was able to volunteer in a unique way this year was Deanne Dick. A food industry professional with SensoryEffects, Dick took part in the 2015 AFA Food Institute in Chicago by serving as a tour group guide and a moderator for the Institute’s career roundtable session.

“Serving as a tour guide at the AFA Food Institute gave me an opportunity to give back to AFA and show students what a career in the food industry looks like,” she said. “I’m ten years out of college. It’s kind of the middle ground between management and being in entry level positions. It was great to share my experience with the students.”

Dick also gives back through the AFA Leader and Academic Scholarship program in her home community. As a past Cooper County, Missouri, scholar herself, Dick says she thinks it is important to give back in this way.

“When I look at my charitable contributions, I try to look for things where I can make a difference,” said Dick. “I know giving back to my community does make a difference. My mom supports them, my brother supports them. Among the three of us, we can get a good portion of a scholarship together for one kid.”

Of course, there are many who also give back by providing leadership to the Alliance itself. The eight person Alliance Planning Committee governs all activities of the organization from membership and communication to programming and future direction.

“The experience of working in a group for one common goal; to plan something you hope a lot of people will benefit from and enjoy
has been a well-rounded experience,” said Grant Christensen, 2015 fiscal year program vice chair. “Learning how to take multiple opinions, come to a general consensus and run with that has been good from a professional standpoint. You learn and work on these skills while serving on the Planning Committee.”

Meeting New Faces

On Aug. 25, the Alliance welcomed a new face to help with the expanded program initiatives. Annie Storey, director of programs, joined the AFA staff team in a newly created role. This addition dedicates new staff attention and leadership to the development of AFA’s programs for young professionals.

The Planning Committee is excited about Storey’s leadership and opportunities this will open for current and new members. Christensen says the Alliance’s multifaceted attributes make it stand out from other professional agriculture organizations.

“The Alliance is one of the few young professional organizations that crosses multiple industries and geographies and brings driven goal-oriented people together,” Christensen said. “The environment that is created by this atmosphere is one of curiosity.”

He believes every young agriculture professional should attend at least one Alliance event within the first three years of their career. Paul Kirbach, who works for Monsanto, agrees the Alliance’s environment is different than others he has experienced.

“When I have the opportunity to attend the AFA Alliance Forum, it’s like I get to top off my fuel tank. It’s energizing,” he said. “I really get to stretch my thinking muscles. You get to think in a different direction at AFA because it looks at agriculture more broadly.

An annual report takes a detailed look at an organization’s assets. Most often, we focus on the assets represented numerically on the balance sheet. It is important to track how these assets changed throughout the course of the fiscal year. Yet, in my mind, this practice does not show an holistic view of a company’s assets. When we look only at the numbers, we miss vital organizational assets, perhaps the most important assets.

These other assets are not so easily quantifiable. They are the people of our organization. For AFA, these assets are seen by the life changes, perspective shifts and self-discovery created through our programs. These are people driven assets. On the pages of this report, we’ve attempted to qualify these assets by sharing the stories of our young professional and collegiate participants. When our programs help a participant see agriculture’s larger picture and their place in it, we want to celebrate that victory.

Often this discovery is the start of what we consider the greatest asset of AFA. When our participants change the way they see themselves, our greatest accomplishments as a leader development organization are realized. Many enter into our programs seeing themselves as someone who needs to receive an investment of leader training. Their balance sheets are in the red, so to speak. However, over the course of their involvement with our programs, they accrue support and contributions that allow them to see themselves as an asset. They recognize their ability to make a difference in a community, a company and our agriculture industry. It is always a pleasure to watch our participants mature through this process — first as students and then as young professionals.

I invite you to explore how several of our participants have found themselves in various stages of this process through the stories recorded in this annual review. From participating in the AFA Leader and Academic community scholarship programs, to serving in leadership roles, our students and young professionals are making a difference for the future of agriculture.

As a non-profit organization, those who invest in our organization are an important asset. We want to express our sincere gratitude to those who have given back and made AFA and its programs possible this past year. We hope these stories help you see how we use the assets you entrust to us to make a difference in the lives of agriculture’s future leaders.
From Washington D.C. to Chicago, Illinois, with a couple of stops in Kansas City, Agriculture Future of America’s collegiate programs provided outstanding leader development and experiential opportunities to agriculture students in fiscal year 2015.

**Passion for Policy**

Kicking off the year in the nation’s Capital, the AFA Policy Institute brought 39 AFA delegates together to take part in Agriculture Council of America’s National Ag Day student programming as well as additional AFA training. During the ACA portion of the event, AFA delegates were joined by members of 4-H, FFA and Student NAMA.

“I’ve been to D.C. a few times for other conferences. This has been my, by far, favorite,” said Joe Rust, an AFA delegate from Purdue University. “We were able to see all sides of agriculture policy. We spent over half a day visiting our U.S. senators and representatives.”

Following the closing of ACA’s program, which included visits to Capitol Hill, the AFA delegates met with various policy leaders from Senator Mike Johanns to individuals at the U.S. State Department. Capping off their experience with a visit to American Farm Bureau, the students participated in a forum on agriculture trade, regulation and policy with individuals from a variety of organizations.

Throughout the event, meeting with policy leaders from across the country lent value to the students’ experience as did the opportunity to interact with their peers.

“It’s really cool to see other students who are just as passionate and involved in the agriculture industry as I am,” said Stephanie George, who attends Washington State University.

**Focus on Animal Agriculture**

A product of the competitive application process, this unique environment created by passionate, driven students is an important distinction of all AFA collegiate programs. Benjamin Sims, a delegate from the College of the Ozarks, said this environment is one of his favorite things about attending programs such as the AFA Animal Institute.

“I really enjoyed being able to communicate with people who are interested in the same things I am, specifically agriculture,” he said.

Sims and over 70 other students came to Kansas City for this year’s Institute, April 6-8. Participants interacted with their peers and asked questions of executives from Merck Animal Health, Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Hill’s Pet Nutrition, Ceva, MRI Global, Bayer Animal Health and the Kansas State University School of Veterinary Medicine, before breaking into six tour groups.

“The networking was amazing,” said Jared Wellik. “I valued interacting with industry leaders, hearing what they have learned throughout their life from getting jobs after college to now.”

Each tour group visited four animal health companies, including marketing agencies, associations, pharmaceutical companies and animal nutrition companies. Representatives from most of the 24 companies joined the students for dinner where industry professionals and students had the opportunity to interact with each other and hear from American Royal Association President, Bob Petersen.

In addition to visiting major companies, students discussed key topics related to animal agriculture and participated in a careers in animal agriculture round table session.

**Collegiate Leaders Activated**

A few months later, 586 delegates found themselves back in Kansas City for the 2014 AFA Leaders Conference, Nov. 6-9. The delegation represented 92 schools and 37 states. The 2014 theme “Activate” challenged students to activate their own potential and seek to be a catalyst for positive change on their campuses and in the sectors of agriculture closest to them. Throughout the four-day experience, students engaged in programming that fostered their personal and professional development and allowed them to explore what it means to be activators. Highlights of the program included charges from Vietnam veteran Captain Charlie Plumb, Brady Deaton from USAID, University of Denver Associate Professor Corey Ciocchetti and 2014 AFA Leader in Agriculture Award recipients Dan Dye, CEO of Ardent Mills, and Bruce Rastetter, CEO of the Summit Group.

“I’ve learned you often have to go where the opportunity is, and that will help you be successful,” said Joan Jordan, a delegate from Purdue University. “You shouldn’t be afraid to step outside your comfort zone — move to a new geographic area or take a risk.”

Recognizing the importance of mentorship, more than 400 industry professionals provided advice, wisdom and skill enhancement training through a variety of interactions, including Conference sessions, panels and round tables. Nearly 90 organizations shared internship, full-time and study abroad opportunities with the delegates through the AFA Opportunity Fair.
“The Opportunity Fair is amazing. Not only does it give you the option to talk to so many different companies, you also see how many agriculture jobs are out there in the industry,” said Tyler Baum, a delegate from the University of California at Davis.

**Taste of the Industry**

2015 kicked off with almost 60 students attending the AFA Food Institute in Chicago, Feb. 8-10. For Nathan Lundquist, a junior in agricultural science at Cornell University, the few days were an affirmation the food industry was a place he could see himself in the future.

“I’ve always wanted to be involved in an industry that helps others,” he said. “That’s the food industry. I’ve learned from the various food industry professionals here that you’ve got to love what you do, and everybody who is here loves helping other people.”

Through talking with industry professionals in panel, networking and round table settings, Rebecca Gann, a freshman in biological engineering at the University of Missouri, was inspired by the excitement and outlook of those around her.

“I got to meet with industry professionals and not only hear about their careers, but also their outlook on the industry,” she said. “It was really cool to see how excited we students are about our careers in the industry and also how all of the industry professionals are excited.”

In total, 1257 delegates participated in AFA’s collegiate programs during the course of the fiscal year. From the Online Network of Tomorrow’s Agricultural Professionals to the AFA Leader Institutes, the programs are reaching more students and covering more focus areas each year.

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Top: The 2014 AFA Leaders Conference welcomed 586 delegates from across the country to Kansas City, Nov. 6-9. Bottom: The 2015 AFA Food Institute allowed almost 60 students to explore the food industry, take part in professional development and make valuable connections.
Supporting Agriculture’s Future

Mentors and support networks are an important part of student success. For many students, scholarship providers play a role in these networks by supporting education financially. For Agriculture Future of America’s Belles of the American Royal scholars, this academic support comes with a uniquely personal twist. From meeting a member of BOTAR at the AFA Leader in Agriculture Award Dinner to attending the annual BOTAR general membership meeting, the scholars have several opportunities to connect and interact with the organization.

“There is a lot of passion behind this scholarship,” said Anna Setter, 2014 scholar and Kansas State University student. “The BOTARs care about the future of agriculture and believe helping me be successful is a part of that.”

The original BOTAR President’s Scholarship was established to honor past BOTAR presidents. In that tradition, the scholars are selected, in part, because of their volunteer and leadership accomplishments.

“BOTAR connects young women beginning their post-college careers to their community, to their peers and to multiple generations of Kansas City women who have been encouraged by one another throughout their lives,” said Nancy Wilkerson, former BOTAR president.

In 2012, BOTAR chose to partner with AFA to offer its President’s Scholarship as an AFA Leader and Academic award to one female graduating high school senior who planned to pursue a four-year degree and was committed to agriculture and interested in agriculture education. Since then, BOTAR expanded the scholarship program to allow recipients to re-apply for the scholarship each year of their collegiate experience, providing four awards every year. Each recipient receives sponsorship to AFA Leaders Conference.

“AFA has helped our organization reach a large pool of extremely qualified applicants that share similar visions of agricultural emphasis,” Wilkerson said. “More importantly, we are very proud our scholars will be part of the AFA Leaders Conference, which helps them hone critical career skills and tools.”

The students selected for these scholarships recognize the investment the BOTARs are making and are grateful. Megan Harper, who attends the University of Kentucky, was first selected in 2013.

“When I went to the AFA Leaders Conference, one of the BOTARs sat with me at the AFA Leader in Agriculture Award Dinner,” she said. “She explained what they did and how they raised the money and what the BOTARs are all about. It was really interesting to hear her perspective on giving back to the agricultural community.”

As a former 4-H and FFA member, community service is an important part of Harper’s background. Setter also was involved in 4-H for twelve years and now serves as a collegiate coordinator for a grant Kansas 4-H received through Monsanto. After completing her undergraduate degree, she plans to obtain a graduate degree in agriculture education and pursue a career in outreach education and curriculum development.

“What BOTAR stands for lines up with my career goals,” Setter said. “It’s nice to know I now have a network of people who are behind me in my career aspirations.”

Both Harper and Setter say they admire the amount of effort the members of BOTAR put into making agriculture and youth development activities available to young people through BOTAR’s support of the American Royal as well as this scholarship program.

“The fund raisers BOTAR holds and the service the members provide year-round to make the American Royal possible is phenomenal,” Harper said.

Through her experiences as a student, Setter learned to appreciate the value of youth development as well as the effort it requires to make it available. Now planning for a career, she appreciates these things being valued by other non-student organizations.

“It was nice to see those values follow to other organizations,” she said. “The BOTARs’ values line up really well with my own; giving back is part of who I am.”

Setter enjoyed developing relationships with the BOTAR members, and she also looks forward to continuing her friendship with Harper and the other BOTAR scholars who will be selected.

“Interacting with the other BOTAR scholars, will allow us to create a great network,” she said. “We get to share a common experience and learn from each other along the way.”

Harper agrees and says she appreciates the way the BOTAR scholarship has not only provided for her current education, but also makes future opportunities seem possible because she has not had to incur student debt as an undergraduate.

“I actually have the opportunity to go and pursue more education,” she said. “It’s such a blessing. I am so grateful to have what the BOTARs have done for me.”

“Interacting with the other BOTAR scholars, will allow us to create a great network,” she said. “We get to share a common experience and learn from each other along the way.”

Harper agrees and says she appreciates the way the BOTAR scholarship has not only provided for her current education, but also makes future opportunities seem possible because she has not had to incur student debt as an undergraduate.

“I actually have the opportunity to go and pursue more education,” she said. “It’s such a blessing. I am so grateful to have the scholarship.”

She hopes to obtain a graduate degree in agricultural economics or agricultural communication following her graduation in 2017.

Throughout fiscal year 2014, AFA and its partners awarded about 150 AFA Leader and Academic Scholarships. From community-based programs to national awards, each of these scholars and award providers a unique part of the AFA family. To see the full list, visit www.agfuture.org/2014scholars.
2015 Financial Statement

**ASSETS**

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<th>Description</th>
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<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
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**LIABILITIES**

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**NET ASSETS**

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<td><strong>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</strong></td>
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**CHANGES IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS**

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<td>Net assets released from restriction</td>
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<td>Loss on disposal of fixed assets</td>
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**Operating Expenses**

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**CHANGES IN TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS**

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<td><strong>Increase in Net Assets</strong></td>
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**Allocation of Expenses**

- Leader Development: (67.0%)
- Scholarships: (13.2%)
- Fundraising: (6.8%)
- Management: (13.0%)

**2014-15 Board of Directors**

- Daniel J. Cosgrove
- Pete Goettmann
- Leticia Goncalves
- Janey Grafting
- Gailyn F. Hayes
- Stan Howell
- Carol Koitan Long
- Sandy Kemper
- Ruth Kimmelshue
- Greg Krissek
- Dr. Thomas L. Payne
- Orion C. Samuelson
- L. Joshua Sosland
- Kevin Stiles
- Leticia Goncalves
- Greg Krissek
- Dr. Thomas L. Payne
- Orion C. Samuelson
- L. Joshua Sosland
- Kevin Stiles
- Bob Timmons
- Mike Vande Legt
- K. Russell Weathers
- L. Joshua Sosland
- Kevin Stiles
- Bob Timmons
- Mike Vande Legt
- K. Russell Weathers

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AFA Partners

Agriculture Future of America appreciates the generosity of hundreds of individuals, corporations, foundations and educational institutions that partner with AFA to provide career development and scholarship programs for the next generation of agricultural leaders. The following recognizes AFA’s partners for the 2015 Fiscal Year, which was March 1, 2014 to February 28, 2015.

Investments $100,000 to $249,999

Arysta LifeScience
CGB Enterprises, Inc.
California Cotton Alliance
Central Missouri Agriculture Club, Inc.
Cerner Corporation
Dairy Farmers of America, Inc.
Gowan USA, LLC
K•COE ISOM, LLP
Kuhn North America
LEWMAR Foundation
National Crop Insurance Services
National Pork Board
Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company
Nebraska Corn Board

Investments $50,000 to $99,999

BÜNGE
LAND O’LAKES, INC.
UMB

John Deere

Arvin Gottlieb Charitable Foundation
Enid and Crosby Kemper Foundation
R.C. Kemper Charitable Trust
William T. Kemper Foundation

Investments $25,000 to $49,999

The Andersons Inc. Charitable Foundation
Ardent Mills
Boehringer Ingelheim
Ceva
Daniels Fund
Elanco
Farm Credit
Helena
INTL FCStone
Lansing Trade Group
Monsanto
Merck Animal Health
The Scoular Company
Syngenta

Investments $10,000 to $24,999

Creymore Services

A R O Y N

Investments $5,000 to $9,999

K. Russell Weathers
CEO

Nancy Barcus
Chief Operating Officer

Mark Stewart
President

A complete list of all partners is available at www.agfuture.org/industrypartners.

K. Russell Weathers
CEO

Nancy Barcus
Chief Operating Officer

Mark Stewart
President

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Phone: 816-472-4232
Fax: 816-472-4239
www.agfuture.org
www.afaalliance.com

Mission: Creating partnerships that identify, encourage and support outstanding college men and women preparing for careers in the agriculture and food industry.