



Leadership Development – An Investment

Defining the Issue

Effective organizations will not survive from one generation to the next unless they invest in leadership development. Great leaders develop over time. They use life experiences as a basic foundation for involvement and network with peers and community members who have similar interests. Many look for opportunities to learn more about issues as well as participate in programs where they can sharpen communication skills.

Organizations that invest in leadership development create growth opportunities. Members who want to get involved in higher levels of organization leadership and community service look for programs that have the following features:

- Clear objectives that identify short and long term program goals and establish clear ways for participants to recognize, monitor and measure success.
- Provide ample opportunities for small group networking, peer support and mentoring.
- Provide a variety of training opportunities that can accommodate different learning styles, as well as programs where they can compete at local and higher levels.

Leadership development ensures that there is an ample supply of interested persons ready to tackle the changing needs and challenges of organizations and communities. What programs do you see as vital for leadership development in agriculture and rural communities going into the mid-21st century?

AFBF Policy

The objective of the AFBF Young Farmers & Ranchers program is to help members develop leadership skills and achieve personal growth. Program objectives building a more effective Farm Bureau to preserve our individual freedoms and expand our opportunities in agriculture.

The National FFA Organization provides vital programs for development of the talent and leadership needed in farming and agricultural service industries. The Cooperative Extension Service has similar responsibilities, maintaining support for 4-H youth development.

OFBF Policy

Ohio Farm Bureau is committed to the long-term personal and professional leadership development of its members by creating, facilitating and encouraging leadership programs, such as Ohio Farm Bureau Youth Program, Young Ag Professionals and AgriPOWER, within Ohio Farm Bureau and cooperating with allied organizations. We will develop strong leaders for our organization, community and agricultural industry.

Farm Bureau youth and/or agricultural oriented youth programs should be encouraged, supported and expanded. We should explore and expand youth leadership development opportunities that reflect the Ohio Farm Bureau mission with like-minded groups outside the organization.

We support creation and expansion of Community Councils to enhance communication, collaboration and leadership development opportunities between members and their respective county Farm Bureau.

We support FFA as a personal and leadership development program; and support OSUE on creating and maintaining 4-H youth development.

Discussion Questions

1. What leadership programs were available to you when you were a student? What experiences did you gain participating in them that helped you later in life? Are those programs available today?
2. What leadership programs were available to you when you were a young adult just starting down a career path? What features - peer support, mentoring, special education sessions, etc. - made them valuable?
3. What has your council heard about Farm Bureau's *Young Ag Professional*, *AgriPOWER* and *Issue Advisory Teams*?
4. Older adults need opportunities to sharpen and/or continually practice leadership skills they have acquired over the years. What leadership development opportunities does participation in a community council bring to Farm Bureau at the local level?