Growing Servant Leaders Through LEAD

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Extension’s LEAD Maryland Fellowship Program Increases the Numbers and Capacity of Leaders Serving Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Rural Communities
More rural than most think!

COMMUNITIES SERVED BY THE RURAL MARYLAND COUNCIL (RMC)

RMC Service Area
- RURAL
- SEMI-RURAL

Other Communities
- SUBURBAN
- URBAN

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Maryland needs confident leaders who can:

- See a “larger picture”
- Stay informed on issues
- Offer problem-solving ideas
- Use networks to create teams of support
- Promote the economic importance of agriculture, natural resources, and rural communities
- Tell others about agriculture’s positive roles
- Respond to agricultural and environmental issues
- Work with public officials to shape policy
LEAD provides two-year educational Fellowships, forming classes of 20-25 emerging leaders.
Extension and LEAD Maryland Foundation, a 501(c)(3), share responsibilities to fund and deliver the fellowship curriculum, create public value, and provide measurable outcomes of the fellowship program. Board trustees also serve as an advisory board to the program.
The Foundation matches Extension’s contributions in faculty salaries and benefits, program operations, and overhead to the program 1.5:1. Funding comes from UME and the LEAD Maryland Foundation, through grants and donations. Thank you for funding the LEAD Maryland Fellowships!
Who are LEAD Maryland’s Fellows?

- Farmers, growers, producers
- People serving rural community development, natural resources, land use, forestry, food processing, sales, finance, law, conservation, research, education, government, advocacy, nonprofits, and many more
Curriculum

- Public issues education
- Skills training
- Agricultural literacy
- Mixed teaching methods
- Diversity of trainers, speakers, and educators
- Fellows learn from each other
International Travel Experience
Netherlands & Belgium; Cuba; Brazil; China; Finland, Estonia, Russia; Hong Kong, Vietnam, Taiwan; Chile; South Africa; India, United Arab Emirates; and Poland
Researcher position, approach & analysis

- Original studies 2012 & 2016
  - Quantitative main focus-deductive process
- Pragmatic → Heuristic Inquiry
- Reflexivity as social critique (Findlay, 2002)
- Thematic analysis
  - Auto codes / keywords
  - Search for themes
  - Review themes - researcher/participant
  - Summary analysis
Survey at 20th Year of Program

- Descriptive study
- Researcher is a participant
- 22 questions in Qualtrics
  - Demographic, Likert, multiple choice & open-ended
- Individually addressed / emailed invitations to 219
- 107 responded
- 97 complete surveys
- Qualtrics reports
- Nvivo coding auto & themes
  - Open coding → themes

2 tickets to attend the 20-Year Celebration
Who Completed the Survey?

- Class I (1999-2000: Netherlands, Belgium)
- Class 2 (2001-2002: Cuba)
- Class 3 (2003-2004: Brazil)
- Class 4 (2005-2006: China)
- Class 5 (2007-2008: Finland, Estonia, Russia)
- Class 6 (2009-2010: Hong Kong, Vietnam, Taiwan)
- Class 7 (2011-2012: Chile)
- Class 8 (2013-2014: South Africa)
- Class 9 (2015-2016: United Arab Emirates, India)
- Class 10 (2017-2018: Poland)
Living Present Community

Supportive & Other

Production Agriculture

AGE

- 30-49: 62%
- 50-64: 29%
- 18-29: 7%
- 65+: 2%

Male: 37
Female: 47

1-5: 14
6-10: 6
11-15: 7
16-20: 5
>20: 52
LEAD influenced your actions to work with:

Often
Non-profit Ag based Organizations
Industry Organizations
Local Government
State Government

Rarely
Civic Community Organizations
Non-profit non-Ag Focused Organizations
Why taking action or why NOT

- Action based on skill development
  - Public speaking, media training, advocating
- Action based within occupation
  - Duty as new leader, network, job
- Action with groups not based on LEAD
  - Prior interest, community connections
- Lack of action
  - Time constraints
  - Conflicts with job responsibilities
Leadership Position Interest

**Interested**
- Agricultural Commissions (28)
- Professional Association Office (25)
- State Representative (24)
- Planning/Zone Board (21)
- County Fair/Recreation Board (19)

**Not Interested**
- County Executive (88)
- City Official (83)
- Education/School Board (78)
- State Senator / Commissioner (76)
Skill Development from LEAD

- Public Speaking (9)
  - Fear to confidence growth, personal mission statement,
- Social Media (6)
  - Non-existent to huge factor for agriculture
- Other
  - Honing of skills, empowerment to act with skills, identifying opportunities to act with confidence
- Didn’t develop but practiced
Personal Growth in Educating Others in Relation to Public Policy

- Has taken action
  - Obtained leadership role, testifying, guest speaker, opportunity outreach/education
- Increased interest
  - Reaching out to networks, empowered to be vocal, interest to help connect others
- Increased understanding
  - Agriculture peers (challenges), connections to resources/gatekeepers, how to “tell my story”
Impact of International Study

- Globally Connected
  - Markets, cultures
  - Similar challenges, politics/fraud
  - “big world-small MD”

- Eye Opening
  - Culture & travel shock (personal comfort), Food, hospitality/humbling, broad/similar AG

- Appreciation
  - Americans (fortunate & spoiled), US Ag/Innovations
  - Spirit of humanity against odds

- Relationship Building
  - Friendship bonds with classmates/hosts
Introspective Summary

- **Us vs Them**
  - Native farmers & agricultural immigrants
  - Appreciation of others but may lack understanding

- **Food is the platform for common dialogue**
  - Adversity in cultivating food draws empathy & bonds strangers

- **Empowering agriculturalists may occur through the process of developing & practicing skills [bricks] - however peer support ties efforts & builds self-confidence [mortar].**
Thank You!

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Questions?

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