

2018 NYFEA INSTITUTE

Seven PYFA members and several students attended the 2018 NYFEA Institute December 12-15 in Rogers, Arkansas. Kicking off the activities was the delegates meeting, where Denise and Ken Sanner and Betsy Huber represented PA as delegates.



Thursday's tours centered around the University of Arkansas' agricultural experiment station and the Don Tyson Center for poultry research. Ross Dunn, global government relations for Tyson Foods, spoke and introduced Chuck Bell, long-time employee of Tyson. Bell explained the business model of Tyson poultry

division, where he oversees the growth of 18 million birds at a time. Tyson's motto is "Raising the world's expectations for how much good, food can do." The company must plan 18 months in advance for an order of day-old pullets, which after 25 weeks begin laying fertile eggs. These eggs are moved to the hatchery and in 3 weeks they hatch and are shipped to growers where they grow into broilers in 45-53



days. 400 farm families in the 5 county Arkansas area raise chickens for the company. Tyson also produces the feed for all their chickens, as well as transports it to the farms. Twenty-five percent of all U.S. broilers are produced by Tyson, and they supply many restaurants such as Chik-fil-a, Wendys, McDonalds, etc.



Agriculture in Arkansas contributes \$21.4 billion to the economy and provides 1 in every 6 jobs. The state is number one in U.S. rice production, growing 50% of all U.S. rice. It is second in broilers and fifth in turkey production.

Thursday afternoon tours visited various projects at the experiment station. There are 15 research centers in AR with 110 faculty researchers and 300 projects. The Food Innovation Center is a commercial kitchen available for rent to local small businesses to produce value added products. The Sensory & Consumer Science Program studies peoples' reactions to sight, smell, taste, hearing, and touch of different foods and how surroundings affect



these. There is also a water quality lab and soil testing lab which provides free soil tests for any AR farmer. The animal science center houses beef cattle and calves, sheep, and pigs and has classes to teach students their care. Tyson provided dinner at the Poultry Center for the group.



Friday's tours visited the Wal-mart Museum in Rogers, where visitors learned the amazing story of Sam Walton and how he grew his business from one 5&10 store to an international company with thousands of stores with the mission of providing customers with the best price and service.

Crystal Bridges is an art museum created by Sam Walton's daughter to showcase American paintings and sculpture. The design of the building is amazing as it wraps around and over a lake and woods.



After box lunches at the Ozark Beer Company, young farmers walked around Rogers and



visited the Daisy BB Museum or the newly renovated Rogers History Museum. Then they boarded the buses and traveled to southwest Missouri to the Grasslands Dairy. Grasslands is a New Zealand company that owns 10,000 acres in Missouri, milking 8000 cows at 15 different parlor sites. The cows graze on ryegrass year-round and are all scheduled to freshen in 10 weeks starting February 1. The cows, which are 80% Jersey and 20% New Zealand Friesian, are rotated

from paddock to paddock every 12 hours between milkings in a 50-cow parlor. This was a very different business model from Pennsylvania dairy farms!

Crowder College hosted the group for dinner and director Jorge Sapada explained the agricultural studies at the school. Foreign travel is an important part of the curriculum.

Back at the Embassy Suites Hotel on Saturday, the Ag Decision Makers panel included three interesting speakers. Adam Chappell, cotton farmer, spoke on his philosophy and how he uses no-till, cover crops and dual planting to improve yields. Melvin Torres, from the World Trade Center Arkansas, talked about how they help small businesses access the global market. The major exports from AR are aerospace/defense and agriculture—rice, soy, and poultry. Half of the exports go to Mexico and Canada but they trade with 191 countries. Angela Hoffman, Farmers for Free Trade, spoke on three issues they are addressing regarding trade and said that farmers need to get involved.



Rodney Knight, VP of Ag Services for JB Hunt, was the lunchtime speaker. Mr. Hunt started the business in the early 1960s by trucking rice hulls to poultry farms for bedding. Today it is an \$8 billion logistics company with 12,000 trucks. They are the largest intermodal shipper in the U.S. with 30% of the market. The company is continually expanding into new markets, most recently milk, hogs, and logging.



New NYFEA officers were sworn in. They are (l to r) President Kenny Boyd, AL; President Elect Tim Faulkner, SC; and Secretary Donny Carter, GA. Past President swearing them in is Stan Deal of GA.

Saturday evening was the Agricultural Leadership Banquet with former NYFEA president Jimmy Emmons speaking on Improving Water Infiltration with Cover Crops. He demonstrated by slides of OK dry land farms that cover crops save more water from evaporation than it uses to grow the crops. Organic

matter in the soil provides the water holding capacity.

Throughout the institute, the Ag Communications competition was held with 20 contestants. Winners were Roy Ward, TX, and Kaylen Stevens, Delaware Valley University, PA. Banquet entertainment was rising Nashville star Justin Adams.



Next year's institute is in Lancaster, PA so please volunteer to help with the hosting duties. Contact Dan Wilkinson at danwilkinson96@gmail.com or Denise Sanner at sannerfarm@aol.com.