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Mentoring: What is your role?

As an organization with the stated focus of answering the question: Where will we find the next generation of young and beginning farmers? The National Young Farmer Educational Association (NYFEA) recognizes the importance of the current generation of agricultural professionals making the case for the next generation.

Who is the best recruiter for the next generation? The person that actually is in the agricultural business has the greatest chance to influence others to follow in his/her footsteps. Simply put, current agricultural professionals can speak with certainty of the trials and the victories found in the industry.

NYFEA is developing a detailed series of mentoring activities to provide to the individual farmer, the interested agricultural educator and the classroom teacher. Each of these is designed to assist in the goal of "spreading the word" of agricultural opportunities.

Along with successful agricultural production support, NYFEA recognizes that the food and fiber industry's future rests in developing the human capital.

Being a good steward of the land is critical to success and the importance of animal husbandry is recognized. However, since the beginning of this world, man has been in charge of managing God's creation.

NYFEA has accepted the challenge of providing training and helping develop the men and women of agriculture. Further, NYFEA accepts the opportunity to assist in communicating the value of agriculture to a constituency of consumers. It is the goal of the association to Educate Agricultural Leaders.

Often, we find ourselves looking toward the industry and what we can learn to be a better producer or how we can better market our product. Clearly, these are important. However, we can do more by telling the compelling story of our amazing agricultural process to the next generation.

If we do not share "why we are passionate about agriculture," then how is the passion ever understood or multiplied? The bottom-line is we have to be assertive.

NYFEA has roots that run deeply across the American agricultural horizon. These roots provide the chance for the association to touch a diverse network of people. The opportunity to be a leader should be an exciting thought for each of us.

Former NFL Coach Tony Dungy, who authored the book,

The Mentor Leader, stated, "Most people, at one time or another in their lives, will take on the role of a leader—whether formally or informally, at work, at home or at church. And most people, if they're honest about it, would say they feel a little inadequate in that role—whether as a parent or boss or a team leader. Actually, some self-doubt is a healthy attribute in a leader."

The truth is that leadership principles can be taught. The lessons that are gained from agricultural experience are often unique. NYFEA is excited about the opportunity to capture the unique stories of every day success from the farms of our members and friends. Then, NYFEA will show simple steps that can be taken to begin sharing the message.

How does this happen? The association is asking for you all to email us your best story of "Why I love farming?"

Send the story to nyfea-main@nyfea.org.

We will be following up with ways you can use your story to benefit others and the industry that is important to us all.

Thanks and God Bless,

Gordon Stone
Executive Vice President, NYFEA

Mission, Vision and Other Policy

The mission is to promote the personal and professional growth of all people involved in agriculture.

The purpose is to develop leaders, inspire service, strengthen communities, and enhance the success potential for American agriculture, especially the beginning farmers.

The objective is to accomplish this mission through programs and services designed to provide:

- a—a national framework to inspire personal achievement;
- b—educational opportunities to build business and environmental stewardship skills; and
- c—leadership and service opportunities for living and working in a local and global community.

The vision is a world where all people value and understand the vital role of agriculture, food, fiber and natural resource systems in advancing personal and global well being.

The focus is on answering the question: "Where will we find the next generation of young and beginning producers and young agribusiness professionals?"

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