



P.O. Box 414838  
Kansas City, MO 64141-4838  
(816) 472-4232

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Consolidated  
Mailing  
Corporation

## 8 perspective

### What are you doing this summer?



Russ Weathers

Where are those “Lazy Hazy Crazy Days of Summer” that Nat King Cole sang about in his 1963 billboard hit? “The lazy days of summer,” often attributed to a lifestyle of the young, is a phrase that definitely applies to a time past. It

certainly does not reflect the style of today’s college man or woman in pursuit of an agricultural career. There are very few “lazy days” for the 21st Century college student.

In today’s world, summer is a time to strengthen one’s resume for his or her future career. Certainly, that is the case for AFA students. AFA recently conducted a survey of our 2008 Leaders class regarding their 2009 summer plans. The respondent data provides a profile of men and women hard at work.

Eighteen percent of the respondents had accepted permanent full-time positions. Fifty-four percent had accepted internships for the summer

working for corporations, associations, rural businesses and government agencies. The remainder identified returning home to work on the farm, going to summer school and participating in study abroad programs as their summer activities. Not many “lazy days” in their summer plans!

AFA students are busy preparing to be future leaders for our food production, processing, marketing and service chain. They are committed, passionate and most of all very talented men and women. They are eager to embrace and become contributors to the future of this ever changing global industry called agriculture.

AFA assists students with their career preparations in a variety of ways; one of which is networking students to opportunities that lead to internships and permanent employment. Twenty-four percent of the survey respondents attributed their full time employment to their AFA network, and 30% identified AFA as the link to their summer internship.

After a tough work week ends, however, we can only hope that these men and women are taking advantage of a few “lazy day” weekends! ■

Have you told AFA what you are doing this summer? Contact us at 816-472-4232 or email us at [afa@agfuture.org](mailto:afa@agfuture.org).

### AFA Staff

**K. Russell Weathers** – President and CEO, [russell.weathers@agfuture.org](mailto:russell.weathers@agfuture.org)  
**Jan Shelby** – Administrative Coordinator, [jan.shelby@agfuture.org](mailto:jan.shelby@agfuture.org)  
**Matt Bornhorst** – Director of Development, [matt.bornhorst@agfuture.org](mailto:matt.bornhorst@agfuture.org)  
**Brian Friedman** – Program Manager, [brian.friedman@agfuture.org](mailto:brian.friedman@agfuture.org)  
**Suzanne L. Smith** – Administrative Assistant, [suzanne.smith@agfuture.org](mailto:suzanne.smith@agfuture.org)

# agri cultures



Summer 2009

The Newsletter for Agriculture Future of America

### Fanning the flame: 2009 Leaders Conference Plans Underway



After an outstanding AFA Leaders Conference in 2008, the AFA staff and Student Advisory Team are working hard to put together an even better program for 2009.

That, however, may be easier said than done. The 2008 conference brought in more than 470 outstanding college students from across the nation to learn from and interact with prominent leaders in the agriculture and food industry. Students had the opportunity to network with more than 125 top leaders in agriculture, business, government and education. Conference speakers included nationally recognized names Captain Charlie Plumb and Trent Loos.

How do you follow an act like that? You start earlier, work harder and make it happen! The AFA staff and 2009 Student Advisory Team have really hit the ground running, and this year’s conference is already taking shape.

During its first meeting in May, the Student

Advisory Team created the theme for the 2009 AFA Leaders Conference. The group felt the theme, ***Agriculture: Many Sparks. One Fire.***, embodied the very nature of the agriculture industry. While the industry is comprised of many individuals, it takes everyone’s cohesive efforts to generate the blaze that is agriculture. During the conference, students will be reminded that they are the important spark in the agriculture industry and without them, the fire would be reduced to nothing more than a flicker.

Throughout the coming months, the AFA staff and the Student Advisory Team will continue to work hard toward making this year’s conference better than ever. They invite you to join them Nov. 5-8 at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center in Kansas City, Mo. for the 2009 AFA Leaders Conference. It’s time for you to add your flame to the torch that will light the future of the agriculture industry. For more information, visit [www.agfuture.org](http://www.agfuture.org) and click on 2009 Leaders Conference. ■

The 2009 AFA Leaders Conference will be **November 5-8** at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center in Kansas City, Mo.

Visit the AFA web site at [www.agfuture.org](http://www.agfuture.org) and the AFA Alliance web site at [www.afaalliance.com](http://www.afaalliance.com)

## AFA Congratulates the 2009 Student Advisory Team



2009-2010 AFA Student Advisory Team (Front Row, Left to Right) Brittney Morris, Julia Shuck, Shawna Cikanek, Charlotte Jackson and Kelly Moyer. (Back row, left to right) Jared Unrau, Brian Spannagel, Ryan Hrubes and Andy Otto.

Agriculture Future of America (AFA) is proud to welcome the 2009-2010 Student Advisory Team. The new team is made up of nine outstanding young men and women who were selected based on their AFA involvement, geographic representation, interest in agriculture, and campus and community leadership.

The 2009 Student Advisory Team Members are:

- ▶ **Shawna Cikanek**, Kansas State University
- ▶ **Ryan Hrubes**, Iowa State University
- ▶ **Charlotte Jackson**, University of Missouri
- ▶ **Brittney Morris**, Iowa State University
- ▶ **Kelly Moyer**, Colorado State University
- ▶ **Andy Otto**, University of Minnesota
- ▶ **Julia Shuck**, University of Missouri
- ▶ **Brian Spannagel**, University of Southern Illinois
- ▶ **Jared Unrau**, Kansas State University

Throughout the next year, the AFA Student Advisory Team will serve as ambassadors for AFA. They will also plan and staff the AFA Leaders Conference to be held Nov. 5-8, 2009 at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center in Kansas City, Mo.

While serving on the Student Advisory Team, members have the chance to interact with corporate and association leaders, be exposed to career opportunities, take on leadership roles, and receive media and communications training. Team members also receive the AFA Student Advisory Team academic scholarship.

"Each year, AFA is fortunate to have men and women seek the opportunity to serve as student advisors and each year, the team gets stronger," said Russ Weathers, AFA President/CEO. "The 2009 team promises to set a new standard of leadership." ■

Do you see yourself on the 2010-2011 Student Advisory Team? Applications will be available online after the 2009 AFA Leaders Conference, Nov. 5-8th.

## Take Advantage of Opportunities



Claire Masker

One of the many benefits the AFA Alliance provides members is lifetime professional development. Thanks to webinar technology, the organization now provides these opportunities throughout the year.

Alliance members logged on to the first-ever Alliance-sponsored web education event on Friday, May 22. Issue management and public relations expert Charlie Arnot presented on the topic of animal welfare.

Arnot gave suggestions for addressing the growing disconnect that threatens animal agriculture. "Historically what we have focused on in agriculture is talking about our competence. We want everything to be science-based; we want to have the data," he said. "If we give people enough information, surely they'll be reasonable, rational and logical."

The reality is that competence only accounts for 17% of consumer trust, he said.

"Consumers really don't care how much we know until they know how much we care," Arnot said. "Does that mean we abandon science? Of course not. We still have to have that as our foundation for decision making."

But that care needs to be the first point of communication with the consumer. "We have to engage in value-based communication so consumers understand that our size, our scale and our use of technology have changed dramatically, but our commitment to doing what's right has never been stronger," he said.

The success of this inaugural webinar means there will be many more. The goal is to provide three a year, along with the annual Forum. Alliance members will participate in a survey to uncover what they hope to learn during these webinars. As the Alliance programming grows beyond the yearly forum, members will have even more of these lifelong learning opportunities. ■

## 2009 AFA Alliance Officers



**Chair**  
Rachel Mehlhaf  
Farm Credit Services  
of America  
Sioux Falls, SD



**Secretary/Vice Chair**  
Mark Reiman  
Monsanto  
Gothenburg, NE



**Membership Chair**  
Erica Coble  
John Deere  
Raleigh, NC



**Membership Vice Chair**  
Adam Anderson  
Pioneer Hi-Bred  
International  
Fremont, IA



**Programming Chair**  
Casey Mattke  
Dow AgroSciences  
Fort Worth, TX



**Programming Vice Chair**  
Trudy Westweet  
Minnesota Pork  
Producers Association  
Mankato, MN



**Communications Chair**  
Claire Masker  
U.S. Pork Center of Excellence  
Ames, IA



**Communications Vice Chair**  
Lura Roti  
Tri-State Neighbor  
Reporter/Freelance Writer  
Sioux Falls, SD



## AFA Board of Directors Bids Farewell to Two Members



Bill Siebenborn



Greg Webb

The AFA Board of Directors met for its summer meeting in Kansas City, Mo., May 27-28. During the meeting, AFA recognized retiring members Bill Siebenborn and Greg Webb for their dedicated service to the board. Both men have been instrumental in helping AFA achieve important organizational goals.

Siebenborn served on the AFA Board of Directors for eight years, starting in 2001. He is a dairy producer from Northwest Missouri and

serves on numerous other boards in the dairy industry. Throughout his time on the board, Siebenborn served on the program committee which helps shape the future of AFA. Thank you, Bill, for your years of service and commitment to AFA and the future of agriculture.

Webb has served on the AFA Board of Directors since 2003. During his years of service, Webb was a member of the board's resource development committee, which works hard each year to secure funding for AFA programs. Webb serves as the vice president of state and government relations at the Archer Daniels Midland Company. He also serves in several other leadership positions throughout the agriculture industry. Thank you, Greg, for all you have done to help make AFA a continued success.

AFA would like to extend its heartfelt appreciation to these men for their years of service and wish them continued success and fulfillment in their future endeavors. ■

## AFA Welcomes Emily Schneider



Emily Schneider

AFA is pleased to announce that Emily Schneider of Smolan, Kan., is the AFA Marketing and Communications Intern for the summer of 2009. Throughout the summer, Schneider is responsible for coordinating the AFA

newsletter, writing the annual report and helping with advertising, design work and event planning for the organization.

Schneider is a senior at Kansas State University, majoring in Agricultural Communications and Journalism, with minors in Agricultural Economics and International Agriculture. She was an AFA Community Scholar from Saline County, Kan. and has attended

Tracks 1 and 2 of the AFA Leaders Conference. She is looking forward to learning more about living and working in a global market by attending Track 3 this fall, thanks to a sponsorship from AFA.

Schneider grew up on a dairy farm in Central Kansas. Although her family no longer milks, Schneider's father still manages the family farm and a family-owned yard waste composting facility. Her mother owns her own financial planning business in Salina, Kan. Schneider was active in 4-H and FFA throughout her childhood, and she remains involved in leadership organizations at K-State.

Previously, Schneider served as a Kansas 4-H Foundation Intern and as the Communications Specialist at the International Grains Program in Manhattan, Kan. She was also an International 4-H Youth Exchange Representative to Austria and Germany for six months during 2007. ■



Congratulations to **Dan Dye**, AFA Board of Directors member, for being identified as the new president of Horizon Milling. Horizon Milling is a joint venture between Cargill and CHS, Inc. flour milling with Cargill as the majority owner and managing member.

## Agriculture: Many Sparks. One Fire.



Kelly Moyer

"You had better put it in gear!" my internal drive said to me after completing Track 1 of AFA Leaders Conference. From small town Colorado, I was used to being a "high achiever." However, after just three days of interacting with

some remarkable people at AFA Leaders Conference, I realized that I had a long way to go.

During the conference, I found myself surrounded by people who will one day lead the agriculture industry. After witnessing the skills they possessed and the passion they held, I wanted to do more. One student spoke about combating activist groups to keep his mink farm; I wondered if I would be able to channel my passion in such a way to defend what I believed in. I needed to kick it in gear. Neutral was just not going to cut it if I was going to continue collaborating and connecting with the caliber of students present at AFA Leaders Conference.

When I returned home, I put it into first gear,

and stepped up my involvement in leadership organizations. I worked to create an impact. By the summer after my freshman year, I was burnt out and felt that there were plenty of people making impacts, without me. Tired of school and feeling unsure of my future, I attended Track 2 of AFA Leaders Conference. The experience re-energized and refocused my passion. I realized that, while it was hard to make an impact alone, together, as future leaders of the industry, we could create a real effect.

Shifting up another gear, I attended Track 3 of Leader's Conference. While discussing issues in the industry with the current and future leaders at conference, I realized I was making an impact as an individual. An impact isn't something achieved and crossed off a to-do list. It is a perpetual process that is accomplished by the spark of passion in each of us, uniting to make a fire. My experiences at AFA Leaders Conference motivated me by relighting my spark. More importantly, I realized the power of a fire created by many sparks. AFA has given me hope for the future of agriculture - its legacy will continue, emblazoned by the passion of young leaders. ■



R. Crosby Kemper, founder of AFA, was honored by the Kansas City AgriBusiness Council with the Jay B. Dillingham Award for Agricultural Leadership and Excellence on May 22. Pictured with Mr. Kemper is John Dillingham. ■

## AFA Leaders Conference: How are YOU going to pay for it?

It's no secret that our economy is on a roller coaster. Many students (and their parents) may be feeling the pinch in their pocketbooks as they pay tuition this year. Some students may even have to start cutting down on their activities to lower expenses.

What about AFA Leaders Conference? You went last year and loved it. The speakers were great, you had a chance to network with your peers and AFA helped to get you that awesome internship for the summer. You really would like to go again this year, but you just don't know how you are going to pay for it.

Good news: even if your pocketbook is feeling restricted, AFA has some ideas to help you get the funding to have another great conference experience.

- ▶ **Community Scholars:** Visit with your community partner from last year and ask to be sponsored for this year's conference.
- ▶ **Internship Providers:** Have a great internship this summer? Ask your internship provider to sponsor you to conference.
- ▶ **College & University Partnerships:** Speak with your college or university dean about AFA sponsorships.

- ▶ **Corporate Sponsorships:** Apply for one of more than 200 nationwide conference sponsorships now available for AFA Conference.
- ▶ **Pay your own way—Get a discount:** Register by AUGUST 1ST, and you pay a discounted rate as a returning delegate.

If you are planning to request sponsorship from another source to help you get to the 2009 AFA Leaders Conference, Nov. 5-8, you may want to include the following information. A conference sponsorship costs \$1000.00 and includes hotel room, meals, and AFA Leader Conference program. The registration deadline can be found online at [www.agfuture.org](http://www.agfuture.org). The primary sponsor benefit is that AFA Leaders Conference develops leaders into future employees who are equipped to succeed. The primary student benefits include: improved employability through an understanding of industry issues, enhanced communications skills and the opportunity to network with peers and leaders in agriculture from across the nation.

Prospective sponsors can learn more information by calling AFA at (816) 472-4232 or by visiting AFA's website at [www.agfuture.org](http://www.agfuture.org). ■

## Cow Town Chow Down

While most students are breathing a sigh of relief because finals are over, some talented college students are already on to their next challenge: an internship. Every year, hundreds of students move to a new city, a new state or even a new country to pursue an internship in the agriculture industry. For many students, this is the first time they have truly been "on their own," and while internships offer excellent learning opportunities, students can find themselves rather lonely during the first few weeks.

With that in mind, AFA hosts an annual event for agricultural interns in the Kansas City area. The event, called Cow Town Chow Down, is a chance for the interns of AFA's partner companies to come together, network and make new friends. At the same time, it gives students a chance to learn more about different companies and organizations throughout the agriculture industry.

In addition to Cow Town Chow Down, AFA offers similar networking opportunities year round. At AFA Leaders Conference in November, students have numerous opportunities to network and get to know each other. AFA provides a directory of all students who attended the conference so they can stay in touch once they return to their respective universities. Additionally, the AFA Alliance Web site allows students to contact Alliance leadership to find out more about the AFA Alliance and the people who make up the organization.

This year's Cow Town Chow Down was held at the end of June, and as always, the event was a huge success. AFA plans to continue this tradition in the future, and we hope it will continue to make a positive impact on the students who are getting out of their comfort zones to make their mark on the industry. ■

## AFA Announces New Partnerships

AFA is pleased to announce new partnerships with the Pork Checkoff program and Bayer CropScience. AFA's programming is made possible by the commitment from corporations, associations, foundations and individuals who are committed to the future of the agriculture industry.

"The National Pork Board, supported by the investment by U.S.

pork producers in the Pork Checkoff, is proud to sponsor Agriculture Future of America," said Erik Risa, education program manager. "The board, like AFA, is dedicated to building awareness of the many opportunities that exist in agriculture and in the pork industry."

Jack Boyne, Bayer CropScience director of communications, said that the people of Bayer CropScience are also proud to support AFA. "We recognize the importance of developing tomorrow's agricultural leaders. These young leaders will need to create sustainable solutions as the world's population increases and places greater stress on our limited arable land availability."

AFA President and CEO Russ Weathers said, "AFA is pleased to welcome two new partners to



the AFA team. The investments made by Bayer CropScience and the Pork Checkoff help AFA to continue to strengthen the quality of its programs and develop new programs to better prepare a new generation of leaders for agriculture." ■



### AFA Thanks Continuing Partners

AFA would like to thank its continuing partners for the dedication they have shown to AFA and the future of the agriculture industry. AFA partners truly recognize the importance of developing young men and women in agriculture. Continuing AFA partners are:

ICM, Inc.  
Monsanto  
The Farm Credit System Foundation  
CHS Foundation  
Dow AgroSciences  
Bunge North America  
John Deere  
UMB Bank

## Farm Credit System Foundation supports Youth Returning to Rural America

*By John Hays, FCS Foundation vice president of national programs*

The average age of the senior decision-maker on the farm continues to increase. Although there are many young people pursuing agricultural degrees, it is important to always have young producers in production agriculture. Our mission at FCS Foundation is to help young, beginning and small producers be successful. We do this in many ways.

In 2008, Farm Credit Institutions made close to \$7.7 billion in loans that supported young farmers. We also encourage organizations in rural communities to create opportunities for their young people who return to the farm, such as reserving a board seat for a young producer at the local coop.

We also support organizations that provide direct benefits to these young producers, such as Agriculture Future of America. We believe in organizations that focus efforts on keeping youth



engaged in agriculture and provide the help they need to be successful after their return to the farm.

FCS Foundation feels that leadership development provided by AFA and other agricultural organizations can only benefit rural America as these young producers become school board members, county commissioners, town council members and other positions of influence.

We are honored to be an AFA partner and have been impressed with what the organization has accomplished thus far. Because we strongly support the next generation of farmers, we feel that AFA's success is our success, and we look forward to a continued partnership in the future. ■