

The National Young Farmer Education Association has had another eventful and successful year. At the National Ag Leadership Conference held last July in Austin, Texas, organization leaders gathered to make plans for the upcoming year. A priority set forth by the organization was to attract and encourage participation of 18-25 year olds. That initiative was embraced as plans were made for the December NYFEA Institute in Baltimore, MD. Along with tours of local agricultural facilities, the institute involved several competitions and seminars to enhance the leadership, communication, and business management skills of young institute participants. The Institute's Young Ag Leaders Event was put on by the Disney Institute, which offered experiential training in leadership and business management for college-aged NYFEA members and local participants.

In April, NYFEA members gathered with other agriculture based organizations in Washington D.C. This three day event offered opportunities for members to meet with members of Congress, attend seminars on agricultural policy, and participate in forums on agriculture issues and futurism. Participants also had an opportunity to visit local attractions and socialize with participants from other organizations with similar interests.

To further address the importance of education for new and young producers, plans are moving forward for an online bachelor degree program to be offered through the University of Western Alabama. This program will be designed for current or future producers and will be delivered entirely at a distance.

Looking forward, NYFEA has scheduled their National Ag Leadership Conference for July 5-7, 2009 in San Diego CA. Members will have the opportunity to learn about California agriculture and current challenges facing producers throughout the state, particularly political challenges. In addition, members will make plans for the future of the organization and spend time enjoying the amenities of the area. The NYFEA Institute will be held in Mobile, Alabama, December 10-12, 2009. Plans are in the works to make the 2009 Institute an educational and entertaining experience for all.