



PRESS RELEASE

USDA Signs Agreement with Agriculture Future of America to Prepare Young People for Careers in Agriculture

PUBLISHED: December 12, 2023

SHARE:



WASHINGTON, Dec. 12, 2023 – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Agriculture Future of America (AFA), formalizing a partnership to promote the common goals of strengthening the future competitiveness and sustainability of the U.S. agriculture industry by preparing more young people for careers in agriculture.

“This partnership will enhance USDA’s involvement with AFA and its leadership development and education mission,” said Secretary Vilsack. “This agreement reinforces USDA’s commitment to preparing students for future careers in agriculture with an emphasis on federal sector employment.”

USDA and AFA will continue to collaborate on leadership development efforts, and link these young leaders with career opportunities in food, agricultural science, natural resources, and related fields. Under the MOU, USDA commits to advancing opportunities for AFA delegates to participate in USDA programs, including internships. AFA will provide occasions for USDA to meet with AFA delegates to share information about these opportunities.

The MOU will be administered by USDA’s Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE), which develops and maintains partnerships focused on solutions to challenges facing rural and underserved communities and connects those communities to the education, tools, and resources available to them through USDA programs and initiatives.

“Our collaboration with USDA signifies a shared vision for the future of American agriculture,” said Mark Stewart, President and CEO of AFA. “This MOU is not just a document; it’s a commitment to bridging the gap between talent and opportunity. This

agreement reinforces our belief that connecting young leaders with USDA initiatives will enrich their careers and contribute to a more resilient and competitive agriculture industry.”

AFA builds bridges for young leaders to foster engagement and innovation in food and agriculture through premier leader and career development experiences. With program participation increasing 28% in the last five years, AFA has provided 26,000 leader development experiences to college leaders and young professionals from more than 200 colleges and universities throughout 43 states since its inception in 1996. AFA has awarded more than \$11 million in academic and leader development scholarships. For more information about AFA, visit www.agfuture.org.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America’s food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, promoting competition and fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate-smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.



#

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

PRESS RELEASE

Release No.:
0251.23

CONTACT:
USDA Press

EMAIL:
press@usda.gov



U.S. Department of Agriculture