

—HROPTMTR ΓACZZA 5-102



National  
Farmers  
Union  
FOUNDATION

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Cover photo by Marji Guylor-Alaniz, FarmHer

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

National Farmers Union Foundation has an unrivaled history and long-standing commitment to rural America. Farmers Union began offering educational programs more than 80 years ago in order to counter limited opportunities for rural youth during the Depression. Our commitment to educational programs is just as strong today as it was in its founding. Education is part of National Farmers Union's core; it's the foundation upon which our early leaders built a successful organization.

In order to further our educational goals and expand our offerings, National Farmers Union established the National Farmers Union Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, in 1998. The Foundation's mission is to empower and educate youth, our neighbors, media and policymakers of the social, economic, and cooperative contributions of family agriculture.

Through our Foundation, we support educational programs that provide leadership camps for young people all around the country. We also support scholarships and conferences on cooperatives for college students. Our support for our National Youth Advisory Council gives young adult members the opportunity to attend leadership training in Washington, DC. No other organization does more to encourage its members of all ages to have a voice in grass-roots development. We empower people to better live their lives, contribute to their communities, and develop their leadership abilities.

National Farmers Union Foundation works with all age groups, including adults, and is creating more and more adult learning opportunities through our Beginning Farmers Institute, Women's Conference and international Farmer-to-Farmer program. These programs improve the knowledge of farmers both at home and in the field of agriculture. The more informed farmers and ranchers are, the more empowered they are to use grassroots activism to make positive changes in their lives and communities.



Not only do we educate about cooperatives that complement farmers' operations, but we also support the cooperative business model. Cooperation is a way of life for our organization and our members.

Our education efforts are focused on growing rural leaders and engaged community members who value rural America and where their food comes from. Our outreach is constantly growing and reaching more individuals and farm families. In the future we plan to send more students to the College Conference on Cooperatives, grow our Beginning Farmers Institute, utilize e-learning for all age groups, and focus on empowering women, veterans and minority farmers.

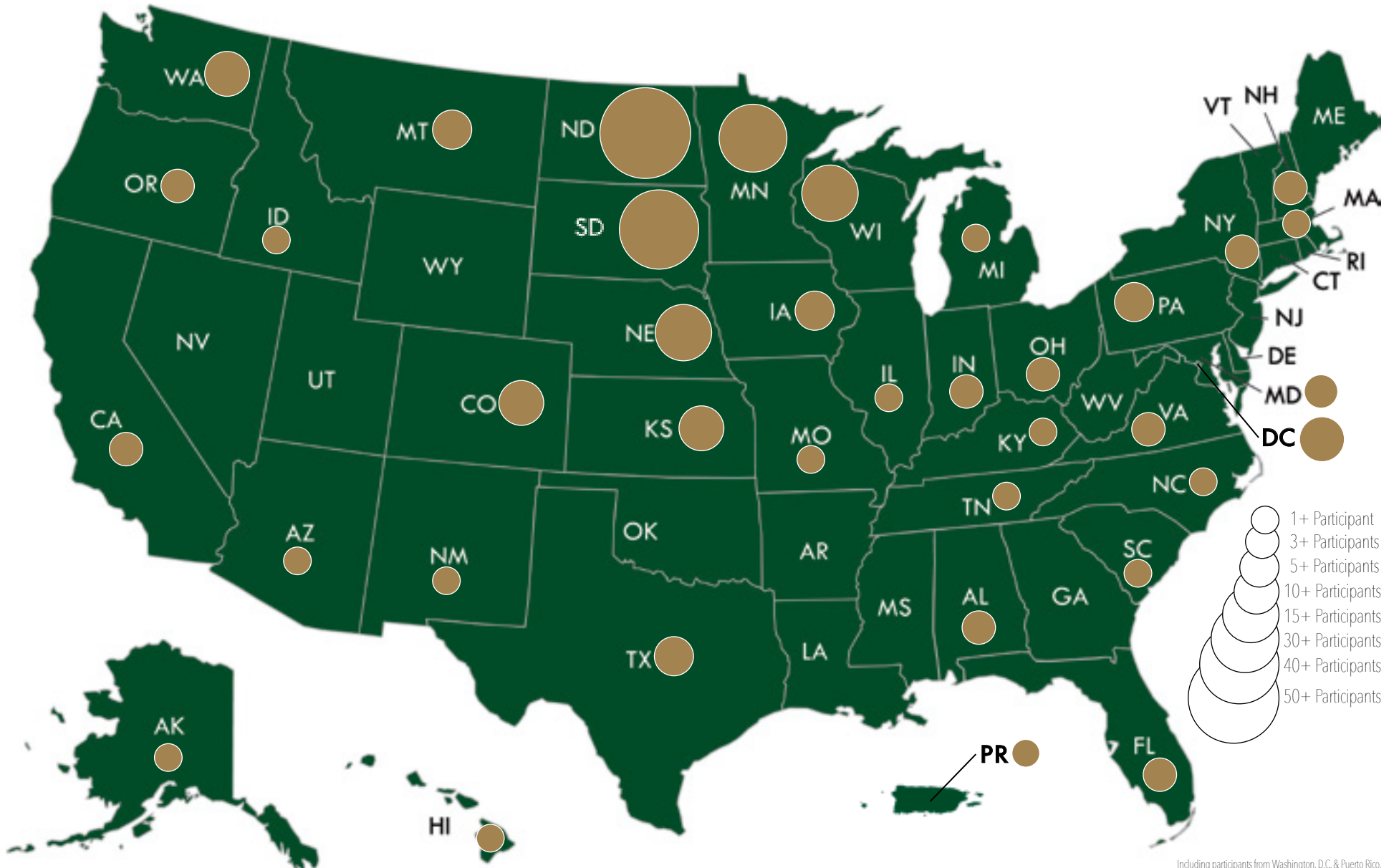
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Roger Johnson, Chair  
National Farmers Union Foundation

NATIONAL FARMERS UNION FOUNDATION  
**EDUCATION IMPACTS**

In 2015 the programs of National Farmers Union Foundation directly engaged 282 participants from 37 states\*



Including participants from Washington, D.C. & Puerto Rico.

# BEGINNING FARMER INSTITUTE

**N**FUF's Beginning Farmer Institute leverages its ability to reach farmers and ranchers across agriculture and strives to cultivate the next generation of American farmers. Beginning farmers get the support, technical training and empowerment that they need to succeed. This program is especially unique as it brings farmers from all over the country who use different production techniques together to learn critical business skills and develop their leadership abilities.

For the past five years, National Farmers Union Foundation (NFUF) has operated a Beginning Farmer Institute (BFI) to provide new farmers and ranchers with the resources they need to meet our nation's demand for safe, wholesome, and nutritious food. Our focus for this national program is to develop beginning farmers from all geographic regions and backgrounds, as well as

ages, levels of education, and commodity types. The program gives participants the skills necessary to sustain a successful career in agriculture, emphasizing business and financial planning.

## PRAISE FROM OUR PARTICIPANTS

*"Increased my perspective of farming and got me critically thinking about ways to diversify and improve my operation."*

*"BFI has provided me with great info on taxes and estate planning. Seeing operational farms has been great!"*

*"I know of no other opportunity that provides the amount and quality of information plus networking that the BFI provides."*

*"Great opportunity to learn from peers and experts alike. The camaraderie is powerful. Very educational and inspirational."*

*"BFI is an incredible opportunity to learn how to be a more successful farmer and gain a support network of other beginning farmers while having a great time. Thanks for all the help, NFU!"*

*"BFI has continued to pleasantly surprise me with the wealth of resources provided! Even with the presence of modern technology, I could never have found such good content."*

public speaking, leadership, estate planning, taxes, business structures, record keeping, cooperatives and legal issues on their farms. NFU partnered

with The Agricultural Land Based Training Association (ALBA) and the Farmers Legal Action Group (FLAG) to deliver training to the next generation of farmers and expand the program's reach. The BFI cohort networked with this diverse array of farmers and learned more about the challenges beginning farmers face in cross-cultural settings as well as how to overcome these obstacles.

The Beginning Farmer Institute focuses on building confidence in new farmers to enable them to run successful farms. It also encourages them to learn and apply leadership abilities to become actively involved in community organizations. The program is open to new farmers starting an operation of any size, though most applicants are forming small and medium sized farms.

This year's BFI cohort attended training sessions in Washington, DC; Salinas, CA; and Minneapolis, MN. They learned about topics such as advocacy,



2015 BFI participants gather around the grill while touring Harvest Farm in Kansas, during the 2015 NFU National Convention.



BFI participant Lisa Shirek surveys the farm operation of the Agricultural Land Based Training Association (ALBA) Farm Incubator and Food Hub in Salinas, CA. The 2015 BFI cohorts learned about farm financials in the classroom alongside ALBA's farmers-in-training.

## BEGINNING FARMER ADVOCACY & NGAC

NFU works tirelessly to advocate for both the current and next generation of agriculture. As agricultural demographics shift alongside industry and consumer trends, NFU strives to advocate for the needs of the next generation of producers. NFU's Next Generation Advisory Council (NGAC) works with NFU leadership, Government Relations, Membership and Education staff to recommend areas of focus and training that are relevant to the next generation of producers throughout the US. NGAC is represented by a rotating, non-voting member of the NFU Board of Directors, providing young farmers the opportunity to weigh in on issues that matter to them and gain board experience. NGAC was created in 2015 by the NFU Board of Directors to give newer, younger producers a stronger voice within the organization.



The BFI are given the opportunity to present at National Convention. Matthew Ubel of KS and the 2015 cohort shares his experience about the impact of the program on his family and his operation.

## BFI PARTICIPATION

**7%**

Of BFI participants are veterans

**54%**

Of BFI participants are women

**56**

Beginning Farmers have completed the BFI Program

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW: WOMENS CONFERENCE

Women play a critical role in agriculture around the world and in Farmers Union. The annual NFU Women's Conference celebrates women in agriculture while offering them opportunities to deepen their leadership and business skills.

The 2015 conference, Oceans of Opportunities,

was held in Clearwater Beach, Florida January 17-21 and focused on recognizing opportunities for women in agriculture. Keynote speakers included Lilia McFarland, USDA Coordinator of New and Beginning Farmer and Rancher Program and Althea Raiford. Althea is a combat veteran and served as a Navy Seabee. She is currently a military police officer and helps run

her 6th generation family farm in Georgia. She talked about the healing power of agriculture and what being a farmer means to her. The conference included a film showing of the documentary Terra Firma that tells the stories of 3 women farmers who are also combat veterans.



Above, Althea Raiford was a conference keynote speaker. She shared her story about returning from abroad and the impact going back to her family farm has had on her.

At left, (from left to right) Althea Raiford and Montana farmers Union members Kim Owen, Audra Labert Bergman and Courtney Lowery Cowgill.



Women's conference participants tour Keel and Curley Winery where they learn about viticulture, agritourism and Florida fruit production.

In addition to inspiring keynote presenters and speakers who focused on leadership, the conference covered the 5 areas of risk management: production, financial, marketing, human, and legal. Breakout workshops focused on topics such as: direct marketing, estate planning, crop insurance, food safety, social media, balance sheets and business planning.

The conference includes a day of farm tours. Attendees visited different farms and businesses that are owned and operated by women, including a winery and two commercial strawberry farms. The conference also provides valuable networking opportunities where women can find mentors and peers by connecting with other producers from across the US. Conference attendees come from farms of sizes and production types.



Madeline Schultz learns about the family farm operation at Castillo Farms, a woman owned and operated strawberry farm.



## WOMEN'S CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

**88%**

Increase in participants  
over the last 4 years

**47**

Attendees participated in  
the 2015 Women's Conference

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

# COLLEGE CONFERENCE ON CO-OPS

Every February, students attend the Midwestern College Conference on Cooperatives (MCCOC). The event attracts students and presenters from around the country. More than 150 attendees from 25 states and Puerto Rico participated in the 2015 National Farmers Union (NFU) College Conference on

Cooperatives in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Participants heard from cooperative experts from across the nation on why member-owned businesses are thriving in industries ranging from senior housing to healthcare. To bring cooperative education to life, students toured housing, retail

and grocery cooperatives in Minneapolis and St. Paul. They also visited the headquarters of CHS Inc., the nation's largest agricultural cooperative. A highlight of the tours was the Mill City Museum, built within the ruins of the former Gold Medal Flour mill, which at one time was the world's largest flour mill. Students heard from cooperative



Above, 2015 CCOC participants tour REI in Minneapolis, a national outdoor gear cooperative.

At left, CCOC participants visit a local senior housing co-op in Minneapolis to learn about its model.





CCOC participants visit Lakewinds, a grocery co-op in Minneapolis, to learn about its history and operations.

leaders, farmers and government experts who explained the current challenges they face.

Presenters at CCOC ranged from members, directors, employees and managers of traditional and value-added agricultural cooperatives to representatives of housing and worker-owned co-ops, as well as consumer cooperatives such as REI and natural foods co-ops. These professionals offered insights on cooperative development. This year's conference also emphasized opportunities for cooperative careers as well as the impact of cooperatives in international development. In addition to hearing from co-op professionals in business and retail settings, conference participants heard from farmers who are members and growers for different types of agricultural cooperatives.



2015 CCOC participants take a break from touring at Mill City Museum to take a group picture.



## CCOC PARTICIPATION

**157**

Participants attended  
CCOC in 2015

**20**

States sent participants  
to CCOC in 2015

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

# ALL-STATES CAMP

Each summer, National Farmers Union (NFU) members ages 17-20, who have proven themselves to be leaders in their communities, are given the opportunity to attend NFU's All-States Leadership Camp, in Bailey, Colorado. Campers arrive from all over the United States, and dedicate themselves to developing new skills. Campers find themselves learning new curriculum everyday, including: identifying issues important to their generation, discussing their roles in effecting positive change throughout rural America and effective communication skills.

The 79th NFU All-States Leadership Camp took place at the NFU Education Center in Bailey, Colorado, June 21-25. The underlying theme throughout camp was "Diversity: It's What We

## QUOTES FROM OUR CAMPERS

*"My favorite memory of camp is meeting many different people. I stepped out of my comfort zone from meeting many different people. The people in my leadership group made me laugh. I will miss camp very much, but I can call everyone family. Thank you everyone for making this week one of the highlights of my summer."*

*"I will not be the same because you can be open and share your feelings to one another. My great memory is making new friends and meeting people from many states! This camp is very special because it changes lives."*

Have in Common." Over 60 participants from six states attended the camp. The campers engaged in challenging discussions about diversity while practicing their communication, listening and leadership abilities.

Campers enjoyed hikes, outdoor games, a talent show, dances, a campfire, team-building exercises, and an outing to Breckenridge, Colorado. Campers also took part in cooperative activities and listened to inspirational speakers: Olympic gold medalist Rulon Gardner; NFU President Roger Johnson; Oklahoma Farmers Union President Terry Detrick; NFU Senior Vice President of Programs Chandler Goule; comedian Josh Blue; and Washington State University Graduate Research Assistant Cedric Habiaremye.



The 2015 All State Campers gather for a group photo.



Campers engage in a leadership workshop with Oklahoma Farmers Union President Terry Detrick.

## NATIONAL YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

Every year at All-States, campers select six of their peers to represent thousands of Farmers Union youth across the country as the National Youth Advisory Council (NYAC). Eighteen campers at this year's All-States camp applied for NYAC and the following six were elected by their fellow campers as the 2015 representatives:

- Kiana Jean Brockel, South Dakota
- Jesse Carlson, South Dakota
- Andrew Cotter, Wisconsin
- Alexandra Grace Farber, South Dakota
- Karly Jane Held, North Dakota
- Ali Slaughter, Wisconsin

NYAC duties include representing thousands of Farmers Union youth across the country and participating in the annual NFU Convention. These young Farmers Union members also hone their leadership skills at a session in Washington, D.C. and help plan the next year's NFU All-States Leadership Camp.

NYAC members are also given the opportunity to learn more about the United States political system and history. This year's NYAC attended the NFU Legislative Fly-In and participated in workshops where they learned about advocacy, agricultural policy and public speaking.

## ALL-STATES CAMP PARTICIPATION

8

Different NFU states sent campers to the 2015 NFU All-States Camp

60

Campers participated in the 2015 NFU All-States Camp

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

# WORLD FARMERS' ORGANISATION

The World Farmers' Organisation (WFO) is an international organization that aims to strengthen farmers' positions within value chains, with a particular focus on smallholder and family farmers. The WFO General Assembly adopted a pronouncement of the world's farmers on the need to produce a sustainable and environmentally conscious food supply that will be sufficient for the estimated 9.2 billion people who will inhabit our planet by 2050.

The Farmers Union delegation consisted of Dave Velde, NFU General Council and Vice President of International Relations; Mark Watne, North Dakota Farmers Union President; Doug Peterson, Minnesota Farmers Union President; Alan Merrill, Montana Farmers Union President; Darin Von Ruden, Wisconsin Farmers Union President; Robert Carlson, former North Dakota Farmers Union president and first president of the WFO; and Sue Carlson, former president of Wisconsin Farmers Union and WFO Women in Agriculture

representative.

In addition to adopting the Farmers' Declaration, the officials also participated in panel discussions focusing on sustainable, precision farming, agriculture contract issues and credit issues in ranching and farming. While in Milan the delegation attended a food, faith and the environment international conference where they met with Cardinal Turkson.



NFU members and state presidents traveled to Rome as part of the General Assembly of the WFO in Milano, Italy.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW: INTERNSHIPS

The NFU internship program allows college students with an interest in rural communities and agriculture to gain experience with NFU's grassroots initiatives. Focus areas include communications, cooperative education, economics, general education, membership, marketing, policy research and political science. Interns worked in the DC office and also participated in projects such as the College Conference on Cooperatives, All-

States Leadership Camp, the Beginning Farmer Institute, the NFU Policy Book, fundraising and researching prices for the Farmers Share. Graduate and undergraduate students, and those looking for more extensive work experience, are invited to apply. Interning in 2015 were: Skylar Schneider from Texas, Daniela Silva from Texas, Rochelle Bitz from North Dakota, Thomas Somrack from Ohio and Sara Kangas from Texas.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW: CURRICULUM

The 2015 theme for National Farmers Union's education curriculum was "Diversity: It's What We Have in Common," and was used by Farmers Union education programs across the country. The

lesson plans are designed to engage students using a variety of activities. Multiple lessons are available for students in grades 1-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12, along with separate curriculum for college students and adults.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW: EVENING FOR ED

The sixth National Farmers Union Foundation (NFUF) "Evening for Education" fundraiser was held in conjunction with the NFU annual convention. The event generates funds to support all of the NFUF educational programs. The program for

the evening included presentations by NFUF program alums and a keynote by Jim Richardson, an award winning National Geographic Photographer, who shared photos of his work from around the world.

## NFUF SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

National Farmers Union Foundation annually distributes thousands of dollars of scholarships to students furthering education at a two- or four-year college or university.

# 4

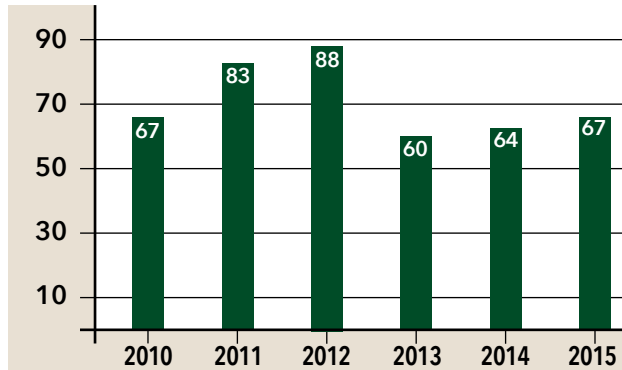
Stanley Moore \$1,000 scholarships were awarded to Brittany Dunning of Wisconsin, Jonathan Linke of South Dakota, Kali Schwanzenberger of North Dakota and Hayley Siroky of Montana.

# 1

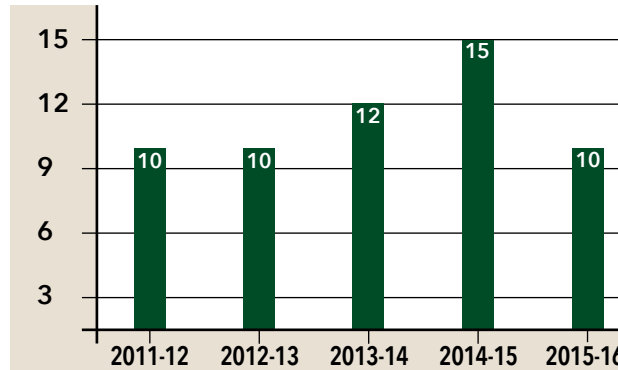
Hubert and JoAnn Seymour \$2,000 scholarship was awarded to Abigail Donkers of South Dakota.

# NFUF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

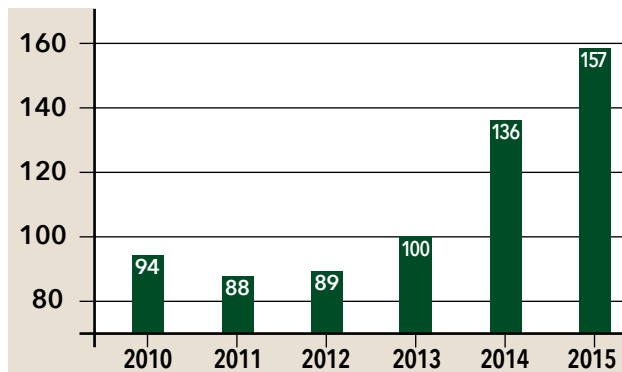
## ALL-STATES CAMP



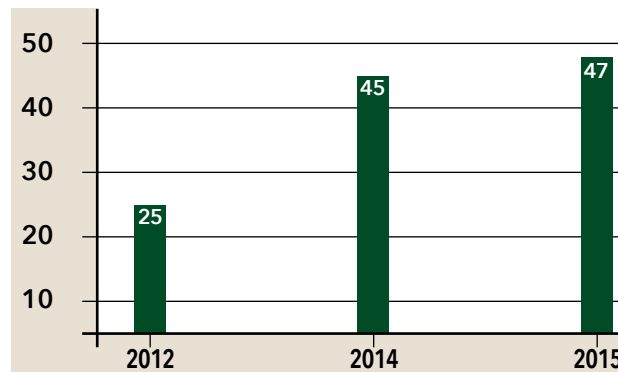
## BFI



## CCOC



## WOMEN'S CONFERENCE



## NFU FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Roger Johnson**, Chair

**Donn Teske**, Vice Chair

**Doug Peterson**, Minnesota

**John Hansen**, Nebraska

**Doug Sombke**, South Dakota

**Alan Merrill**, Montana

**Darin Von Ruden**, Wisconsin

**Mark Watne**, North Dakota

**Terry Detrick**, Oklahoma

**Jana Linderman**, Iowa

## NFU FOUNDATION STAFF MEMBERS

**Dave Velde**, General Counsel

**Sue Arends**, Recording Secretary

**Sarah Campbell**, Director of Education

**Melissa Miller**, Education Coordinator

## NFUF MISSION

To empower people to educate our youth, neighbors, media and policymakers of the social, economic and cooperative contributions of family agriculture.

WE THANK OUR GENEROUS  
**SUPPORTERS**

**\$150,000+**

CHS Foundation

**\$50,000+**

Farmers Union Industries

**\$40,000+**

Farm Credit Council

**\$20,000+**

CoBank

**\$5,000+**

North Dakota Farmers Union

**\$3,000+**

Roger Johnson

**\$1,000+**

Dave Velde  
 National Youth Advisory Council  
 The Cooperative Foundation  
 Canidae Corporation  
 Donn Teske  
 Midwest Agency, LLP  
 Rocky Mountain Farmers Union

Oklahoma Farmers Union

Reedy Ashton

Minnesota Farmers Union  
 Insurance Agency

Missouri Farmers Union

Montana Farmers Union  
 Mutual Insurances

North Dakota Farmers  
 Union Insurances

Rocky Mountain Farmers  
 Union Service Association

South Dakota Farmers  
 Union Insurances

Paul Jackson

Minnesota Farmers Union

Kansas Farmers Union

Doug Peterson

American Farmland Trust

Montana Farmers Union

David Porsborg

Janet Nelson

Ralph K Morris Foundation

**\$500+**

Chandler Goule  
 Wisconsin Farmers Union  
 Darin Von Ruden  
 Justin Sherlock  
 Tom Giessel  
 Harley Danielson

Scott Udby

Kent Bushman

Kent Pepler

George Davis

John Ellis

Mark Watne

Alan Merrill

**\$100+**

Nebraska Farmers Union

E. G. Reed

Georgia Joachim

Ohio Farmers Union

Justin Cowan

Larry Lieb

Linda Larson

Wayne Soren

Brett Morris

Minnesota Cooperative  
 Education Foundation

Elizabeth Erickson

Larry Quandt

Aaron Lehman

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