

Young Farmers GATHER for RETREAT

Top awards presented

The Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay in Cambridge was the site of the Maryland Farm Bureau Young Farmer's Annual Leadership Retreat in late January. Almost 150 attended the weekend event that featured speakers, break-out sessions, competition and networking.

Baltimore County Farm Bureau President and MidAtlantic Farm Credit Leader Keith Wills led two sessions during the event. His topics were "Fast Start – New and Beginning Farmers" and "Business Planning for Your Dream Farm." Brian Villec talked about "Protecting the Family Farm – Business Killers" and Department of Natural Resources representative Glenn Carowan discussed wildlife habitat incentives.

MFB Young Farmer Chairperson Joe-Sam Swann challenged all county Young Farmer groups to bring non-perishable food to donate to the Harvest for All program. Frederick County Farm Bureau Young Farmers were the top givers, followed by Calvert County Young Farmers.

A record number of participants competed in the annual Discussion Meet, with James Adkins of Wicomico County taking home the win. He was one of 19 that used their knowledge and communication skills in the annual event. Becky Burrier of Frederick County was the runner-up. In a separate contest, Abbey Linthicum of Montgomery County captured the Collegiate Discussion Meet.



Speaking of starting

Speaking on “fast starts” and “dream farms,” Baltimore County Farm Bureau President Keith Wills, who also represents MidAtlantic Farm Credit, offered two sessions for Young Farmers during the retreat in Easton.



James grew up on a small fresh market vegetable and grain farm outside of Salisbury. He was active in 4-H, focusing on field crop, poultry and public speaking projects. James graduated from the University of Maryland with a B.S. in Biological Resources Engineering in 1999. He has been employed as an agricultural engineer at the University of Delaware Carvel Research and Education Center in Georgetown for 10 years. His research has focused on vegetable harvest mechanization and irrigation while serving as a statewide Extension engineer. James spends most of his free time helping with the vegetable production on the family farm, and raising 2 boys, Isaac and Grant.

Winners for the Maryland Young Farmer Achievement Award and the Excellence in Agriculture Award were also announced during the retreat. Applications were judged last fall with interviews taking place at the Young Farmers meeting at the Maryland Farm Bureau Convention in Ocean City. Honorees of both will represent Maryland at the American Farm Bureau Convention in Atlanta in 2011 and also win a trip to the Young Farmer and Rancher Leadership Conference in Orlando.

Capturing the Achievement Award was Erin Burall of Carroll County. Erin is a fourth generation dairy farmer and is one of three children. Both of her siblings opted to take full time employment off the farm, giving Erin the opportunity to take on the role of herd manager. She has



an AA Degree in business and is a certified artificial inseminator. She is active in her Young Farmers group, volunteers with the local 4-H dairy club and exhibits cattle on the local, state and national levels.

The Excellence in Agriculture honor went to Sean and Amanda Clougherty of Talbot County. Sean is the associate editor of American Farm Publications and reports news and events as it pertains to agriculture production, development and profitability. Sean has a bachelor's degree in journalism. Amanda is the executive director of the Maryland 4-H Foundation. She raises funds to develop future agricultural leaders. Amanda is pursuing her master's degree in education leadership. They are the fourth generation on Amanda's family grain, beef and hay operation. They assist with animal feeding, hay baling, grinding feed for cows and acting as a backup for Amanda's father.

Winners of the three major contests – Discussion Meet, Achievement Award and Excellence in Agriculture – each received \$500 from Dodge as a state honoree. They will go on to compete for national honors where they could win a Dodge Ram, courtesy of Dodge.



Break-Out Sessions

Maryland Farm Bureau President Pat Langenfelder helped lead one of the popular break-out sessions during the Maryland Farm Bureau Young Farmers Retreat. Other group leaders included Paul Miller and Sarah Johnson.

