

Agricultural scholarships abound for Farm Bureau youth

Several large corporations are teaming up with Farm Bureau to offer scholarships to youth from Farm Bureau member families. Below are two such opportunities. Applications for both scholarships are due in February. Don't miss out!

The scholarship program is offered by Monsanto in association with the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture, and is open to high school seniors from all 50 states. In order to be eligible for one of the awards, the student applicant must come from a farm family and plan to pursue a career in the field of agriculture. One-time awards of \$1,500 will be made to 100 high school seniors chosen by an impartial selection committee of agricultural educators and industry leaders.

To qualify, a high school senior must have an average to above-average academic record, plan to enroll as a full-time student in an agriculture-related academic major in an accredited school, and be committed to pursuing a career in agriculture.

Applicants will be evaluated on their high school records, standardized test results, extracurricular activities and personal essays submitted as a part of the application process. Applications are currently available from Monsanto dealers, county Farm Bureau offices, and on the following web sites: <http://www.farmsource.com>, <http://www.agfoundation.org> and <http://www.ffa.org>.

Application forms must be completed and postmarked by Feb. 15, 2002. Applicants will be notified of the competition results by May 1, 2002.

Dodge Division, American Farm Bureau Federation and the National FFA Organization are offering \$30,000 in collegiate scholarships to FFA members across the country who are pursuing a four-year degree at an accredited four-year college, university or vocational/technical school.

The scholarship program is a cooperative effort between Dodge, Farm Bureau and the National FFA. In order to apply, a student must be an FFA member and a member of a Farm Bureau family. Financial need will be considered and applicants must complete the parent financial analysis section. In addition, students must complete the official National FFA Scholarship Application by February 15, 2002.

Welcome our new local affairs director



Maryland Farm Bureau Mission Statement

Our mission is to work cooperatively with the county Farm Bureaus and other state agricultural groups to promote the image, political influence, quality of life and profitability of Maryland's farm families and rural residents.

Maryland Farm Bureau leaders rely heavily on their mission and vision statements to conduct the daily business of the organization. And with that in mind, the board hired an employee to specifically assist county Farm Bureaus.

Carl DeMatteo began his work as director of local affairs for Maryland Farm Bureau on December 3rd. Many members may have met him on his first day of work - which coincided with the first day of the annual convention.

"It all starts with the mission statement," the new employee said. "I'm here to help with those goals and objectives and work together with the county leaders to achieve their legislative goals outlined in county Farm Bureau policy."

Specifically, DeMatteo wants to work on the local level to learn the issues, assist in developing an action plan, develop leadership and spokespersons, and lobby the issues when requested by the counties.

"All of the county Farm Bureaus have been doing this for years," DeMatteo said. "But as more counties have to tackle more issues and more complex issues, it became apparent it would be a great asset to have a staff person dedicated solely to the counties."

The new director jumped into his position with both feet, recording issues presented at district caucuses during the convention. "Over the next three to four months I hope to visit all of the counties, meet the farmers and determine the hot issues," he said. "It

will be a team effort, just like all Farm Bureau programs. I will work with the county as well as the field representatives and the government relations staff to achieve our goals."

DeMatteo said there are a number of zoning issues that directly relate to agricultural properties hitting many counties now. "I have looked at the district priorities and counties that have hot issues," he said. "I'm doing a lot of research at this point and meeting with the county farmers, learning about changes and how they will be effected and how they want to address them."

"How and when I get involved in county issues is completely up to the county leaders - I will take your lead," DeMatteo said. "My input will be based on how to help you implement the policy."

The local affairs director comes to the Free State from the American Farm Bureau Federation where he held three positions since 1995. He conducted campaign management, campaign activist and political involvement training for volunteers as assistant director and later, director of political education. Last year he became director of policy implementation, managing and coordinating grassroots issue strategies and the website and database.

"I like the local issues because this is where the rubber meets the road, this is the front line," DeMatteo said. "It's a great place to be and I like working with members on the one-to-one basis. It's good to be back out in the field."

Prior to joining AFBF, DeMatteo was director of governmental relations for Connecticut Farm Bureau, coordinating and administering grassroots policy development and activism, tracking and analyzing regulation impact on agriculture and lobbying Farm Bureau policy positions. He also spent a year working as an intern and assistant clerk for the Connecticut General Assembly.

DeMatteo received his bachelor of arts in political science from the University of Vermont and his masters of science, environmental education from Southern Connecticut State University.

"This position is a collaboration of all my experiences - learning the issues, knowing the many sides to issues, working with Farm Bureaus across the country on the state and national level," he said. "All of those experiences have given me real insight into some of the issues we are facing here."

"I've also had good experience in how government functions after the nine years with Farm Bureau and a good feeling for the membership and their goals and needs," DeMatteo explained. "At this point in my career, I want to focus on ground zero and take the skills I've acquired and implement them at the local level."

"With my experience and enthusiasm and desire to be at the local level, we can now offer county Farm Bureaus increased opportunities to implement county Farm Bureau policy," he concluded.



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