



ILLINOIS FFA

Allies -FOR- Agriculture

IL CORN EMPOWERS YOUTH TO ELEVATE POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT



A PUBLICATION OF YOUR
ILLINOIS CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION
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LEARNING TO DO

Looking around the board room at IL Corn, at least two-thirds of our farmer leaders got their start in FFA. Those early experiences taught us parliamentary procedure and public speaking, as well as giving us that drive to give back to the industry. As a result, of course it feels good to invest in FFA student leaders all over the state. As usual when it comes to FFA students, we've gotten more than we expected.



Meeting EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler



The Washington, D.C. program for our FFA Section Presidents and five major officers fills a hole that I understood we had for a long time. FFA is great at teaching advocacy for ag education and foundational leadership skills, but I felt like we were sending these excellent ag students - the leaders of tomorrow's industry - out into the world with very little guidance on how to apply everything they had learned.

This is where the IL Corn program fits in. Staff at IL Corn work very hard to teach and guide these student leaders to use their skills in new way. The students have access to important officials that are running our country and making big decisions for the U.S. ag industry. They walk alongside the leaders of your commodity groups, getting first-hand experience on how to initiate conversations with elected officials.

Our students graduate from FFA knowing how to lead a meeting, but maybe not fully understanding how to focus a meeting on a specific topic with a congressman who doesn't really want to discuss that topic. This is what the FFA to DC program with IL Corn gives them.

When I consider my job to build the very best leaders for the Illinois agriculture industry and equip them to impact a changing world, the experiences they get through this experience is invaluable.

Mindy Bunselmeyer
 Executive Director
 Illinois Association FFA

"This trip to Washington, D.C. completely changed the way I understand my potential for impact on our country and our industry. I didn't realize I could walk into my Congressman's office and have a conversation with him about what life on my farm was like, or that he would even care what problems I worried about. I was able to sit in my Congressman's office in Washington, D.C. and he listened to me describe how I wonder whether or not I'll be able to return to the farm someday. I talked to USDA officials about how their work impacts my farm. I met with the administrator of the EPA! Who knew I could have access to the people who run this country or that they would care about me?"
 Collin White, IL FFA State Secretary



Meeting U.S. Reps. Darin LaHood and Cheri Bustos



Selfie with the ag secretary!!



"My time with the FFA served me well. I remember those days fondly, and love revisiting that leadership experience every time we host FFA members in Washington, D.C. These students are so sharp and are so committed to the future of our industry. I will be proud to hand the baton off to them one day."

*Bill Christ, Metamora, ICGA Board
IL FFA President, 1978-79*

"I'm always impressed that after we host these FFA members in Washington, D.C., many of them report considering an internship or a career in politics in the capitol. The truth is, we need more representatives with a background in agriculture working in D.C. offices. I just think the program has been hugely successful in this way."

*Randy DeSutter, Woodhull, ICGA Board
IL FFA Reporter, 1976-77*

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