



**Young Farmers & Ranchers**

**Program**

**Guide**

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## **FARM BUREAU AND THE YOUNG FARMERS & RANCHERS PROGRAM**

How do they fit together?

FARM BUREAU is a family organization. Its Young Farmers & Ranchers Program provides a means by which Young Farmers & Ranchers can get involved in the mainstream of the organization's activities. At the same time, it provides the vehicle and pipeline for Young Farmers & Ranchers identification of problems and issues unique to the youngest generation of farm families. The Program is geared to both couples and single Young Farmers & Ranchers.

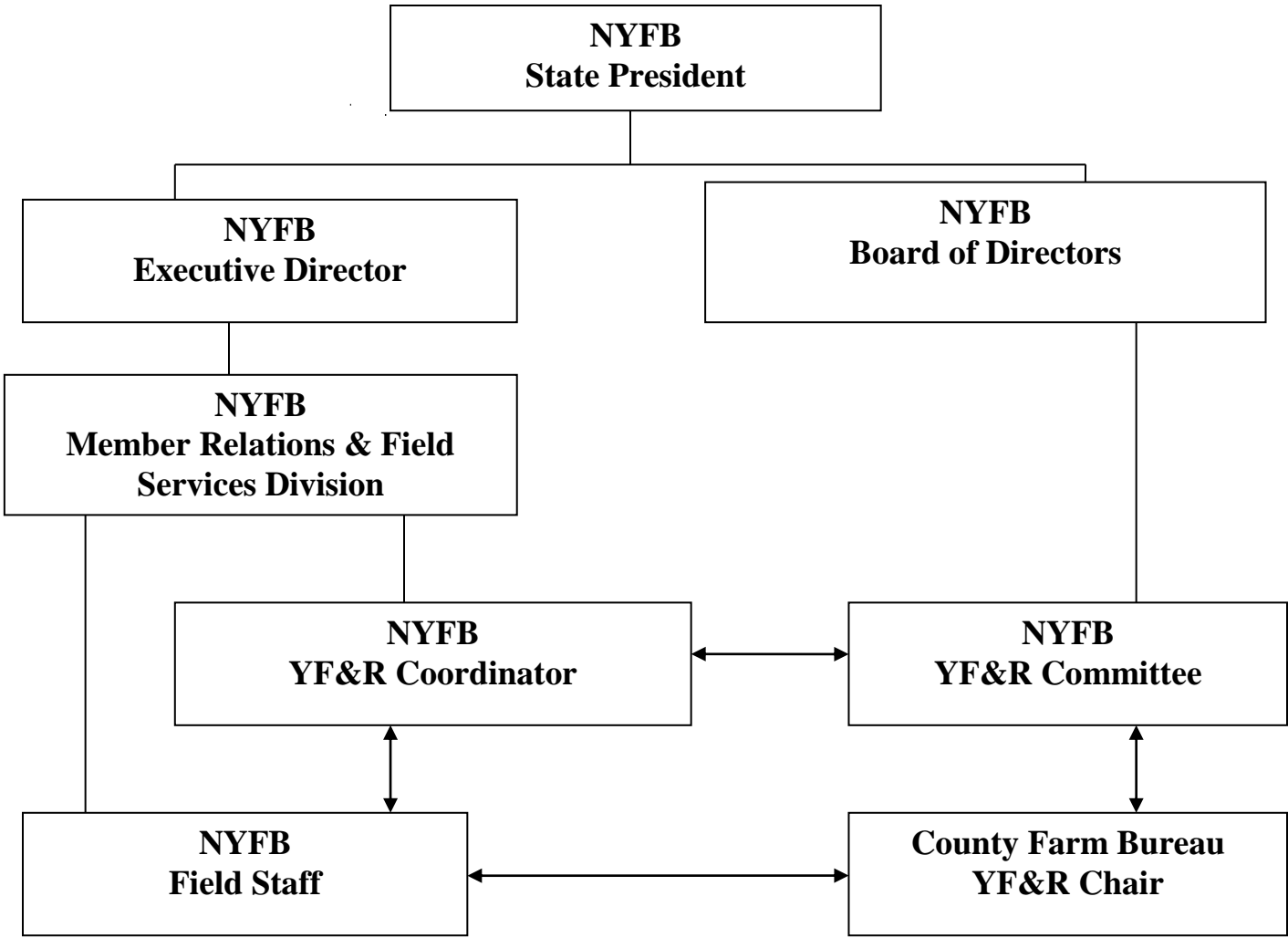
Young Farmers & Ranchers are a part of Farm Bureau -not apart from Farm Bureau: All activities are designed to:

- a. Promote an understanding of Farm Bureau, its purposes, operations and role in solving problems faced by the farming community.
- b. Provide for and encourage the direct participation of young farm couples in Farm Bureau.
- c. Surface and develop Young Farmers & Ranchers skills and abilities for present and future roles of leadership.
- d. Recognize outstanding achievements of Young Farmers & Ranchers.

Successful county Young Farmers & Ranchers programs have:

- a. A voting representation on the county Farm Bureau Board of Directors.
- b. Young Farmers & Ranchers involved in other committees and activities of Farm Bureau.
- c. An annual program of activities.
- d. A budget sufficient enough to fund its total program.
- e. Participation in activities sponsored by Young Farmers & Ranchers at the state level.

**STATE YOUNG FARMERS & RANCHERS PROGRAM**  
**STRUCTURE**



## **COUNTY YOUNG FARMERS & RANCHERS PROGRAM STRUCTURE**

There can be no set formula for the organization and development of a County Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee and Program. Much will depend upon the history of such activity, if any, in that respective county, plus the interest and effort rendered by county Farm Bureau leadership in the beginning stages. It is possible, however, to suggest some basic steps that ought to be followed as guidelines during the period of organization.

### **GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZING**

1. The county president and board of directors must first be informed of the merits of having a Young Farmers & Ranchers Program organized within the county Farm Bureau. Their support is essential. Your Field Advisor and your state Young Farmers & Ranchers Coordinator can help you establish this understanding and support among county leaders. The county president and board of directors must then officially approve development of a County Young Farmers & Ranchers Program.
2. Establishment of a core group consisting of several couples or single persons is often the best way to start.
3. Invite your county Farm Bureau president, the state Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee representative from your district and your Field Advisor to an organizational meeting. Discuss the Young Farmers & Ranchers Program in general and set some specific goals for your county effort. These goals should include specific activities to be conducted, plans of how to surface other Young Farmers & Ranchers, and a discussion of how the Young Farmers & Ranchers Program will relate to the total county Farm Bureau program.
4. Establish a regular meeting date.
5. Establish a program for the year. Keep it simple the first year. Consider the state sponsored Young Farmers & Ranchers programs and try incorporating at least one into yours. Have some of your meetings designed as educational, some for discussion and some for pure social purposes. The important thing to remember is to have them well planned and of interest to the group so as to avoid "dead" meetings which will lose members in a hurry. Meetings can be held monthly, bimonthly, or seasonally to fit the needs of your county and activities. Program ideas are suggested later in this handbook.
6. Determine your financial needs. Funds might be forthcoming from your county Farm Bureau treasury. But, before you go to the Board of Directors with a financial request, be sure you have developed your plans for program development and activity in writing. It may be necessary, as has been true in other counties, for you to conduct a fund-raising activity.

## **OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANIZING**

1. Young Farmers & Ranchers are usually between 18 and 35 years of age. All Young Farmers & Ranchers Awards are for age 18-35.
2. Review your county Farm Bureau by-laws. The committee, once organized, should seek one position on the county Board of Directors with a full voting privilege.
3. Work closely with your county newsletter editor and county media contact person in promoting participation and reporting activities conducted.
4. Rely upon your district representative on the NYFB Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee and your NYFB Field Advisor for advice and assistance.
5. Advise leaders in Cooperative Extension and teachers of agriculture of your program and invite their input.
6. After you are well established, offer the county leadership names of Young Farmers & Ranchers willing to serve on various county Farm Bureau committees.
7. Appoint a secretary to handle meeting notices, minutes of meetings, and other promotional activity in cooperation with county Farm Bureau information volunteers.

## **ORGANIZING MEANINGFUL ACTIVITY**

What do we do?

Some say it is much like the chicken and the egg. Which comes first, a well-developed Young Farmers & Ranchers group or the type of activity, which will promote growth of your organization?

The answer is that you must pay attention to both programming and growth. The stronger your programs, which often means careful planning, the faster you will attract Young Farmers & Ranchers to your group. As the size of your group increases, you will have more ideas, more resources and more talent to help put meaningful programs together.

It is extremely important that your activities reflect the interests of your members. What better way to accomplish this than to have a group planning session, a brainstorming period. The following outline is the suggested approach to this type of exercise.

## **DEVELOPING ACTIVITIES RESPONSIVE TO YOUR MEMBERS**

1. Organize an evening meeting. Have as many Young Farmers & Ranchers in attendance as possible. Advise them in the announcement that the meeting is scheduled to gather their input for activities designed to benefit them. Promote the meeting in the newspaper and make some individual telephone calls. Make each member know that his attendance is important to you and the county.
2. Once the Young Farmers & Ranchers have arrived, make necessary introductions and make sure everyone is acquainted and relaxed. Then break them down into small groups of four or five. Try to place husbands and wives in different groups. If a small group is present, have each individual work separately.
3. Pose this question: "What are your chief PROBLEMS and CONCERNS as young farmers?" Allow ten minutes for individual group discussion and then have a "reporter" provide you their conclusions. Take one response from each group and keep rotating until all ideas are recorded on a blackboard or flip chart.
4. Then have the group as a whole; determine their priority placing of these different ideas.
5. Take the first of six problems or concerns, as time will allow at your first meeting, and discuss SPECIFIC ways you can get involved in seeking a solution or relief. From this discussion, you will arrive at two or three major projects for the year and perhaps other less extensive programs that will be informational in nature.
6. Suggest fun activities for months you don't have other programs.

## **FARM BUREAU RELATED PROJECTS**

It should be remembered that since a county Young Farmers & Ranchers Program is a part of the county Farm Bureau, Young Farmers & Ranchers should also be involved with Farm Bureau efforts in addition to any individual projects planned and executed. The same exercise outlined earlier can also be used to brainstorm and plan Young Farmers & Ranchers involvement in on-going Farm Bureau programs. In fact, your group might well be able to give the county Farm Bureau suggestions of different approaches to traditional programs.

## **OTHER PROJECT AND PROGRAM IDEAS**

Listed in this program guide are other suggestions (suggested by month) which may prove interesting and productive.

## **ORGANIZING A SPECIFIC PROJECT**

Whatever the project, and whatever the timetable, it is best to remember that several people ought to share the burden and responsibility. The use of sub-committees, with a chairman to head the effort, is by far the widest approach.

Needless to say, as your county Young Farmers & Ranchers group is just getting started, you may not have a large number of people to get involved. Spread the work around. Do not be afraid of giving someone else some responsibility.

Your county Farm Bureau Board of Directors should be apprised of your plans. Their official approval needs to be sought and secured.

Be sure to involve your county Information Director, county Newsletter Editor and county Media Contact Person.

If you need any advice or resources, call upon your State Young Farmers & Ranchers District Representative, your New York Farm Bureau Field Advisor or your State Young Farmers & Ranchers staff person.

Report your activities to the State Farm Bureau office. The Director of Communications in the Public Policy Department will want to share it through member publications.

## **SUGGESTED CALENDAR OF ACTIVITY**

Printed below is an outline of various activities, which may be conducted at the county level. The list is certainly not all-inclusive. A good brainstorming session will result with other meaningful programs. Nor must these projects be conducted during the months suggested. The important determination is WHAT'S BEST FOR YOUR COUNTY GROUP.

- SEPTEMBER**
- Assist in planning and promotion of county Annual Meeting.
  - Hold organization meeting and prepare program for year
  - Assist Political Education and Action Committee in its planning of a "Meet Your Candidates" activity
  - Continue to participate in policy development
  - Conduct Discussion Meet activities
- OCTOBER**
- Attend county Annual Meeting.
  - Make recommendations to the county Board of Directors of Young Farmers & Ranchers who will participate on committees
  - Assist county non- renewal membership drive



- NOVEMBER**
- Promote State Annual Meeting
  - Assist Political Education and Action Committee with a "Get Out the Vote" campaign
- DECEMBER**
- Attend State Annual Meeting
  - Participate in Harvest for All Project At State Annual Meeting
  - Conduct information session outlining policies adopted at State Annual Meeting
  - Young Farmers & Ranchers Christmas Party
- JANUARY**
- Discussion of legislation to come before the new session of the State Legislature
  - A get acquainted session with newly elected officials
  - An examination of urban or rural problems
  - An analysis of last year's crop reports for spring production planning
  - Promote State YF&R Conference and encourage new participation
  - Request approval for funds from county board for Conference
- FEBRUARY**
- Legal planning for estates and partnerships
  - A report on the American Farm Bureau Federation's Annual Convention
  - Plan to attend State Lobby Day in Albany
  - Promote State YF&R Conference and encourage new participation
  - Attend AFBF YF&R Leadership Conference

- MARCH**
- Attend State YF&R Conference
  - Tour of maple processing facility
  - Attend State Lobby Day in Albany
  - A discussion of mutual problems with county Sheriffs Department and State Police
  - A review of agricultural districting status in your area
  - Assist with county Membership Campaign
- APRIL**
- Exchange program with a daily newspaper
  - An examination of town and county taxation
  - First aid on the farm
  - Plan farm tours and dairy month activities
- MAY**
- Farm tours for school children (begin planning in March)
  - Discuss progress of State Legislature and organize final push for passage of legislation (in cooperation with Policy Execution committee)
  - Encourage participation in Young Farmers & Ranchers Achievement Award & Excellence in Agriculture Award by given deadline
- JUNE**
- Participate in Dairy Month celebration (plan in May)
  - Tour of local radio station (discuss farm programming, market and weather reporting)
- JULY**
- Hold tour or picnic at a Young Farmers & Ranchers farm
  - Conduct local Harvest for All Project
- AUGUST**
- Promote and participate in policy development sessions (in conjunction with County Policy Development Committee)
  - Assist or coordinate tour of county farms for local and state legislators
  - Plan & conduct Discussion Meet Competitions in the county

## **FORMING THE STATE COMMITTEE**

Any Farm Bureau member between the ages of 18 and 35 is eligible to serve on the State Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee. The committee is appointed by the president with approval of the Board of Directors after each district caucus nominates an individual. The term is for two years. The caucuses are held annually at the NYFB Annual Meeting, at which time a chair is also nominated.

## **FUNCTION OF STATE YOUNG FARMERS & RANCHERS COMMITTEE**

The functions of the State Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee are to develop a program of work and to help surface and develop leadership in Young Farmers & Ranchers. Once the program has been presented and approved by the State Board of Directors, the committee should carry out the program to meet its objectives.

Those costs incurred by the committee in carrying out this program will be reimbursed by the state Farm Bureau (travel, meetings and telephone).

## **STATE STRUCTURE**

The New York Farm Bureau Board of Directors has the full and direct responsibility to activate, develop and govern the State Young Farmers & Ranchers Program. The coordination of the program is jointly carried out by a member of the state staff and the State Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee. The staff member serves in an advisory capacity to the committee.

The State Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee serves in an advisory capacity to the Board of Directors and makes decisions affecting Young Farmers & Ranchers programs within the guidelines established by the Board.

The chair of the State Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee serves as a voting member of the New York Farm Bureau Board of Directors.

The State Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee:

1. Reports its activities to the New York Farm Bureau Board
2. Elects its own officers as necessary
3. Develops a State Young Farmers & Ranchers program of activity
4. Works to carry out its planning program

The president of the New York Farm Bureau annually appoints members of the State Young Farmer Committee to other working state Farm Bureau committees.

## **STATE YOUNG FARMERS & RANCHERS COMMITTEE SPONSORED PROGRAMS**

### 1. YF&R Business Session at State Annual Meeting

Nomination of members to the State Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee is held during the YF&R Business session at the State Annual Meeting. Committee members from odd-numbered districts are elected during odd-numbered years and those from even-numbered districts are elected during even-numbered years. The State YF&R committee chair is elected annually.

### 2. Silver Key Awards

The County Young Farmers & Ranchers Program can be recognized for outstanding Activities/ programs by being included in the County's "Young Farmers & Ranchers" & "Leadership Development" Key Award Applications.

### 3. Young Farmers & Ranchers Achievement Award

This program is designed to recognize outstanding farming and leadership achievement by a Young Farmers & Ranchers not more than 35 years of age. Selection is based on efforts in both production agriculture and leadership / participation achievements.

The values used in judging this award include: Farm Operation & Growth (70 points), Financial Progress of Operation (60 points), Farm Bureau Leadership (40 points), and Other Leadership (30 points).

The ideal candidate(s) for the Achievement Award is an individual or couple involved in production agriculture with a majority of their income subject to normal production risks.

Applications are mailed to county presidents and county Young Farmers & Ranchers chair. Contestants complete the applications and mail to the state Farm Bureau office by the deadline. Up to three finalists are selected for the state competition. The state winner will receive an expense-paid trip to the American Farm Bureau Federation Convention.

### 4. Discussion Meet

The strength of Farm Bureau is largely dependent upon its ability to involve members in analyzing their agricultural problems and deciding on solutions which best meet their needs.

The contest itself consists of moderator, timekeeper, and from four to eight contestants. The contestants exchange ideas and viewpoints on a given topic.

**Discussion Meet Judging Criteria:**

- Problem Solving & Implementation 200 points
- Analysis of Topic or Problem 150 points
- Cooperative Attitude 100 points
- Delivery 100 points
- Opening Statement 50 points
- Closing Statement 100 points

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Possible Total Points	700 points
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The Discussion Meet is carried out at local, state and national levels. The state winner represents the New York Farm Bureau in national competition and receives an expense paid trip to the American Farm Bureau Federation Convention. Contestants compete in a round-robin format in the fall and the top 4 compete to determine the state winner.

5. Excellence in Agriculture Award

This award is designed as an opportunity for Young Farmers & Ranchers to earn recognition, while actively contributing and growing through their involvement in Farm Bureau and agriculture. Participants will be judged on their involvement in agriculture, leadership ability, involvement and participation in Farm Bureau and other organizations (i.e., civic, service and community).

Participants' written application will be judged on: Application questions II-IV (37.5%), Farm Bureau experience (30%), Other Leadership Experience, Awards and Recognition (25%) and overall application form (7.5%). The presentation is judged: Delivery of Presentation (40%), Content of Presentation (30%) and Response to Questions (30%). The total score is based on the application (80%) and the presentation (20%).

The ideal candidate(s) for the Excellence for Agriculture Award is an individual or couple who do not have the majority of their income subject to normal production risk.

Applicants must not have derived a majority of his/her income from an owned production agribusiness enterprise for the past three years. For example: farm employee (non-owner), agricultural teacher, fertilizer salesperson, agricultural marketing, and agricultural writer.

Applications are mailed to county presidents and county Young Farmers & Ranchers chairs.

Contestants complete the applications and mail to the state Farm Bureau office by the deadline. Up to three finalists are selected for the state competition. The state winner will receive an expense-paid trip to the American Farm Bureau Federation Convention.

## 6. Harvest for All Project

The New York Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers have joined Young Farmers & Ranchers across the nation to partner with Feeding America (formally America's Second Harvest) [the largest domestic hunger-relief organization in the U.S.] to conduct the "Harvest for All" campaign. The New York Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee has adopted this campaign as a YF&R service project. County Young Farmers & Ranchers are conducting food drives and volunteering their time to assist at local food pantries and food banks.

## **YOUTH OUTREACH**

The NYFB Young Farmers & Ranchers Program has been working to develop future agricultural leaders by becoming more involved with youth in FFA, 4-H and at colleges.

By involving these agricultural youth, the Young Farmers & Ranchers Program can foster new leaders for not only their program and New York Farm Bureau, but for the agricultural industry as a whole.

## **COLLEGIATE FARM BUREAU**

Collegiate Farm Bureau brings together agricultural students on college campuses to engage them in educational activities that will enhance their future while building awareness of the Farm Bureau organization.

### **CAREER DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL**

- Provides college students with experience in local, state and national government through legislative activities
- Provides college students with professional contacts in the agricultural industry

### **PERSONAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES**

- Provides a transition from youth agricultural programs to the Farm Bureau
- Educates college students about the Farm Bureau organization and the benefits of being involved
- Encourages professionalism

A Collegiate Discussion Meet contest is conducted each year similar to the YF&R Contest.

Currently there are Collegiate New York Farm Bureau Chapters at Cornell University & SUNY Cobleskill.

## **AMERICAN FARM BUREAU YOUNG FARMERS & RANCHERS PROGRAM**

1. Structure
  - a. The State Farm Bureau program is affiliated with the American Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers Program.
  - b. Upon request of the American Farm Bureau President, the State Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee recommends a candidate for appointment to the American Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers Advisory Committee.
  - c. With encouragement and approval by the State Board, the State Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee decides upon participation in a wide variety of events and awards programs sponsored by the American Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers Advisory Committee.
2. The Work of the AFBF Committee

The AFBF Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee is made up of twelve representatives from all over the country. The Northeast has three members on the committee. The terms on this committee are also two years. The members are appointed by the American Farm Bureau Federation President on recommendation by the state presidents.

## **PROGRAM RESOURCES**

There are many individuals in your local area that will be eager and able to help provide input into activity you plan for your county group.

Your Farm Bureau organization also has a diversified staff of people who have access to information and who are available to appear before programs as their schedules permit.

## **FARM BUREAU FACT SHEET**

### **1. What is Farm Bureau?**

Farm Bureau is a general farm organization – an organization of, by and for farm families in all types of agriculture. Financed and controlled by members, Farm Bureau is the way neighbors lend their influence to off-the-farm problems through a united effort.

### **2. What is the purpose of Farm Bureau?**

Our national resolutions state “Farm Bureau is an independent, nongovernmental, voluntary organization of farm and ranch families united for the purpose of analyzing their problems and formulating action to achieve educational improvement, economic opportunity and social advancement, and thereby, promoting the national well-being. Farm Bureau is local, county, state, national and international in its scope and influence and is non-partisan, non-sectarian and non-secret in character.”

### **3. How large is Farm Bureau?**

It's the world's largest farm organization being organized in 50 states and the island of Puerto Rico, with over 5.5 million member families. In 2012, New York had nearly 25,000 member families in 52 organized county Farm Bureaus.

### **4. Who belongs to Farm Bureau?**

Farm Bureau is an organization of all types of farmers. Tenant farmers with small tobacco allotments join with Western ranchers, Midwest grain producers, Northeast dairymen, Southern cotton growers and other segments of rural America. Does only the operator or farm owner belong? NO!!! A family membership opens the program and activities to the entire family, women as well as men.

### **5. Why do the By-Laws create special committee status for Young Farmers & Ranchers and Promotion and Education Committees?**

Farm Bureau is a family organization. Young Farmers & Ranchers and Promotion and Education Committees provide unique opportunities for leadership development of Young Farmers & Ranchers, men and women. These committees provide for and encourage the direct participation of Young Farmers & Ranchers, men and women in Farm Bureau.



## **YOUNG FARMERS & RANCHERS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**Q: Do I have to be a Farm Bureau member to be part of the Young Farmers & Ranchers Program?**

A: No, you do not have to be a member to participate, but the chair must have his or her own membership to be a member of the county Board of Directors. Since there is strength in numbers, it is a goal of the Young Farmers & Ranchers program that all Young Farmers & Ranchers will become Farm Bureau members. You must be a member to participate in the Young Farmers & Ranchers competitive events.

**Q: Why should I be active in the Young Farmers & Ranchers group rather than in the organization itself?**

A: The purpose of the Young Farmers & Ranchers program is to have leaders for the Farm Bureau of tomorrow. The program offers input through specified channels that assures ideas of Young Farmers & Ranchers are included into policy decisions. The agriculture of tomorrow is better served by this input. Your participation is needed in all Farm Bureau programs.

**Q: If my county does not have an active group, can I still participate in state activities like the awards program and the State YF&R Leadership Conference?**

A: All Young Farmers & Ranchers are encouraged to be part of statewide activities. Young Farmers & Ranchers many times bring ideas back to county Farm Bureaus and are successful in starting a county group.

**Q: Are there any activities where I can meet other Young Farmers & Ranchers from other states?**

A: Yes, the AFBF Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee hosts a National Leadership Conference each February. Normally the state committee delegates representation at this conference.

**Q: If I was interested in getting help to start a county Young Farmers & Ranchers program, who could I call?**

A: Members of the State YF&R Committee, the Farm Bureau field advisors and county Farm Bureau leaders are ready to help in your county. For the person nearest you, contact the Member Relations & Membership Marketing Division of New York Farm Bureau at 518-436-8495, 1-800-342-4143 or visit [www.nyfb.org](http://www.nyfb.org).

**Q: Who runs the Young Farmers & Ranchers program in the county, state and nation?**

A: Each Young Farmers & Ranchers group is run by Young Farmers & Ranchers and not the staff of the organization. By being part of the larger Farm Bureau, Young Farmers & Ranchers have the advice and structure of a time and proven organization while having the opportunity of inserting new and important ideas in the process.