

Seminar 7: National Agricultural Policy

NEW MEXICO AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM



OBJECTIVE:

Participants will analyze the process of making agricultural policy and consider the dynamics of power and politics in our nation's capital.

- Explore the history and dynamics of Washington, D.C. and consider the development of our modern democracy
- Recognize the complexity of government and the processes which establish agricultural policies
- Describe the relationship between agricultural policy and other federal programs and laws
- Identify how government policies can be influenced by lobbyists, think tanks, and constituents
- Distinguish traits of effective leadership and teamwork in a political environment
- Practice advocacy and communication skills through trainings and meetings

It's a long, long journey to Capital City

By: Kaitlin Robinson

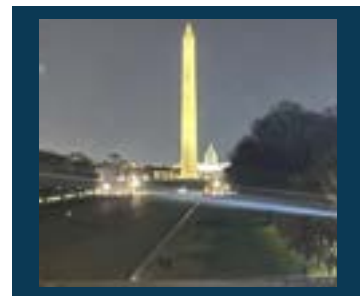
A 2 to 3 hour time zone change... daylight savings time starts for spring forward... and 30 fellows on a bus together... but oh what fun we had! We kicked off our east coast trip with a day in Gettysburg with the AgForestry leadership program from Washington State. We had a great time getting to know our peers from the West Coast and the bus drive first thing in the morning provided lots of time for breaking the ice. We had a great day filled with scenes of the Battle of Gettysburg and getting to take turns being leaders making battle time decisions.

The next few days of our trip were spent running around town meeting with American Farm Bureau Federation, Congressmen and Congresswomen, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, Army Civil Works, and many members of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). We got an inside look at the Senate and House office buildings and even got to eat lunch during the hustle hour in one which made us feel just like the staffers!

To me the most intriguing part of our Senate and House meetings is the amount of people it takes to run our Congressmen and Congresswomen's offices. They have multiple advisors who have to stay abreast of many different situations and how their office views policies as well as being open and willing to listen to constituents. Further to this point, when we were able to sit in to listen to the Senate Ag Committee it was impressive to hear Secretary of Ag Vilsack speak with vast knowledge of USDA programs as he was witness for the hearing on the Oversight of the USDA. The farm bill is a hot topic in the 2023 legislation and the talks on the Farm Bill were starting to kick off as we were making our way around the Hill.

Going into these meetings we were lucky to have started our week with the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) meetings which included tips on being a good advocate and also media training for any potential interviews. I think all of my fellows, and myself, were able to take these tips and training and turn them into a value add as we were in each office and able to discuss our Ag issues with the policy advisors for each office. We were lucky enough to meet with the offices for both Senators and all three Representatives for New Mexico. Senator Lujan, a member of the Ag Committee, took some time out of his very busy schedule to sit down and make sure every voice in the room was heard.

D.C. is very easy to get sucked into as an outsider. It was simplistic to see how everyone is able to get caught up in the "Beltway Mentality" as everything involved making a deadline, making someone happy, trying to make everyone happy as possible, but also it becomes its own world. It was easy to see the disconnect between urban and rural life in such a big city which is something we aim to fix everyday back home. I was thrilled to be able to see some of the biggest and best National monuments and enjoy a very small amount of time exploring the city with my fellows.



New Mexico Agricultural Leadership Groups takes Washington D.C., Farm Bill Top Priority

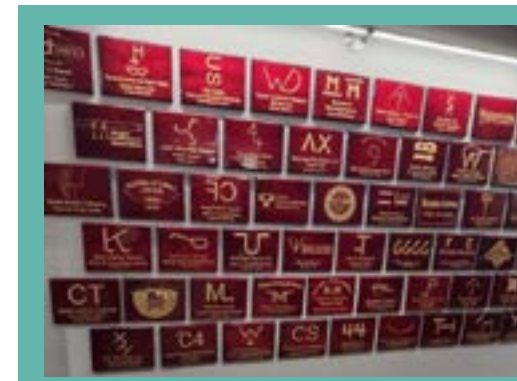
By: Megan Schuller

Early March, Class 15 took a trip to the nation's capital and the week was filled with leadership opportunities, networking and legislative activities. We were fortunate to be in D.C. at the same time as other state leadership programs. This was a great opportunity to expand our network, learn what other programs are doing and experience activities together.

We started off our week, early Sunday morning with a bus ride to Gettysburg to take part in Diamond 6 leadership with Jeff McCausland and Tom Vossler. They took us to the battlefield, where we were tasked with making on-field decisions and the unanswerable question of "Could decisions affect the outcome of the battle?". It was a great experience, and I can't wait to go back to Gettysburg to gain even more perspective. We were each given the book, "Battle Tested", this is in the stack of reads.

Monday was off to a fast pace, this gave us a taste of how the rest of the week would go. We kicked the morning off with a meeting/workshop with the American Farm Bureau. It was a great way to start the week. We then visited with multiple different groups discussing agricultural issues within our states. We also did media training which I loved, it was refreshing to see the good and bad. I left there with some great tools that will come in handy in my future endeavors.

The next day we went to the United States Department of Agriculture, where we joined our extended class mates from Washington, Kansas, Virginia and Kentucky. It was a day full of great insights from USDA senior leaders. It was also very nice to see the Former Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, Jewel Bronaugh, again. She gave insight to becoming successful even when the answer is no. The day was packed full of speakers giving their priorities and viewpoints on leadership. The day ended with a meeting at the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. This visit helped us focus on discussions regarding the Farm Bill that would be taking place over the next few days.



Mid-week we were off to meet up with our leadership classmates to the U.S. Army for Civil Works. Robyn Colosimo, Director of Policy and Legislation, gave an impactful talk on how she handles ever changing management, while being the experienced player on the team. We also heard from New Mexico native and NMSU graduate, Mike Conner. He is currently serving as Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. The group closed with questions from the floor. Water is everyone's concern. It doesn't matter what part of the country we are from, water, water and water are top concerns.

Our week came to an end with meetings with our legislative representatives. This was my first time to D.C. and what an experience. I was able to sit on the floor of the Senate Agriculture Committee hearing with Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, where he was questioned about the upcoming Farm Bill. It was amazing to see that he was able to answer each question with ease, confidence, no hesitating, and always directly to the point. I took mental notes from our meeting early in the week and put them into play as Secretary Vilsack answered the committee's questions. We also met with our New Mexico representatives and discussed our priorities with the upcoming Farm Bill.

The week wrapped up with a night tour of the monuments and some time at Arlington National Cemetery before departing back to New Mexico. Overall, a great trip to the nation's capital. I try to stay away from the political side of things, but took this message home "Remember everyone is trying to do good." There are really two worlds there, the political side and vast history with monuments, museums. One week was not nearly enough to take it all in. "Change the shape, Change the mission."



DC Seminar By: Juan Sanchez

The New Mexico Ag Leadership group traveled to Washington D.C for the National Agricultural Policy Seminar. The objective for the seminar was to analyze the process of making agricultural policy and consider the dynamics of power and politics.

Prior to the trip, I joted down a few objectives that I personally wished to accomplish while at our nation's capital. First, was to enhance my knowledge of how policy works at the federal level. Second, meet our congressional delegates. And lastly, take a tour of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

A week before the trip, I hosted a delegation of cattle buyers from Mexico as part of a USDA funded trade mission. We attended a bull sale, toured a few ranches and the delegation purchased a few bulls. The New Mexican rancher was excited and appreciative of being able to export cattle to Mexico for the first time. I realized that without the funding from the Farm Bill, this rancher probably wouldn't have had this export opportunity. My new goal then became to support the ag industry by advocating to our congressional delegates about the positive impacts that the farm bill provides with hopes that they support the Farm Bill, especially increasing funding for international trade. The Farm Bill was the major piece of conversation throughout our DC journey. We had discussions about agriculture, industry issues, and of course the Farm Bill; with lobbyist groups such as National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), American Farm Bureau (AFB), and the CATO Institute. It was very interesting to learn their stance on certain topics. Meeting our congressional delegates was a treat. Though we mostly met with the staffers, I felt proud to be able to advocate for the New Mexico agriculture industry.

To say the trip was full of memories is an understatement. Each day was beyond memorable. One of my favorite parts of the trip was the visit to USDA. Words can't describe the feeling of being inside that building. I felt humble to be in such a historic and monumental building. To top it off, I had the opportunity to introduce New Mexico native, Under Secretary for Rural Development, Xochitl Torres Small during the USDA's Senior Leadership presentations. The USDA presentation was a combined event with the Ag Leadership programs of New Mexico, Washington, Virginia, Kansas, and Kentucky. I was truly honored to have been chosen to do that. Another notable part was attending the Senate Ag Committee hearing. USDA Secretary Tom Vilsak testified before the Senate Ag Committee on the Farm Bill. Besides being starstruck, I was very happy and gratified to see and listen to the highest-appointed official for the agricultural industry in the United States.

The long journey home was full of appreciation and reflection. I felt a lot of emotions. Visiting Gettysburg, touring the battlefield, and participating in the leadership exercise was awesome. Being able to share that experience with my fellow Fellows was the best. The networking opportunities with the other Ag Leadership groups provided a lot of value. We were able to gain knowledge, through shared experiences and meaningful conversations. Talking to like-minded people provided us all enlightenment about growing leadership skills, professional, and personal development. The somber visit to the Holocaust Museum will be unforgettable. I felt sad, angry, and despaired. But, as an aspiring leader, I felt challenged to change the way I look at things. I felt motivated to foster awareness of, not only ag issues, but social issues. I felt motivated to confront and challenge ideas, to speak up, and not be afraid to ask questions. I returned home feeling empowered, with a renewed sense of passion and purpose to become the best person and leader I can possibly be. Let's Go CAPS!



Class 15 Goes to Washington! By: Marcy Ward

Just before the cherry blossoms were in full bloom, I along with the rest of the NMAL class 15 group traveled to Washington D.C. The group got a good introduction to government leadership in February with a trip to our state capital in Sante Fe, NM. However, we took things to the highest level with the trip to D.C.

My family had had some personal experience with how D.C. worked from a bureaucratic vantage point years ago. My father had been appointed by President Ronald Regan to be the Director of the Office of Service Mining within the Department of Interior. One goal for me with this trip was to see how things may have changed from an adult perspective. The visit made me realize how even more layers have been added through either policy or regulation, just to get something done. I know this was my father's primary frustration in his short tenure in D.C.

By their own admission, these policies and regulations have slowed progress significantly. Either through the discussions with the USDA folks, or Civil Office of Engineers, important tasks are rarely achieved due to bureaucratic red tape. All of our agency and legislator visits made me realize just how big our federal government is. During the tour of the original senate chambers, it seemed that this was not the intent of our founding fathers.

During this trip, we were given the opportunity to meet our state representatives and senators. Though all of our visits with legislators were similar, I found it interesting to see the different dynamic each meeting brought. The meetings with Hinrich, Vasquez, and Stansbury's offices left me with an impression that New Mexico Agriculture is not their priority, as they had their aids take care of the meetings; even though we were New Mexico citizens in their office voicing concerns. The tone of those meetings was flat and impersonal. Conversely Senator Lujan took time out of his busy schedule to sit down with us in person, that simple gesture offered value and open discussion. I believe this meeting in particular, at least in appearance, had the most impact. The fact he is willing to also sit on the nation's Ag Committee demonstrates his sincere interest in the 2nd greatest contributor to New Mexico's economy.



I did come to appreciate how much it takes to run a country as complex as ours, but in business, successful companies learn to streamline and make doing business easier. Both state and federal governments could learn from this model, while still achieving the goals of our country. Finally, on a cold drizzly day, I had the great privilege to assist in placing a wreath at the tomb of the unknown soldier at the Arlington Cemetery. This powerful ceremony, the commitment of the tomb's guards, and the sheer expanse of tombstones across many acres of land should remind us all that our freedom is not free.



Navigating D.C. By Dineh John

This was my first trip to Washington D.C. and I had a few goals. First, to observe how laws were created, such as the discussion of upcoming legislation and the voting to pass or deny them. Second, to hear how organizations such as the American Farm Bureau and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association impacted legislation. Third, to advocate for the Farm Bill's Title Rural Development, specifically the needed Infrastructure funding.

One training course that we attended was the Gettysburg Leadership Workshop; lead by Jeff McCausland and Tom Vossler. It involved traveling to specific battle sites in Gettysburg, reading the actual scenario, deciding what we would do and then finding out what the Union or Confederate Commanders did. Each site review included a leadership strategy. For example, one that I found most interesting was called Decision Making and it was at Little Round Top. On July 2, 1863, Colonel Strong Vincent was ordered to take his troops to the Wheat Fields but intercepted a courier who had a message from Major General Barnes asking for assistance at Little Round Top. There were Confederate Troops moving in and they didn't have enough forces. He had to decide whether to do as he was commanded or to make the call to assist. Most leaders have faced a similar dilemma at least once because there are times when we must make hard decisions. We must evaluate the situation, resources and decide. As Mr. McCausland stated, "it's better to be scolded than to be sorry".

I observed that the Federal Government works by conversations. Conversations between Legislators, Lobbyists, Advisors and various organizations. We had the privilege of sitting in and listening to the US Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry discussions regarding the Farm Bill. Multiple Senators brought up their state concerns with Secretary Thomas Vilsack.



An hour prior to the committee meeting, we met with Senator Ben Ray Lujan. One discussion included advocating for Conservation funding such as the Gila National Forest disaster, New Mexico's large fire recorded in history. After our meeting, he met with the committee and backed the Title. This showed that our legislators hear the people and that our opinions matter.

Another meeting was with the U.S. Army for Civil Works. The discussions were based on improving water way infrastructure and managing the Nation's water resources. Being from the Navajo Nation, where every drop of water from the San Juan River counts, it was great to hear that they work closely with the Native Communities to provide technical services and maintain the water systems.

Overall, the Seventh Seminar to Washington, D.C. was an eye opener. Not only did we meet with our State Congressmen and Congresswomen, but we were also able to meet with advocates for public policies such as the American Farm Bureau. I learned that we need to support our communities and legislation by having conversations with elected officials. That is how we can make a difference.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL POLICY By: Roxanne Chepsongol

The United State Capitol is located at Capitol Hill, Washington D.C. where Class 15 had the pleasure to visit and develop an understanding of federal government policy. My primary goals for our trip to the Capitol were to recognize the process to establish policies, understand the roles of government staff and lobby groups, discover the history of Washington D.C and develop my communication skills to advocate for agriculture.

Our journey began with the Gettysburg leadership experience led by Jeff McCausland and Tom Vossler, veterans and authors of the book Battle Tested! Gettysburg Leadership Lessons for the 21st Century. We spent the day working through specific scenarios that occurred during the battle at Gettysburg and how leaders today can learn from discussion made from that battle.

The second day Class 15 visited the "Voice of Agriculture", the American Farm Bureau Federation where we were granted opportunities to develop our personal narratives to advocate for agriculture. The advocate training assisted us for the remainder of our visit at the Capitol since we met with think tanks, New Mexico Senators and Representatives and constituents. We put these advocacy skills to the test when Class 15 spoke with the think tank, Cato Institute, later that afternoon and New Mexico Senators and Representatives staff throughout the remainder of our time in Washington D.C.



One of the many highlights of the seminar was learning from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Senior Leadership Team Basil Gooden, Jewel Bronaugh, Sanah Baig, Xochitl Torres Small, Daniel Whitley, Robert Bonnie and Zach Ducheneaux. Their presentations emphasized the work it took to become leaders at the USDA and their experiences as a leader. Our time at the USDA inspired Class 15 to use our abilities to be positive influences and motivate others toward success.

The voice of U.S. cattlemen and women drives the advocacy group, National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), whom we met with that afternoon. The NCBA pointed out key items in the upcoming farm bill and what it means for the cattle industry. They touched on the recent aerial gunning of cattle in the Gila wilderness and the effects of the action.

The stunning architecture, art and history of the Capitol was revealed during the Capitol tour that next morning. Class 15 stood in the very places that monumental discussions were made that shaped the United States.

Foundations of Leadership By: Marshal Wilson

In 1790 our nation's capital was founded along the Potomac River. Today, the District of Columbia remains one of the world's most important and iconic cities and it was the destination for the seventh seminar of class fifteen of the New Mexico Agriculture Leadership Program. The fellows of the class traveled to Washington D.C. with several objectives such as: describing the relationship between agricultural policy, lobbyists, think tanks, and producers; exploring the history and dynamics of Washington D.C; and recognizing the complexity of government and how it influences us through our professional and personal lives.

The seminar began by joining up with the Washington AgForestry Leadership Program for an experiential leadership workshop at Gettysburg National Military Park which was run by Jeff McCausland and Tom Vossler of Diamond 6 Leadership and Strategy LLC. The workshop was an impactful and thought-provoking way of teaching leadership lessons by using the historic places and events at the battle of Gettysburg during the Civil War. Our group learned about various leadership techniques and witnessed how they were applied during the battle of Gettysburg such as: strategic leadership, innovation, effective communications in an organization, emotional intelligence and much more. One of the lessons that resonated most with me was a decision-making approach called the OODA loop (Observe, Orient, Decide, Act). The OODA loop focuses on filtering available information, putting it in context, and making a decision while understanding that a changing situation influences the decision. The workshop also included a discussion of President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address which came to be known as one of the most influential speeches in our nation's history. The speech is a prime example of how one man's vision can influence the course of an entire nation, and that conveying one's vision is equally important as the vision itself. Lincoln conveyed his vision to the nation in just 271 words.

The seminar continued with the class visiting the American Farm Bureau Federation AFBF (AFBF) and CATO institute. Here we were given an overview of the lobbying process and how special interests interact with congress to influence public policy. While at AFBF we were given media training by Johnna Miller, Sr. Director of Media and Advocacy Training. The training was extremely well done and covered topics such as the power of shared values, how to build a message house, what language to use to bridge subjects, lifeline phrases and more. At the culmination of the training, the fellows filmed each other doing a mock interview...which was both educational and humbling.



Next, our class had the opportunity to put our advocacy skills to use by touting New Mexico agriculture during congressional visits. We visited every office of the New Mexico delegation and discussed issues ranging from water infrastructure to public lands issues to stress resilience for agricultural communities. This year is a renewal year for the Farm Bill which authorizes many of the programs that farmers and ranchers utilize in their operations so it was one of the primary topics discussed in our congressional visits. Time and time again we heard from the congressional staffers the importance they attached to hearing directly from their constituents as they craft legislation that affects our industry. So if you are reading this letter you are encouraged to contact your legislator, visit a town hall or field hearing and share your values.

The seminar concluded similarly to how it began, by paying tribute to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice through a visit to Arlington National Cemetery. With reverence and humility, we walked those hallowed grounds in remembrance of past and present military conflicts and the circumstances surrounding them. These emotions were intensified when several members of our class had the opportunity to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The dignity of the Tomb Guards, the significance of the cemetery, and the proximity to the capital of the United States of America made an unforgettable experience and it is with sincere appreciation and respect that we thank the men and women in uniform and their families.

Following our visit to Washington D.C. I can say that the trip has re-cultivated my pride to be a part of the New Mexico Agriculture Leadership Program, my pride to work in an industry that feeds and clothes not just our nation, but the world, and my pride to be an American.

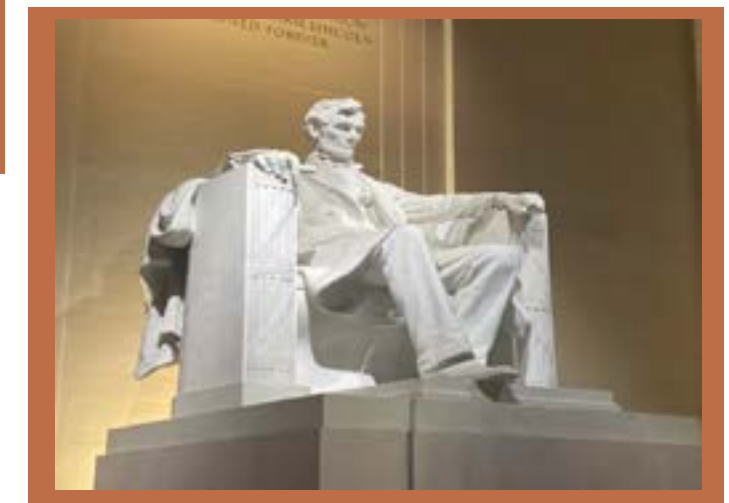
A Word from College Drive By: Tina Wilson

Last month, class 15 and I traveled to Washington, D.C. to examine agricultural policy at the national level.

This was my second time leading a trip to Washington with New Mexico Agricultural Leadership, but it was filled with many wonderful meetings. We visited with staffers from all of New Mexico's congressional delegation and were paid a surprised visit by Senator Ben Ray Lujan. Our visit to Washington also coincided with other state leadership programs- Kentucky, Washington, Kansas, and Virginia. The combined meetings with USDA and Army Civil Works provided opportunities for networking. A first for myself was visiting The National Holocaust Museum. The visit evoked feelings of grief and sorrow. It was good to have an opportunity to debrief with Dr. Samuel J. Aronson, Associate Dean-Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service-Georgetown University.

A highlight for myself was being able to share the Gettysburg Battlefield Leadership seminar with the fellows of class 15. If you remember, I tagged along with Washington State's program last year and was so inspired by my visit that I knew I had to offer it to my program. New Mexico Agricultural Leadership partnered with Washington State to go on the one-day trip. There were many sleepy faces on the ride up but once we were all on the battlefield, everyone appeared to be a little more energized and the squads, named after famous generals, started working as a team coming up with solutions to situations that generals faced during this historic conflict.

It is hard to believe that class 15 fellows will be graduating at the end of June, and we will welcome class 16 fellows into the mix. Recruiting for class 16 has gone well and we have 6 applications to date. The deadline to apply has been extended to June 1st. For those interested in applying, please visit <https://aces-nmal.nmsu.edu/application.html>. Class 16 will officially begin June 21st in conjunction with class 15 graduation.





THANK YOU

Thank you to our sponsors. We appreciate your continued support of New Mexico Agricultural Leadership.

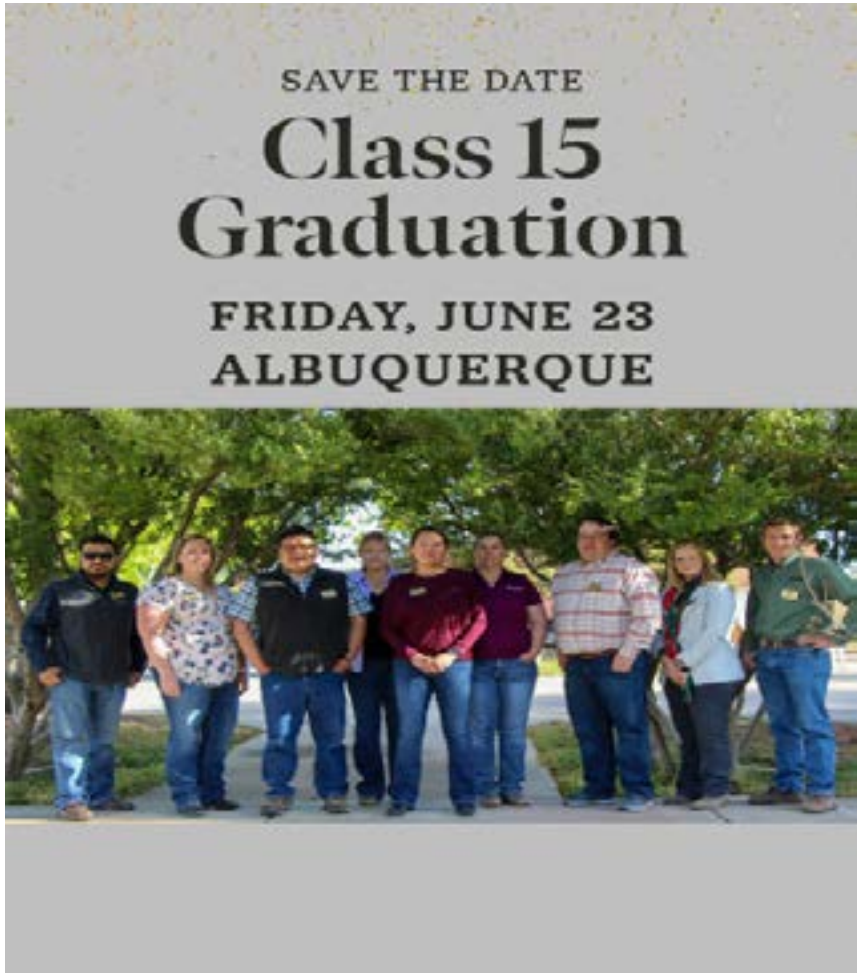
Friends of NMAL

- Bob and Sandra Mayberry,
Mayberry Inc.
- Dr. Cynda Clary
- Bill West
- KC Schooley
- Schuller Quarters LLC
- William and Martha Weisler

Crimson Colleagues

- Jeff and Janet Witte

Have news? Tell us!
 We love to hear what our alumni are up to! Send us a picture of a recent trip, conference, life event or milestone so we can share with fellow alumni and supporters. Send pictures and a brief description to nmal@nmsu.edu to be featured in one of our newsletters.



● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
 New Mexico Agricultural Leadership Program
 ● MSC 3501 Box 3003 Las Cruces, NM 88003-8003 ●
 ● Phone: 575-646-6691 Fax: 575-646-4082 ●
 ● Email: nmal@nmsu.edu Website: aces.nmsu.edu/nmal ●
 ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Follow us @NMagLeadership

