

New Mexico Agricultural Leadership Program



In this edition, you will find articles about class 15 last in person seminar in Farmington and be introduced to class 16. We share the joy of welcoming the 9 fellows of class 15 in to the network of well over 100 alumni.

The New Mexico Agricultural Leadership program is committed to developing knowledgeable, multicultural leaders within the food, agriculture, and natural resource industries of New Mexico.

Growing Forward with the Community

By Kaitlin Robinson

Just off Main Street in Aztec, NM lies 11 acres of land put to significant beneficial use. Growing Forward Farm, run by the San Juan County Extension Office, is an impressive operation on such a small footprint. They have a universal vision in mind: teach everyone about agriculture. This feat is accomplished through school tours, events, and a new

farmer incubator program run on the south fields of the property. Support for this farm is derived through the San Juan County Extension and a significant amount of their time is spent writing and applying for grants in order to keep their program growing and in tip-top shape. The Program Coordinator, Andrew, shared his passion for this property with us during our tour and it was easy to see how popular this farm would be in the community and especially for school tours.



This program is lucky to be located in San Juan County where they receive significant support from the community for the farm and Agriculture as a whole within the county. There are many parts to this property including learning stations about nutrition on the plate,

where food comes from, and even going through making drip irrigation systems and different ways to compost. Their new farmer incubator program lets individuals who want to start farming try it out on a much smaller scale and with assistance as needed from the employees of the farm. These farmers have access to the land, water, supplies, and a market program to use throughout their production cycles. They are also required to go through business acumen classes through the program.

Overall, this is a slice of agricultural paradise in a community for 4-H, school children, and adults alike. Learn more by visiting their website at: <https://sanjuanextension.nmsu.edu/agandhort/farm.html>



Navajo Agricultural Products Industry

By Juan Sanchez

Class 15 of the New Mexico Ag Leadership Program traveled to the four corners for the Cultural Awareness seminar. The agenda was packed with interesting visits and productive meetings. We had the opportunity to visit Navajo Agricultural Products Industry (NAPI). NAPI is a Navajo enterprise that is owned and operated by the Navajo people. Our visit included a presentation and a farm tour. We had the opportunity to see lots of pivots, potato sheds, a laboratory, and a country store. NAPI's workforce is unique in that during harvest, they employ up to 500 people and contribute significantly to the local economy.

NAPI was created in the 1970s by the Navajo Tribal Council to utilize water provided through the Navajo Indian Irrigation Project (NIIP). NIIP is an agreement from the federal government to deliver over 500,000 acre-feet of water annually to over 110,000 acres of land. Currently, they are farming over 70,000 acres. This makes NAPI the largest contiguous farm in the U.S. NAPI's irrigation system and infrastructure has successfully yielded high quality agricultural products that compete at national and global scales.

NAPI has developed the Navajo Pride brand which helps identify NAPI grown products. Products include alfalfa, wheat, corn, potatoes, pinto beans, chile, melons and traditional Navajo foods. Due to growing conditions, NAPI is able to capture a window in certain markets during their harvest. Their product can be found at Walmarts, Wholefoods, and In-and-Outs.

Besides producing high quality foods, NAPI is also recognized for their food safety standards. NAPI is GLOBAL GAP (Good Agricultural Practice) certified. The certification guarantees that NAPI is safe and conducts sustainable practices. In addition, NAPI is also a certified USDA Organic producer. They produce organic watermelons, potatoes, green chile, and corn.

I am grateful for the opportunity to visit and tour NAPI. It was interesting and memorable. I was blown away by the scale of the operation, the logistics, and production capabilities. Next time you stop at an In-an-Out, make sure to order fries!



Navajo Agricultural Products Industry Hosts Class 15

By Megan Schuller

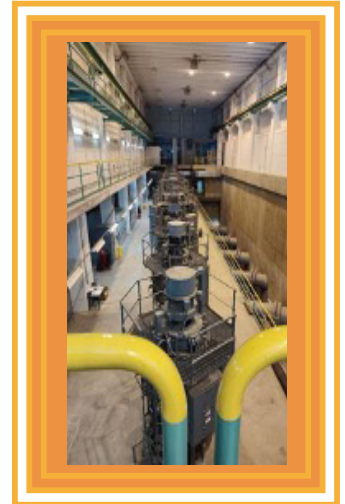
Our final seminar for Class 15 took us to the northwest corner of New Mexico. We had the opportunity to visit the workplace of our classmates Dineh and JD at Navajo Agricultural Products Industry or better known as NAPI. We started our morning with great hospitality as we were served homemade blue corn pancakes.



NAPI was developed in 1970 by the Navajo Tribal Council as an enterprise to operate the Navajo Indian Irrigation Project. Fast forward to today and NAPI irrigates over 110,000 acres of farmland with production of various crops including organic farming as well. We were able to tour some of the facilities as well as seeing the farm in production. While visiting, we stopped by the Region 2 Store, where we were able to pick up some of our very own blue corn meal, and one of us even purchased a 10-pound bag of popcorn kernels. What does NAPI grow, you may be asking with such a large operation? Major crops include alfalfa, No 2-feed corn, table

stock potatoes, dry beans along with a variety of other specialty products. Along with production, NAPI is also home to a Bean Plant and Flour Mill and leases some acreage to the NMSU agricultural science center. Two great resources so close together to help share knowledge across operations.

While on the tour, we stopped by one of the water lift systems and learned the power needed to lift the water over 300 feet. It uses so much electricity that a call is needed before starting the generators to the municipality in order not to cause a blackout. Watering throughout the farm



is controlled and monitored from a control room located on site. Current farming operations in production are about 70,000 acres with over 600 center pivots. Farm managers are able to place their water orders online and then orders are accumulated with demands to the canal outlets, pumping stations and gravity outlets. Quite a vast water system operation, we were expecting to see a huge number of employees controlling the water, to our surprise it is monitored by just a few and some computer screens.

The morning went by fast. I think we could have spent the whole day or even a few days on their operation. We finished up our tour with NAPI with lunch with some NMAL alumni. It was fun to meet them but also to compare classes and what each class did during their time in the program. The great hospitality continued with the group providing Navajo Fizz Soda. A handcrafted beverage with ingredients sourced from the Navajo Nation and surrounding areas. It was great to finish up our time with all our classmates together and see where Dineh and JD work every day.



Meeting with Kendal Chavez, Food & Hunger Coordinator for Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham By Roxanne Chepsongol

Class 15's seminar 8 sent us to explore business and community culture of Northwest New Mexico through interaction with key agricultural enterprises. The journey began with a stop in Albuquerque to discuss innovative input for the state's direction on agriculture policy with Kendal Chavez, Food & Hunger Coordinator, Office of Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham.



Ms. Chavez described the governor's current policies in place for food and hunger initiatives as well as the last legislative session's victories for the cause of wholesome food availability in the state. Topics discussed with class 15 were: the impacts of food insecurity; intersectional food system challenges; food safety; food, farm and hunger goals; and critical interactions with local farms for school lunches.

Currently New Mexico is second in the nation for child food insecurity. The governor's office is partnering with agencies

for a 5-year plan to manage and implement local food to tribes, pandemic EBT, senior meals and free school lunches to address food insecurity. Class 15 spoke with Ms. Chavez about how agriculture can assist with the governors' goals and explained challenges they see with current structures in the state. Agricultural products that many of the programs use are aimed at smaller farmers which have limited capacity of supply and biosecurity challenges for local needs. Class 15 expressed the desire to explore how all farmers big and small can add nutritious food to local communities. Since crops are not priced in the seller's favor revenue will need to be added to keep the food in the state. Class 15 spoke about the current programs in place with the New Mexico Department of Agriculture, where communities and tribes can double up food bucks and local farmers market opportunities. Class 15 values the state's desires for local food and markets but also emphasized the need for more new farmers to join the effort to produce what the state needs. Class 15 appreciates Ms. Chavez insight from the governor's office about this critical topic about food and hunger.



PESCO – Not Just a Place to Work By Marshal Wilson

In early May, Class 15 had the opportunity to visit the Process Equipment and Service Company, otherwise known as PESCO, in Farmington, New Mexico. PESCO creates and services equipment used in onshore oil and gas production and has been in business in Farmington for over 50 years. When we arrived at the site, the Business Development Manager, John Byrom started off by giving an overview of the history of the company. During the overview one of the company's owners, Jim Rhodes stopped by to welcome us and shared a few words of his own. PESCO is a family-owned business and has been for over 50 years. It was evident by the way we were received by these two men that they value community, personal development, and leadership in the way they expressed appreciation for how the New Mexico Ag Leadership Program seeks to broaden the industry awareness of the participants in the program.



After the introductions and once we were properly kitted up with personal protective equipment, off we went to tour the plant. The visit took on the character of a real life “how it’s made” episode. We were able to view the whole process, from raw material to finished product for the equipment that PESCO makes. The breadth of skill and commitment to excellence that is responsible for the power that comes out of our outlets or goes into our engines is worth remembering the next time we flip the switch or get behind the wheel. Just as there is an entire behind the scenes process that goes into taking food or fiber from the farm or ranch to people's homes, so there is an under-appreciated yet vital process for our nation's electricity and fuel in which PESCO plays a role. Interestingly, even though PESCO was originally founded to serve the oil and gas industry in the San Juan basin, most of its business is now transported to other basins and oil fields. When I saw how PESCO remained competitive with other companies given the rising costs of transportation and if they had considered relocating to a more convenient location, the answer was that the company's values are what kept them going. Those values were Integrity, Mutual Respect and Trust, and Commitment to Excellence. We would like to thank PESCO for allowing us to visit and reiterating the importance of values in any business or professional environment.



More Graduates of Class 15



Dr. Marcy Ward



Travis McKenzie



Jarrell DeGroat



Dineh John

Class 15 Graduation - By Luther Dunlap

New Mexico Agricultural Leadership Program class 15 graduation was held on the evening of June 23, 2023, at the Courtyard Marriott in Albuquerque. Class 15 was joined by friends and family members as well as class 16 to help celebrate the past 18 months and reminisce on the great times they had. I was happy to see the amount of support that the members of Class 15 had from their community (coworkers and supervisors) and family and friends. Each member of the graduating class had friends and family there supporting and celebrating with them their success through the program.

Guest of honor for the evening was Patrick Hankins with Joy Junction. Patrick is the volunteer coordinator for Joy Junction, the largest homeless shelter in New Mexico. The members of Class 15 joined the new members of Class 16 earlier in the day at Joy Junction to serve lunch.

Each member of Class 15 had the opportunity to speak about what they had learned and experienced over the past 18 months and shared one photo to explain their experience. One thing was very clear that evening, Class 15 had developed a close bond not only with class members but also with Tina Wilson, coordinator of the New Mexico Agricultural Leadership Program. The common theme for that evening was you get out of it what you put in. If you truly want to have a great experience you need to have an open mind and make the most of it. Coordinator, Tina Wilson, did a great job highlighting the members and their successes.

Advice to members of class 16 was on how to approach the New Mexico Agricultural Leadership Program. It is what you make it. If you want to get something out of the program, you must jump in with both feet ready to learn and explore the diversity of agriculture in New Mexico and develop as a leader. Thank you to all the supporters and board of directors for all the support to the New Mexico Agricultural Leadership Program.



Introducing Class 16...

Pictured (Left to Right): NMAL Board President Bob Mayberry, Tina Wilson, coordinator NMAL, Katelin Spradley- New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau, Bernadette Romere- New Mexico Department of Agriculture, Katie Lara- Farm Credit of New Mexico, Emily Harris- New Mexico Department of Agriculture, and Luther Dunlap- Farm Credit of New Mexico. Not pictured: Julie Hughes- NMSU- NM Cooperative Extension Service

Making New Connections- Bernadette Romero- Benally

It was a leadership discovery for making new connections. New names. New faces. New leaders. New discussions. New foods. New ideas. At first, we were not sure what to expect about the New Mexico Agricultural Leadership (NMAL) program then, after the completion of the first seminar, it became clear that the newly selected fellows, NMAL Class 16 were going to be adventurous the next 18 months. It was a pleasure to meet for the first time Emily, Julie, Katie, Katelin, and Luther. It was also a pleasure to meet Bob Mayberry, the NMAL Board President, and Tina Wilson, the NMAL Coordinator.

Here is a little bit of my fellows making new connections with one another. The dinner conversations were times that we got to better connect as we got to know each other. For example, Luther has a family. They live in Clovis. Katelin has recently become engaged and lives in Moriarty. The rest of us live and work



in Las Cruces. Something that stood out collectively about each of my fellows was that we each have some kind of connection to agriculture. Our employers are a mix of the New Mexico Department of Agriculture, the American Ag Credit, the New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service, and the New Mexico Farm and Livestock Board. One significance of our connection was that we live and work throughout the state of New Mexico. Each of our personal and professional backgrounds has strong ties to New Mexico.

The activities in Seminar One allowed each of us to connect and express ourselves to one another. The orientation and introduction were key as we sat around the table and talked. We each defined two or more characteristics of what it takes to have leadership skills. We also did team-building exercises that allowed us to further connect with one another. As a group, we were able to sketch out our first year of seminar dates and discuss three international trip locations. As the months go by, our connections will only get stronger. We will learn from each other to become leaders of New Mexico by making that new connection and letting it develop into long-lasting friendships.

This is the message that Class 15 kept reiterating, “the first night we all met, we became closely connected.” That Friday, on the last day of Seminar One, we made another new connection. We got to meet Class 15 who were graduating from the NMAL program that evening. The room was alive. The graduation presentations were an inspiration to continue to make those connections. There were many NMAL experiences that were shared with one another. Many came up to you and introduced themselves and great conversations were exchanged. Class 15 concluded the NMAL program as fellows, remaining long-lasting friends, and keeping that connection among one another, not only the fellows, but also by those who have completed the past NMAL programs, the NMAL board, and sponsors of the NMAL program. The connection between Class 15 and 16 got better at the celebration party. It was unfortunate that Friday night came to an end as we had to depart and return to our homes. It was great networking in Albuquerque to make new connections.

Looking Ahead for Class 16 by Katelin Spradley

Class 16 of the NMAL program met together June 21-23, 2023, for our first seminar and to plan for the upcoming months. While we generally got to know one another, we also laid out a roadmap for what we will learn and experience through the program.

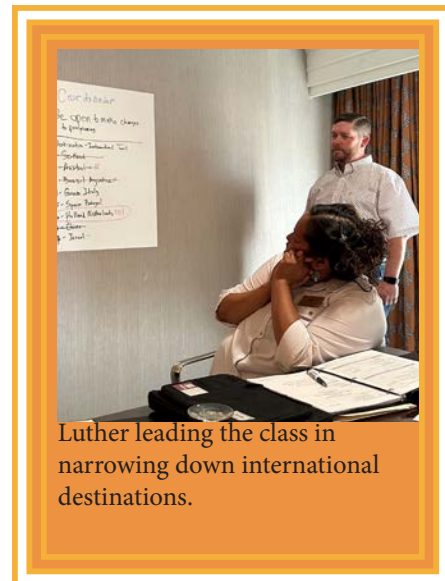
The NMAL program seeks to create knowledgeable and multicultural leaders in the food, agriculture, and natural resource industries by leading fellows through a journey of leadership discovery and industry awareness. The six fellows who make up class 16 of the program will go through eight seminars that touch on leadership discovery, national and state political processes, trade and communication, the oil and gas industry, urban agriculture and social issues, energy, mineral and natural resources, and an international experience. As a class, we discussed businesses, organizations, or communities we would like to visit that we felt might give us a better understanding of these topics. Ideas from the class included Southwest Cheese near Clovis, Navajo Agricultural Products Industry near Farmington, a meat processing plant, a water desalination center, and many others.

We also discussed areas of the world we would like to visit to learn more about their cultures and their unique food, agriculture, and natural resources industries. Bernadette shared a little about her interest to visit Australia and learn more about how they manage their water resources. Luther shared his interest in Scotland's sheep production. We finally narrowed our list to the three locations the group agreed they would most like to visit. A location will be selected in cooperation with NMDA later on.

In addition to the in-person seminars, we also discussed the future of our growth as leaders. We touched on possible leadership books we may read individually to further our understanding of leadership and received the first two books we will read as a class: *Modern Manners* and *The*

Leadership Challenge. Almost every other month from when we meet for our in-person seminars, the class will meet on a conference call to discuss the various books we will be reading as a class. These discussions will be led by our peers and will help us to better comprehend what we read and see leadership through the eyes of our peers as we travel on this journey together.

We concluded the seminar with a glimpse of the graduation that will mark the conclusion of our participation in the program in 2025. We also received some words of wisdom from class 15 fellows to help each of us make the most of our time. I personally chose to participate in the NMAL program because of the invaluable networking and learning opportunities I felt it could provide me. Seeing the growth and camaraderie of class 15 along with the general direction class 16 has set for the upcoming 18 months left me incredibly excited to be a part of the NMAL program. I have no doubt our class has a bright future ahead, and we look forward to sharing the many lessons and experiences we have in the upcoming months.



Luther leading the class in narrowing down international destinations.

Defining Leadership, an Ongoing Mission for NMAL Class 16- By Julie Hughes

In today's world, when faced with a question such as "What is Leadership?," many turn to Google to get a feel for the common definitions and descriptions, but they do not often yield an answer that can truly describe the magnitude of a subject such as leadership. At its base, the dictionary defines leadership as, "the action of leading a group of people or an organization," but leadership can mean different things to different people. Who we choose to follow or who we consider a visionary depends on our own experiences and personalities, however, there are certain characteristics that are generally considered critical to defining a good leader.

The New Mexico Agricultural Leadership program's Class 16 started their leadership journey with a thoughtful discussion on the differences between leaders and managers. The conversation followed the reading of *Leading and Managing: Understanding the Difference* by Abraham Zaleznik, which provided a foundation for discussion on how leadership and management are different concepts.

The NMAL fellows identified characteristics of leaders, including being bold, motivating individuals to follow a shared vision, taking responsibility, and giving credit. Leaders generally are not afraid to take risks and look at the big picture. We also discussed how a leader is willing to do what they are asking of others – good leaders are boots on the ground individuals who seek input and share success. Good leaders do not always have to be at the top of an organization. Leadership can happen at any level.

Managers generally are detail orientated individuals who are responsible for putting the vision into action. They drive process and deal with the day-to-day. Managers tend to be straightforward and follow policies. They are often not risk takers and prefer to follow the status quo. However, the fellows discussed that an individual can be a good leader and manager, even a visionary can understand process and recognize the details are critical to employing a shared vision. However, Zaleznik's article focused on the "managerial mystique" and how often those that see themselves as leaders have fallen into the trap of focusing on the bottom line, not the vision. His argument is that this has damaged corporate America and led to the downfall of many organizations.

As Class 16 continues its journey to discover what leadership means to them and how it translates into their own lives, both professionally and personally, there will be many opportunities to assess leadership qualities through reading, listening, discussing, and perhaps even respectfully disagreeing.

Top 3 International Destinations Selected by Class 16

1. Spain and Portugal
2. The Netherlands
3. Greece and Italy



Faith Based Mission Continues to Pour Out Love and Service at Joy Junction

By Emily Harris

Joy abounds in a place full of people who have faced and might still be facing unimaginable hardships in Albuquerque, New Mexico at Joy Junction. Service and gratitude were overflowing as Patrick, Volunteer Coordinator and Social Outreach at Joy Junction, gave New Mexico Agricultural Leadership (NMAL) Program a tour of the facility. While walking around the beautiful facilities, he gave a brief history into how he ended going from a successful but unfulfilling job in real estate to what he says will be his forever occupation in serving others. His faith was evident in the tales he spun for the group as we toured around the facility and heard stories of great triumph and great tragedy. And while some of his stories were harrowing, the people around the facility were bright and happy as Patrick called them each by name, echoed by a "Hello!" from the group.

To be able to serve people, even for such a short time, was a humbling experience for all those involved. Hearing the phrase "Thank You" from those who were served lunch felt criminal as we were the ones who felt truly touched by the ability to do something so small for a group of people who deserved so much more. The volunteers, not only at Joy Junction but also at their affiliated thrift stores, help make this organization a great one whose impacts are making a difference in so many individuals' lives.

Joy Junction serves a multitude of individuals and families at various stages of their lives and journeys. They offer a Christ In Power Program that entails working in various aspects of the shelter for thirty hours while the other ten hours are spent doing daily bible study and skills classes. They also have programs for children in conjunction with some of their partners where tutors come and give lessons and help the kids develop skills and interact with other children.

Joy Junction boasts a large number of partners that help their residents deal with a number of



issues ranging from updating their resumes to accompanying people to appointments to places like the Social Security Office which could prove a daunting task for anyone. The push to help people look towards the future and stake out a course of action for their futures is an empowering act that Joy Junction brings to those who walk onto this property.

Upon the close of our time at Joy Junction, Patrick left us with the request of nothing more than prayers for the ongoing work and for the people who come into this place. That and of course green chile. Joy Junction is the largest homeless shelter in New Mexico and their impact is noticed and admirable. Though none of us ever think that we could end up in a situation, where we would need to utilize such services, it's important to recall the founder's story where he, like the rest of us, thought the same thing and yet found himself homeless. Gratitude filled the volunteers as we left feeling grateful for our situations in life as well as the feeling of humility with an afternoon well spent serving others who may not be as lucky. The joy was palpable at Joy Junction and their mission continues.

Fellows in Action- Joy Junction



Joy Junction

A Word from College Drive by Tina Wilson

The last few months have been very busy for NMAL and me. In May, I traveled to Albuquerque and Farmington for the last seminar of class 15. I also participated in a Flip classroom program to Spain and Portugal to explore Agricultural Communications and Marketing. I have never been to either country, so it was all new. Of all the visits, I enjoyed visiting with local producers of wine and olives. Both operations stressed quality over quantity. Like many other places in the world, Spain and Portugal are experiencing drought. The vineyard does not have any type of irrigation and relies on rainfall to water the vines. I asked how their crops survive in the drought and the answer was due to the age of vines that roots run very deep and so were not as susceptible to drought. The olive producer was very proud of his sustainable agricultural practices. He deploys drip irrigation from a well that is run by a solar powered pump. He also uses manure from cows that are fed from organic sources. Another practice I found interesting is after the olive trees are pruned the cuttings are turned into a compost for the trees.

Before heading to Europe this year, I had the opportunity to interview 6 individuals for class 16 of New Mexico Agricultural Leadership program. Thank you to board members Justin Salcido, Bill West, Colin McVaugh, and board president Bob Mayberry for taking time out of their busy schedules to help me with the interviews. As you have read in previous pages, we selected all 6 to be part of the class 16. Our first seminar before graduation was wonderful and I found fellows of class 16 eager to be start the program. I am excited for the growth and adventures to come.

Along with onboarding a new class occurred the graduation of class 15. This is always a bittersweet time for me. I am overjoyed at how far the fellows have grown in their leadership journey, but I am saddened that I no longer will be going on adventures with the same individuals I have spent the last 18 months with. I must admit to shedding a few tears during this graduation celebration, but I will always have a part of class 15 in my office to remind me of our adventures together. Bob the artichoke has settled into his new home, my office. He may accompany class 16 fellows on their leadership journey or perhaps a new mascot will appear?



Enjoying the view in Lisbon.



Bob the artichoke in his new home.



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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.



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