

Maryland Farm Bureau Young Farmers Meet

RANDALLSTOWN, Md. — Young farmers from across the state are to be at the Comfort Inn in Westminster, Nov. 20-22, for the Maryland Farm Bureau Young Farmers Annual Meeting and Retreat.

Activities for the weekend include tours of Baugher's Orchards, Maxon-Dixon Dairy and the Robotics Systems plant; leadership seminars led by trainer Patsy Perkins, formerly with the American Farm Bureau Federation; and the annual Young Farmer Discussion Meet and Achievement Award contests.

Achievement Award entrants this year include John Saathoff of Denton, Caroline County. Saathoff, 29, graduated summa cum laude from the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore in 1991 with a degree in agronomy. He then joined the family grain and hog operation, which he works with his father, uncle and brother.

The family farms 2,300 acres of soybeans, wheat and barley, and maintains an 80-sow farrow to finish hog operation. They also serve as a seed company sales representative for the area, and operate a school bus route.

A member of the Caroline County Farm Bureau board of directors, Saathoff also serves as chairman of the Caroline County Young Farmers and is a director on the Maryland Soybean Board. He is also chairman of the Caroline County Weed Control Advisory Committee.

He and his wife Marsha are both active at First Wesleyan Church and in the Fellowship of Christian Farmers. They have one daughter, 15-month old Julie.

All Achievement Award contestants must be working farmers between the ages of 18 and 35, and fill out a detailed application describing their farming operation in depth. Each is judged on his or her leadership, creativity and success in agriculture.

Contestants in the Discussion Meet include Roger S. Schmick of Preston, Caroline County and Lee Richardson of Willards, Wicomico County.

Schmick, 32, is a fourth generation farmer. His family operates a 600-acre grain and poultry farm in Preston, where he uses knowledge gained while

obtaining a degree from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Schmick is also a member of the Caroline County Farm Bureau board of directors and a member of the local Ruritan Club.

Richardson, 27, is a fifth-generation poultry and grain farmer. A 1992 graduate of the University of Delaware with a bachelor's degree in ag science, he and his wife Dana and 1-year-old daughter Rebecca live and work on the family farm.

The Discussion Meet, held annually by the Maryland Farm Bureau Young Farmers, is an

opportunity for Farm Bureau members aged 18 to 35 to deeply study various nationally important agricultural issues and discuss them with other farmers their age.

Contestants, who have been given the topics to study before the contest, will be judged on their ability to defend their options while carefully considering the position of others. This contest is designed to prepare young farmers for discussions. Farm Bureau members have while developing the organization's official policy.

Discussion Meet contestants

will be considering one topic chosen from four developed by the American Farm Bureau Federation last spring.

Topics this year are:

- Is agriculture experiencing a polarization of its population? It is becoming small farm versus large farm?
- Discuss the use of cloning in agriculture.
- Can production agriculture survive the threat of urban sprawl?
- What is the impact of the changing demographics of American agriculture on the role of Farm Bureau relative to Farm Bureau serving as the voice of agriculture, and Farm Bureau serving as a grass roots organization?

Winners in both state contests will then compete with young farmers across the country at the American Farm Bureau Federation annual meeting and convention in Albuquerque, N.M. next January. The winner of the national competition will receive a 1999 Dodge Ram pick-up truck and an Arctic Cat 4x4 all-terrain vehicle.

The New Dodge and Arctic Cat are sponsors of both the state and national Farm Bureau Young Farmer programs.

For more information about the retreat or these contests, please contact Amy L. Miller at (410) 922-3426.

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