



MFBF Young Farmers Cross Border To Learn About Trade, Farming Challenges In Canada

MARLBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS - Nov. 7, 2017 - Five Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) members, who participant and serve on the statewide Young Farmers & Ranchers (YF&R) committee, traveled to Montreal last week during which they learned about trade with our Northern neighbor and other farming challenges that Canadian producers experience.



"During this trip, our young farmers learned about their importance in our growing global marketplace," said MFBF President Ed Davidian, who farms in Northborough. "While Massachusetts is not known for exporting large quantities of agricultural products, we all play a role in the trade dynamic between countries. This is especially true with Canada as it is a part of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)."



To start the visit, the group met with government officials who discussed NAFTA and its impact on trade. In addition, there was an in-depth conversation with the group about Canada's temporary foreign worker program, which is similar to the United States' H2-A program.

"During this presentation, we learned that about 90 percent of Canadians live near the U.S.-Canadian border," said YF&R Chair and Rochdale farmer Heidi Cooper. "For this reason, many agricultural products crisscross the border multiple times. For example, they

showed us an infographic of how a burger we enjoy at a restaurant may really be a melting pot of products from both Canada and the United States."

In addition to meeting with government



officials, the group toured three farms on Nov. 2 including a dairy that makes cheese; an apiary that also has a distillery to make mead; and a highly mechanized dairy farm that had robotic milkers and an automatic feeder for the cattle.

"As my husband's family has a dairy, I found learning about Canada's dairy quota system from producers to be interesting," Cooper said. "Both the cheese farm and the large milking operation spoke of how the quota system has benefitted their farms and allowed them to explore new avenues for selling products and mechanizing."



On the final day in Canada, the group met with the Conseil des appellations réservées et des termes valorisants (CARTV), where they learned about efforts in Canada to brand products based on method of production, territory or specialty. For example, this group has certified ice wine and cider of Quebec, Charlevoix lamb, Canadian cow cheese and Quebec sweet corn.

"The knowledge we gained from the trip will be put to good use as we continue to grow and expand our farming operations," Cooper said. "It's exciting to see how we fit into the global

market."

MFBF members who participated in this mission, included:

- Heidi Cooper, MFBF YF&R chair and Rochdale farmer,
- Chris Grant, MFBF YF&R vice chair and Essex farmer,
- Briana Mann, MFBF YF&R secretary/treasurer and Malden farmer,
- Heather Bonanno, Methuen farmer, and
- Harley-Anne Hamilton, Miss Massachusetts United States Agriculture.

Click [here](#) to view the most recent updates from the YF&R committee on Facebook.

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The Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation is a non-profit organization representing nearly 6,000 family members across the Commonwealth. MFBF is an advocate for farmers, run by farmer members who develop policies through its grassroots process. Its mission is "to protect the rights, encourage the growth, and be of service to its members, in the best interest of agriculture."

For more information about the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation, please visit www.mfbf.net.

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