



## NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release  
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### **Leadership Program Participants Study 'Political Process, Urban Society and Media'**

Toronto, ON – Class 13 of the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP) held their fourth seminar in the urban setting of downtown Toronto from February 21-24, 2010. The four day itinerary focussed on gaining insight to the political processes at Queen's Park, relationships between urban centres and agriculture, as well as how to effectively use and interact with various media.

AALP members were welcomed to the TD Tower by Vice President of Agricultural Services, Craig Bremner. The morning's speakers gave class members insight to the economic crisis of 2008 and its lasting impact on both urban and rural settings, and expanded with a thorough analysis of the current markets and future economic expectations. A highlight of the day's activities was the unique opportunity to tour the TD trading floor.

To focus on media relations, Wallace Pidgeon, Brick and Ball Media, briefed the class on how to effectively interact with various media. Along with Lilian Schaer, a media communications specialist, Kevin Hann, Deputy Editor of the Toronto Sun, and George Lomaga, camera-operator, Mr. Pidgeon ran concurrent media sessions in the afternoon focussing on online social media, news releases, and TV interviews.

A tour of the Ontario Food Terminal, a competitive market for wholesale growers and retailers to exchange produce, gave class members perspective on the effective distribution process within the GTA.

AALP class 13 was privileged by a visit from Honourable Tim Hudak, Ontario PC Leader. His message on agriculture was followed by an open question period. During a tour of Queen's Park the class members heard a variety of leadership strategies, concepts and perspectives from senior level politicians, key government officials and industry executives. Class members increased their understanding of the provincial political process and the role media and communications play in government. A highlight was a personal tour and question period with the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, Steve Peters. The day at Queens Park was followed by a visit to the Toronto Police Services.

The tour of Daily Bread Food Bank was educational and inspiring. Executive Director, Gail Nyberg, explained the non-profit, charitable organization's role as a central location in Toronto to oversee the collection, sorting and distribution of food to various local food banks in the GTA. Adam Spence, Executive Director of the Ontario Association of Food Banks (OAFB), outlined various programs used to link the Toronto organization with the agricultural sector of Ontario. Just over \$500 was donated to the OAFB as a class donation along with food to Daily Bread.

Class members also provided fundraising moments to highlight the role of two key AALP program supporters, TD Canada Trust and the Ontario Farmer.

The Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP) is an executive development program for men and women in Ontario to further develop their leadership skills and work to shape the future of the agri-food sector and rural communities. AALP is presented by The Centre for Rural Leadership (TCRL). Class 13 will reconvene for their fifth seminar in Sudbury in April.

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Bonnie denHaan  
AALP Class 13  
Loretto  
[haanview@zing-net.ca](mailto:haanview@zing-net.ca)

Kathryn Minten  
AALP Class 13  
Kerwood  
[kminten@live.com](mailto:kminten@live.com)

Ben Sterk  
AALP Class 13  
Embro  
[sterkholm\\_farms@xplore.net.ca](mailto:sterkholm_farms@xplore.net.ca)

Rob Black  
Executive Director, TCRL  
Guelph  
[rblack@ruralleadership.ca](mailto:rblack@ruralleadership.ca)