

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AALP Class 17 begins their leadership journey

Guelph, ON, October 13, 2017 - A group of 18 agricultural professionals began their leadership journey as part of the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP) with a three-and-a-half day session in Guelph, Ontario.

The diverse group of leaders-in-training, which includes primary producers as well as those in the banking and insurance industries, regulatory affairs, communications and outreach, among other areas, began their leadership journey with some perspective from previous AALP class members, and a crash course on proper business etiquette with Jodie Beach from The Etiquette Advantage.

On the second day of the session the AALP participants began a two-day workshop on effective leadership and change. The session was led by Gavin Robinson of Robinson Leadership who introduced the class to the concept of GridWorks. This approach to effective change helps to embed mutual trust, respect and candor into an organizational culture.

That evening the AALP participants took part in a Class 17 Opening Banquet, which drew some 50 program alumni, sponsors and supporters to welcome the new class members. Taking the stage as the keynote speaker for the evening was author and performance coach Alan Mallory, who spoke about his journey to the top of Mount Everest with his family. His story highlighted the critical importance of planning, ongoing evaluation and communication, all of which are the difference between failure and success - and in his case, life and death.

On the final day of the session, AALP Class 17 members had the opportunity to visit the Biodiversity Institute of Ontario, housed at the University of Guelph. They learned about the International Barcode of Life project from Dr. Rob Young. This initiative is the largest biodiversity genomics initiative ever undertaken and the students learned about its potential applications in agriculture.

Finally, the students visited Woodrill Farms where owner AALP Alumnus Greg Hannam toured the class through his impressive, multi-faceted operation, which includes a grain elevator, a seed growing operation and a crop input supply business. Greg spoke to the power of innovation in driving his business – and the agriculture industry writ large – forward.

Over the next 19 months, AALP participants will learn about leadership and organizational development theories and practices, government and political processes, economics, trade policy, global affairs, sector and industry related issues in Ontario and globally through North American and international study travel components.

To follow Class 17's journey, connect on Twitter at @AALPClass or #AALP17.

AALP is delivered by the Rural Ontario Institute (ROI). Established in 1984, the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP) has graduated almost 450 leaders who are making a positive difference across Ontario and beyond. For more information visit www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/aalp.