



For Immediate Release
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AFACT's Farmer Voices Program Effectively Trains Producers to Inform Consumers

Helping farmers connect from the heart with the consumer – that is the goal of the Farmer Voices program hosted by American Farmers for the Advancement and Conservation of Technology (AFACT). The first phase of Farmer Voices was held July 20-22, 2010, in Owatonna, MN.

"Farmers have the knowledge and a great story to tell," said Monty Miller, co-leader of the Farmer Voices training. "Our program provides the skills, practice and introspection to effectively communicate in both public speaking forums and by using social media tools."

Agriculturists from Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Colorado and Kansas gathered for the three day personal development and intensive presentation training program. Participants learned how to harness eye contact, vocal and body energy, as well as other communication tools to be most effective while presenting. The most unique part of the training was that each member of the group could practice these tools and receive immediate constructive feedback from professional coaches.

"It pushed me to operate outside of my comfort zone," said Mike Bodenhausen, participant and President of the Kansas Dairy Association. "You learn the most when you get to that point."

Besides developing the skills to effectively present, attendees also developed their own message based on their personal values. Everyone started this process with an introspection exercise to create a coat of arms, similar to a mission statement.

"Recognizing our passion and shared values is exactly what the consumer needs to see," said Carrol Campbell, participant, and crop and livestock farmer.

The next phase of the Farmer Voices program will include placement of trained speakers in front of consumer audiences. "Consumers want to know that food is produced by people who care about the same things they do – family, food and the faith that our animals, land and water will be preserved for future generations," said Daphne Holterman, Wisconsin dairy farmer.

The Farmer Voices communications workshop will be offered again in November. To learn more about AFACT and the Farmer Voices program, please visit our website at www.itisafact.org or find our page on Facebook at **AFACT**. You can also follow **itisafact** on Twitter.

AFACT is willing to invest in farmers, and the impact they can have on consumers and the entire food chain. The group seeks to educate, equip and empower all participants in the food chain to understand the benefits of technology and encourage consumers to demand access to high quality, affordable food with a minimal impact on the environment.

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Wisconsin dairy farmer, Daphne Holterman of Rosy-Lane Holsteins LLC, practices sharing the values of her family farm in a Farmer Voices presentation training session