



Dear Future Leader,

America's greatest resource are individuals with leadership abilities and a commitment to influencing the future. At Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, we want to make sure that rural and urban communities, agricultural producers, and consumers have leaders who understand the complex system that connects producers to consumers to ensure agricultural prosperity and food security. Rocky Mountain Farmers Union is dedicated to making sure that our future leaders are equipped with the knowledge and tools they need.

America needs leaders who are proactive and progressive leaders like you! They must have both commitment and skills to be effective. The RMFU Fellows program was created to help individuals develop and polish the skills they need to effectively create and sustain vibrant communities. The Fellows program offers emerging leaders a foundation in key areas such as agriculture, food policy, and food systems. It offers forums to compare and address local urban and rural issues, and workshops in advocacy that will help you understand how the various levels of government shape a community.

The 2023 Fellows class will include about a dozen selected individuals and couples from Colorado, New Mexico, and Wyoming. They will come from various backgrounds. Past Fellows classes have included farmers, ranchers, Farmers Union insurance agents, cooperative leaders, local food and urban food advocates, and entrepreneurs. Fellows classes are not exclusively for RMFU members, but the program does emphasize the history and role of Farmers Union in the topics addressed.

The program will include four in-person sessions over the course of the next year, plus a few virtual sessions. Most sessions will take place over a weekend. The September 2023 session will be a trip to Washington, DC, and because of additional travel time, it spans five days. The sessions will be held at different locations, urban and rural, to offer direct experience of the diversity of the region.

Rocky Mountain Farmers Union takes great pride in being a family organization, and we welcome your entire family to participate in this program. The Fellows invitation is for you and your spouse/partner. Child care can be available by request at each session, with an exception for the trip to Washington, DC. RMFU will cover costs for lodging, childcare, materials, most meals, and airfare to Washington, DC. We believe the investment we make in our emerging leaders will pay back tenfold in the future, with Fellows engaging in food issues, leading their communities, and helping to sustain our local economies. That is why we offer this opportunity to you for only the investment of your time.

Your community needs you, and RMFU wants to help you be as prepared as possible to accept the challenge of leadership and service.

If you are interested in applying for the 2023 Fellows Class, here is what we ask you to do:

Complete the online application form and submit by January 2, 2023. Please answer all questions thoroughly and add topics that you'd like to see included in the program. This way we can ensure a program that will be effectively tailored to you and your interests.

Upon completion of the program, select two of the following “community-building” options and complete them during the following year:

- Conduct a community-based event focusing on the RMFU Fellows program
- Nominate 2 individuals to the next Fellows class
- Present an overview of the Fellows program at the state convention, an RMFU county meeting, or a public forum
- Provide volunteer service at a food bank, co-op, or urban farm
- Serve as a county delegate to the RMFU convention
- Plan and assist with a county day camp, county fair, or similar event
- Give a presentation on a key topic at a local school or community organization
- Write a “letter to the editor” on a timely rural, agriculture, or food issue
- Recruit 2 new campers for RMFU’s Summer Cooperative Leadership Camp
- Take on a leadership role in your county Farmers Union, other community organizations or local government (such as school board, county commission, or cooperative board)
- Recruit 4 new RMFU members
- Work with a local Farmers Union insurance agent/state office to contact local RMFU members with lapsed memberships.

If you don’t feel you know how to do those things now, don’t worry. After you complete the Fellows program, they will come naturally and you’ll look forward to the opportunity to make a difference!

Please accept our invitation to apply for the 2023 Fellows Class. For an investment of a few days, you will have a lifetime of benefits and passion for your community. And we will benefit from you and your classmates as we discover your talents and explore how to apply them to creating a vibrant and prosperous community.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, feel free to contact Jennifer Luitjens Bahr at 303-283-3550 or email [jennifer.bahr@rmfu.org](mailto:jennifer.bahr@rmfu.org).

Best wishes,



Chad Franke, President  
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union

# Rocky Mountain Farmers Union FELLOWS

## VISION

“ To be the resource network of trained leaders who will serve all aspects of agriculture and rural communities for Farmers Union and beyond. ”

The future of American agriculture and rural communities lies in the hands of those involved. As our hometowns and the face of family farming change, we need to ensure that those involved in decision-making understand and appreciate the role our communities play in the American economy and our society as a whole.

Our Fellows Program is centered on the need for strong leadership in agriculture and our rural communities. Join us in this exciting year-long journey that will positively impact your life, livelihood, and community for years to come.

## PROGRAM

Four weekend sessions, plus a few virtual sessions, will be held over year, with the highlight of the program being a trip to Washington, DC. Each session focuses on a new area that is instrumental in leadership and personal development. Those areas include, but are not limited to: Farmers Union toolbox, rural empowerment, communication skills, cooperative principles, and local, state, and federal government.

## TIME

Your investment is your TIME. Lodging, meals, and childcare are covered by RMFU. A fun activity or free time will be included in each session. Come and network with those who have similar interests and want to make a difference in their communities.



## EXPECTATIONS

We are pleased that you are applying for the RMFU Fellows Program. Described below are the procedures and deadlines for applying, as well as the process for screening and selecting candidates. Please read the directions carefully and complete all the required fields.

## ELIGIBILITY

- You do not need to be a current member of RMFU to apply but will be expected to become a regular member (\$75) by the 1st Session.
- The applicant does not need to own a farm/ranch operation to apply.
- Applicants should be involved in agriculture. A farm or ranch owner and/or operator; food/food policy advocate; insurance agents; FFA advisors; co-op leaders; or rural residents.
- Anyone over the age of 21 is eligible to apply. We welcome women, veterans, people of color, and other minority candidates.
- The Fellows Program is open to residents of Colorado, New Mexico, and Wyoming.

## INSTRUCTIONS

Please review the questions on the application prior to starting your application. A 1-2 page essay will need to be uploaded and you may need to come back to the application and complete it – in this case, scroll to the bottom of the form and click the Save and Continue Link – you will then be prompted to add in your email address (you may have to scroll down) and you will receive an email with a link to get back where you left off. **IF YOU DO NOT ENTER YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS – YOU WILL HAVE TO START THE APPLICATION OVER.**

Write a 1-2 page essay on your agricultural experience, and why you would like to participate in this program.

## REQUIREMENTS

- Participants are **REQUIRED** to attend all programming in its entirety and report punctually.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Session will be February 3-6, 2023, in Denver, CO.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Session will be held during the summer months based on class availability.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Session will be September 9-13, 2023 in Washington DC.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Session will take place in conjunction with the RMFU state convention November 16-18, 2023.
- RMFU will cover the majority of the costs of the program including lodging, most meals, childcare, and the flight to Washington, DC.

## DEADLINES

Applications must be submitted by **January 2, 2023.**

Final selections for participation in the RMFU Fellows Program will be based on application analysis.

Candidates will be notified of their status by **January 9, 2023.**

Applicants must confirm their acceptance into the program by **January 12, 2023.**

A team of RMFU staff and leadership will score each application. All applications are kept confidential.