

For Immediate Release

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Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council Invests in Farm Business Management

ST. PAUL, Minn. (December 3, 2015) - The [Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council](#) (MAELC) recently awarded \$3,315,000 to eight Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) Farm Business Management programs. These grants are part of a brand-new program designed to maintain and increase the number of Farm Business Management instructors and students in local programs.

The MnSCU Farm Business Management (FBM) program is extremely important to the state's farm economy. As the agricultural economy fluctuates, there is an increased demand for FBM education. At the same time, the number of FBM instructors has decreased over the past ten years, leading to a shortage of instructors available to students. To address these challenges, the Minnesota Legislature and MAELC created the FBM Challenge Grants program. These funds were made available through the Agriculture Research, Education, Extension, and Technology Transfer grant provided by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

"The nationally recognized Farm Business Management programs offered by eight MnSCU colleges have provided educational opportunities to Minnesota's farming community for over 60 years. The Challenge Grants offered through MAELC will allow these vital programs to flourish and to strengthen a vital sector of our state's economy," said Dr. Larry Lundblad, President of Central Lakes College and MAELC board member.

Institutions awarded a Challenge Grant include Alexandria Technical and Community College, Central Lakes College, Minnesota West Community and Technical College, Northland Community and Technical College, Ridgewater College, Riverland Community College, South Central College, and St. Cloud Technical and Community College.

Beyond the Challenge Grants, MAELC will be awarding \$425,000 for Additional Instructor grants. These grants are designed to assist FBM programs by covering the costs associated with employing a brand-new instructor. Grants will be awarded in January, 2016.

Established in 1997 by the Minnesota Legislature, MAELC is comprised of seventeen educators, legislators, government officials, and agribusiness and community organization representatives. The Council represents all of the major institutions and groups in Minnesota with an interest in agricultural education and serves as a focal point for initiatives to improve agricultural education in the state. Since its establishment, MAELC has provided over \$7.3 million in competitive grants, scholarships, sponsored projects and awards.