



Matt Gruhlkey, #11

**TALL XIV Session 4 – Washington, DC, Maryland and New York
April 18 - 25, 2015**

“National Government: Issues and Policies”

SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 2015

TALL XIV Session 4 began as we all met in Washington, DC at the Holiday Inn Capitol. It was great to again see everyone and reacquaint and reconnect. As was in the past, it continues to get easier to restart past conversations and continue to strengthen the bond between all of us.

“Washington in the Dark” Bus Tour – Washington, DC

TALL XIV Session 4 began with an awesome opportunity to see the sites in Washington DC via a bus tour at night. We were all very impressed with the Washington DC skyline at night and all the buildings, monuments and historical sites. Patriotism swelled inside all of us as we passed by and stopped at some of the national monuments honoring our brave soldiers throughout our history. There were many impressive sites to take in, but the most meaningful to me were the Lincoln Memorial and the Marine Corps Memorial. The silent and still monuments seem to come to life as I stood there marveling at the quality of work needed to erect such wonderful monuments to our heritage as a free people. For everyone, the 3 hour tour went by quickly. Tomorrow we would have a free day on Sunday to tour Washington DC.

SUNDAY, APRIL 19, 2015

Free day to explore Washington DC

We had the opportunity to explore the many sites of Washington DC. We all split into smaller groups and explored the city and surrounding area. My group was able to explore parts of the Holocaust museum, Smithsonian Museums, National Archives, and just enjoy the beautiful spring weather. There were far too many places to see in just one day, but we tried our best to fit in as many as possible. The National Archives was especially impressive. To be in the presence of the Bill of Rights, Declaration of Independence and Constitution was a true honor. As the day wound down, we met back the hotel for dinner.

MONDAY, APRIL 20, 2015

Ronald Regan Building – EPA Rules and Regulations

We all had to go through considerable security to get into the proper EPA building. Our group was able to meet with the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Research and Development Dr. Tom Burke. He is also the Agency Science Advisor. He gave us an overview of how the EPA uses scientific studies to determine approaches to conservation of natural resources. We learned about the 10 regions of the EPA in the US and how we can provide input to the EPA via those regional offices. Joe Williams from a regional office in Ada, OK joined us via Skype. He gave us an overview of the issues of the energy sector, CAFO, watersheds, nutrients and green infrastructure. The group was very professional and asked very good questions.

Pentagon Tour – Admiral James A. Winnefeld, Jr, Vice Chairman, Joints Chiefs of Staff

We had the privilege of being invited to the Pentagon for a full access tour of the facility. The tour guides were very knowledgeable and had a great sense of humor. We learned that the Pentagon has employs 16,000 military staff, 7,000 civilians and has 18 miles of corridors within its walls. While on the tour, we had the privilege of meeting with Admiral Winnefeld. It was quite an honor to meet with someone so high in rank at the Pentagon. The Admiral was very gracious to answer our questions and take time for a photo with our group. We all appreciated his candor and good nature as we discussed the world and the dangers we face in the 21st century. The Admiral was very kind to give us a small medallion with his name and rank on it. We will all treasure that gift. Another poignant part of the tour was being able to see the memorial inside the Pentagon for those who lost their lives on 9-11 when a plane was crashed into the building. We learned that the loss of life could have been much great had it not been for the fact that that area was under some construction and was not heavily occupied.

USDA – Secretary Vilsack and staff

Next, the group arrived at one of the USDA buildings (James L. Whitten Building) as we sat down to await the arrival of the Secretary of Agriculture. Jennifer Yezak, TALL II class, was our gracious host. She current is the Chief of Staff in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration. We all sat down at huge table and had the privilege to meet with the Secretary. Mr. Vilsack was very gracious to answer all our questions and seemed impressed with the depth of our questions. The Secretary spoke of trade with China, Brazil, and Trade Promotion Authority. He insisted that the President needed that authority to keep ag products moving out to other countries. He informed us that the top 250,000 producers in the US were responsible for 80% of the production of commodities nationwide. We then were able to meet with Michael Scuse, the Under Secretary, Farm and Foreign Ag Services (FFAS). Mr. Scuse gave us a great outline of FFAS and how it uses its influence to encourage trade of US ag goods to other countries. He spoke specifically about the Trans Pacific Partnership and its importance to US ag. He also gave us an update on the possibilities of the US doing business with Cuba. Then, Lillian Salerno, the Administrator of Rural Business and Cooperative Services, spoke to our group regarding rural business, rural development, the energy title and grants available to smaller rural communities for infrastructure improvements. Finally, the group met with Dr. Warren Preston, Acting Deputy Chief Economist for the USDA. It was a very informative discussion about WASDE government reports, Risk Management Administration, FDA, COOL, and other topics. Our group thoroughly enjoyed the meetings and was impressed by our ability to meet with the Secretary.

American Farm Bureau – Dale Moore and Bob Young

After a busy day of meeting with government officials, we ended the work day by meeting at the American Farm Bureau offices in DC. Dale Moore and Bob Young were great hosts. We all appreciated their humor and candor as we discussed the world of agriculture, trade, EPA, and world trade. Mr. Young gave us a great overview of the world trade. We learned that there are a lot of factors to consider when analyzing world trade – the US Dollar, Chinese currency, Avian flu, and the importance of exports for the US ag industry. Mr. Moore gave us a rundown of the American Farm Bureau and all that it does to protect US ag. They have over 50 lobbyists covering all 50 states. The issues they see as critical to US ag are actions by the EPA on waters of the US, GMO's, use of Drones, Endangered Species act and ag labor and immigration reform.

US Grain Council – Kurt Shultz and Erick Erickson

The group was able to meet with key leaders at the US Grain Council. Mr. Shultz gave an overview of global strategy of the US Grains Council – build demand, eliminate tariffs, help traders understand US trade and promotion of new products. Mr. Erickson, the V.P. for the US Grains Council gave a great overview of world supply and demand for the main feed grains and wheat. One of the startling facts he shared was the population growth in Sub-Saharan Africa will be tremendous in the next 20 years. That can create a huge demand for US ag products, but will they have the \$\$\$ to purchase our goods? Trade is vital to our role as a leader in the world of ag. And the US has a tremendous asset in the form of large sections of arable land, great technology and a strong infrastructure.

Combest, Sell and Associates - Jeff Harrison

The group had the privilege of meeting for dinner at the famous Trattoria Alberto restaurant in DC. Jeff Harrison, with Combest, Sell and Associates, was a very gracious host. It was great getting to know him and his staff and learn more about Jeff's path to DC. Jeff gave a great overview of the history of the "Farm Bill" and the inner workings involved in making sure that it was passed again by the US Government. He explained that this most recent bill narrowly avoided disaster and without Rep. Boehner's assistance in the House, the Bill might not have passed. It was a great night for everyone. We enjoyed the company and the great meal.

TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2015

White House (Eisenhower Executive Office Building) – White House Staffers

After going through rigorous, but necessary security, the group met in the Indian Treaty Room. We were immediately impressed by the ornate features of this older building. It was a great setting as we could look out the windows and see the White House. We met with various White House Staffers and discussed many topics ranging from immigration, environmental quality, climate preparedness and the White House Rural Council. The staffers explained the position of the President on these many topics and how climate change mitigation was a top priority for this current administration. We learned of the Three Pillars of the Action Plan for climate preparedness – reduce carbon emissions, prepare the US for impacts, and leadership on the international stage. And we learned that the Rural Council focuses job creation, drought issues, rural child poverty, health and diets. They told us that the USDA has provided \$30 billion/year in impact via 40 USDA programs at a cost of only \$2 billion.

Office of Representative Ruben Hinojosa – Connie Humphrey, Chief of Staff

Ms. Humphrey was a gracious host. She welcomed us in and proceeded to inform us of the issues that the Representative was working on in the current legislative session. She gave us an overview of what the day to day operations of a Chief of Staff are and how they interact with Representatives. We discussed issues such as immigration, homeland security, and the responsibilities of the Finance House Committee.

House Ag Committee – Michael Horder and Matt Schertz

The group then walked over to the Longworth House Office Building to meet in the chambers where committee meetings are held. I had been in that room on a prior trip and was again impressed by the room and it's symbolism for US agriculture. Matt Schertz, Policy Director for the House Ag Committee, gave the group a great overview of the function of the House Ag Committee and how it interacted during the most recent "Farm Bill" debate. He explained that in the most current law, the direct payments have been removed, 30% reductions in overall expenditure over 10 years was achieved, protection for cotton producers was lacking, and that the SNAP portion of the bill was only down 2% vs. the 30% cut that the ag title accepted. He also explained that the actual cost of the ag title was \$80 billion over 10 years, which represents only 0.25% of the US total budget. Other Issues before the Committee were food labeling/GMO, CFTC reauthorization, Grain Standards Act renewal, mandatory price reporting, COOL, and Trade Promotion Authority. Michael Horder, Professional Staff for Representative Conaway, also assisted in the discussion as well.

US Capital Building – Senator John Cornyn from Texas

Our group had the distinct privilege to meet with Senator Cornyn in person at the US Capital. The Senator was gracious enough to meet with us and answer questions and discuss his vision for the future. I had the privilege of introducing the Senator to the group. I was impressed by his resume and didn't have enough time to list all of his accomplishments. The top issues that the Senator discussed with our group was Medicare, Fast Track Authority, Immigration reform, trade with Cuba, the export of natural gas to Europe. The Senator expressed to the group that the three biggest threats to the US in his opinion were Iran, Russia led by Putin and Islamic radicalism. We were impressed with his command of the issues and his willingness to answer all our questions with candor and sincerity. It was truly an honor to get to meet with the distinguished Senator.

Longworth House Office Building – Representative Bill Flores from Texas

We were once again privileged to meet with a great Representative from the great state of Texas. Representative Bill Flores was gracious to meet with us and discuss the issues at hand facing a divided government. Representative Flores serves on the Energy & Commerce Committee and is the Chairman of the Republican Study Committee. The top issues facing the congressmen and women were tax reform, litigation reform, increasing national debt, immigration system, protection of life before birth, and inaction by the Democratically lead Senate in the past. He outlined the Republican solutions for a better tomorrow for the US and expressed his deep concern for mounting national debt and the burden that it is putting on our future generations. The Representative was very direct, open and honest and answered all our questions without hesitation. We all enjoyed our meeting with him and wished him well in his endeavors. I was truly impressed by his sense of purpose and his drive to make positive change in the US government.

“Freedom’s Song” Ford’s Theater – Washington, DC

After the group meet on our own for dinner, we arrived at Ford’s Theater. It is certainly an historic location and this is the 150th anniversary of the killing of President Lincoln. We were all very impressed by the venue and soaked in every minute of the moment. The program used a musical type style to immortalize the words of Lincoln as he led the Union through the Civil War. The talent in the performance was tremendous and the content of the message, President Lincoln’s own words, was tremendous. The event was a great end to the Washington, DC portion of our trip. Everyone had good things to say about this last event. Tomorrow we were off to Maryland.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2015

Bonita Farm – J. William Boniface

It was beautiful day as our bus left DC and heading to the Maryland countryside. Later we arrived at the thoroughbred horse farm owned by Bill Boniface and his family. Bill had a great sense of humor and you could tell he loved thoroughbred horses. He proceeded to give us a tour of his 84 acre facility which included some houses, horse stable and even a regulation horse race track for training new thoroughbreds. We learned that Bonita Farm was home to several very prestigious horses owned by entrepreneurs from all over the world including Dubai and Greece. Bill took us through the breeding process for the horses, and we learned that no artificial insemination is allowed in thoroughbred horses used for racing. We also learned that all the genetics behind all the thoroughbreds are from three horses, and that the first thoroughbred came to America in 1691. Bill shared a little about his past. He started in the business at the age of 14, worked his way up and is now an owner of his own farm. He was also instrumental in introducing women to horse racing. We all really enjoyed our time on this beautiful farm in Maryland.

William Amoss – County Land Preservation Program

William was gracious to be our guide and set up the Maryland portion of the tour. He currently is the Chief of the Agricultural and Historic Preservation for Harford County Government. He went on to explain the concept of preserving rural land for ag use. The State of Maryland was concerned that urban sprawl would consume all the fertile land that has traditionally been used for ag. There are 7 million people within a 1 hour drive of the Bonita Farm. The goal was to preserve 50,000 acres. Maryland is the first state to establish this type of preservation. Easements are purchased via taxes that incentivize the landowner to keep the land for ag use. The real estate premium (over the value of the land as ag use) that could be captured, if the land was developed, is paid to the land owner over a 20 year period. Stipulations are placed on the landowner so that no development is allowed, other than what is necessary for the ag business. A strict application process is followed and not everyone gets approved for this type of land preservation. The program has been very popular, and there is a waiting list to sign up. Easements, in the range of \$4,000 to \$6,000 per acre, are paid to compensate landowners to not develop the land. The area is very productive in corn and soybeans yielding 300 bu/ac on corn, and 100 bu/ac on soybeans. Droughts are rare and annual rainfall is 45 to 50 in/yr.

Holloway Brothers Farm – Richard Holloway and family

We then proceeded to another beautiful farm in the Maryland countryside. We met the Holloway family. We instantly felt at home and had much in common with them. We appreciated their humor and positive attitude. Rick and Jeff are the sons and Karen is the daughter. Rick and Jeff farm with their dad Richard and their uncle Henry. They have approximately 1,000 acres and raise hay, corn, wheat, soybeans and have a cow herd. They also do customer harvesting work for local producers. The local corn market is typically strong due to domestic demand. Karen is the manager of the Mill of Bel Air and oversees operations. They merchandise bagged feed, process their own feed, sell seed, fertilizer and garden plants. The family on the farm and at the Mill has adapted to the changing environment to stay successful. Their property is very near a beautiful river that feeds into the Chesapeake Bay. They told us of the battle that ag people in the state have had with convincing non-ag people that ag is not to blame for the pollution in the Chesapeake Bay. We all very much enjoyed the visit with this great family. We have so much in common in agriculture that we must not let the small differences get in the way of progressing together as a group.

Broom's Bloom Dairy Farm and Store – David and Kate Dallam

Kate Dallas was a great host as she showed us around their dairy farm. We learned about a different way to operate a dairy and how they integrated that into the store they also operate that serves lunch and ice cream. The group enjoyed a great lunch as we sat on the picnic benches outside in the fresh air. Dr. Andy Holloway, Elanco rep, gave us an overview of the dairy business in Maryland. Andy is related to the Holloways we met with early in the day. John Stump, a Farm Credit rep, also discussed in more detail about local agriculture in the area. We all learned quite a bit and enjoyed meeting members of the LEAD group which is very similar to the TALL group in Texas. We then got on the bus and headed to Pennsylvania.

Riehl Farm Tour (Amish) – Sam and Susie Riehl

We arrived in Amish country in southeast Pennsylvania. We were all very impressed with the beauty of the area. Green pastures, rolling hills, and very well kept farmstead as far as the eye could see. We thoroughly enjoyed the chance to meet with the Riehl family on their beautiful farm. Mr. Riehl introduced us to the Amish way of life and how it differs from ours and how it was similar. He was very humble and was willing to answer any questions we had. Their way of life is very interesting and we were impressed with the cleanliness of their operation and how all members of the family were involved. The gift shop which the Riehl family operated was very nice and contained many handmade items from the local Amish people. As we loaded the bus, we had a much better appreciation of another style of life and might have envied it in some ways. Next we headed to New York City... the city that never sleeps....

THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2015

New Fulton Fish Market, Bronx, NY – Victor Sequinot

After a busy and fun night in NYC seeing the sites on our night off, it was a very early morning the next day as we loaded the bus for the New Fulton Fish Market. As we made our way through traffic, we were able to get a different view of NYC and the Bronx. As we arrived at the Fish Market, we were greeted by Victor Sequinot, security director for the market. He gave us a great tour of the Market. The size and scope of the Market was very impressive. Even though we came at the end of the trading day for the Market, it still seemed busy to all of us. The trading begins at midnight and stays really busy until about 4am. Mr. Sequinot told us that \$25 million is sold in fish every day at the market. This is the 2nd largest fish market in the world. All the fish/seafood is trucked in and wholesalers, retailers, chefs, brokers, middlemen and individuals come to buy fresh fish/seafood. The days leading up to Easter weekend are usually the busiest all year. As we walked through the massive facility, we spoke with several of the wholesalers. All were very eager to talk to us and share about their businesses. We all thoroughly enjoyed the visit. It was well worth getting up very early and smelling a little like fish afterwards.... ☺

Mosner Family Brands, Bronx, NY – Benjamin Mosner

Our next stop was Mosner Family Brands meat processor. We met Benjamin Mosner, the Vice President of Sales. His family has been in business since the 1960s. They employ 56 people, cut meat and distribute it to the local market. They also partner with other brands of beef to increase efficiencies on truck freight going in to NYC. Their family started in the veal business and expanded from there into lamb, mutton and beef. They have successfully adapted to the ever changing markets and continue to innovate. They are breaking into the grass-fed and organic markets where it makes sense to compete with the larger meat processors. They are one of the suppliers of Whole Foods. Benjamin gave us an all-access tour of the facility and we truly enjoyed his company and expertise. He truly had a passion for his business and took pride in what he does.

Hunts' Point Produce Market, Bronx, NY – Myra Gordon

Our next stop was the Hunts' Point Producer Market. Once again we were awed by the immensity of the venue and the volume of trade occurring. Ms. Gordon was extremely knowledgeable about the business and impressed us with her professionalism and her sharp wit. She gave us a very thorough tour of the whole facility. The variety of produce, every kind you can image, was tremendous. There were even some fruits and vegetables that I did not recognize. The quality of the all the products was outstanding. We learned that his market is one of the largest in the world and trades \$30 to \$40 million in produce each day! This market hits 65% of NYC and covers 23,000 restaurants. This market also trades in 9% of all the beef sold in the US. None of the produce is repackaged. It is only brought in, store for a short time and sold to buyers. The City of New York owns the building and charges rent to the tenants. There is a staff of 93 on site and also 40 peace officers for security. And less than 1% of the producer that goes through the facility is wasted. The facility covers 113 acres and has 40 different companies as tenants and supplies an area that is 50 miles in radius. Each space that is rented costs approximately \$250,000 per year. Producer is shipped into this market via rail, air, boat, trailer and vans. Needless to say, our group was very impressed with our visit. We will certainly not forget our experience here.

Community Kitchen, Harlem, NY – Sheree Quiles and staff

We had the privilege of visiting a community kitchen in Harlem. It was a new experience for many of us. Ms. Quiles was a very gracious host. She was very passionate about her role in helping to feed the needy in the local community. She went on to give us an overview of the size and scope of the operation. They serve or distribute 90,000 meals per month at the facility. They cook hot meals each day and also provide basic foods for the local community to pick up so they can go back home and cook good meals for their families. She also informed us that there are 1,000 of these locations in the five borough area. This location has 11 full time employees and 300 volunteers. They all seemed very dedicated to their jobs and had a true passion for helping the needy. At the end of the tour we were treated to a very good meal that was prepared by the local staff. We were impressed with the quality and great taste of the meal. As we left, we thanked Ms. Quiles for the tour and for her dedicated service to her community. It was truly an eye opening experience and opened up our worlds just a little bit more.

Farm Credit Bank – Susan Bilotta, Vice President, Federal Farm Credit Banks Funding Corporation

We had the privilege of meeting in a very nice office in downtown Manhattan and were able to meet Ms. Bilotta. She was very gracious to give of her valuable time to explain the Farm Credit Bank system and the positive impact it has on rural America and beyond. We learned that the Farm Credit system through various organizations provided 42% of all the ag lending in the U.S. The organization is regulated by the F.C.A and reports to Congress on its activities. The state of the Farm Credit System is very positive and strong with a very diverse portfolio. California and Texas as the states with the largest concentration of ag loans via the Farm Credit System. It was a very informative session and I learned quite a bit from her presentation.

“Three Decades of Commodity Market Evolution” – Sal Gilbertie

The next guest speaker we had was a very well know commodity trader by the name of Sal Gilbertie. He is the President and CIO and co-founder of Teucrium Trading, LLC. Mr. Gilbertie gave the group a great overview of commodity trading over the last 30 years and how it has changed tremendously. We learned that 92 million barrels of crude oil are used every day around the world and how that affects many aspects of the trading world. Deregulation of the oil and gas industries in the 1980's changed the nature of trading. Also the rise of investment groups putting commodities in their portfolios has greatly increased the interest in commodity trading. Goldman Sachs is a major player in this market. But in the early 2000's, as the economy harshly corrected, margin calls became steep, and some traders could not stay “in the game”. More regulations have been put on the trading of commodities as electronic trading via very sophisticated computers put some at a disadvantage. A more level playing field was established to avoid market crashes. Mr. Gilbertie was very interesting to listen to and certainly has had the pulse of the commodity trading business for a very long time. We all greatly enjoyed his presentation.

FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 2015

DeBuck Sod Farm (Pine Island, NY) – Leonard DeBuck

As we the group boarded the bus for another adventure, we had the pleasure to meet Mr. Larry Van De Valk, who is the Executive Director of LEAD New York. This group is very similar to our group and Mr. Van De Valk gave a great overview of New York ag as we rode on the bus to Pine Island, NY. The scenery on the trip to the farm was great and something I had never seen before. After about an hour and a half bus ride, we arrived at the farm and immediately were impressed with the quality of soil and the abundance of water for the crop. We learned that this area receives 45 to 50 inches of rain each year. The quality of the sod growing was world class. I'm sure many of us would have taken off our shoes to walk in the grass barefoot if it hadn't been for the 40 degree temps! We had the privilege of seeing a state of the art sod harvesting and stacking machine that the farm uses. They cut the sod the same day as the shipment and the timing of getting the sod laid down at destination is very critical. The top soil on this farm can be as thick as 12 feet! The DeBuck's seem to have a great business and a very unique situation in that valley in which they live. We greatly enjoyed the tour and hospitality.

Ruszkiewicz Onion Farm – Pine Island, NY

We then proceeded to travel a small distance to the onion farm owned and operated by the Ruszkiewicz family. That farm had been in the family at least 3 generations and was very interesting. They raise mainly yellow onions and explained the process of growing, harvesting and marketing the onions. The onion business certainly has its challenges such as plant disease, harvesting delays and possibly lack of demand when crops are large. The family in the past had raised cabbage and celery, but disease and pests and lack of labor has made it very difficult to raise those crops on their farm. We also learned that Mr. Ruszkiewicz is very involved in the local historical society and is trying very hard to maintain the heritage of the local community. We greatly enjoyed the tour and learned a great deal about production ag in up-state NY.

Cheryl Rogowski Farm

We then proceeded to another farm not too far away that specializes in organic agriculture, as well as all-natural agriculture. Ms. Rogowski is very well known in her field and has received some very distinguished awards. She has been able to involve the local community in the operation of the farm and cooperates with her buyers to raise the crops that they prefer. She also runs a store and sells all-natural products. She and her staff were very gracious hosts and treated us to a great meal of traditional Polish food. While we ate, we had the chance to meet Phil Giltner, Deputy Commissioner of the New York State Dept. of Ag. He was a very interesting speaker with a diverse background who certainly had a passion for ag in the State of NY. We learned that NY State produces \$5 billion in ag sales each year (most of which is dairy) and is #2 in the U.S. for nursery products. The average dairy herd is 100 cows and 99.9% of the dairies are family owned. The beverage craft industry is becoming popular as well as the wine industry in NY.

Martin Nop Dairy – Montgomery, NY

As our tour continued on, we had the honor to meet a great dairy family in Montgomery, NY. The Nop family had been operating this dairy for at least 2 generations and seem truly dedicated to the land, the cows and the local community. Mr. Nop and his two sons and families have a strong passion for the area and were proud to show us their business. They explained the joys and struggles of life on a dairy farm in up-state NY. Our time with the Nop family went by very quickly. We all seemed to quite a bit in common with these people, and it was great to see families of such character and commitment.

Crist Orchards – Jenny Crist

The final stop on our tour in up-state NY was Crist Orchards. We had the pleasure to meet the very intelligent and inspiring Jenny Crist, part owner of the farm. She, along with her other siblings and parents operate this very successful and automated apple farm. We had the privilege of seeing the much automated system the use for cleaning, shipping and packing the ripe apples. We were all very impressed with the sophistication and ability to control quality from start to finish. As we toured the apple storage barns, it was very apparent that this family had great pride in their farm and wanted to provide an excellent product to the marketplace. They had invested considerable money into new infrastructure as well as staying in tune with customer's desires in regards to apple types and quality. Their ability to change with changes in the industry has allowed them to be nimble and successful. We all enjoyed getting to meet a rising star in the apple business and her positive attitude and passion for the family business was inspiring.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24, 2015

Depart for home.....

Take away/Recap:

Another great session of TALL XIV! Although our group has already had some great trips thus far in our TALL experience, this trip exceeded all the others. The exposure to the agriculture in the Northeast was tremendous. Gaining access to some of the power players in Washington D.C. was awesome and quite an honor. This trip was a great mix of policy, hands on experience and some great social time. Our group was able to get to know each other more and continue to build on friendships. The social times together on the bus, in NYC and DC were tremendous opportunities to bond even more as a group and learn from each other. I am once again reminded of the generosity of so many sponsors that make this program possible. And the staff at TALL has been tremendous. Dr. Mazurkiewicz is a great asset to AgriLife, and I enjoy each time I get to learn from him. I look forward to meeting again with my classmates in July 2015 in Houston, TX as we continue on this journey to learn more about ourselves, others and the great business of agriculture that we all call home.