



July 12-14, 2012
Des Moines, Iowa

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 9, 2012

Contact:
State Representative Helen Miller: 515.650.3320 / rellimgroup@gmail.com
Heather Strachan: 515.890.1030 / hestrachan@gmail.com -- for press details and program

First National Urban Ag Academy convenes in Des Moines:
State Representative Helen Miller brings new voices to agriculture

DES MOINES, IA--Iowa State Representative Helen Miller (D-Ft. Dodge), Ranking Member of the Iowa House Agriculture Committee, will convene a national conference of state legislators Thursday, July 12 through Saturday July 14 at the Renaissance Savery Hotel in Des Moines, Iowa. The goal of the conference is to address the widening gap between rural and urban districts in America and identify common issues.

More than 30 legislators from 11 states and the Virgin Islands will hear from national, state and local experts on a broad range of topics related to agriculture. These legislators will have an opportunity to interact, ask questions, and engage in seeking solutions to the many agricultural concerns and issues.

The Academy's curriculum leads off with world-class educators from Iowa State University along with national, state and local leaders, including Congressman Leonard Boswell (D-Iowa 3rd District), State Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey, and Ambassador Kenneth Quinn, President of the World Food Prize Foundation. Rounding out the curriculum are presentations from producer and farm groups, experts on agricultural education and tourism, updates on ethanol and the 2012 Farm Bill, and a five-member panel of African American farmers.

Informing and encouraging diverse new voices for agricultural and rural issues will enable all legislators to become fully informed and better able to help grow the agricultural economy. Agriculture has played a major role in mitigating the recent economic downturn, illustrating that it is more important than ever to develop understanding, appreciation and involvement on the part of policy makers.

The Urban Ag Academy purpose is to educate policy makers, especially state legislators, about agriculture and rural issues, in order to engage them in efforts to move their states forward in this arena.

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P.O. Box 371, Fort Dodge, IA 50501
515.650.3320 • rellimgroup@gmail.com