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RLND Class VI Update
National Trends in Agriculture and Rural Issues
Seminar 4 by **Mara Solberg and Stacey Lilja**

March, 2014

A wide array of topics, sightseeing, good food and memorable conversations took place in Washington, D.C. for RLND Class VI March 3-8, 2014.

We hit the ground running on Tuesday morning with a meeting at the USDA. We listened to speakers discuss the new Farm Bill, water management, and Ghana where we will be travelling for our international seminar in February 2015. Kathryn Hill served as our guide and she showed us the press room where Secretary Vilsack holds his press conferences. After eating lunch in the USDA dining room, we broke into smaller groups and headed to our professional development appointments.

The groups visited with National Cattlemen Beef Association, DC Central Kitchen, US Grains Council, National Corn Growers Association, National Farmers Union, and Manufacturing Extension Partnership. Tuesday evening we dined at Carmine's and had the pleasure of listening to our speaker Jim Callan of James Callan Associates LLC. He is a consultant in the Washington area who lobbies for a variety of groups including the North Dakota Corn Growers Association. Jim spoke on how he and the group he was working with was able to include a sentence in the current Farm Bill.

Wednesday morning the group went to the Hart office building to meet with Senator Heidi Heitkamp. We introduced ourselves and explained what we hoped to take from our experience in the Rural Leadership program. After our meeting, we walked to the Russell building to meet with Senator John Hoeven. Two of the staffers from Senator Hoeven's office gave the group a tour of the Capitol. Wednesday evening RLND hosted a social for the staffers from all the offices of the North Dakota Congressional



RLND visits Senator Heitkamp

delegation. The sponsor for the event was Dan Lund and Jim Lund of Quality Seed Genetics LLC located in Alice, ND.

We began Thursday with a meeting at the Environmental Protection Agency. A variety of topics were discussed including Renewable Fuels Standard and Waters of the United States. After lunch, we met with the National League of Cities. We ended the day with a Monuments by Moonlight trolley tour.

The government representatives we met at the various meetings were open and willing to answer our questions and share information on their topics of expertise.



Gettysburg

On Friday, we boarded the bus to make the trek to Gettysburg. When we arrived, we attended a movie about the history of the battle at Gettysburg along with a cyclorama which left an impression on the viewer. Afterwards, we boarded back on the bus and our tour guide walked us through each day of the three day battle to help us understand the decisions that were made by the leaders. To cap our day in Gettysburg, we visited President Dwight D. Eisenhower's farm.

To spend a week in Washington D.C. and cover the ground we did as a group would be next to impossible under most circumstances. The trip provided opportunities to practice our emotional intelligence as well as business etiquette which made our group more cohesive and workable.

Taking everything into account, the trip gave us a broad picture of how our government operates and that North Dakota is on the radar of many agencies.