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Twelve Graduate from Ohio AgriBusiness Association's LAUNCH Program
Program Prepares Future Agribusiness Leaders

COLUMBUS, Ohio (March 10, 2026) – Twelve Ohio agribusiness leaders were recognized as the latest graduates of Ohio AgriBusiness Association's Leaders Achieving Unexpected New Career Heights (LAUNCH) program.

Hosted by the Ohio AgriBusiness Association, in partnership with Shift-ology Communication, the LAUNCH program is geared to help Ohio agribusinesses Elevate People, Elevate Ideas and Elevate the Industry. Participants were identified by their companies as emerging agribusiness leaders: individuals with a desire to meet higher level goals than the scope of their current positions, who seek to rise within their companies.

The twelve OABA member graduates who successfully completed the 2026 LAUNCH program include:

- Melanie Blankenship, Eurofins Grain Inspection
- Gayle Chambers, Morral Companies, LLC
- Alex Daniel, Luckey Farmers, Inc
- Ryan Emery, Nutrien Ag Solutions
- Connor Erwin, KOVA of Ohio
- Carson Flynn, Deerfield Ag Services, Inc.
- Clayton Farquer, Nutrien Ag Solutions
- Geoff Galida, Deerfield Ag Services, Inc.
- Mara Schmid, Shift-ology Communication
- Allie Solly, Luckey Farmers, Inc
- Matt Simmons, Versova
- Cody Wright, Global Impact STEM Academy

“OABA is committed to developing the next generation of leaders who will shape Ohio's agribusiness future,” said Melinda Witten, OABA President & CEO. “Through the LAUNCH program, participants gain essential skills, industry knowledge, and the confidence to advance their careers. We're proud to support their growth and excited to watch the contributions they will make to our industry.”

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LAUNCH is a transitional training, empowering employees to meet higher level goals, going beyond the scope of their current position. Agribusinesses continually compete with all industries to recruit and retain the best talent, but there is also a need to invest in those who are already passionate about agriculture and their organizations.

The program covers a wide range of topics, including personal insight and advanced leadership skills, strategic planning, critical thinking, change management, goal setting, communication and presentation skills, global issues in agriculture, sales and marketing principles, regional agribusiness trends, and state and local government.

More than 20 different speakers provided their insight through multiple interactive sessions including Annie Gallagher of Gallagher Consulting Group, Evan Hahn and Heather Vidourek of Farm Credit Mid-America, Lisa Woodke of Star of the West, Matt Lis of Crestcom International, Darryl Grayson of DLMG Training Associates, Kyle McCalla of People First Consulting and Amy Zimmerman-Dunham of Vital Fitness.

A signature component of the experience is the personalized capstone project, in which participants select a strategic initiative to implement within their organization. The program also offers valuable networking opportunities, allowing participants to connect, share ideas and build relationships with peers and industry leaders. Participants also toured local agricultural business and OABA member, Cargill.

For additional information on OABA or the LAUNCH Program, contact Janice Welsheimer at 614-326-7520 or jwelsheimer@oaba.net.

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About OABA

The Ohio AgriBusiness Association is the leading advocate for Ohio agribusiness by creating a sustainable business climate through collaborative policy leadership, continuous education and effective communication. OABA is a membership-based state trade association which includes the manufacturers and wholesale/retail suppliers of plant nutrient and protection materials, the grain warehousing and marketing industry, the feed and seed industry, as well as companies providing equipment, financing, insurance, consulting, and other products and services for the agribusiness industry. OABA is also the administrator of the Ohio Certified Crop Adviser Program, 4R Nutrient Stewardship Certification Program and Ohio Agricultural Council. For more information, visit oaba.net.

PHOTO CUTLINE: Graduates of Ohio AgriBusiness Association's 2026 LAUNCH leadership program include (L to R) – *Back row*: Geoff Galida, Deerfield Ag Services, Inc.; Carson Flynn, Deerfield Ag Services, Inc.; Clayton Farquer, Nutrien Ag Solutions; Matt Simmons, Versova; Ryan Emery, Nutrien Ag Solutions. *Middle row*: Connor Erwin, KOVA of Ohio; Gayle Chambers, Morral Companies, LLC; Cody Wright, Global Impact STEM Academy; Melinda Witten, OABA CEO & President. *Front row*: Allie Solly, Luckey Farmers, Inc; Mara Schmid, Shift-ology Communication; Melanie Blankenship, Eurofins Grain Inspection; Alex Daniel, Luckey Farmers, Inc.