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## **Land O'Lakes, Inc. Selects 11 College Students for Fellowship to Address Global Hunger**

*They're tasked with discovering solutions and engaging peers in fellowship's third year*

ARDEN HILLS, MINN. (Dec. 8 2016) – Land O'Lakes, Inc. today introduced its 2016-2017 emerging leaders as part of the cooperative's efforts to find sustainable, practical and achievable solutions to world hunger.

The 11 leaders, all of whom are college sophomores from six universities, were selected for the third year of the Global Food Challenge Emerging Leaders for Food Security™ Program and will be partnered with university professors and with mentors from Land O'Lakes, Inc. to develop plans to fight global hunger. The emerging leaders come from rural and city backgrounds and are pursuing degrees in fields from biotechnology to entrepreneurship to Spanish to international studies.

"Ag is the greatest growth industry of our generation and presents many dynamic career opportunities. We need people from different backgrounds to make a difference in feeding the growing global population," said Lydia Botham, vice president, Community Relations and the Land O'Lakes Foundation.

With the world's population expected to rise to more than 9.7 billion people by 2050, the agriculture industry's next generation of leaders must come from diverse disciplines and backgrounds to develop sustainable solutions to increase food production by 70 percent.

Land O'Lakes, Inc. created the Global Food Challenge Emerging Leaders for Food Security™ fellowship in 2014 to engage future leaders in the challenges and opportunities facing agriculture in the coming decades. For the program's third year, the 2016-2017 Emerging Leaders for Food Security are: Audrey Sebastian (Eden Prairie, Minnesota), Katie Atkins (Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota), Rachel Anderson (Ferryville, Wisconsin) and Peri Warren (Minneapolis, Minnesota) attending the University of Minnesota; Erica Timmons (Lebanon, Indiana) and Margaret Hegwood (South Windsor, Connecticut) attending Purdue University; Travis Troendle (Lanesboro, Minnesota) and Peyton Russell (Long Grove, Illinois), attending Iowa State University; Alexander Fried (Scranton, Pennsylvania), attending The George Washington University; and Deanna Zernicke (Bonduel, Wisconsin) and Jessica Wendt (Stoughton, Wisconsin), attending the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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Throughout the academic year, Emerging Leaders work closely with their university professors and Land O'Lakes employees serving as mentors to develop a project that addresses solutions for food insecurity. They're also tasked with engaging with their campus peers on the topic through social media. The experience includes a summer internship spent at key Land O'Lakes, Inc. locations, including headquarters in Minnesota, a Land O'Lakes, Inc. dairy member farm and member agriculture cooperatives. The students will also visit with policymakers and agricultural experts in Washington, D.C. and with smallholder farmers in Africa. They will address issues such as sustainability, global supply chains, ensuring broader access to new markets in agriculture and empowering change in communities here, near and far.

"The program was a once-in-a-lifetime experience," said Abby Adair, a 2015 alumna and business student from Purdue University. "I realized how important farmers' work is and that I need to be telling the story of agriculture."

Land O'Lakes, Inc. is committed to improving food security at home and across the globe, helping farmers grow more food in increasingly sustainable and productive ways. Through growing commercial businesses, Land O'Lakes, Inc. helps feed human progress from farm to fork. The company fights hunger, supports education and strengthens communities in the U.S. through the Land O'Lakes Foundation in surrounding areas where employees and members live and work. In 2015, the foundation gave \$11 million through financial and product donations to a variety of nonprofit organizations, educational institutions and community initiatives.

Since 1981, Land O'Lakes International Development has been assisting farmers in developing countries improve the quality and quantity of what they produce and linking them to viable markets. Through this work, International Development staff has implemented 280 programs in 80 countries, engaging in agricultural and enterprise partnerships that replace poverty with prosperity and dependency with self-reliance.

Learn more about the Global Food Challenge and join the conversation at <http://foodchallenge.landolakesinc.com>.

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## **About Land O'Lakes, Inc.**

*Land O'Lakes, Inc., one of America's premier agribusiness and food companies, is a member-owned cooperative with industry-leading operations that span the spectrum from agricultural production to consumer foods. With 2015 annual sales of \$13 billion, Land O'Lakes is one of the nation's largest cooperatives, ranking 215 on the Fortune 500. Building on a legacy of more than 95 years of operation, Land O'Lakes today operates some of the most respected brands in agribusiness and food production including LAND O LAKES® Dairy Foods, Purina Animal Nutrition and WinField United. The company does business in all 50 states and more than 60 countries. Land O'Lakes, Inc. corporate headquarters are located in Arden Hills, Minn.*