

Emery County farmer receives ‘Discussion Meet Award’ at 2006 Utah Farm Bureau Convention

December 5, 2006 – Castle Dale, Utah – Mark Seely of Castle Dale was chosen as the winner of the Utah Farm Bureau “Discussion Meet” at the 2006 Utah Farm Bureau Convention held last month in Salt Lake City.

“This discussion meet is an important activity that helps young farmers and ranchers learn to explain important agricultural issues based on their merits, not by using inflammatory language that is often found in current political debates,” said Jay Mark Humphrey, President of the Emery County Farm Bureau. “We’re very proud of Mark and the way he put into plain words the important issues facing agriculture in Utah.”

Mark’s arguments and examples were chosen to be the most effective and best presented from a group of four participants in the final round of the discussion meet. Three earlier rounds of the State “Discussion Meet” were held earlier last week at the start of the Utah Farm Bureau Convention. Prior to competing at the state level, Seely debated the issues at the Emery County “Discussion Meet” and won that event.

The competition is held among Farm Bureau members under the age of 35, with the intent of training young farmers and ranchers with leadership and debate skills in the important agricultural issues of the day. Seely and others addressed the issue of how individuals can properly influence policy that affects agriculture in a setting of partisan politics during the final round of the competition.

Other topics that were discussed included increasing market opportunities for agriculture, urban sprawl and land values, and a potential national animal identification system.

“With more and more Utahns not having direct contact with agriculture, it’s nice to have a young farmer that can intelligently debate issues, explaining to other Utahns why agriculture is so important here,” Humphrey said.

“Discussion Meet” winners from each state Farm Bureau will compete at the national level in the American Farm Bureau Convention, held in January. The convention will be hosted by Salt Lake City this year, for the first time ever. Winners of the national award will receive a 2007 Dodge Truck. For their Utah Farm Bureau award, Mark received a 2007 Polaris ATV, a \$500 check from Dodge and a year’s insurance policy from Farm Bureau Financial Services for the ATV.

About the Utah Farm Bureau

The Utah Farm Bureau is the largest general farm and ranch organization in the state with more than 21,000 member families. Its mission is to improve the net income of the state’s farmers and ranchers and the overall quality of life in the state and nation through political action, educational and informational means. The Farm Bureau is a non-partisan, voluntary organization, and its efforts are based on grassroots policies developed by

members at the local, county, state and national levels. It is affiliated with the American Farm Bureau Federation, the world's largest general farm organization, with more than 5 million family members in 50 states and Puerto Rico. For more information, go to the Utah Farm Bureau Web site at <http://utfb.fb.org>.

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