



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Farmland Foods Brings Smithfield Foods' Learners to Leaders™ Alliance to Denison to Provide Educational Opportunities for Youth**

*Smithfield commits \$296,000 for community educational partnership to help disadvantaged youth prepare for science-related college degrees*

DENISON, Iowa (April 24, 2007) – Smithfield Foods, through its independent local operating company Farmland Foods, along with the Denison Community School District and Iowa State University, today launched a five-year partnership that will help prepare 60 to 75 disadvantaged eighth grade and high school students for college.

Smithfield Foods is underwriting the estimated \$296,000 cost of the program, which will run from October 2007 through May 2012.

The community educational partnership will be driven by Learners to Leaders™, a national educational alliance funded by Smithfield Foods and made up of Smithfield's independent operating companies and local educational partners. The alliance will feature Iowa State's Science Bound program, which has developed a national reputation for increasing the number of diverse students who go to college to pursue science, technology, engineering and mathematics degrees.

“The goal of the Learners to Leaders alliance is to help reinforce what we believe is the most critical part of any community's foundation, the education of its residents,” said C. Larry Pope, president and chief executive officer at Smithfield Foods. “We have always been firm believers in giving back to our communities, and we can think of no better way than to bring educational opportunities to disadvantaged youth in Denison to help them achieve their dreams.”

Todd Gerken, local Learners to Leaders liaison and vice president of fresh pork operations for Farmland Foods in Denison, pointed out, “The Smithfield Foods Learners to Leaders alliance is an invaluable tool for helping our young people fulfill their potential through a postsecondary education. And by utilizing Iowa State’s Science Bound program, we will have the necessary resources to motivate and prepare disadvantaged students to go to college and pursue the technical careers our country needs to compete on a global scale.”

“This is a wonderful opportunity for our students to gain valuable insights into what it takes to succeed in college, and we applaud the contributions of Smithfield Foods, Farmland Foods and Iowa State,” said Mike Pardun, superintendent of the Denison Community School District.

Learners to Leaders and Science Bound are selecting Denison students from eighth through 12th grade from disadvantaged backgrounds who have the potential to succeed in college. They include students who are part of ethnic groups that are considered underrepresented in the sciences.

Beginning in October 2007, 10 to 15 eighth grade students will be the first to participate in the Learners to Leaders program. Each year an additional class will be added to the program and eventually 60 to 75 eighth through 12th graders will take part.

“We’re excited to partner with Learners to Leaders in Denison and to have the opportunity to help students realize their potential and capacity to achieve academic excellence,” said Connie Hargrave, Science Bound program director at Iowa State University.

“Science Bound’s goal is to increase the number of diverse young people who pursue and earn science-related college degrees. Empowering and informing students and their parents about the necessary elements of preparing for and obtaining a college education are essential to meeting this goal,” Hargrave said.

According to Hargrave, “The alliance between Science Bound and Learners to Leaders is an excellent example of the kind of productive partnerships involving businesses, universities and public schools needed to attract, prepare and enable students to excel in technical fields. Given the challenges faced by school systems, programs such as this are absolutely critical if we are to maintain our international economic competitiveness.”

In addition to enabling students and parents, Science Bound supports teachers and provides resources as they set high expectations for students; provides students with

rigorous course expectations and academic support; and exposes students to science and technology experiences with professional scientists, engineers and technologists.

“Learners to Leaders and Science Bound make a great team because of the combined impact they will have on local Denison businesses,” said Dennis Treacy, vice president of environmental and corporate affairs at Smithfield Foods. “Businesses are always looking for a fresh talent pool from which to draw, and we certainly expect that these young people eventually will have the skills and training to step right in and contribute to the community’s economic well-being and quality of life.”

He added, “Our ultimate goal is to bring Learners to Leaders to as many communities as possible where our employees live and work.”

The Denison program is the third Learners to Leaders project in the country. Additional programs have launched in South Dakota and Wisconsin. Smithfield Foods plans to launch similar educational partnerships in communities across the nation and in Europe.

Farmland Foods, founded in 1959, is a subsidiary of Smithfield Foods, Inc., of Smithfield, Va. Farmland is headquartered in Kansas City, Mo., and has about 6,300 employees at its operations in Crete, Neb.; Denison and Carroll, Iowa; Monmouth, Ill.; Wichita, Kan.; New Riegel, Ohio; Salt Lake City, Utah; and Springfield, Mass. Farmland processes fresh and frozen pork products for national retail and foodservice markets, with a strong concentration in the Midwest. Farmland serves an international commodity, foodservice and retail market in Asia, Central America and Eastern Europe.

Smithfield Foods has delivered a 24 percent average annual compounded rate of return to investors since 1975. With sales of \$11 billion, Smithfield is the leading processor and marketer of fresh pork and processed meats in the United States, as well as the largest producer of hogs. For more information, visit [www.smithfieldfoods.com](http://www.smithfieldfoods.com).

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Note to editors: Photos available upon request. Please contact Margie Albrecht at 262-352-2472.