



Kip TOM

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On the RECORD

Northern Indiana farmer, entrepreneur and former National FFA Foundation trustee Kip Tom has been nominated to be the new U.S. Ambassador to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome, Italy. He credits FFA with teaching him many life lessons that he can use on the world stage.

Q: HOW DID YOU FIRST ENCOUNTER FFA?

A: I grew up on a small farm in northern Indiana near Leesburg. My parents, Everett and Marie, raised five kids on 120 acres. We learned the value of working hard and taking care of each other, including our neighbors.

When my siblings and I got into high school, we knew we would be a part of FFA because we would learn the professional skills needed in life. Be it *Robert's Rules of Order*, public speaking or various project skills, they are all things that a person uses just about every day.

Q: WHAT OTHER BIG LESSONS DID YOU LEARN IN FFA?

A: It taught us competitiveness in a spirited way that involves respect for everyone. We learned to strive for continuous improvement in everything we do. And we learned to help others improve, too.

Q: WOULD YOU CONTINUE TO USE THOSE LESSONS AS AMBASSADOR?

A: Absolutely. I often remember and think about the FFA Creed and what it says about growing and serving others. I will use all of that when I'm in Rome.

Q: WHAT ARE KEY ISSUES THAT WOULD BE ON YOUR AGENDA AS AMBASSADOR?

A: I will work with leaders from around the world at promoting initiatives to drive peace, security, agricultural development and accountability. I feel a great responsibility to make sure that the billions of dollars of U.S. taxpayer money that we invest in food and agriculture initiatives are well focused at driving peace and security in an accountable manner.

Q: WHAT ADVICE DO YOU GIVE TODAY'S FFA MEMBERS?

A: Get involved and learn all you can. The lessons will be applicable to you for the rest of your life. Wherever I go, be it in my local area or the halls of Congress in Washington, D.C., I meet so many people who, like me, have a background in FFA and use the lessons they learned every day. Those few years of high school and how you apply yourself there can make all the difference in your success for the rest of your life.

— By Gene Johnston