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## Executive Leadership Incubator Alums Rise to the C-Suite



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— **DAN WAGNER**

PRESIDENT & CEO, FARM  
CREDIT MID-AMERICA

Reaching the top seat in any organization takes immense commitment, strong leadership skills and broad business knowledge, and two recently promoted Farm Credit CEOs credit their success in part to the FCCS Executive Leadership Incubator (ELI).

ELI is a dynamic peer networking and leadership group for high-potential professionals, primarily those who aspire to achieve the CEO position or excel in other C-suite roles.

"Everyone in the group is a thought leader in their own organization, and sharing our perspectives helps us all think differently and more strategically," says Dan Wagner, president and CEO of Farm Credit Mid-America since December 2021, and an ELI member since its inception until his promotion. "We also represent different business functions, so our shared experiences give each member a broader perspective of the challenges faced across an entire organization."

Formed six years ago, ELI meets twice annually for an integrated session including collaborative problem solving of two real organizational issues presented by individual ELI members in turn, as well as a slate of high-impact speakers on topics selected by the group. Combined with ample networking time, the format is designed to develop strategic thinking across business functions, all of which, of course, a future CEO will need to lead.

"Participating in ELI helped me lay out a vision for how I want lead this organization, develop an executive team and run daily operations," says Travis Jones, who was named CEO of Greenstone Farm Credit Services in June 2022 and was a member of ELI since 2019. "I also had the confidence to lay this vision out to the board, and ultimately be selected."

ELI was created as a direct result of FCCS' executive succession work in response to a need expressed by current CEOs.

"Multiple Farm Credit CEOs told us they had great people who were really smart and really knew the business, but they wanted something new and enhanced for their growth and development," says Jay Lux, FCCS's Vice President of Organizational Development and ELI facilitator. "After hearing this a number of times, we designed a template model and presented it to the CEOs, who committed to the program."

In its six years, seven ELI members have been promoted to CEO. Once they achieve that position, they leave the group and can recommend another high-potential leader from their organization to join; Dan has nominated two individuals, both, he says, with the potential to succeed him. In 2018, FCCS launched an ELI for ag co-op leaders to run alongside the Farm Credit group.

For more information on the Executive Leadership Incubator, including to nominate a leader from your organization, contact Jay Lux at 651.982.4568 or via email at [jay.lux@fccsconsulting.com](mailto:jay.lux@fccsconsulting.com).



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CEO, GREENSTONE  
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