

Georgetown Native Ryan Quarles Sworn in as Kentucky's Commissioner of Agriculture

FRANKFORT, Ky. – Agriculture Commissioner Ryan Quarles pledged to run an efficient, transparent Kentucky Department of Agriculture that advocates for Kentucky's agriculture industry as he and other state constitutional officers were sworn into office today in the Capitol Rotunda.

"Being the commissioner of agriculture for Kentucky has been a dream of mine since I was a child, and it is a great honor and privilege to serve as your next commissioner," he said. "Having grown up on a farm, I personally know the challenges and struggles that we will face as a community in the coming years. As your commissioner, I am committed to facing these challenges head-on and running a department of agriculture that will make all Kentuckians proud."

Quarles was elected agriculture commissioner in November. Prior to assuming the agriculture commissioner post, he served three terms as a state representative from his home town of Georgetown. At 32, Quarles is the youngest statewide elected official in the nation. Quarles succeeds James Comer of Tompkinsville, who served from January 2012 to December 2015.

Quarles, the son of Roger and Bonnie Quarles, grew up farming in Scott County and comes from a family that has farmed in central Kentucky for more than 200 years. He was an active member of 4-H and FFA youth programs and won the state tractor driving contest while in high school. He graduated from the University of Kentucky in 2006 with undergraduate degrees in political science, agricultural economics, and public service, and two master's degrees in diplomacy and international commerce. He earned a master's degree in higher education from Harvard University in 2009 while also attending Harvard Law School and the Kennedy School of Government. He completed work toward his law degree at UK.

As Kentucky agriculture commissioner, Quarles serves as chairman of the Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corporation and vice chairman of the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board. He serves on the Kentucky State Fair Board and numerous other boards and commissions.

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) is a consumer protection and service agency that affects the lives of all Kentuckians every day. KDA administers Kentucky Proud, the state's nationally recognized official farm marketing program. The Division of Animal Health, located in the Office of the State Veterinarian, works to protect Kentucky livestock from foreign animal disease and eradicate disease outbreaks. The KDA also oversees industrial hemp pilot projects in the Commonwealth. Through the Division of Regulation and Inspection, KDA staff checks price scanners and motor fuel pumps for accuracy; tests motor fuel for quality and octane; inspects amusement rides; checks scales used in commerce; conducts random inspection of eggs; and manages the Teen and Tobacco Program. KDA's Division of Environmental Services regulates the pesticide industry in Kentucky, and the Division of Food Distribution administers the federal government's food distribution programs in Kentucky.

Article written by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture.



Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner Ryan F. Quarles, right, is sworn into office by state Chief Justice John D. Minton Jr. on Monday in the Capitol Rotunda in Frankfort. (Kentucky Department of Agriculture photo)

Reading Comprehension Questions:

- 1) Who was named the new Agriculture Commissioner for the Commonwealth of Kentucky?

- 2) What is the role of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture?

- 3) Whom did Commissioner Quarles replace?

- 4) Where is Commissioner Quarles from?

- 5) What is one fact you thought was interesting about Commissioner Quarles?

