Agribusiness Students Learn about their Connection to Science
By: Dr. Victoria Salin

“We all have a connection to science,” said Dr. Robb Fraley in remarks on the Texas A&M University campus on Thursday, April 28, 2016. Texas A&M Agribusiness students who attended his talk were impressed by the opportunities that have opened up due to crop biotech. Priya said, “I learned that cheese-making enzymes were one of the first commercial applications of recombinant DNA science. As a food scientist myself, it’s fascinating to see that application.”

Yucheng Xie explained, “The vast change in food from its natural state to the present was interesting to me. Society has done so much to allow people to feed themselves, with conventional breeding and GMO. The responsibility to grow more food for the future is a great challenge for us, who want a career in the food industry.”

“Dr. Fraley had insights on the economics of biotechnology,” said Victoria Salin, professor and director of the MAB program. “He explained that the industry is far along the average cost curve in the production of biotechnology. A data point for a genetic trait can be evaluated for less than a penny. Robotics in research labs and advanced computing for data analysis play key roles in cost efficiency of science in agriculture.”

Strategic Planning for Santa Gertrudis Breeders International
By: Allyson Fuller

A group of MAB students and Dr. Victoria Salin consulted with the Santa Gertrudis Breeders International (SGBI) as it formulated its five-year plan. The MAB students included Marcelo Coehlo de Lima, Mfon Paul, Reed Singletary, and Kendall Lemm. Dr. Salin presented the report and its findings to members of SGBI in early April. The report serves as a background document on the opportunities and issues facing the stakeholders of Santa Gertrudis Breeders International. Dr. Salin and the MAB students identified the strengths of the organization and the challenges facing the organization given market trends in the beef cattle industry. After identifying SGBI’s strengths and weaknesses, they offered six options for the SGBI stakeholders to consider.

At the conclusion of the report, a Summary Financial Plan outlined the expected requirements of personnel time, cash, and other resources needed to implement the various options, should the Board decide to proceed.

Arjun Shanker, MAB 2016 with Dr. Robb Fraley, Chief Technology Officer of Monsanto Co.

Dr. Victoria Salin visited Albuquerque, New Mexico to present the report to SGBI stakeholders.
MAB Students visit the Rio Grande Valley Citrus Production Area
By: Iker Haucuja Goya and Chieh Ting Chu

On January 29th, the MAB students had the great opportunity to tour the Wonderful Citrus company in the Rio Grande Valley area. This was an enlightening visit to experience the process some citrus fruits undergo before arriving to supermarket displays. The tour started with general introductions in which Aggies currently working in the company gave the MAB students a warm welcome. The group was led by experts in every process throughout the day. The experts eagerly answered any questions our students had. The students learned about each step in grapefruit sales process, from breeding to packaging. Wonderful Citrus shared the process grapefruits undergo before hitting the market, starting out by the nursery and farming of their own citrus trees and later stages as the receiving, sorting and packaging of the final goods. Most of the students were amazed by the amount of time and work it takes to have a tray of ready-to-ship grapefruits, given the quality this company provides to its customers.

After the tour, the group enjoyed lunch from a local BBQ place and had Q&A time with Paul Heller (Vice President in the Texas area). The MAB students learned that one of Wonderful’s ongoing projects is to increase awareness and consumption of grapefruit throughout the population, given some recent studies about health and the emphasis on wellness that is emerging in the market. Following lunch, students and staff proceeded to a photo session and said goodbyes. Chieh Ting Chu thought, “this was a valuable experience because we saw how agribusinesses manage their products and how the knowledge we learn in the MAB program can be applied in real life.

In addition to the tour at Wonderful Citrus, we also attended a study and networking event during the trip. This trip offered several experiences that helped the MAB students build their professional skills.

The group also went to Brownsville Farmers’ Market and Flea Market to see to inspire our thoughts as a professional in business. Overall, it was a great trip filled with fun learning experiences.
CoBank Scholarship Recipient

Congratulations to Thomas Stewart! He is the recipient of the CoBank graduate scholarship for the 2016-2017 academic year. Thank you CoBank for providing these opportunities to our students!

Are you LinkedIn with Aggie MABs?

Last summer, the official LinkedIn Group for Aggie MABs was launched. We invite you to share news of your current employment and share job opportunities. Look for discussion on current issues in the world of agribusiness from students and former students.

We are excited to be LinkedIn with you!

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Go to:

http://tx.ag/MABProgramSupport

Looking to fill a vacancy at your Company? We know some potential industry leaders.

Let us help you! Email us at mab@agecon.tamu.edu.

Graduating MABs

The biggest achievement of the semester is Graduation. MABs who will graduate in May 2016 are:

- Claire Camstra
- Mfon Patience Paul
- Keila Schilling
- Daniel Swirsky
- Alonso Villarán Raffo
- Yingjia Zou

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