

# Kansas State University's Master of Agribusiness

CONTACT: Mary Bowen ■ 785.532.4435 ■ [mjbowen@ksu.edu](mailto:mjbowen@ksu.edu)

## K-State Master of Agribusiness offers international education opportunities

With advances in technology making it possible to communicate around the world instantaneously, professionals in the food and agriculture industry need to know more than what is happening within their own country. The K-State Master of Agribusiness distance-degree program understands how important it is for agribusiness professionals to have the knowledge and skills to excel in today's rapidly changing, and increasingly complex, food and agricultural global economy. In order to gain a greater understanding of the global agriculture industry, the MAB program has built opportunities for international education into the program. In addition to having classmates from one of 25 countries around the globe, an elective course taught by instructors in seven different regions and international agribusiness tours abroad are offered.

MAB's [Comparative Food and Agriculture Systems](#) course offers an in-depth view of the global food and agribusiness industry from people who have experienced it first hand. This award-winning course is delivered by professors from France, Russia, Uruguay, New Zealand, Thailand, Uganda and India and covers the food and agricultural systems of the European Union, Russia and the Former Soviet Union, MERCOSUR, Oceania, East Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. It allows working professionals the opportunity to study abroad without leaving home. The course provides the background needed to evaluate the current situation of the food and agricultural economy in world regions and assess comparative advantage of specific industries in international markets.

"Students learn about other regions of the world they may not be familiar with. For example, they often have clichés about the European Union and while taking this course realize many issues are fairly similar in the U.S. and in the EU," Nicolas Habert, a Purpan University professor in Toulouse, France, with a background in the European banking industry, said.

Each professor provides lectures, readings and an assignment for his/her module. Using innovative distance technology, live weekly chat sessions are led by the international professors where students ask questions and interact directly with faculty around the globe. The opportunity to question the instructors creates an interactive and engaging learning environment as well as establishes international connections.

The graduate-level, three credit-hour course will start in mid-April. Enrollment is open to anyone with a

bachelor's degree and an interest in the food and agriculture industry. For more information about the international faculty or the course, go to [mab.ksu.edu/OurProgram/International\\_Elective.html](http://mab.ksu.edu/OurProgram/International_Elective.html).

In addition to the elective course, the MAB program strives to create an environment of learning which transcends global boundaries, both academically and geographically. Students may find their classmates are from Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, China, Ecuador, Grenada, Italy, the Ivory Coast, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, Singapore, Uruguay, Venezuela and more. These international students provide a different perspective of the industry and add greatly to the learning experience.

"I needed a program that could be completed at a distance and is interactive. The Master of Agribusiness program fit the bill. Additionally, the campus sessions give us a chance to get to know one another and build a sense of community," Philippe Steffan, Managing Director of Grands Moulins de Dakar in Dakar, Senegal, said. "I enjoy talking with my classmates, sharing ideas and learning about the differences and similarities of our cultures."

The MAB program also provides the opportunity for students to tour agribusinesses abroad. MAB has led organized agribusiness tours to South America (Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina), Russia, and Southeast Asia (Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam). These trips included visits to crop and livestock operations, agribusinesses, and agricultural and food-related companies in order to gain a better understanding of industry in those regions.

"The MAB trip to Southeast Asia was a great experience. We really enjoyed learning about the agribusiness and industry in the region. It was fascinating to learn how the different countries' government structures have influenced business and agriculture. It added a glimpse of the culture we might not have otherwise experienced if we traveled on our own," Leslie Svacina, Communications Director of Minnesota Agri-Growth Council, St. Paul, Minn., and MAB student said.

The next international trip will be to Australia and New Zealand tentatively scheduled for April 16 - May 1, 2010. For more information on the elective, or if you are interested next year's trip, please email [mab@agecon.ksu.edu](mailto:mab@agecon.ksu.edu) or call 785-532-4495.