

The Syllabus

K-State Master of Agribusiness *A decade of developing agribusiness leaders*

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MAB celebrates successes in 2008

“Alex, I’ll take Agribusiness for \$800.”

This has been an exciting year for the Master of Agribusiness program with numerous milestones achieved and success stories shared! For example, late this summer, Barry Brant, Sales Manager, Koch Nitrogen, was our 100th student to defend a thesis. We have also had a record number of students complete their theses this year with more than 20 so far.

Several alumni have been featured in national publications (*see Duke article on page 2*) helping to spread the word about the MAB program. The program has also been featured on the Business & Beyond TV program, which recently aired nationally on the Discovery Channel and continues to air on regional networks. We were excited to learn from alumnus Dave Rock that the program even had the honor of becoming a question on the game show Jeopardy!® in October!

With all of these accomplishments and word of mouth about the success of our program, the Master of Agribusiness program is continuing to grow. Our incoming class in January 2009 is shaping up to be the largest yet with close to 40 students! It’s a great time to be a part the K-State Master of Agribusiness program.

Question: If you’re a slick, pressed-overalls Manhattan M.A.B., you have a **Master of Agribusiness** degree from here, K-State for short

Answer: Kansas State

*as featured on Jeopardy!®,
October 13, 2008*

Students complete thesis projects

To access an electronic version or view a thesis defense, log onto K-State On-Line, www.online.ksu.edu, with your eID and password. Go to the MAB Community Page, go to Files & Content and click on Theses.

Barry Brant, class of 2007
Alternative Strategic Financial Plans For Garden City Co-Op

Travis Gullickson, class of 2005
Net Present Value Analysis of Plant Investment To Add Capacity

Miguel Marciano, class of 2008
Developing a Procurement Support Tool for a Laundry Soap Bar Manufacturing Facility in Venezuela

Brent Schwenneker, class of 2008
A Study of Hybrid Seed Corn Pricing

Marcella Warner, class of 2008
The Impact of Ethanol Driven Corn Price on the Cow-Calf Industry



Alumni Spotlight

Kate Duke

MAB Class of 2008

CRM Project Manager/Trainer

Farm Credit of the Virginias

by Mary Bowen

Pieces of this article were featured on AgCareers.com's e-newsletter in September and will be included in the November issue of Ag Lender magazine.

K-State Master of Agribusiness perfect fit for Farm Credit employee

Kate Duke grew up on her family's 800-head beef cattle farm in Glasgow, VA. She was active in 4-H, FFA and planned on becoming a veterinarian. While pursuing an undergraduate degree in Animal & Poultry Sciences at Virginia Tech, she was required to take some economics courses and realized she enjoyed learning about the business side of the agriculture industry. This interest led Duke to a career with Farm Credit of the Virginias (FCV) and the completion of her Master of Agribusiness (MAB) distance degree from Kansas State University.

"I grew up around agriculture and knew I didn't want to go into production agriculture, but still wanted to be involved. I've always enjoyed the agricultural community and working with Farm Credit allows me to stay involved and support the ag community. The MAB program allowed me to further my education, while keeping the agriculture focus," Duke said.

Currently a CRM Project Manager/Trainer with FCV, Duke is responsible for training and providing user support of the customer relationship database to loan officers within Farm Credit. She knew she wanted to pursue a master's degree and began researching MBAs, when a friend told her about K-State's distance Master of Agribusiness program. She chose the MAB program because it had a focus on agriculture and the ability to complete a master's degree without leaving her position at FCV to be on campus full time.

"I really liked the agribusiness aspect of the MAB – liked that it wasn't straight business like an MBA. The flexibility of the online courses worked great for me, but since we attended sessions on campus a couple of times a year, I still felt engaged with my classmates and professors," Duke said. "I really felt like I was 'going to school' because of the connections and friendships I made during the campus sessions."

Increased technical knowledge and business skills, stronger

leadership abilities and more confidence are just a few of the benefits Duke says she gained by completing her Master of Agribusiness.

"I've gained confidence and increased my knowledge base – it has made me better at what I was already doing. I also feel that I am able to contribute more to Farm Credit of the Virginias by asking for more projects and making recommendations for improvements to management," she said.

Not only has Duke benefitted from her education, FCV has also gained some insight into their leadership development program, which recruits potential leaders and further develops them through internal programs.

In the ever-changing marketplace, it is hard to maintain

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competitive advantage. Organizations have relied on improvements in technology, cost reduction, and pricing to differentiate themselves from their competitors. Recently more organizations are realizing the importance of recruiting potential leaders and developing them further through

internal programs. With more than half the senior management personnel eligible for retirement in the next five years, FCV created the "Training of Today's/ Tomorrow's Association Leaders" (FCV T.O.T.A.L.) development program.

"The demand for high-quality leaders will greatly exceed the supply in the next few years, so this leadership development program will be important to enhance skills of



MAB Alumnus Kate Duke at K-State Graduation ceremony May 2008.

potential leaders within FCV," Duke said.

As a member of the first FCV T.O.T.A.L. class, Duke evaluated the program for her Master of Agribusiness thesis project in order to make recommendations for improvement. She identified five best practices of leadership development: an organizational culture of leadership development, leaders developing leaders, 360-degree feedback, coaching and mentoring, and job

Duke... continued on page 3

MAB Program Director named Interim Head of Agricultural Economics Department



Master of Agribusiness Director Allen Featherstone was selected as Interim Department Head of Agricultural Economics in early October. He will serve the next 12-15 months while a national search for a permanent head is conducted.

“I’m pleased to provide leadership to the department through the

next year as we continue to pursue our mission, streamline our programs, and prepare for new leadership,” Featherstone said.

As Department Head, Featherstone will provide leadership to department faculty and staff; represent the department with agricultural producers, agribusinesses, policy makers, industry groups, alumni and communities;

provide fiscal management and identify funding support for departmental programs and initiatives.

While serving as Interim Department Head, he will continue his role as MAB Program Director and continue teaching MAB courses (AGEC 713 Agribusiness Financial Management; AGEC 710 Comparative Food and Agriculture

Systems; and AGEC 740 Seminar in Agriculture Economics Analysis); as well as working on student theses committees.

“The Master of Agribusiness program and its students are important to me and

I will continue as its director,” he said. “I look forward to continuing teaching my MAB courses and working with students as they complete their theses.”

“I’m pleased to provide leadership to the department through the next year as we continue to pursue our mission, streamline our programs, and prepare for new leadership.”

Upcoming Events

November 4

Deadline to have your name appear in December commencement program

November 7-22

MAB Trip to Southeast Asia

December 1

Scholarship applications due for January 2009

December 2

Deadline to attend fall commencement - Approval to schedule final examination and diploma information forms due

December 12

K-State fall commencement

December 19

Final copy of thesis electronically deposited with graduate school

January 4 - 9, 2009

Campus Session

January 19 - 23, 2009

Thesis Campus Session

March 15 - 20, 2009

Campus Session

Duke... cont'd from page 2

assignments and action learning. Duke’s analysis revealed the FCV T.O.T.A.L. program follows all of these best practices, but she did make recommendations to further improve the program.

Duke’s recommendations for further improving the effectiveness of the FCV T.O.T.A.L. program are: further developing the strengths of T.O.T.A.L.; incorporating job assignments and/or action learning exercises; increasing participation of senior managers; developing a plan for life after T.O.T.A.L.; and maintaining a current curriculum. By making an investment in future leaders, FCV will have the capability to increase recruitment and retention of talented and effective leaders.

“The thesis project was very beneficial and I liked that it was relevant to my company. It also gave me an opportunity to make recommendations to management, many of which have been implemented,” Duke said. “I think they are more willing to come to me with other projects or questions they might not have considered me for prior to this project.”

A full text version of Duke’s thesis, “FCV T.O.T.A.L.: An Analysis of Leadership Development Best Practices and Recommendations” can be found at <http://hdl.handle.net/2097/681>.

Be watching for...

In the next issue:

- An introduction to the 12th MAB Class
- A review of the MAB Trip to Southeast Asia
- The 3rd MAB Professional Development Event

In the NEWS...

Derrick Coleman, class of 2010, has accepted a position with MGP Ingredients in their Applications Technology & Technical Services Group. He and his family will be relocating to Kansas City, MO in the near future.

Chris Simms, class of 2009 promoted to Relationship Manger within the Colonial Farm Credit Commercial Loan Group.

Sean Webster, class of 2010, was promoted to Supply Chain Director with M&M Mars Retail Group. He has assumed responsibility for the new product development team, purchasing, customer fulfillment team and call center.

AgEcon Professor **Jason Bergtold** and his wife, Susan, announced the birth of their second child, Ezra on September 19. Ezra was 9 lbs. and 2 oz. He joins big brother, Elijah.

Virginia Guardia, class of 2010, and her fiancée, Guzman Antognazza, were wed on September 27th.

Michelle Evosovich Adams, class of 2006, has taken a new position as Supervisor of the Aseptic Packaging Department of Pacific Foods of Oregon in Tualatin, OR.

Sara Morey, class of 2001, and her husband, Frank, announced the birth of their daughter, Claire Lane, on April 30. Claire was 6 lbs. and 15 oz. She joins big brothers, Dermot (11) and Connor (7).

Sarah Chess, class of 2008, has taken a position with the USDA, Packers and Stockyard Program as a Marketing Specialist. She is responsible for regulatory work enforcing the Packers & Stockyard Act of 1921.

Josh St. Peters, class of 2010, and his wife, Maggie, welcomed their first child, Owen, on July 29th.

Carlos Piana, class of 2001, was promoted to Manager of International Trade of the confectionery firm, Universal Sweet Industries in Ecuador, which produces and exports candy, chocolate and cookies. Carlos is responsible for purchasing cocoa beans, planning and executing exports to the U.S., Colombia, Peru, Panama, Spain and Venezuela.

Becky Bradwell, class of 2009, and her husband, Christopher, are expecting their first child in May 2009.

Lon Frahm, class of 2002, has been appointed to the Hall Center for the Humanities Advisory Board by the Chancellor of the University of Kansas. Over the summer, he was presented the Alumni of the Year Award from Leadership Kansas.

Keith Harris, class of 2006, left his position with Farmland Foods and has entered the University of Missouri-Columbia as a PhD candidate in Agribusiness Management.

Sarah Velaquez, class of 2007, left AIB International and is now a Membership Services Specialist with the Kansas Crop Improvement Association.

Paula Prindiville, class of 2008, accepted a new position with 7-Eleven as a Business Consultant for franchise locations throughout St. Louis.

Randy Dalinghaus, class of 2003, was promoted to Vice President of Fresh Pork Operations of Farmland Foods.

Chris Carey, class of 2007, is participating in courses from the Biscuit & Cracker Manufacture Association. The Cookie and Cracker Manufacturing Course is a self-study course designed to provide knowledge on the fundamentals of the cookie and cracker manufacturing process.

Dave Rock, class of 2003, has been appointed as Manager, Dealer Strategy in the John Deere Ag Division's Lenexa, KS office. Dave is responsible for defining and managing the Dealer of Tomorrow strategy for the U.S. and Canada. He and his family relocated to Olathe, KS.

Miguel Marciano, class of 2008, accepted a position in Cincinnati, OH with Kroger as the Manager of Corporate Strategic Sourcing in the Corporate Sourcing Department. He and his wife, Andreina, relocated from Caracas, Venezuela.

Baljit Ghotra, class of 2010, has taken a Research Associate position with the National Starch Food Innovation Group located in Bridgewater, NJ.

Jared Brown, class of 2008, is now the Personal Marketing Manager with Cargill AgHorizons in Central Kansas. He advises on the selling of Kansas wheat, soybean and corn.

Ryan Dunn, class of 2007, accepted a Marketing Manager - Cattle position with AlphaPharma, Inc. He and his wife, Elaine, relocated to New Jersey.

Tim Ulrich, class of 2010, has joined the Mountain Plains-Farm Credit Services as a Commercial Loan Analyst.

Leslie Shuler, class of 2009, and Scott Svacina were recently married. Leslie is also receiving the inaugural Elroy Webster Cooperative Studies Fund graduate student fellowship from the Ralph K. Morris Foundation.