

The Syllabus

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A newsletter for Master of Agribusiness students, alumni & friends

Welcome to our MAB Class of 2011!

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TechnoServe Inc. - Ghana
Accra, Ghana

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Maybank Singapore
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Holdrege, Nebraska

Cori Wittman

Director of Government Affairs
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Welcome to
our 12th cohort
of Master of
Agribusiness
students!

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Inside this issue:

- Report on the MAB Southeast Asia trip
- Alumni Spotlight
- New website
- 2009 Alumni Event

MAB students enjoy tour of Southeast Asia

With expansive river valleys and deltas, rich soils, and a humid tropical climate, Southeast Asia has plentiful agricultural resources, but less than one-third of Southeast Asia's land is in agricultural use and most are small family or communal farms. Due to a growing population, the region is one of the largest marketplaces for food and the rapid economic growth of these countries shows potential for positive growth in the agricultural industry. The K-State Master of Agribusiness (MAB) program offered students and alumni a chance to learn about the food and agriculture industry in Southeast Asia during a trip to Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam in November 2008.

"The MAB trip to Southeast Asia was a great experience. We really enjoyed learning about the agribusiness and industry in the region. The cultural and historical tours really added to the experience. 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.



Dried shrimp & fish products at market in Vietnam.

With stops in three countries, the group visited a variety of crop and livestock operations, agricultural and food-related industries, and aquaculture, including stops at the Malaysian Palm Oil Board, PKPS Tilapia Farm, and the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia in Kuala

Lumpur, Malaysia; C.P. Retails and Marketing (CPRAM), Chiameng Rice Mill and the United Nations in Bangkok, Thailand; Dabaco Feed Mill and local wet markets in Hanoi, Vietnam; and a Cargill feed mill and small-to-large size back-yard hog farms outside of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.



MAB group sightseeing in Bangkok.

"The trip demonstrated to me how entwined our food systems are. On our first visit in Thailand, the tour of CP food processing facility allowed us to see first hand the use of competitively priced labor in the making of food which inevitably ends up on our dinner tables at home," MAB student Clair Doan, Manager of Commercial Banking – Agriculture at the National Bank of Canada, in London, Ontario said. "And at the Chiameng Rice Mill, rice was being processed for shipping to Canada; it was interesting to see our government regulated food labels in dual languages (French and

English) being printed on large bags of rice destined for North America."

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3rd MAB Alumni event planned for August

Mark your calendars and plan on joining us for the third MAB Alumni Professional Development Event in Kansas City, KS. The event is tentatively scheduled for August 27th-29th and will be held at the Holiday Inn Express in the Legends Center at Village West (adjacent to Kansas Speedway, near the intersection I-70 & I-435)

The program will kick-off early afternoon on Thursday, August 27th. **Be watching for more details!**

Thank you for all of the programming suggestions on the recent survey—they will help us put together a great program. If you are interested in being on the planning committee to help us choose topics, activities and possible speakers, please contact Mary at mjbowen@ksu.edu.

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.

Sarah Chess, Class of 2008, *Competitive Edge: Cattle Marketing for the 21st Century*

Joel Phelps, Class of 2008, *Great Lakes Pork, Inc. Establishing a Cross-Border Pork Production Company*

Katy Venard, Class of 2007, *A Feasibility Study of Operating a Sheep Dairy in Central Iowa*

SE Asia continued from pg 2

These visits also provided glimpses of an agriculture industry at varying stages of development. For example, palm oil, rice and ready-to-eat food industries in Malaysia and Thailand are highly developed with modern processing plants, while the rice industry in Vietnam still relies on hand planting and harvesting small plots of land. Some rice farmers are just beginning to modernize, showing great potential for growth. In addition, the visits gave the group a feel for the differences and similarities between Western and Eastern practices.



“It was interesting to see the different ways things are done. For instance, we visited three hog farms in Vietnam, all called ‘backyard hog farms’ because they are literally in the backyard. The largest farm had 30 sows and was a only few steps from the family’s home in the middle of their village,” Svacina said, “but they chose to use a U.S. feed source because of the company’s reputation and the performance of the feed.”

Time was also set aside for enjoying the culture, shopping and sightseeing in each of the locations. Stops at famous sites such as Batu Caves, the Malaysian rain forest, Grand Palace, Halong Bay and the Cu Chi Tunnels were highlights. Group members had opportunities to shop for bargains in bustling night markets and



enjoyed wonderful meals of combinations of fresh fish and chicken, fruit and rice.

“I thoroughly enjoyed traveling with the K-State group -- the mix of current students, staff, alumni and spouses all with an interest in agriculture allowed for interesting discussions. I strongly encourage the participation in travel opportunities organized by the MAB program,” Doan said. “Although it may not have been a restful trip, the busy schedule strengthened my education about global food and agribusiness management and allowed us to tour, meet and interact with real people in Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam.”



The 4th MAB International trip is tentatively scheduled for April 16 - May 1, 2010 and we'll be traveling to Australia and New Zealand. More details will be available soon.



Top Right: Mauro Bergerman and lunch.

Above: Street vendor in Hanoi.

Left: Bagging rice in Bangkok.

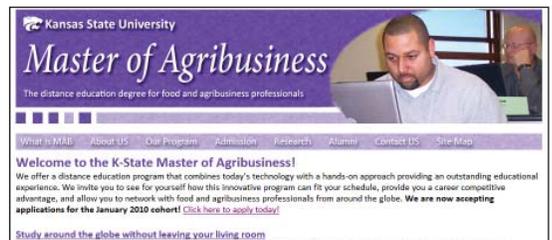
Far Left: Feeding fish at Tilapia farm in Malaysia

Top Left: Leslie Svacina receives a lesson in harvesting rice in Saigon.

New website launched

The MAB’s redesigned website was launched February 20th. The fresh, new look for the website, www.mab.ksu.edu, adds a more informative homepage with announcements and current program events, and makes information easier to access through a streamlined menu. Many stories and photos of students, alumni and Advisory Board members were used to give the site a personal feel. Don’t be surprised if you see yourself on a page!

The site will continue to develop over the next few months, so make sure you check back for updates, new additions and announcements regarding current events.



program is offering an internet-based look into the business and profit, graduate-level course is delivered by professors from across the lower United, sub-Saharan Africa, MERCOSUR, East Asia, South Asia and

Did you know?
The Master of Agribusiness website receives around 40,000-50,000 hits a month!



Alumni Spotlight

Christopher Carey

MAB Class of 2007

Plant Manager

OkTex Baking

by Mary Bowen

Playing it Safe

Chris Carey, Plant Manager of OkTex Baking in Marietta, Okla., has built a career on playing it safe. When most people think of careers in agriculture, they picture things like farming, ranching, and food production lines. While all of these are a big part of the food and agriculture industry, there is one piece that is the backbone of every agricultural career – safety. Carey never thought he’d make a career out of explaining and enforcing safety procedures, but that is exactly what he’s done.

Growing up, Carey’s father worked in livestock transportation and while he enjoyed being around the agriculture industry, he was not sure what he wanted to do. After some consideration, he went to work for Cargill Meat Solutions as a Purchasing Manager and then moved on to Cargill Animal Nutrition as a Plant Manager Associate. While there he discovered a greater purpose in the area of industrial safety.

“Every year, workers are killed on-the-job due to safety hazards or not following policy. At Cargill, safety was the most important part of your job. I earned the title ‘Safety Champion’ and it became my responsibility to make sure everyone knew and followed safe practices. My career has grown from there,” Carey said.

With an undergraduate degree in Animal Science, he felt he knew the science side of the industry and the importance of safe practices, but needed to gain more knowledge of the business side of agriculture in order to advance. He turned to the Master of Agribusiness (MAB) distance degree from Kansas State University. With the increased knowledge of agribusiness, better public speaking and decision-making skills, stronger leadership abilities and more confidence being just a few of the benefits Carey says he gained by completing his Master of Agribusiness degree.

“Because of my safety experience, Fehr Foods offered me a Safety Manager position, which lead to a promotion to Process Improvement Manager. I was constantly pulling data from all over the plant to figure out the most efficient production processes. The MAB taught me how to interpret the data and really increased my business knowledge and data analysis skills. Before, I didn’t feel like I had the skills needed to make good decisions – now I feel like I can really grow in the

“The MAB taught me how to interpret the data and really increased my business knowledge and data analysis skills. Before, I didn’t feel like I had the skills needed to make good decisions – now I feel like I can really grow in the industry.”

industry,” he said. “Because it is a distance program, I could continue working while completing the MAB coursework – I didn’t have to relocate to take Classes.”

Not only has Carey benefitted from his further education, so has Fehr Foods, maker of Lil’ Dutch Maid Cookies. As a requirement to complete his Master of Agribusiness degree, Carey created a comprehensive safety manual for the company as his final thesis project. “The Benefit of an Effective Safety Program in the Agribusiness Industry” was created to develop an employee driven safety program that would reduce the extent and severity of work related injuries, improve employee morale and productivity, and reduce worker’s compensation costs.

“I was already working on safety procedures, so we decided it would be a good project for my thesis and for Fehr Foods. It is still used at Fehr and is updated every year,” he said. “With continuous improvement in the area of safety, goals can be achieved and people can come to work and go home the same way they started the day.”



MAB Alum Chris Carey at OkTex Baking.

Carey’s story doesn’t end there. Just recently, he was given even more responsibility within Fehr Foods. He was promoted to Plant Manager of one of their sister companies, OkTex Baking. He now is responsible for all aspects of the cookie manufacturing company, not just safety procedures.

“All of the business and economics skills I learned in the Master of Agribusiness program are used daily in this new position. I handle everything from production to budgeting to administration, and of course, safety,” Carey said. “I chose the MAB program for its focus on agribusiness and its good reputation in the industry – it was a good decision and I would

recommend it to anyone wishing to advance in the agriculture industry.”

A full text version of Carey’s thesis, “The Benefit

of an Effective Safety Program in the Agribusiness Industry” can be found at <http://hdl.handle.net/2097/503>.

What safety procedures does Chris have to remind employees of regularly?

- *Lifting properly*
- *Not lifting too much weight*
- *Strains are the most common injury*

in the NEWS...

Piercarlo Marletta, Class of 2009, has accepted a position as an Agronomist Officer with the South Milan Agricultural Park in the Province of Milan, Italy.

Stan Sikora, Class of 2009, and his wife, Rochelle, are expecting their first child in March.

Meng Tee, Class of 2009, has accepted a position as General Manager for California Florida Plant Company, L.P. in Salinas, Calif.

Eliana Cobos, Class of 2003, has relocated to Denmark and accepted a position as the Director of Marketing and Sales with Finance for Everyone.

David Mog, Class of 2010, is engaged to be married to Cathrine McKinnis on March 7, 2009.

Kimberly Rameker, Class of 2006, has accepted a position with Ralcorp as a part of the Procurement and Risk Management Team. She and her family have relocated to St. Louis, Mo. from Malaysia.

Steven Turner, Class of 2010, has been relocated to Moline, IL. He is now a

Senior Sales and Service Rep within John Deere for row-crop planters in North American markets.

Josh St. Peters, Class of 2010, has accepted a new position as the supply chain analyst for GROWMARK, Inc.

Dave Mace, Class of 2005, has started his own company called Maverick Creative Group. MCG specializes in helping agri-food companies and small businesses realize their visions.

Abby Dechant, Class of 2010, and Winston Amick, announce their engagement. A 2010 wedding is planned.

Juan Garza, Class of 2010, announces the arrival of a new baby born October 6. Juan has also been promoted to Business Development Manager Senior for the Meat Division of HEB in Mexico.

Young Jung, Class of 2007, announces the birth of Jaelynn Jung, on November 11. Jaelynn was 7.6 lbs. and 20.5 inches long.

Jason Pratt, Class of 2011, finished as first runner up in the 2008 Virginia Farm Bureau Young Farmer and Rancher Discussion Meet.

Chris Simms, Class of 2009, finished as the first runner up in the 2008 Virginia Farm Bureau Young Farmer and Rancher Excellence in Agriculture competition.

Kevin Nielsen, Class of 2011, has accepted a position as the Director of Human Resources with Ag-Valley Co-op.

Keith Kennedy, Class of 2005, and his fiancée, Jeannie, announce their engagement. A March 14th wedding is planned.

Lon Frahm, Class of 2002, was selected as the Top Producer of the Year for 2009, by the editors of Top Producer magazine.

Stacie Garvert, Class of 2007, has moved to New York City and is an Executive in Commodities Product Control with Barclays Capital.

International elective, AGEC 710, begins April 13th

The MAB's award-winning international elective, Comparative Food and Agriculture Systems, is set to begin in mid-April.

AGEC 710 is team taught by faculty at K-State's partner institutions in Uruguay, France, Russia, New Zealand, Uganda, India and Thailand. The course gives students a first-hand account of the history and conditions of each of the significant economic zones studied – MERCOSUR, European Union, Russia and the FSU, Oceania, sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and East Asia.

The course is open to students in the Master of Agribusiness program, but may also be taken by individuals not currently participating in the MAB program. Anyone with a bachelor's degree, two years of professional work experience and an interest in the food and agriculture sector is encouraged to enroll. This is an excellent opportunity for anyone thinking about joining the MAB program to test the distance technology and get a feel for the program.

Enrollment is now open for the three-credit hour course, so those interested in the elective should contact Lynnette or Mary at 785-532-4495 to get registered.

Upcoming Events

March 15 - 20
Campus Session

April 13
AGEC 710, Comparative Food and Agriculture Systems begins

May 5
Deadline to attend spring commencement - Approval to schedule final examination and diploma information forms due

May 15
K-State spring commencement & final copy of thesis electronically deposited with graduate school

May 18
Final electronic copy of thesis due to graduate school

August 27 - 29
Alumni Professional Development Event in Kansas City