

# The Syllabus

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

Volume 8, Issue 2 • Summer 2007 A newsletter for Master of Agribusiness students, alumni and friends

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## MAB in the Heartland *Professional Development Alumni Event*

*The Master of Agribusiness's second alumni professional development event was held in Junction City and Manhattan, KS in April. Participants engaged industry leaders and fellow classmates to learn about and discuss the future of biofuels, biosecurity in the United States, the Farm Bill and the experience of farming without subsidies in New Zealand, and hear perspectives of international agribusiness from MAB students and alumni.*

*Below you will find thoughts from MAB Alum Keith Kennedy, Manager & Owner, Agrimind LLC, MAB Class of 2005, a speaker and member of the planning committee.*

### **MAB** *in the Heartland*

#### **Keith Kennedy**

Those of you that were unable to attend the MAB In The Heartland, April 19-21, 2007, missed a great event that allowed alumni and students to regain the broad and deep perspective that we all had during the MAB program. It was also great to renew old friendships with classmates and make to acquaintance of other members of the MAB program.

The first day began on Thursday afternoon with Drs. Kastens and Dhuyvetter discussing whether biofuels are here to stay or a passing fad. Randy Schlatter, with Pioneer, discussed linking seed to energy production, as well as biobutanol production. Dr. Featherstone spoke with us about ethanol production in Brazil. Bob Copher of Koch Industries concluded the formal discussion on Thursday, followed by a group discussion—in the spirit of discussion

during trade policy or leadership classes.

We spent Friday morning visiting the recently constructed Biosecurity Research Institute (BRI) at Pat Roberts Hall. We certainly gained an appreciation of the breadth of physical food safety and security issues that can be researched, when BRI is fully operational. The visit to BRI was followed by lunch at the Kansas Farm



*Dana Peterson, Bill Craig and Bret Oelke listen to presentations Saturday morning.*

### Students complete thesis projects

*To access an electronic version or view a thesis defense, log onto K-State On-Line, [www.online.ksu.edu](http://www.online.ksu.edu), with your eID and password. Go to the MAB Community Page, go to Content and click on Theses.*

#### **Timothy Loh, class of 2003**

Avian Influenza: Impact on the Poultry Industry in Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam

#### **Kim Rameker, class of 2006**

Vietnam Market Analysis & Opportunities for Increased Feed Grain Imports

#### **Justin Ringler, class of 2004**

Planning for Future Generations

#### **Charles Sauerwein, class of 2007**

Comparative Analysis of Origin vs. Destination Ethanol Plants

## MAB in the Heartland continued from page 1

Bureau. A DVD (available from Mary Bowen) narrated by Dr. Kastens, introduced the discussion by MAB students Joel Phelps, Marcella Warner, Dr. Kastens and myself about the MAB trip to Russia in August 2006. Ted Monoson, ag staffer with U.S. Rep. Boehner, began discussion of issues surrounding the 2007 (Maybe!) Farm Bill, with Terry Holdren giving the Farm Bill perspective of the Kansas Farm Bureau. It was fortunate that Dr. Keith Woodford, Lincoln University, New Zealand, was scheduled for later that afternoon, otherwise point and

counterpoint regarding the Farm Bill would likely have continued for the remainder of the afternoon. Via distance technology, Dr.

Woodford discussed the New Zealand experience of farming without subsidies.



*Alumni Dave Mace, Bill Golden, Charlie Sauerwein and KFB participant Terry Holdren continue discussion about the 2007 Farm Bill.*

attendance, I would like to extend our thanks to Mary Bowen for all of her hard work on putting the program together. For those of you who were unable to attend, I hope each of you is able to make time to attend the next MAB Alumni Event; it will certainly help you to regain knowledge about aspects of agribusiness that are no longer your primary focus, but still important perspectives about global agribusiness.



*MAB Director Allen Featherstone speaks on ethanol production in Brazil.*

Leah Suellentrop and Walter Von Muhlen Filho concluded presentations on Saturday morning detailing their involvement with international agribusiness. Although I was unable to attend the final event, the Spring Football Game, I assume that K-State won! On behalf of all those in



*Alumni event participants heard several perspectives on the potential of biofuels Thursday afternoon.*

## MAB offering travel to Southeast Asia in 2008

The Master of Agribusiness is in the planning stage of its third international trip. We are offering a tour of Southeast Asia: Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam.

The 2-week trip is tentatively set for November 7-22, 2008 with planned visits to various crop operations, agricultural and food-related industries, aquaculture and shipping ports. Time will also be set aside for sight-seeing.

### A different kind of agriculture

Less than one-third of Southeast Asia's land is in agricultural use and most of that is small family or communal farms. Due to low yields and a growing population, the region is one of the largest marketplaces for food. However, the rapid economic



growth of these countries shows potential for positive growth in the agricultural industry. The

opportunity to see sophisticated shipping ports, wet markets, developing aquaculture and region specialties such as rice fields and large-scale estate crops should provide a unique view of agriculture for trip participants.

### Sights to see

Possible programs include a Southeast Asia rainforest canopy walk with FRIM scientists, visits to multinational agribusinesses, a tour of the United Nations office in Bangkok, and stops at farms and food processing facilities, to name a few. In addition to professional

visits, we plan to tour several cultural and historical sites such as: Petronas Twin Towers, Batu Caves and the King's Palace in Kuala Lumpur; the Mekong Delta, Cu Chi Tunnels, the Presidential Palace and Halong Bay in Vietnam; and palaces, temples and the Damnoen Saduak floating market in Bangkok.



### Interested in more details?

For more information or suggestions on things to see and do in Southeast Asia, contact Mary Bowen, [mjbowen@ksu.edu](mailto:mjbowen@ksu.edu) or 785.532.4435. Trip info is available and regularly updated online at [www.mab.ksu.edu/Alumni/International\\_Trips.html](http://www.mab.ksu.edu/Alumni/International_Trips.html).



# The benefits of an MAB

While preparing a paper on distance education and the MAB program for the Southern Agricultural Economics Association (SAEA), Program Director Allen Featherstone and Coordinator Lynnette Brummett noted some key findings on benefits of completing the MAB program.

We survey students before they enter the program and again after graduation to assess whether their incoming expectations of the program were met and the effectiveness of the course work and the thesis. Although we know that students come to the Master of Agribusiness program for a variety of reasons, there seems to be general agreement of what they expect to gain from completing the program. Most want to increase their knowledge about business and economics and increase their knowledge of the food and agribusiness industry.

Evaluation of the program's course work includes categories on the appropriateness of course work to the industry, the timeliness of the material, and whether presentation skills, analytical skills, critical reading skills, critical thinking skills, and decision making skills were improved. The highest rated areas were analytical skills and computer skills. The lowest

areas of improvement were presentation skills and critical reading skills; however a large majority of the students rated the improvement either high or very high in each category.

Regarding the value of the thesis, the issues addressed included the application of the thesis to their job and the value of the thesis to their company or business in addition to the improvement in the skills discussed above. Critical thinking skills, analytical skills and the application of the thesis to their job were rated the highest of the seven choices. The lowest rated areas were the improvement in computer skills and improvement in presentation skills. Again, each of the issues was rated high or very high by a majority of the students.

The close bonds students form with one another and salary increases are just a couple of the unexpected benefits noted by alumni after completing the program. If you are interested in learning more about their findings, please contact Mary at [mjbowen@ksu.edu](mailto:mjbowen@ksu.edu) for a copy of the paper. The paper will be published in the August 2007 issue of *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics*.

## MAB attends World Ag Forum

Allen Featherstone and Lynnette Brummett attended the World Ag Forum held in St Louis, Missouri May 8-10. This was the first time the Master of Agribusiness was extended an invitation. The theme for this year's conference was "*Creating Prosperity through Investments in Agriculture*". The three-day event brings together individuals from across the globe for presentations and dialog regarding food, agriculture, investments and creating a climate for change.



Participants included Hon. Minister Hilary Onek, Minister of Agriculture, Republic of Uganda; Mike Johanns, US Secretary of Agriculture; Jonathan Campaigne, PRIDE AFRICA; Marcos Jank, President of the Brazilian Institute For International Trade Negotiations and Bob Lane, President of John Deere to name just a few.

We would like to thank Ray Cesca, MAB advisory board member and President of the World Ag Forum for the invitation.

For more information about the World Ag Forum, please go to <http://www.worldagforum.org/>.

## Visit MAB at IFT in Chicago

The Master of Agribusiness will once again have a booth at the Institute of Food Technologists Annual Meeting and Food Expo July 28 - 31, 2007. This year's meeting is at McCormick Place in downtown Chicago. MAB will share booth #2653 with the K-State Food Science department.

If you're going to be at IFT, stop by and visit Lynnette and Mary at booth #2653. We'd love to see you!



## Upcoming Events

### August 10

Last day to submit final thesis copies to graduate school to be a summer graduate

### October 15

Applications due for class of 2010

### November 26

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

### December 1

Scholarship applications due for January 2008

### December 7

K-State fall commencement

### December 14

Final copy of thesis due to graduate school

### January 6 - 11, 2008

Campus Session

### March 17 - 21, 2008

Campus Session



# Alumni Spotlight

## Eliana Cobos

MAB Class of 2003  
International Sales Manager  
The Exotic Blends Company  
Quito, Ecuador



by Mark Seitz

*The Alumni Spotlight focuses on an MAB alum and is written by Mark Seitz, a 2003 MAB graduate.*

### Eliana Cobos... One of MAB's Best Kept Secrets

As a graduate of the Master of Agribusiness program I could write numerous pages about my experiences in the MAB program: how much I learned, how challenging the program was/is and how it changed my life. I think most of us who endured our four weeks of festivities on campus and our two plus years of study while juggling work & family could do the same thing. While the pace of the program certainly caused me, and I am sure the rest of you a bit of anxiety, I believe the single greatest part of being an MAB student was having the chance to meet so many incredibly talented people. Our friends and classmates come from across the agribusiness industry, from all over the US and around the world. This incredibly diverse, business savvy group of classmates and professors make the MAB program what it is today – the best agribusiness distance education program in the world.

My classmate and friend Eliana Cobos, (Class of 2003) is a great example of the kind of agribusiness professional – both American and international, MAB attracts. Eliana, like many others in the MAB program, brought her diverse background and international experience in the food industry to Manhattan in January 2001. I recently emailed Eliana and asked her a few questions for this article. I wanted her to share with us some of her thoughts and experiences in MAB and how it changed her and her life for this month's *MAB Syllabus Alumni Spotlight*.

**Mark:** Where do you live now and where are you working?

**Eliana:** I live in Quito, Ecuador and work for The Exotic Blends Company as an international sales manager. My company is a natural gourmet snacks producer and exporter, who's most important products are banana and plantain chips. We export product to markets in the USA, France, Jamaica, Canada, Holland and Switzerland. Prior to this position I worked as an Export Manager in the Export Department for Expropalm S.A. in Quito, the second largest exporter of hearts of palm in Ecuador.



**Mark:** What is your agribusiness background? Where did you work before joining the MAB program?

**Eliana:** My father is an agronomic engineer with a Masters degree in Rural Development and my mother is a nutritionist who owns a small processing plant that produces fruit pulp that is sold in local markets. My parents own a farm in northwest Ecuador. They have owned and operated this farm for 23 years and grow tropical fruit such as soursoup, papaya and passion fruit. I grew up on this farm assisting with the harvest and processing of these products. After

college, I left the farm and took an internship with an exotic hot sauce producer – *Especies Exoticas Cia. Ltda.* This is where I realized that I enjoyed and was very good at selling food products in international markets. I spent most of my professional career working in international sales and after short stays in the cut flower industry, I took a job with *The Exotics Blends Company*.

**Mark:** What attracted you to the MAB program?

**Eliana:** What I found interesting about it was the fact of being able to attend a prestigious American university while being able to keep my job. I found about the MAB program on the Internet, on a link from the University of California, Davis.

**“What I found interesting about the MAB program was the fact of being able to attend a prestigious American university while being able to keep my job.”**

**Mark:** How do you think the MAB program helped you with your career?

**Eliana:** The MAB program helped me in two aspects. The classes, projects and exams helped me organizing my thoughts and ideas in a fashion that greatly helped my ability to manage the work I do for my company. Dr. Schurle's Computer Optimization class taught me some valuable spreadsheet applications that I use every day in my current position.

**Mark:** What did you enjoy most about the MAB program?

**Eliana:** I was able to meet people from many different backgrounds. The professors, classmates, guest speakers and administrative personnel made the program a very enriching experience. The networking opportunities were a big plus that the MAB program at K-State offered.

**Mark:** If you think about your life before the MAB program and after MAB, how have your views of the world changed?

**Eliana:** I am now able to see things not only from my point of view but also from the point of view of the person I am talking to. Dr. Barkley's International Trade Policy class helped me see things from an international perspective. This knowledge helps me understand and balance the needs of my clients and negotiate with them. Having a greater understanding of comparative advantage and how trade policy and trade barriers are implemented helps me better understand my clients needs and enables me to create situations that result in win/win situations for both parties more often.

**Mark:** What training from your MAB classes do you use most often today?

**Eliana:** Today I don't use materials from any one class more than materials from another. That to me is the beauty of the MAB program – the holistic vision of the entire industry and what it takes to be a successful manager. The whole experience provided me with the professional background I needed to cope with the challenges I face each day in my job.

**“The beauty of the MAB program is the holistic vision of the entire industry and what it takes to be a successful manager. The whole experience provided me with the professional background I needed to cope with the challenges I face each day in my job.”**

**Mark:** I know you told me many times that you had many international education opportunities before coming to Kansas State. Where did you receive your bachelor's degree and what other educational programs and opportunities did you have before landing in Manhattan, KS?

**Cobos... continued on next page**

# In the NEWS...

**Marilyn Vass**, alum, has taken an Accounts Manager position with Kearny County Hospital in Lakin, Kans. She is also responsible for web monitoring.

**Stacie Garvert**, class of 2007, has started a new position as a Futures and Options Analyst with British Petroleum in Naperville, Ill. She will be working in their Oil Americas supply and trading division.

**Marcella Warner**, class of 2008, was selected for the Phi Kappa Phi honor society.

**Scott Snider**, class of 2007, has returned to US Bank in Centerville, Iowa as a Commercial Loan Officer for the Northeast Missouri/Southern Iowa Region.

**Leslie Shuler**, class of 2009, and her fiance, Scott Svacina, announced their engagement. A wedding is planned for October 11, 2008.

**Travis Gullickson**, class of 2005, has been promoted to Regional Operations Manager - Logistics within Land O'Lakes Purina Feed. He was previously the Sr. Transportation Manager for LOL Dairy Foods.

**Sara Sellers**, class of 2007, was married to Enzo Zouaoui on April 14 in Texas. They held a second ceremony in Ouarzazate, Morocco on April 21. **Stacie Garvert**, class of 2007, was the maid of honor at both ceremonies.

**Lon Frahm**, class of 2002, has been appointed by Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius to serve as a commissioner on the Kansas Water Authority.

**Mark Winger**, alum, was promoted to Senior Vice President of Administration for Farm Credit of Western Kansas. He was elected to four-year term on the Board of Trustees for Colby Community College in April. Mark is also serving a one-year term as the chairman of the Kansas Agriculture and Rural Leadership, Inc.

**Amy Brusik**, class of 2009, has been promoted to Grant Specialist at the K-State College of Veterinary Medicine. She will be responsible for fiscal management and proposal preparation for grant funds with Clinical Sciences.

**Clint Imel**, class of 2004, and his wife, Cheryl, announce the birth of their second son, Reece Colton. Reece joined big brother, Mason on March 30 and weighed 5 lbs., 15 oz.

**Barry Brant**, class of 2007, has accepted a Sales Manager position with Koch Nitrogen in Wichita, Kans.

**Paula Prindiville**, class of 2008, is now the Corporate Gift Shop Director for Adam's Mark Hotels in St. Louis, Mo.

**Katy Venard**, class of 2007, accepted a position with Murphy-Brown LLC in Ames, Iowa as a Feed Operations Specialist.

**Terry Garvert**, MAB Advisory Board Member, started a new job with Cargill, Inc.'s Grain and Oilseed Supply Chain-N.A. as the Corn & SBM Customer Risk Manager.

**Sandra Alton**, alum, began a new position as Member Services Representative with Gay Lea Foods, which is a milk processing cooperative in Ontario with plants in Teeswater, Guelph and Mississauga.

**Jeff Ast**, class of 2007, and his wife, Kerri, announce the birth of their son, Jeffrey Teague, on April 4. Little Teague weighed 5 lbs., 6 oz. and was 19" long.

**Nathan Broders**, class of 2006, and his fiancee, Carrie Littlewood, announced their engagement. A summer 2008 wedding is planned.

**Becky Bradwell**, class of 2009, accepted a position with TSC Container Freight as a Merchandiser Assistant I.

**Zach Gaines**, alum, has been promoted from Research Technician to Brewhouse Manager for Anheuser-Busch, Inc. and moved to Los Angeles, Calif.

**Nate Schroeder**, class of 2009, has accepted a position as District Sales Manager with Croplan Genetics, a division of Land O'Lakes in Omaha, Neb.

**Michelle (Evosovich) Adams**, alum, and her husband, Rich, announce the birth of their daughter, Kylee Marie on January 29. Kylee was 6 lbs., 3 oz. and 19" long.

**Chris Nobles**, class of 2004, is the new Farm and Laboratory Manager at the Uihlein Farm of Cornell University in Lake Placid, NY. Uihlein Farm is the official Foundation Seed Potato Farm for the state of New York.

**Marvin Knoeber**, class of 2005, has accepted a position as a Teacher with Valley High School in Gilcrest, Colo.

**Eliana Cobos**, alum, is now the International Sales Manager for The Exotic Blends Company in Quito, Ecuador.

**Ryan Dunn**, class of 2007, accepted an Operations Manager position at Grand River Bean, Inc., an edible/dry bean processing and growing facility.

**Brad Swartz**, class of 2008, is now a Grain Merchandiser for Agrex Inc. in Superior, Neb.

**Matt Craig**, class of 2005, has taken a job with Ethanex Energy as the Manager of Sales and Marketing.

## Cobos... cont'd from previous page

**Eliana:** I attended Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador in Quito and received a Bachelors of Arts - Foreign Languages Applied to International Business in January, 1999. I also took a one month intensive course in Italian Language and Culture in Siena, Italy in 1998. In addition I participated in the American Field Service Intercultural Exchange Program, in Newfoundland, Canada where I studied during my senior year of high school.

**Mark:** Tell us a little about the amount of travel and how many frequent flier miles you have accumulated since graduating from the MAB program?

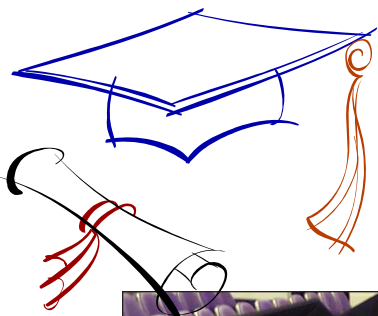
**Eliana:** Well, I have been traveling quite a lot the last two years. On average I travel two to three times per year to Europe and the US.

My business travel has taken me to France, Sweden, Germany and several states in the US – enough frequent flier miles for a good vacation in Europe.

**Mark:** What would you say to a colleague or prospective student who is thinking about starting the MAB program?

**Eliana:** It is a very thorough academic program and I would totally recommend the experience. I would do so not only because of the academic standards adhered to by K-State in running this program, but also because of the diversity of the people and the networking opportunities the MAB program provides.





## Congratulations to our Spring 2007 MAB graduates

**Chris Carver  
Justin Ringler  
Charlie Sauerwein**

**Timothy Loh  
Kimberly Rameker**



*Spring MAB grads Justin Ringler, Charlie Sauerwein and fall graduate Sarah Velasquez enjoy commencement and a reception with faculty, family and friends.*



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