



alex hage

Alex Hage, an agricultural business student at Iowa State, has been interested in aquaponics since his first trip to Haiti two years ago. With the help of the Agricultural Entrepreneurship Initiative (AgEI) program, Hage was able to set up an internship with Early Morning Harvest, a local company that is a leader in aquaponics. Early Morning Harvest is a diversified family farm just outside of Panora, Iowa. The farm includes cattle, chickens, hogs, an orchard, vegetable garden, an all-organic stone mill and a few aquaponic systems. Hage worked as the primary greenhouse manager and led a project to extend the shelf life of the products grown, but also to increase the market reach of the company.

"My eyes have been opened up to a completely different side of agriculture. All of my life I have been surrounded by corn and soybeans, so growing vegetable crops has been foreign to me until this summer. I see great potential for aquaponics in a world that is demanding healthier food and more sustainable agricultural practices."

Growing up on her family's farm, Lexi Marek developed a passion for sharing her agriculture story at a young age. While attending an AgEI roundtable event, Marek met Marji Guyler-Alaniz, owner of FarmHer, and fell in love with Marji's business; promoting women in agriculture through photography. Marek knew she needed to be a part of the initiative to help share those stories. During her internship, Marek was able to strengthen her communication and marketing skills while spearheading an effort to reach young women through her new event, "Grow by Future FarmHer." This event is intended to inspire, encourage, and inform young women in agriculture about the various opportunities within Iowa's agricultural industry.

"FarmHer has truly taught me to turn my passion into a business, which is what entrepreneurship is all about. Agriculture is a diverse industry, which is something I am deeply proud to be a part of. I've been inspired by the FarmHers I've had the opportunity to work with. It truly makes me excited for the future of agriculture."



lexi marek

SUMMER internship PROGRAM



nettie payne

Majoring in agriculture education, Nettie Payne found the perfect summer internship through the AgEI program that allowed her to both learn about the local food market and yogurt industry as well as work to educate consumers. As the sales and marketing intern for Country View Dairy, she redesigned the company brochure, updated product photos and interacted with hundreds of grocery shoppers across Iowa. The company offers an original and Greek style yogurt, as well as frozen yogurt. It's an all-natural yogurt with a high protein content of 10-13 grams per cup. Payne enjoyed sharing the delicious and nutritious product with consumers.

"I never realized how many different yogurt brands stores offer. The importance of supporting local producers has also come to light for me. Working with Country View Dairy, I have found that there are high quality, local products being produced not far from home."



With a wide variety of experiences in dairy farming, extension and FFA, Steven Brockshus was looking for an internship experience that would provide him with the skills necessary to start his own business. Upon hearing about the AgEI internship program, he found the perfect fit with AccuGrain, an Iowa-based startup focused on improving the grain-handling industry by accurately measuring the weight of flowing grain. Brockshus was a sponge during his internship, working with the founder to conduct market research, meeting with farmers and cooperatives throughout the Midwest, developing a product launch plan and helping set AccuGrain on the right course for a successful future.

"Working with a startup, I was exposed to how an entrepreneur's mind works - always searching for innovative new solutions. Meeting so many incredible folks with visionary ideas gives me hope for the future of the agricultural industry."

steven brockshus