

Youth

NATIONAL PORK BOARD

HARD WORK AND

RESPONSIBILITY

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Tomorrow's Leaders Today
Mentoring Program

The summer of 2006 was filled to the brim with opportunities to learn about the pork industry. My experiences included traveling, giving presentations, spending time with pork producers and meeting people who will forever impact my life.

But, above all, it was an excellent opportunity to experience the pork industry—to its fullest.

The first direct exposure I had to the National Pork Board (NPB) was during the 2005 World Pork Expo, held in Des Moines, Iowa. As a member of the Nebraska Pork Producers Association's Mentoring Class, I visited the NPB office, prior to attending Expo. This is where I initially learned about the NPB's internships.

However, it was through meeting NPB staff during the National FFA Convention, in Louisville, Ky., that the possibility to intern with the Producer Services Department at the NPB started to form.

The internship interested me because it fit well with my experiences in the pork industry, and past interns raved about their terrific experiences at the NPB.

As an Agricultural Education major at the University of Nebraska, I knew the combined experience of working with educational resources and a commodity organization would be very beneficial.

The theme for the summer was, "It is through hard work and responsibility that the most is learned."

Serving as one of the summer interns for the Producer Services Department brought with it a wide variety of responsibilities—that required a lot of hard work.

The biggest responsibility I had was to plan and present the State Intern Conference, which was held the week of World Pork Expo. This was a key conference for the state pork producer associations who had summer interns.

The education interns, from across the country, relied on this event as an educational, hands-on training, where they could attain additional knowledge about the Pork Checkoff and the programs it funds.

The week was filled with opportunities for the students to learn about the promotional, research and educational aspects of pork. The incorporation of great speakers and entertaining activities made the event a lot of fun too.

I remained in close contact with the interns throughout the summer.

Upon returning to their home states, each intern routinely updated me on the educational projects they were working with. Regular conference calls kept everyone informed and allowed the interns to learn from each other too. Likewise, newsletters kept the state interns knowledgeable about NPB happenings.

Another project occupying a great deal of my time was a distance learning piece developed for noncommercial pork producers.

Educational content, focusing on semen management, estrus detection and artificial insemination, was packaged into a flyer. The brochures, which were cobranded by participating boar studs, are currently being included in semen shipments. The project also involved a Web site, containing photos, video clips and more.

I also had the opportunity to do some traveling. In June, I was in Illinois and Minnesota, presenting at youth shows and camps, and the 4th of July weekend found me in Denver, doing my part to help grill and distribute over 1,800 sausage patties.

My experiences at the NPB were incredible, and I would recommend this internship to anyone interested in the animal agriculture industry. Everywhere I went, I was surrounded by outstanding pork producers, Checkoff staff and other experts, who were doing their best for the industry.

My time with the NPB not only benefitted me this summer, but will continue to do so in the future. I have created a great network of industry professionals, and the hands-on experiences will be hard to beat.

Each year, several National Pork Board departments host a summer intern. Contact the NPB, (800) 456-7675, for more information about the 2007 internship possibilities.

