

Bright future for ag engineers

OUR team is growing again, and we recently hired an undergraduate student, Jason Schuster, to help us with our energy efficiency projects for ISU Farm Energy this semester. Schuster grew up on a dairy farm south of Dubuque, near the town of Zwingle. He's a senior in ag engineering at Iowa State. He brings with him lots of practical work experience from



Farm Energy
DANA SCHWEITZER

the family farm, 4-H and FFA, as well as new skills from his recent engineering intern-

ships with John Deere in Waterloo. I asked him to share some of his thoughts with our readers this month:

How does energy management affect Iowa farmers? Energy management is at the core of modern Iowa farming practices. It's hard to go very far anymore without hearing terms like "fluid efficiency" or "consumption rate" with respect to farm

equipment. Poor energy management can mean the loss of potential income, which may jeopardize opportunities for the future generation of farmers.

How do you define energy efficiency? Energy efficiency is all about minimizing inputs to achieve the greatest possible output. This is increasingly important as resources become stressed from a growing population.

Why did you choose ISU for college? I knew from a very young age I was a Cyclone. I was very active in 4-H and FFA, both of which had impactful advisers that were Iowa State alumni. ISU presents endless opportunities for leadership experiences, academic excellence and research. Attending ISU is the best decision I've made so far.

Why ag engineering for your major? ISU boasts one of the most highly regarded ag and biosystems engineering programs in the nation for both undergraduate and graduate studies. My background in agriculture and my interest in science allowed me to feel right at home in Ames. Being an engineer will allow me to be on the frontlines of the technological advances in our industry. It is an exciting time to be in the ABE field.

What's the most useful thing you've learned as a student? I've found through my classes and leadership experiences that there are always multiple solutions to a problem and many methods for how to get to those solutions. What makes for a successful outcome is how you handle the situation, plan for the unexpected and communicate your answer.

Describe your internship experiences at John Deere. During my two previous internships with Deere in Waterloo, I had the opportunity to serve as a manufacturing engineer in 9R Tractor Final Assembly and as a test engineer in Large Tractor Product Test and Evaluation. It was a phenomenal experience and work environment. My projects centered on the 7R, 8R and 9R tractor platforms.

What's the most useful thing you learned as an intern? My internship experiences taught me that life is full of surprises and unexpected turns. It's easier to just go with the flow, but also necessary to remain focused or you'll never reach your destination.

What did you enjoy the most about growing up on a farm? Farming is full of day-to-day challenges, but even more numerous than the challenges are the lessons to be learned by them. Growing up on a farm gave me the tools I needed to build a foundation for a successful future. Whether the task at hand was bringing in a load of corn, milking cows or just day-to-day activities, there was always a learning opportunity. Each day I draw on past experiences that make me thankful for being brought up on a family farm.

Would you like to return to the family farm in the future? Agriculture is a significant part of my life. Helping on the farm keeps me focused on current issues faced by today's farmers. It's difficult for me to imagine my life without the impact of the family farm.

Schweitzer is program coordinator for ISU Farm Energy in collaboration with the Iowa Energy Center.



Because "Good Enough" Isn't Good Enough.

We don't have to build each product stronger and heavier than it needs to be. We don't have to offer everything in multiple configurations and sizes to meet farmers' unique needs. And we don't have to test each new design for hundreds of hours, and thousands of acres, before going to market. **But if we didn't...it just wouldn't be a Summers.**



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