



TALL Cohort XVI
Session II – Lubbock/Amarillo, TX
October 22 – 26, 2018

Casey Crabtree #3

Monday, October 22, 2018 – Lubbock Session

Dinner and Social at Dan and Linda Taylor’s

What a treat it was to reconvene with all of our fellow TALL cohorts since our last session in July. This was even more special as we got to spend the evening at Dan and Linda Taylor’s house and multiple barn cotton farming “museum”. We toured the property learning about the history of cotton farming from a ginning pioneer in Mr. Taylor, who later in the evening it was announced that he will be honored with an Agriculture Lifetime Achievement Award at our Austin session in January. Several TALL Alumni and Texas Tech University Dean of CASNR Dr. Bill Brown joined us for a delicious real chuckwagon campfire cooked meal sponsored by Lindsay an industry leader in crop irrigation. This was a great way to kick off our time on the South Plains

Tuesday, October 23rd, 2018

Bayer Crop Science Seed Cotton Facility

Jerry Barrier of Bayer Crop Science the makers of Deltapine cotton seed toured us around their massive new one hundred fifty million dollar seed cotton facility north of Lubbock. This Lubbock facility produces two million bags of cotton seed for farmers each year. It was quite the sight to see pallets and pallets of bagged cotton seed in their one hundred and fifty thousand square foot climate controlled warehouse. Outside of this impressive operation it was really interesting to learn the large and unique roll Texas plays as a leader in seed cotton for the United States as well as the world. The favorable climate and infrastructure investment like Bayer’s make Texas the king of seed cotton for planting.

Lubbock Cotton Growers Co-op Gin

Jerry Butman General Manager of Lubbock Cotton Growers Co-op spoke to us about the cotton ginning industry and toured us through his gin that was just gearing up to really kick off ginning season. This gin last year produced ninety-seven thousand six hundred and three cotton bales in 2017 from his producers in a fifty to sixty mile radius. The average weight of a cotton bale is 480 pounds.

It is often asked during a stop or tour what is the biggest challenge the person or company faces, for Jerry and Lubbock Cotton Growers it was labor and especially as it relates to finding and keeping truck drivers. The ginning business is seasonal and once the season starts it is twenty-four hours a day seven days a week until all the cotton has been ginned.

Heinrich Farms

Just across the road from Lubbock Cotton Growers, Bert Heinrich took us to a cotton field where he has below ground drip irrigation tape installed. Bert gave us a detailed explanation of how to install the tape one foot under the ground. Four gallons of water per minute irrigation helps him raise an extra bale to a bale and a half of cotton vs non irrigated dry land cotton. We were able to learn how his irrigation motor worked with his large filtration system to keep clean water in his drip irrigation tape. Bert also discussed with us his move towards minimum till farming and how he is working to improve the organic matter of the soil in his fields. Bert also shared with us some of the highs and lows he has experienced over the decades as a cotton farmer on the South Plains.

Texas Tech University and Commodity Group Speakers

Texas Tech College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources (CASNR) hosted us for an afternoon hearing from several commodity associations. Farmers Compress/Olam Cotton sponsored us lunch prepared by the universities Red Raider Meats. Dr. Brown Dean of Texas Tech CASNR kicked us off sharing with some of the good things going on in the CASNR. With two thousand one hundred undergraduates and a total of five million dollars in scholarships the college is growing at a rate of seven percent. The meat science department also gave us a tour of their meat lab and processing facilities, which generates almost two million dollars in sales annually all while training and teaching students.

Kody Bessent of Plains Cotton Growers, Stephanie Pruitt of Texas Corn Producers, Jennifer Blackburn of the National Sorghum Producers, and Shelly Nutt of the Texas Peanut Producers Board spoke to us about their respective commodity groups and organizations. We learned a plethora of great things from each of the speakers on state and national legislative issues and how they represent and positively impact their producers and members. However one of the biggest takeaways I had was how well and often each of these organizations work together for the good of the area and producers. It was a great experience to have these groups come and speak to us that afternoon.

USDA Lubbock Cotton Classing Office

Danny Martinez is the General Manager of the USDA Lubbock Cotton Classing Office that classifies twenty percent of all the cotton grown in the United States. That equates to somewhere between a staggering three to four million bales of cotton classed each year. It was impressive to see how automated and computerized the process was. We were given a crash course in cotton grading and learned new terms like micronaire and mote. With the growing transition to round cotton modules wrapped in plastic, the USDA recently added a grade for plastic in a cotton bale. Once the samples have been classed the USDA bales the samples and sells them to cover a good percentage of their annual operating cost. Roughly one thousand samples can be remade into a 480 pound cotton bale.

TALL Lubbock Reception - Bayer Museum of Agriculture

The Bayer Museum of Agriculture hosted us for our Lubbock reception in their amazing museum and facilities. If you haven't had a chance to visit the museum I highly recommend a visit. It was a great evening to mingle and mix with TALL alumni and supporters of the TALL program. The evening included

Dan Taylor being officially announced as receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award during our Austin session, and Tonya Foerster was honored for her work as the outgoing TALL Alumni President. Texas Corn Producers Board was also honored for their many years of support for the TALL Program. Zach Brady TALL Alum delivered a strong message on the importance and higher call of TALL and its place in the State of Texas and Nation. From there we each ventured out with our individual dinner host, I was hosted by longtime friend Brett Bamert of Bamert Seed Co.

Wednesday, October 24th, 2018

Conestoga Diamond Ethanol – Diamond Nutrition Energy Cubes

Our morning started off at Conestoga's Diamond Ethanol and Diamond Energy Cube Facility outside of Levelland. Unfortunately the ethanol producing portion of the plant was not in operation during our tour, but we were able to tour the Diamond Nutrition Energy Cube production facility. Diamond Nutrition Energy Cubes are 28% crude protein, 8% fat, and 10% fiber cattle feed. We were able to see the process of taking loose dried distiller grains go through the extrusion process of extreme heat and cold to produce the ¾ inch diameter cube in a very short period of time. Diamond nutrition has had good luck selling their cubes to ranchers to supplement what the grass is not providing nutritionally in the late fall, winter, and early spring months. Diamond's energy cubes are sold bag or bulk and they sell several thousand tons a month.

Bamert Seed Co.

When we think of farming we often think of corn, wheat, soybeans et cetera, but what might not come to mind is perennial grass seed. But native grass seed is the sole focus of Bamert Seed Co in Muleshoe, Texas. Bamert Seed will have over 4,000 acres of seed planted and any one time and up to 100 varieties of native grasses and flowers. We toured around their storage, sorting, blending and sacking facility by owners Nick and Brett Bamert (both TALL Alumni). It was impressive to see the big equipment they use to screen and filter what is harvested down to just the seed. We learned about the industry process for testing and germination to ensure what a customer is buying will have the correct qualities to seed and make a stand of grass.

Stonegate Dairy, High Plains Underground Water District, Birch Family Vineyards, Kunafin & Blue Sky Dairy

Due to soaking October rain and many of our stops being on dirt roads Bamert Seed opened up their conference room to allow the speakers to come to us. Joe Osterkamp of Stonegate Dairy spoke to us on current and future dairy economics and how the Texas Panhandle has seen great growth in dairies in the last two decades. There has been one billion dollars in infrastructure built in the Texas Panhandle to support the new dairy industry like cheese plants and powdered milk plants. Jason Coleman of the High Plains Underground Water District spoke to the group on the current and future state of the underground aquifers in the Panhandle and South Plains. This is a critically important issue for the people of this area and for future generations. We were able to learn about some of the many services the water district provides and how we can learn and become involved in water issues for our area. Keith and Brenna Birch of Birch Family Vineyards spoke to us about their journey farming traditional crops and how a couple years long drought led them to viticulture. They shared with us their learnings

and accomplishments of five years in the grape growing business. The Texas wine industry has grown considerably in the last two decades and now contributes thirteen billion dollars annually to the Texas economy. Clifton Castle also presented to the group on his company Kunafin that specializes in eradicating or controlling flies on agriculture operations using larvae eating wasps. A big thanks to Joe Osterkamp of Stonegate Dairy for sponsoring the Leal's Mexican food lunch during the speaking presentations. Last but certainly not least, was a quick impromptu tour of Blue Sky Dairy along a paved road set up by fellow TALL XVI members Michael Lawrence and John Van de Pol both dairymen near Muleshoe. We were able to get an inside look at a circular rotating milking machine that can milk dozens of cows at one time. We were also able to see the beds where the cows live when they aren't milking. The quick dairy stop was a big hit for the group!

Caviness Beef Packers

Caviness Beef Packers in Hereford, Texas kicked off the Amarillo leg of Session II. Trevor and Regan Caviness President and Vice President of the company spoke and discussed with the group in a very open and relaxed way about their business and changes and trends in the beef industry. We toured their packing house that harvests eighteen hundred head of cattle a day and employs eight hundred people. They were just beginning expansion of their facility that will allow them to harvest two thousand six hundred head per day while employing fourteen hundred people. While Caviness specializes in harvesting of cows and bulls they are expanding into younger higher quality carcasses to support their branded beef product lines they are developing. I was really impressed with Caviness and how they operate as a company, I will remember this visit for a longtime.

Sweet Bran

Sweet Bran gets the award for the most innovative business model of the trip. We toured Cargill's Sweet Bran Plant in Bovina, Texas that supplies feed inputs to feedlots and dairy's in the area. Cargill has several facilities throughout the Midwest that process corn for high-fructose corn syrup, much of the byproduct from the process makes up the highly nutritionally consistent branded Sweet Bran product. The meal product is roughly forty percent moisture and is shipped on a one hundred and ten car unit train to the Texas Panhandle. The model is successful because it moves a human grade waste stream of feed stuffs from an area of excess in the Midwest to the Texas Panhandle that is a deficit area for feed stuffs. The science behind Sweet Bran is that it is identical nutritionally from load to load and that helps that cattle's rumen to remain healthy for increased weight gain or milk production. In recent years Sweet Bran has begun fortifying their product with macro and micro minerals to save time for the customer in ration mixing on their operations. The Bovina Facility will easily ship out two hundred truck per day seven days a week to their customers, and the truck drivers are responsible for the customers inventory. Other branded products that Sweet Bran makes are OneTrak a lactating dairy designed product and Ramp a twenty one day calf starter product that utilizes alfalfa hay and promotes health and increased weight gain.

Scott Seed Company

We were treated to wonderful hospitality from Scott Seed with a barbeque dinner at their headquarters in Hereford, Texas. Coby and Chad Kriegshauser own and manage Scott Seed Co. that is a leader in

sorghum planting seed. They breed and develop new varieties of sorghum to increase yield and withstand tough climate and weather. Scott Seed will produce four hundred thousand bags of seed sorghum per year for their customers. We not only learned about Scott Seed but we learned more about the sorghum industry as a whole and how the Texas Panhandle is the world capital for seed sorghum. Coby also shared about the industries struggle with the sugarcane aphid destroying milo and drastically increasing the cost of production to rid a field of the aphid. Scott Seed has been very active in trying to lobby for approvals to do gene editing to solve the sugarcane aphid problem. Deaf Smith County Agriculture Extension Agent Rick Auckerman also spoke to us on agriculture in the county and the changes he has seen over the years.

Thursday, October 25th, 2018

West Texas A&M University and Commodity Group Speakers

The next morning we met at the brand new state of the art West Texas A&M Paul Engler College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences. Texas Cattle Feeders Association sponsored breakfast for us to start the morning. We were treated to a great tour of the new building by Dr. Lance Keith Department Head of the college. No detail was spared when designing the building and the meat science lab is absolutely incredible with a focus on learning and collaboration. John Smithee Texas House Representative for District eighty-six spoke to us on the upcoming legislative session and changes he has seen in Austin in his thirty plus years as a representative. Ross Wilson President and CEO of Texas Cattle Feeders Association spoke to us about his organization that represents forty-five hundred members and provides twenty-eight percent of the nations fed beef or roughly six million head of cattle per year. The Texas Panhandle is the heart of cattle feeding for the nation and feeds two million bushels of corn per year. TCFA is working hard to influence issues such as trade, immigration reform, fake "meat" labeling, animal ID and traceability, and eminent domain. Rodney Moser Executive Vice President of the Texas Wheat Producers Association spoke to us about his organization that is funded by a two cent per bushel checkoff of every bushel of wheat sold in the state. TWP works on research and developing new varieties, developing the export market, educating consumers, and legislative issues. Texas typically plants six million acres of wheat of which about three million acres are harvested. Lastly, we were given a presentation from WTAMU graduate students about their beef cloning program and the research projects around cloning and producing the rare and desirable prime yield grade one carcasses. My takeaway from the morning is we have some really great commodity organizations based in Amarillo and there are some very exciting things happening at the WTAMU College of Agriculture.

Timber Creek Veterinary Clinic

Dr. Gregg Veneklassen hosted us at his vet clinic between Canyon and Amarillo to learn more about cloning and gene editing of livestock and the possibilities and future of animal agriculture. Dr. Veneklassen is an industry leader in horse cloning and is really passionate about cloning horses for the rodeo bucking industry. We were able to see a new colt that was the offspring of two clones one of only three in the world. Dr. Veneklassen has a unique perspective on agriculture given his experiences and shares his ideas in a compelling way. He showed us a clone to Royal Blue Boon the National Cutting Horse Association Highest producing mare with offspring wings over ten million dollars. Another thing that Dr. Veneklassen was passionate about was the up and coming generation and how they are going

to change the world and be problem solvers. He employees many pre-vet and vet students that he said help keep him young and challenge his thinking. The field of cloning and gene editing holds a lot of promising aspects that could improve or correct many challenges we have in animal agriculture, however public perception will also play a large role in how much science will be allowed.

Micro Technologies

Texas Cattle Feeders Association sponsored lunch for us at Micro Technologies. Micro Technologies supports the feedlot and dairy industry with feed batching systems and feeding systems technology and software. It was interesting to learn their business model as they provide some assets, many services, and a lot of vital technology for customers who in turn for using their systems purchase, micro minerals, drugs, and additives from Micro Technologies. It was easy to see how Micro can bring a lot of value and improve a feedlot or dairy operation. We also were able to tour their large warehouse and see a demo version of their micro ingredient batching system that would be installed in a customers feed mill.

Snack Pak 4 Kids

Dyron Howell is the impressive leader of Snack Pak for Kids that is a non-profit organization that provides students with reliable nutritious food over the weekend so they can succeed in school. The organization started eight years ago with ten students and has grown to serve fourteen thousand students each week in the Texas Panhandle and now the San Antonio area. The model works like this, Snack Pak purchases the food from Labatt Food Services and brings to a warehouse where volunteers pack grocery bag with items like Pop-tarts, fruit cups, cereal, peanut butter, or canned goods depending on the age of the child. From there volunteers distribute the sacks to schools where students and teachers discreetly distribute the sacks to students on Fridays who have signed up for the service at no cost to the child or parent. The idea is to provide a source of food to students who's home is food insecure so they will have food to eat over the weekend or use during the week, because a child can't learn if they are hungry.

Given the success of the Snack Pak program area industries have joined in to help, particularly the beef and cattle industry like Texas Cattle Feeders Association and the dairy industry milk co-ops like Southwest Dairy Farmers, Dairy Max and Select Milk Producers. The beef industry supplies a high quality high protein 100% ground chuck roast and brisket beef stick in every sack providing 9 grams of protein each week and is a favorite of the kids. The dairy industry supplies Snack Pak with bottles of Fairlife milk which has 50% more protein, 30% more calcium, and half the sugar of ordinary milk due to an ultrafiltration process that also makes the product shelf stable at room temperature.

While all of the above things about Snack Pak are so incredible, Dyron is a great example of local community leadership. He saw a problem and is stepping up to the plate to help with childhood hunger in his community. There are a lot of important lessons that can be learned from the Snack Pak model as it relates to grassroots leadership.

TALL Amarillo Reception – Amarillo Country Club

Our Amarillo reception at the Amarillo Country Club was a great evening to meet new alumni and supporters and catch up with old friends. TALL Alumni Casey Cook emceed the evenings events, where

we were treated to a great presentation from Craig Huffines Executive Vice President of the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA). After official introductions from the current TALL class we headed off with our dinner hosts. Robert Ward and myself were hosted by Danny Nusser of Texas A&M Agrilife Extension. Danny is the Regional Program Leader where he provides leadership for Extension educational programs in agriculture and natural resources for 41 counties in the northern part of the state.

Friday, October 26th, 2018

Lone Star Dairy Products

Our morning started off with a tour of Lone Star Dairy Products new facility in Canyon, Texas. The facility was built and opened two years ago and takes raw fluid milk and processes it into dried nonfat milk powder. Lone Star Dairy Products is an extremely sanitary place so we dressed up in special clothing and shoes to tour the facility what employs approximately eighty-five people. The facility receives on average fifty large milk tanker trucks every day from area dairies. Also the facility is operational twenty-four hours a day three hundred and sixty-five days a year. Using a lot of heat, they evaporate off the fluid to get to the end product of fifty pound bags of nonfat dried milk powder. Using advanced filtration they are able to capture two hundred and fifty thousand gallons of water each day from the fluid milk processing. Half of that water is reused at the facility and the other half it given to the city's municipal water system.

Friona Industries – Swisher County Cattle Company

Trevor Peterson General Manager of Swisher County Cattle Company feedlot and Don Gales CEO of Friona Industries toured us around their feedlot near Happy, Texas. Swisher County Cattle Company is home to eighty-five thousand head of cattle, and those animals eat over three million pounds of feed a day! Friona Industries in total has 8 feedlots in the Texas Panhandle and Southwest Kansas and will feed over one million head of cattle per year. The cattle are fed three times a day and checked every day by pen riders for health and wellbeing. While it was extremely impressive to see that many cattle and watch the two hundred fifty ton per hour feed mill at work, the discussion with Trevor and Don was very interesting. They talked with us about their hedging strategy for their cattle and commodities, and some of their struggles with finding and retaining employees. Don was very passionate about our need to get the labeling right on the new lab grown or fake meat which he uses the term artificial dietary protein. Our time at the feedlot was a great way to end our week in the panhandle.

Final Remarks

TALL XVI had an amazing second session on the South Plains and in the Panhandle. Having grown up in the Panhandle most of my life I was excited to share my area of the world with my fellow cohorts and friends. What I didn't expect was how much I would learn about the place I know the most about, I am a much more informed and knowledgeable person about my area. One thing is for certain the size and scale of agriculture in the Texas Panhandle is massive, this region really is feeding and clothing the world. This region of Texas is home to some really amazing commodity organizations that work hard and work together to advance and protect agriculture. I continue to be so impressed by the knowledge and personal connections I am gaining as a TALL participant. The comradery amongst the group depend and

flourished during our second session with all the bus time during the week. I have since enjoyed sharing what I learned with my coworkers, community, and family and friends during the holidays.

A special thanks to Dr. Jim and Jennifer Martinez, Tanya Forester for all things Lubbock, and Casey Cook and Brady Miller for all things Amarillo and also a thank you to the many sponsors, donors, and supporters of TALL XVI Session II!



Kassidy Martin

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TALL Session 2 – Lubbock/Amarillo

Production, Producers, Progress

TALL Session 2 was just as incredible as Session 1, and to top it off this time we were in my part of the world! We kicked off Session 2 on October 22, 2018 with a wonderful dinner hosted by Dan and Linda Taylor. The Taylor's are great supporters of the TALL program and even better hosts. I enjoyed seeing Mr. Taylor's small "museum" of items from cotton gins, especially his miniature cotton gin. I also enjoyed finding bale identification tags from my local area. The Taylor's hosted a chuck wagon cookout that resulted in some amazing food and fellowship. This dinner and social was a great way to catch up with my cohorts as well as meeting some TALL alumni.

Bayer/Monsanto Tour

Day 2 started bright and early with a stop at the Bayer/Monsanto facility. At this facility they de-lint the cotton seed so that it can be sold back to the producers. Mr. Jerry Barrier was kind enough to give us a tour of the entire facility. He talked about the struggles and added expenses of building a plant in the Lubbock city limits, as well as the issues that arose of building so close to the Lubbock airport. I found it impressive how this facility is able to keep cotton seed hybrids for different companies. It required extreme organization by the employees. It was also interesting to see all the technology that the facility is using not only for sorting and bagging, but also for the organization of storing the cotton seed.

Lubbock Cotton Growers Co-op Gin

Our next stop was at the Lubbock Cotton Growers Co-op Gin. The gin manager, Mr. Jerry Butman, gave us a tour of the facility. He walked our group through the mechanics of the cotton gin and we were able to see each step up close and personal. I was impressed with how clean the gin was and their commitment to safety by not leaving cotton stubble out for fire possibilities. Mr. Butman talked us through the cotton grading card as well as some of the struggles he faces. One struggle that seemed to be persistent through our entire session was the ability to find dependable labor. I find it fascinating that cotton gins are still using the same idea that Eli Whitney invented in 1793, yet they continue to increase their bale count with additional technology and proficiency. One of the questions that I asked Mr. Butman was if the gin noticed more time being spent processing the new round bales. I thought it was interesting that they adapted so quickly, and they have not lost any efficiency with the new round bales. This proves how quick the agriculture industry can adapt to new trends and technology.

Heinrich Farms

We then went to one of Bert and Shelley Heinrich's farms. Mr. Heinrich talked to us about cotton farming in the Lubbock area. The field we were at was on a drip irrigation system. As a lender, I found it interesting that some of his land lords had helped financially with the installation of the drip irrigation systems. He talked about the trials and errors of installation and his pipe system. I appreciated Mr.

Heinrich being so willing to talk about his farming operation and business, while showing us his cotton crop.

Texas Tech University – Dean of CASNR and the Commodity Group Speakers

After leaving Mr. Heinrich's we were treated to an awesome lunch at Texas Tech University. The meat was from Red Raider Meats, that we were able to tour after we ate. While we ate we heard from Dr. Brown, the new dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CASNR) at Texas Tech. Dr. Brown talked about the current enrollment at the CASNR as well as the future plans for enrollment and education. After Dr. Brown each of the commodity groups in Lubbock talked with us. We had the pleasure of hearing from Kody Bessent with Plains Cotton Growers, Shelly Nutt with Texas Peanut Producers, Stephanie Pruitt with Texas Corn Producers, and Jennifer Blackburn with National Sorghum Producers. Each of the commodity groups talked about their respected commodity production in Texas as well as the efforts with government officials to support our farmers. They also talked about the importance of research and education for their respected commodity. Jennifer Blackburn talked about the issues with sorghum and China. She talked about the difficulties her group had to work through with the increased tariffs and Chinese investigation into American sorghum production. With China being the main source of exports for the sorghum industry, it was and still is a catastrophic event for sorghum producers in the United States.

Lubbock Cotton Classing Office

Our last tour of the day was at the Lubbock Cotton Classing Office led by Mr. Danny Martinez. Mr. Martinez explained to us that each bale of cotton has to be classed. We walked through the facility to see the process. Although there is quite a bit of manual labor involved in the separation process and classing, the technology used for weighing and sorting was impressive. Mr. Martinez talked about the importance of balancing the weighing machines multiple times a day to consistently give precise sample sizes. I was fascinated at how the cotton classers knew the classing differences so well and could do the classing by memorization.

TALL Reception at the Bayer Museum of Agriculture

Our reception was at the new Bayer Museum of Agriculture in Lubbock. This was a special reception to me because I was able to watch my mom accept an award on behalf of the Texas Corn Producers for being such strong supporters of the TALL program. At the reception I was able to meet the TALL alumni as well as program supporters from the Lubbock area. I was treated to supper by Plains Cotton Growers with Mary Jane Buerkle and Shawn Wade. We were joined with Dan and Linda Taylor, Stanley Young, and Lacey Hoelting. Mary Jane and Lacey are both TALL alumni so we talked about their TALL experiences and what I have gained so far through the program. I also enjoyed talking with Dan and Linda Taylor more about their old cotton gin and how farming has changed since Dan started.

Conestoga Diamond Ethanol Plant

Our first stop on Day 2 of our session was at the Conestoga Diamond Ethanol Plant in Levelland. Unfortunately the ethanol plant itself was not running due to a low supply of sorghum in the panhandle. However we were able to see the Diamond Nutrition Energy Cubes production side. This side of the plant produces cattle cubes out of the by-products from the ethanol production. Since the ethanol side was not running, the cube side has been shipping in by-product so they could continue production. This

facility was heavy in machinery. They can run on minimal labor from humans, as most of the production is computerized. It was neat to see how this plant found a way to become sustainable by using all of their by-products, for an income producing opportunity to maximize profits.

Bamert Seed

We then went to Bamert Seed where we learned about the different types of grass seeds that the Bamert's produced and sell. Bamert seed was started in 1951 with the purpose of producing and selling grass seed. I asked if this was their original plan or if they adapted to the grass seed business plan after a few years. They said that their granddad's intent was to provide a quality grass seed production facility. This is something we do not typically see in the panhandle of Texas. I also thought it was neat that you do not have to be in the wholesale market to buy the grass seed from the Bamert's, anyone can buy and there is not a minimum quantity required in order to purchase. Another way that the Bamert's provide excellent customer service is by providing a custom blend for their customers. This level of customer service will help them continue to succeed, along with their willingness to become visible online with an online store. The Bamert's were generous enough to provide us a great lunch meal. Due to the weather our next few speakers spoke to us while we were still in Muleshoe since we were not able to go to their facilities.

Joe Osterkamp

Mr. Osterkamp was kind enough to originally offer his dairy for us to tour, however with the weather and rain we could not get to his dairy. He was still kind enough to come speak to us during our lunch at Bamert Seed. Mr. Osterkamp talked about his dairy, but focused heavily on the issues facing the dairy industry. He said that his biggest struggle is finding quality help on the dairy, which was a common struggle we heard throughout this session at our stops. He also talked to us about how careful he has to be with public perceptions. The dairy industry is so heavily scrutinized on the quality of life for the cows as well as the treatment of the cows. One thing we talked about with Mr. Osterkamp as a group was the importance of education and all of us being advocates for our producers, so that we can truly help the public understand that agriculture is our way of life, and that livestock is always treated humanely

High Plains Underground Water District – Jason Coleman

Mr. Coleman came and talked to us about the purpose of the High Plains Underground Water District, which is to protect, preserve, and conserve aquifers in the area. One thing I learned is that water districts are political subdivisions. He showed us printouts of the areas that the High Plains district covers, where the water sources come from including the Ogallala and Santa Rosa Aquifers. He also showed us where the wells for his districts are, along with the changes that have happened to them over the past year.

Kunafin – Clifton Castle

I am just going to start this paragraph with who knew bugs could be so interesting?! Mr. Castle showed us how the parasitic wasps that Kunafin sells attack the flies when they are in the larvae stage. Their product is used heavily in the cattle market, especially at dairies and feed yards to manage the fly population. Mr. Castle also talked about how using these parasites helps the dairies and feed yards prove they are being environmentally safe by using a natural source to manage the fly population, making it safe for the surrounding areas and neighbors to the cattle facility. This is one more way that

we can educate the public on how the agriculture industry is trying to be safe and smart with our techniques.

Burch Family Vineyards – Keith and Brenna Burch

The Burch's was generous enough to offer us a tour of their vineyard, but due to the weather we were not able to go. However, they were still kind enough to come and talk to our group about what made them want to start a vineyard, how they started and continue to grow, along with some really neat Texas Wine facts. As an agriculture lender I thought it was neat to hear why they decided to start a vineyard. They knew they needed to diversify their production business, and with some education from vineyard conferences and personal research and contacts, they decided this was the best option for them. The pictures of their vineyard and progress pictures were neat to look out. Some of my favorite facts that they Burch's provided include: In 2004 there were 50 wineries and there are now 436, 80% of Texas grapes come from the high plains, and that the Texas wine industries contributes \$13.1 billion dollars annually to the Texas economy.

High Plains Dairy – Harry DeWitt

After we left Bamert Seed, our cohorts Michael and John organized a quick tour of High Plains Dairy owned by Harry DeWitt. At the dairy we were able to see the dairy cattle on the carousel getting milked, the cattle in the holding pens waiting to be milked and the environment controlled barns where the dairy cattle live. Although this was a quick trip, Mr. DeWitt was great to show us around his dairy and answer the few questions we had time for. The most amazing thing to me about dairy cattle is how they just know how to get on and off the carousel for the milking.

Caviness Beef Packers

Our first stop in the Amarillo area was at Caviness Beef Packers. Trevor and Terry Caviness who are the current President and CEO respectively, first gave us a brief history of Caviness Beef Packers. They also talked about their current relationships and products offered, which include major beef retailers and fast food restaurants. They also talked to us about their plans to expand the plant to a 2-shift operation style. They talked about how this would allow their current employees an opportunity to grow professionally to shift leaders and managers. I was very impressed at the level of care and concern they have for their employees, and the actions that Caviness Beef packers does to make their employees feel appreciated. We were then given a tour of the facility. Mr. Trevor and Mr. Terry were great to guide us through the process and answer any questions we had. Mr. Terry was my group leader. Our group talked with him about the importance of the agriculture industry being open to the public on how processes happen. He talked about how initially they did not give tours, but by opening up the facility, the public can see that everything is done humanely and clean. This continues to show if we can be educators and advocates for agriculture, we can help the general public understand the processes and the level of care we put into every action.

Cargill/Sweet Bran

We then went to Cargill/Sweet Bran in Bovina. I lived in Dalhart for 5 years so I was interested to learn the history and business plan of Cargill/Sweet Bran. Before we toured the facility we learned about the products that Cargill/Sweet Bran offers, their partnership with BNSF railway to keep products consistently moving, and their business goals and philosophy. One of their business goals that really

stuck out to me was that the customer would not recognize any hiccup or difficulty at the plant. To me this showed that Cargill recognized difficulties would arise, but the importance was how it was handled and that the customer would not ever notice. I think this is a great goal for us all to aim for in our businesses. We were then led on a tour of the facility where we watched rail cars being unloaded, the system room where 3 people could run the entire plant, and the loading dock where trucks were loaded. The level of technology that was being used was very impressive. Not only was technology used in the plant, but also each truck has an iPad that tells them which loading dock to go to, what their levels of product were, and which dock/bunker to go to at their unloading site. I was impressed that Cargill/Sweet Bran had piles covered and ready in case there was a storm and rail cars could not get to Bovina. This level of preparedness shows Cargill's true commitment to their customers. One thing we noticed on all the Sweet Bran trucks was they had a decal that said Hi Macey. When we asked about this every employee with us got choked up and teary eyed. The story is there was a young girl from Earth, Texas that had a family joke that the SweetBran trucks were following her. She passed away suddenly and her family went to SweetBran asking for a shirt to help remember Macey and that story. Cargill actually went above and beyond the request for a shirt. They donated a large sum of money to Macey's favorite hobby, the Springlake-Earth band, and put a decal on every SweetBran truck that said "Hi Macey". After the employees told us this story there was not a dry eye in our group, and I think it shows the true compassion and heart that everyone in the agriculture industry has.

Scott Seed – Hereford

Wednesday evening was spent at Scott Seed in Hereford. Scott Seed, is a seed company that is run by 3rd generation family members, who grow different varieties of sorghum seed and sell the seed to producers. Chad and Coby Kriegshauser are the main operators of Scott Seed now. They gave us a brief history on Scott Seed, gave us a tour of their warehouse, and also showed us some products that use sorghum including cereals and whiskeys. In their warehouse we were able to see some sorghum seed that was being shipped to Mexico, which was all packaged in Spanish seed bags. They also talked about the issues of sorghum with China, including the number of pallets that they have received back due to the fact that China refused them.

Rick Auckerman – Deaf Smith County Extension Agent

Mr. Auckerman spoke with us while we were at Scott Seed. He gave us a quick glimpse into the agriculture economy of Deaf Smith county which is mainly beef cattle. One of the facts that he gave us was that there are more than 3 million cattle fed within a 50-mile radius of Hereford, which is the county seat of Deaf Smith County, and includes dairy and feed yard cattle. That is a lot of cattle and helped them get the nickname "Cattle Capital of the World". Along with the cattle, their agriculture sector includes dry land and irrigated farming of cotton, corn, and milo with a heavy emphasis on grain due to the heavy cattle population.

West Texas A&M University – Dr. Lance Keith

Thursday morning started off at West Texas A&M University in their new agricultural complex. Dr. Lance Keith, welcomed us to campus, and he later gave us a tour of the new facility. This tour included the new meats lab, classrooms, meat store, and other research areas. The love and passion that Dr. Keith has for agriculture and the youth of agriculture is contagious. The relationship he has with his student body was obvious throughout our tour as he stopped to visit with every one of them. It is the

small acts like this that will help West Texas A&M University grow to be a highly recognized University. Dr. Keith introduced one of his graduate students who gave us her thesis presentation on the cloning program that West Texas A&M University has. This project is called the WT Prime One project and the goal is to produce the highest quality beef product as efficiently as possible. The WT Prime One Project clones carcass tissue with a goal of providing beef with excellent marbling, quality and yielding grades. The future of agriculture is endless with technology like cloning!

Representative John Smithee – Texas District 86

Representative Smithee talked to us briefly while we were at West Texas A&M University. He is a representative for House District 86 and has served this area since 1984. He talked to us regarding the main issues his area is facing which included education, school safety, and the farm bill. Coming from a small school town in the panhandle I know the impact that a successful public school has, and I am glad that he sees the importance of the schools and teachers in small panhandle towns.

Rodney Mosier – Texas Wheat Producers Association

Mr. Mosier who is the Executive Vice President of the Texas Wheat Producers came and talked to us while we were at West Texas A&M University as well. He talked about how the Texas Wheat Producers works as an organized voice in political issues for their producers not only in production but also in the marketing sector. This is especially important in years like now in getting a Farm Bill passed for the producers in tough economic times. Like other commodity groups they also focus on education to the public and research on wheat and other factors including water conservation practices.

Ross Wilson – Texas Cattle Feeders Association

Mr. Wilson is the President and CEO of Texas Cattle Feeders Association (TCFA). TCFA represents Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico, which accounts for 28% of the nation's fed cattle production. Like other commodity groups they focus on research, education, and government relations. TCFA was founded in 1967 by a group of 10 cattle feeders who saw the need for an organized coalition for their industry.

Timbercreek Vet Clinic – Dr. Gregg Veneklasen, D.V.M

Timbercreek Vet Clinic was probably my favorite stop of the entire session. Dr. Veneklasen is the industry leader in cloning and specializes in bucking horses for the NFR. Dr. Veneklasen talked about the importance of being a multi purpose veterinarian and focusing on small and large animals. I thought it was interesting on the importance he places on listening to his interns and young veterinarians. He knows they can help him become a better vet and also grow the business. I enjoy when mentors love to see their mentees grow and flourish. We were able to see cloned horses, and I instantly became a fan of Shrek. Shrek likes for his tongue to be held. Dr. Veneklasen was telling us that all of the horses that are cloned from Shrek have that same characteristic trait of liking their tongues to be held. The cloning technology is amazing. I was thinking how Dr. Veneklasen is cloning for performance of bucking in the NFR, while WT is cloning cattle for meat quality. Although they are cloning for different purposes, the same education and technology is still being used. The future of the animal industry is endless with the current technology we have and the desire to grow that education and technology.

MicroBeef Technologies –

MicroBeef Technologies in Amarillo hosted our lunch, and during this we had several employees of MicroBeef give the history and mission of MicroBeef. I still chuckle that the prototype for the MicroBeef mixing machine was made in a bedroom. MicroBeef talked about the technology and products that they offer, which allows for maximum efficiency in feeding and supplements to livestock. MicroBeef also recognized that fact that certain facilities would have custom feed rations, and they now carry those rations for those producers. We had a tour of their warehouse and even got to see their technology and machine work to mix the exact ration for a producer.

Snack Pak 4 Kids – Mr. Dyron Howell

Mr. Dyron Howell, who saw a need and took action to fix it, founded snack Pak 4 Kids. He noticed that several kids in the Will Rogers Elementary School were going hungry on the weekends. Upon doing some research he found that there was not a weekend food program for kids. Mr. Howell was aware that these kids would need food that could be prepared without adult supervision because of their home life. From 2010 to now, there are more than 10,000 kids in 51 school districts who receive a weekend food bag from Snack Pak 4 Kids. They have also grown this to service Amarillo College and Baptist Saint Anthony's hospital employees. What is so interesting is they have trained people in their area and have made all publication free so that any area can put together a weekend food program. Snack Pak 4 Kids is also a part of a cooperative that allows the food to be purchased at a low cost and is unison to all members. The stories that were given to us of testimonies from teachers and students tugged at every heartstring in the room. It showed how important food is to the success of our young kids. Mr. Howell has started a program that I think will continue to grow and service kids all across Texas.

Amarillo Reception Speaker – Craig Huffines

Craig Huffines who is the Executive Vice President of the American Quarter Horse Association in Amarillo was our keynote speaker. Mr. Huffines gave a brief history on the quarter horse breed and the growth of the breed in Texas. He pointed out how much their female involvement has increased, which makes me proud that women are becoming more involved in Agriculture. The AQHA is the largest breed registry and organization of the equine section. I appreciated the importance that AQHA puts on the youth sector including shows, trainings and scholarships. I think it is important to invest in the future of your industry.

Amarillo Dinner Host –

My dinner hosts were Dale Artho who is a farmer in the Wildorado area, and Clay Crist who is a TALL alumni and owns a fuel company in Wildorado. They took myself, and two of my other TALL cohorts to a great supper. We were able to talk about the difficulties that producers in the Amarillo are facing including the uncertainty of the Farm Bill and Crop Insurance. Mr. Artho also talked about his international travels to visit agricultural production facilities especially in South America.

Lone Star Dairy Products-

Our first stop on Friday was at Lone Star Dairy Products. We were able to go on a tour of the facility and see trucks full of milk be unloaded and follow the process of cleaning and evaporation to producing powder milk. Lone Star Dairy products only produces powder milk and butter. They told us that none of

their products are a finished product, they are all moved further into the processing chain to be put into other processed goods. We were able to watch the powdered milk be put into bags and their robot load these bags onto pallets. Lone Star Dairy Products focuses on sanitation and cleanliness so that their products are never contaminated. They told us that over a billion pounds of milk are produced annually in a radius of 70 miles from their plant, which makes them a central location to quickly receive milk products.

Swisher County Cattle Company – Trevor Peterson

Our last stop of Session 2 was at Swisher County Cattle Company in Tulia. SCCC is a member of Friona Industries, who is a leading feed yard company in the Texas Panhandle. Due to the recent rains we were not able to get out and tour the inside of facilities, but we did get a drive by tour. We were able to see the different divisions, which included the cattle and the mill division. We were able to see the mill function from the outside as it distributed feed to the feed trucks. We also talked about the duties of the yard division, which includes taking care of the facilities; the feed division, which is in charge of making the rations for optimal growth of cattle; and the office division, which is responsible for financials and information handling for the employees.

Summary -

Session 2 was packed full of location visits that focused on mass production, producers, and progress. I think the amount of technology that we saw was impressive and shows the agricultural sector's commitment to forward progress and growth. We also saw how involved the producers are in each sector, especially in the production part. When you move to the processing sector, we were still able to see the loyalty that the workers had for their company and the industry. I think we as an industry have also seen the importance of education, and how showing the public what we do and why we love it helps the consumer understand where their food comes from. I grew up in the panhandle so it was nice to be home, however it was neat to see so many things I had never seen before. I am proud to be a part of the agriculture industry and will continue to promote and be an Ag Advocate.



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Monday October 22nd, 2018

Dan & Linda Taylor's Dinner and Social

We started off our session at Mr. And Mrs. Taylor's home with a full chuck wagon dinner. Prior to dinner, Mr. Taylor took us on a tour of this cotton heaven. We saw demonstrations of how a cotton gin worked, what a full-size bale looks like, and more books about cotton than I ever knew existed. There was even a full-size cotton bale in a glass case that had been presented to President George Bush. After the tour, we all gathered around the chuck wagon to get our chicken fried steak and vegetables, then went inside to listen to Mr. Taylor tell us about his passion for farming cotton and where it all started. Once dinner was complete, next step was coffee and smores, in which Mr. Taylor was adamant that we eat since he was the one that actually went to the store for the smores. It was a great evening full of learning, food, and great conversation. Thank you to Mr. and Mrs. Taylor for hosting us on our kick off evening and congratulations to Mr. Taylor of winning the TALL Ag Leadership Award.

Tuesday October 23rd, 2018

Bayer Monsanto Facility Tour

We arrived at the Bayer Monsanto Facility about 7:30 that morning, in which it was still dark out and difficult to see the magnitude of the building. Mr. Barrier met us at the front door and he began to tell us about the history and processes of the facility. Essentially the facility has 6 functions which are, de-linting, black seed storage, color sorting, treating, packaging, and warehousing. During the de-linting process, sulfuric acid is sprayed on the seed, which turns the lint to dust making it just fall off the seed. The size of this building blew me away. They also have facilities in Arizona, Mississippi, and Costa Rica. This allows them to make seed year around with different seasons. It was said though that 98% of the seed they receive is grown south of Lubbock.

Lubbock Cotton Growers Co-op Gin

We arrived at the Lubbock Cotton Growers Co-op Gin to meet Mr. Butman and Mr. Reed. Mr. Butman discussed the gins history and told us they average 85,000 bales of cotton a year. This was my first time inside an actual cotton gin and I have heard many people say that the gin itself has not changed since Eli Whitney invented it. However, after seeing it first hand, the process may not have changed but the sophistication has dramatically increased. I felt as though I was walking onto the set of star trek at first. The automation has become very advanced, not at all what I had pictured. Mr. Reed is the cofounder of K-link. K-link is a online tool to help cotton growers and ginners sell their cotton at a fair price. Thank you to Mr. Butman and Mr. Reed for walking us around the gin!

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Heinrich Farms

Headed down a half dirt, half mud road, we end up in the middle of a cotton field half a mile to the nearest road. We are meet by Mr. Heinrich to discuss drip irrigation. Mr. Heinrich told us about how it all started and showed us the sophistication of the dip system. Mr. Heinrich told us that on average he gets anywhere from one bale to a bale in a half per yield when using drip. The nice thing about drip also is being able to run the fertilizer and have much less waste. The plastic tubing is plowed about 13 inches in the ground and put in every other row. The way the system is set up, is they can run the drip to different sections at different times, as well as flush out the system if need be. One of the biggest problems they run into is the plant roots penetrating the pipe or clogging the hole. It was amazing to hear Mr. Heinrich's passion for farming and the systems he has set up to produce more with less and less waste.

Texas Tech University – Animal & Food Science Building Livestock Arena Tour and Lunch

We started off our time at Texas Tech with a great fajita lunch and a welcome from Dr. Brown, Dean of the College of Agriculture Science and Natural Resources. He informed us that they have given over 5 million is scholarships and have an endowment of 67 million dollars. They have the number one Ag Communication program in the country and the number ag students coming in is on a steady incline. 90% of the undergrads are Texans.

Texas Peanut Producers – Shelly Nutt

Ms. Nutt was the next guest speak. She informed us that Texas is the second largest peanut producer next to Georgia. Peanuts have had a bad rap over the last few years, and they have had to do a tremendous amount of research to prove that peanuts are not unhealthy. They have recently released a new marketing campaign called "Inside Every Texas Peanut" in order to deliver their new message to the masses and the new age.

Plains Cotton Growers – Kody Bessent

Mr. Bessent kick off next. The Plains Cotton Growers was formed in 1956 by cotton producers for cotton producers. They serve 41 Texas counties and are a non-profit organization. Mr. Bessent spend a lot of his time on legal issues.

Texas Corn Producers – Stephanie Pruitt

Mrs. Pruitt began our next topic with letting us know that there was 2.4 million acres of land used for corn production in 2017. Most of the production comes out of the high plains and 90% of Texas corn is used for livestock feed. Corn producers do have check offs but are not required to participate.

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National Sorghum Producers – Jennifer Blackburn

Ms. Blackburn gave us a brief overview on the National Sorghum Producers, but very quickly into to presentation we went straight into the sorghum crisis that happened a little while back. Ms. Blackburn walked us through the whole process and what steps had to be taken to win back the fight. It was interest to learn the approach they had to take and how well they fought to protect the sorghum industry.

Lubbock Cotton Classing Office

Now that we have learned all about cotton production, it was time to gain an understanding on how cotton is classes. Mr. Martinez met us at the door to give a brief overview of the classing office. Come to find out Mr. Martinez had no agriculture back ground and is an industrial engineer, which is perfect since classing is a huge process flow. When classing cotton, they test fiber maturity, color grade, trash measurement, length, uniformity, color RD, color plus d, trash particles, and leaf grade. The automation to the classing process was amazing to watch. The part that was most interesting to me was the selling of the tested cotton. The classing office has the revenue of doing the tests, and then bales it all back up and can sell it as mixed class cotton as another source of revenue.

TALL Reception – Bayer Museum of Agriculture

We arrived at the Bayer Museum about six o'clock and greeted by alumni and TALL program supports from all around the panhandle. The museum itself was a sight to see. We mingled with others for a while until the program started, and what a well ran program it was. The program organizer Tanya Forrester was presented an award, in which she was not expecting. TALL XVI was then asked to the front to introduce ourselves to the audience. Once that was complete it was time for our dinner hosts to take us out. I was paired with Clifton Castle of Kunafine. Which is an interesting company in regard to fly control. Mr. Castle came to speak with us later in the session, so I will go into more about the company and Mr. Castle then. Thank you TALL XII Alum and everyone for a great reception and first day!

Wednesday October 24th, 2018

Conestoga Diamond Ethanol Plant Tour

Although we stopped at an ethanol plant, they weren't currently producing ethanol, so we were unable to tour the facility. We did however get to go into the pelleting operation of DDG. I had no idea that DDG cubes were so high in protein and fat. We use to struggle getting peanut and cottonseed cubes, but the DDG is as good as better. The cost is similar as well. The biggest challenges that the DDG pelleting mill faces are losing labor to the oil field and machine breakdowns. Currently the mill has 15 employees and 2 extruders. They are planning to expand to 4 extruders in the upcoming years.

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Bamert Seed Tour

Bamert Seed offers over 100 different types of seed to consumers and are farming about two to three thousand acres of seeds. It all began by oil/gas projects, in where they needed seed to bring back the natural look after the area had been used. One major factor they deal with is the amount of water it takes to produce these seeds. They have installed some drip, but it is costly. Bamert seed does 90% custom mixes for people in different areas but does have some stock items. When planting seeds, there is about an 18 month turn around, but will reproduce each year to follow. Most seeds have a shelf life of about 3-5 years but gets retested every 6-9 months. The harvester for their seeds is a modified combine, in which they had to create. After our tour, we then went inside to have lunch and listen to a few guest speakers.

Kunafin – Clifton Castle

Clifton Castle, who was my dinner host the night prior, showed up to talk more to the group about Kunafin. Kunafin is a fly control company in where they produce wasps, that lay their eggs in fly larva. This in turn kills the fly's life cycle. It is an interesting business, in where they do a month subscription to wasps and you get the amount you need every month to reduce the number of flies in a barn or facility. It was formed in 1959, but Mr. Castle's family and has been family operated ever since.

Joe Osterkamp – Stonegate Farms

We had scheduled to go to Mr. Osterkamps's dairy today, but unfortunately with the weather, they were underwater, so he came to us. He talked about the dairy industry as a whole and the dairy industry in the panhandle. One statement that he made was that one cheese plant uses 14 million pounds of milk a day. The other thing that he discussed was being an advocate in every way for the ag industry and animal welfare. They struggle with the animal welfare people every day and they take better care of their cattle than some do their dogs. Thank you, Mr. Osterkamp, for lunch!

Jason Coleman – High Plains Water District

Mr. Coleman came in to tell us about the water columns in the panhandle and how the High Plains Water District manages the water in the area.

Burch Family Vineyards

Again, we had planned to tour the Burch Family Vineyard, but the weather had other plans. Mr. and Mrs. Burch came in to talk to us about their journey into the wine industry. They found out that grapes like little water, dry, and low humidity so they decided to try and farm some. They started with 7 acres or 7,000 vines. It takes about 5 years to have your vines come to full harvest and there is a lot of expense up until that point.

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Blue Sky Dairy – Harry DeWitt

Since we were unable to tour Mr. Osterkamp's dairy, we had a couple of dairymen in our class arrange a quick stop at Blue Sky Dairy, a fully enclosed dairy. Mr. Dewitt walked us through the carousel process of milking the cows. It was brief tour, but most of us still manages to get cow manure on our clothes before leaving.

Caviness Beef Packers Tour

We arrived to the one of the last beef plants that will allow the public access for viewing, Caviness Beef Packers. Family owned and operated, they mainly harvest bulls and cows, but they do some co-packing, including 44 farms. They are able to harvest about 1,750 head every day. They are planning to expand another freezer and storage which should increase welfare of the workers and create another shift to offer more flexibility to their workers. Getting to see some of the items that they have found in cows' stomach was a sight to say the least. One of them looked like a baseball.

Sweet Bran

We were greeted by Mike Mossur when we arrived at the Sweet Bran facility. He explained that they produce 4 ingredients throughout the Midwest and have limited competition other than DDG wet. The four products are Sweet Bran, SB+, Ramp, and One Trak. The plant started in 2013 and is situated on 16 acres with 32 employees. They have the ability to unload 3 to 4 rail cars a day, which is amazing. They do this by a system that literally dumps the entire railcar over without ever unhooking from the line. The whole facility can be run with a few people just by the automation systems that they have in place to mix feed and load and unload ingredients.

Scott Seed

Our last stop of the day was Scott Seed. The Kriegshauser brothers welcomed us with open arms to a wonderful fajita dinner. During dinner we had Rick Aukerman, Deaf Smith County Extension, talk to us about his county and some of the issues they face. Once we completed dinner, we discussed the sorghum industry, toured the Scott Seed facility, and talked about gene editing in plants. It was great to hear the passion that these two brothers had for the industry and where they had taken it since they bought it from their dad years ago.

Thursday October 25th, 2018

West Texas A&M University Campus

We arrived to West Texas A&M fairly early, but were greeted with coffee and breakfast burritos to start off the day. I had the honor of being the presider this morning.

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Rep John Smitee

My first introduction was for Representative John Smitee. With all the elections going on, voting was a popular topic for Mr. Smitee to discuss. He encouraged us all to go vote for what and who you believe in. The legislative sessions will begin in January and there are 3 main topics he plans to discuss, which are education, school safety, and farm to market problems. Mr. Smitee has seen a lot of change over his 15-term service. Everything from social media rise, technologies, and press become smaller.

Ross Wilson – Texas Cattle Feeders Association

Mr. Wilson was our next speaker with the 4,500-member Texas Cattle Feeders Association. TCRA started in 1967 to represent cattle feeders in Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico in legislative issues. There are 10 billion fed cattle sales in the United States every year and 6.5 billion buying feeder cattle. Mr. Wilson had several issues he touched on and is dealing with at the moment. These include, mandatory price reporting, CME LC Contract, Kane Beef, trade, Farm Bill, fake meat, immigration reform, transportation, and animal ID. The largest two though at the moment are Eminent Domain and Trade. Their two main 2019 priorities are to finalize USRSB sustainability framework and program evaluation.

Rodney Moser – Texas Wheat Producers

Next was Mr. Moser, TALL IV alum, and Executive Director of the Texas Wheat Producers. Amarillo based association, with 4 staff members and 15-man producer elected board. They serve 4 districts in Texas. The main subject that Mr. Moser discussed was trade. Stating that exports need to be a 50% or it depresses prices.

Dr. Lance Keith – WTAMU Department Head, College of Ag and Natural Sciences

After I introduced Dr. Keith, he introduced Jessica Spuerber. Jessica is a graduate student at West Texas A&M and she walked us through what her graduate study is all about. Its about cloning and how they can create better meat with cloning. The part that I still can't believe is that they were able to take a culture off of a yield grade one, prime carcass and clone that exact animal. I am excited to see the end results of this experiment and what the future holds for our meat industry. Once Ms. Spuerber was done, Dr. Keith took us on a tour of the meats lab. This had to be one of the most state of the art meats labs I have ever seen. If I wanted to study meat, West Texas A&M is the place to be.

Tour Timbercreek Vet Clinic

Our next stop and probably one of the top ones for me, was Dr. Veneklausen and Timbercreek Vet Clinic. Having been involved in the equine industry my entire life, it was so fascinating to me to hear about the cloning process and where the future could go with gene editing in clones. Dr. Veneklausen is one of the worlds most renowned vets in the cloning industry and has create a huge market in the bucking horse industry. In fact, 27 of the horses going to this years National Finals Rodeo are out of

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clones. I could have stayed there forever discussing what this could potentially mean for the horse industry as whole.

MicroBeef Technologies Tour

Micro Tech, now owned by MWI Animal Health, touches 2 out of every 3 beef eating experiences in the United States. They do not charge people for their software or the hardware set up. They make their profits off only the products that they sell to the participants. The technologies they have created for the beef cattle industry are quite amazing. They have created a supplement feeding system for feed yards that is completely automated. They have also started to produce their own replacement parts by way of 3D printers.

Snack Pak 4 Kids

Last stop before the reception, was Snack Pak 4 Kids. They help feeding needing children all across the state of Texas. Their goal is to provide children with the nutritional requirements they need while still providing name brand products. They have created a system to deliver these lunch items to kids where they can keep from being embarrassed by others. Is a complete system of volunteers that help pack the backs and deliver them. The products are either donated or bought and stored in their warehouse. The amount of selflessness that goes into a program like this is unbelievable. In fact, it brought a few of our cohorts to tears.

TALL Reception – Amarillo Country Club

We arrived at the Amarillo Country Club to TALL Alumni and TALL Supports of the Amarillo area. We mingled around, all while having some snacks and drinks. Our guest speaker of the night was Craig Huffhines, Executive Director of the American Quarter Horse Association. He spoke to us about the equine industry as a whole, along with some fun facts about the Quarter Horse. Although I have been in the equine industry my entire life, there was still plenty to learn from Mr. Huffhines. Once the reception was over, it was time for our dinner hosts to take us out. I was paired with Dustin Clevenger from Ag Texas Crop Insurance, who is also a TALL Alumni. We went to an Italian restaurant and it was delicious.

Friday October 26th, 2018

Lonestar Dairy Products Tour

First stop on our last day was the Lonestar Dairy Products facility. It is essentially a processing facility for evaporated milk. After we put on our booties, hair nets, and sanitation coats, we took off into the facility for a tour. The level of sanitation that goes into this process is unreal. The milk trucks are pulled into a completely sealed room to be unloaded, after a wash of course. Although the process and sanitation were unbelievable, they were no match to the fact that the only water they use is the water that is pulled off of the milk. For the whole facility, its cleaned milk water. Since 80 percent of milk is water, they have plenty.

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Swisher County Cattle Company

The last stop of session #2 was a Swisher Cattle Company feed yard in Happy. Again, the weather limited us on hands on touring, but we still got to go mudding in a bus, which I have never done before. Swisher is owned by Friona industries and is managed by Trevor Peterson. They have about 85,000 head on the 1,600-acre property. They feed 3.5 million pounds of feed everyday and use their micro tech products to mix the feed. One of their major issues is labor. Their answer to that is increase automation and robotics in any aspect that is possible.

Conclusion

Session #2 was a huge success. Getting to learn about the amount for production agriculture that takes place in the Texas panhandle was unbelievable. One of my biggest take away from the entire session was the people. Those people are some of the nicest people you are ever around and will go out of their way to help their neighbors even if that is a competitor. Ag is a huge industry, but a small world and it makes me smile to know that there are still people out there that are about the betterment of the industry and not just themselves. Can't wait for session #3.