

Learning the Ropes

Abby Braaten spent her summer learning the ins and outs of soybean merchandising far away from home and a long way from where most soybeans are grown. An internship presented the perfect opportunity to get a taste of her preferred professional future.

The Wyndmere, North Dakota, native interned for Cargill. She was based in Raleigh, North Carolina,

where she worked as a commodity merchant intern. The position gave her a firsthand look at the business of commodity trading.

Cargill's Raleigh office manages five soybean-crushing plants scattered across Georgia, Alabama and North Carolina. Braaten was part of the team that purchased soybeans from local elevators as well as directly from farmers.



NDSGA scholarship winner Abby Braaten is back on the NDSU campus after interning in North Carolina.

“The location offered a great opportunity to learn,” Braaten says. “Raleigh is in a soybean-deficit area, so it’s very different there than it is at home.”

Braaten is a senior at North Dakota State University (NDSU) and is majoring in agriculture economics. She is also the 2016 recipient of the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association (NDSGA) scholarship. The scholarship provides \$5,000 to an upper-class student in NDSU’s College of Agriculture, Food Systems and Natural Resources, and it is designed to help further his/her education. To be eligible, applicants must be enrolled at NDSU, have completed at least 90 credits, and be the child or grandchild of an NDSGA member.

Braaten is the oldest of three children. Her parents, Andrew and Teresa Braaten, raise soybeans and corn on their Richland County farm. Because her father is an NDSGA member, Braaten was eligible for the education assistance.

“I’m honored that they chose me as the scholarship recipient,” Braaten says. “I’m hoping to do what I can to

keep pushing soybeans forward, so I was delighted to be selected.”

The NDSGA scholarship and her summer internship helped support Braaten’s drive to learn about the industry because she is hoping to pursue a career in commodity trading. Getting firsthand experience in the risk-heavy world of commodity merchandising was a perfect fit.

“I have taken commodity-trading classes and realized there is the potential to manage a lot of risk, but also the opportunity to make some money,” she says. “I love the fact that it’s dynamic and challenging.”

Braaten is on track to graduate with her bachelor’s degree in May. She is weighing her options which include continuing her education or entering the work force.

“To students interested in applying for the NDSGA scholarship, I would say take the chance and apply for the scholarship,” Braaten says. “Making connections with outside organizations and businesses during college is important for building a network and especially when looking for career opportunities.”

—*Story and photo by Daniel Lemke*