

Scholarship Winner Has a World of Options

A college education helps prepare students for future opportunities. Billie Lentz, a senior at North Dakota State University (NDSU), is from Rolla, North Dakota, and is the recipient of the 2021 North Dakota Soybean Growers Association (NDSGA) scholarship. She may have a difficult time choosing which path to take.

Lentz is majoring in agriculture economics, with a minor in business administration. She's also earning a certificate in professional sales.

"I'm really interested in taking over the management of my family's farm and then becoming involved in maybe some commodity organizations as well," Lentz says. "I also have a lot of interest in possibly getting my MBA from NDSU.

They have an MBA with an emphasis in agribusiness program, which is interesting to me. But then, the internship that I have right now is also sparking some interest for some possible full-time work once I graduate. So, there are a few options out there that I'm interested in for sure."

Lentz worked with John Deere as a marketing and customer product support intern with the Waterloo, Iowa, team over the summer. She recently accepted a full-time position with John Deere in their Marketing Development Program and will begin working there in June 2022.

"It was interesting working with the large tractor division," Lentz states. "It was a really rewarding experience."

Lentz is no stranger to involve-

ment, being active in Future Farmers of America (FFA) throughout high school. During her freshman year at NDSU, she was a North Dakota state FFA officer. She ran to be a national FFA officer in the fall of 2020.

In addition to her formal education, Lentz has had a personal view of agricultural advocacy. Her father, Doyle Lentz, served on the North Dakota Barley Council, the Northern Crops Institute, and the State Board of Agricultural Research and Education. He also chaired the U.S. Grains Council's international market-development efforts, earning him a spot as a World Trade Organization negotiator. Billie Lentz explains how that exposure has opened her eyes to the many facets of agriculture.

"My dad has definitely been the biggest influence on who I am as a person and the kind of path I want to take with my future," Billie Lentz says. "He's definitely shown me how agriculture is more than just the labor of the land, that we need advocates for agriculture. We need educators; we need communicators; and every level of agriculture is equally important. To be able to see all the different opportunities that he's had and the leadership role that he's taken on and being able to use his voice for the industry has really inspired me to want to do the same."

The \$5,000 NDSGA scholarship is available to students enrolled in the NDSU College of Agriculture, Food Systems and Natural Resources who have completed a minimum of 90 credits by the fall semester. Applicants must also be the child or grandchild of an NDSGA member.

Billie Lentz takes a long view of the benefit that the NDSGA scholarship offers to her future.

"A lot of times, people think of a scholarship as being short term, when it's a lifelong impact. As the first generation of my family to go to a four-year college and get a bachelor's degree, my sisters both pursued higher education as well. Having that opportunity was something that we never took lightly because we know that there are so many different routes to go in life, and we really valued being able to have that education," Billie Lentz explains. "We knew that there were barriers that come along with that, finances probably being the biggest one. So, when you're able to just truly focus on the degree you're actually getting, instead of having to worry about those outside factors like finances, it makes for an even more impactful educational experience."

—Story by Dan Lemke,
photo courtesy of Billie Lentz



Billie Lentz

For application
information, visit:

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