

## Get to Know Us

'Get to Know Us' is a feature of some of our Farm Bureau Young Leaders and volunteers. We hope to share what agriculture means to those featured, share the variety of agricultural jobs/careers in our surrounding areas, and have our communities get to know us a little better! This month's feature is on: Jake Armstrong.



### **Tell us about yourself:**

My name is Jake Armstrong, born and raised in the Monmouth area. I am the oldest of two, my brother Jonah is currently studying computer science at Iowa State University. I work at my family's business, Cameron Grain, as our in house agronomist and safety manager. In my spare time I enjoy gardening, riding my motorcycle, and spending time with my wife, Kate. We were married July 21<sup>st</sup> of this year.

### **Did you grow up in agriculture?**

Yes. Growing up I worked in my family's grain elevator operation. From scaling trucks to sweeping bins, I have seen it all in our operation. Growing up I also rode around in my uncle's combine and auger wagon, which gave me a base understanding of where all this grain came from that we handled. As I got older I started getting involved with FFA, broadening my understanding of the agricultural field and what it all has to offer. These perspectives helped me understand the industry entails more than simply sweeping bins and shipping grain.

### **Where did you go to college? What is your degree in?**

I graduated from Iowa State University in 2014 with a bachelor's degree in agronomy.

### **How many years of experience do you have in agriculture? What areas of the industry have you worked?**

I have worked in the industry for 13 years. I've worked at Cameron Grain for 10 years, Agrigold Hybrids for a summer, ConAgra Foods for a summer, and Pioneer Hybrids for a summer.

At Cameron Grain I have run the scales, maintained our equipment, bought and sold grain, developed fertilizer plans with customers, and managed inventory. With Agrigold I was a sales intern in the Woodhull area and the work I did included posting signs in fields, managing corn plots, and dealing with customers' growing issues. For ConAgra Foods I worked in Alton, IL in a wheat elevator and flour mill. I helped mix a wheat blend for the flour mill, managed maintenance of equipment and helped with logistics. Finally, I worked for Pioneer Hybrids soybean production in Woodhull, IL. I scouted fields and did satellite imagery for growers.

### **What advice would you give students considering a career in an agriculture related field?**

It is 100% worth it. Agriculture is a booming industry needing to fill a lot of shoes and take on the challenge of feeding a growing population with less resources available to do so. Not only is it a challenging job, but a rewarding career. Helping farmers achieve their goals and keep their farm profitable is easily my favorite part of my job.

I also would challenge them to find an industry that has a higher job placement right out of college. Agriculture has more jobs than people willing to fill them. Most major universities have a job placement of over 90% in the

college of agriculture. The reason people go to college is to get training in a field and then find a job - no industry does this better than agriculture.

### **What benefits do you get from the Farm Bureau Young Leaders?**

Being a part of the Young Leaders committee gives you many benefits. From leadership conferences to being plugged into new agriculture legislation to meeting new people and networking with young farmers in your area, this committee has helped open up many opportunities. Easily the most valuable thing I have gained is networking. If I have questions on manure management or livestock production, I know someone who runs a livestock farm. If I'm interested in new seed treatments and seed corn prices, I know someone who sells seed. If I'm wondering why the markets are trading the way they are, I know someone in that field as well. Even if it's something such as wanting some farm fresh eggs, I know someone who raises chickens. This committee is very diverse and knowledgeable and is a great resource to tap into.

As much as I have learned and gained from Young Leaders, I have had just as much fun as anything else. Between baseball games, industry tours, cookouts and meetings, it's a fun group to be a part of. I would highly recommend anyone between the ages of 18-35 to give this group a shot, even if you don't have agriculture experience and are just wanting to learn more and see if this group is for you.

If anyone has any questions or comments for Jake, or would like to learn more about Farm Bureau and our Young Leader committee, please give us a call at 309-734-9401 or email [whfb@whfarmbureau.org](mailto:whfb@whfarmbureau.org).