



Alumni Spotlight

Andy Montgomery

Class of 2015
Director of Product Management
AgReliant Genetics, LLC
Brazil, Indiana



Andy Montgomery, Class of 2015

Thesis leads to product launch for MAB graduate

MB: Tell me about your background, education and work experience.

AM: I have worked for AgReliant Genetics and its brands for 18 years. I started out as a DSM for AgriGold in NW Indiana in 1998 after graduating from Purdue University with a degree in Agricultural Economics. From there I moved into a Key Account role with AgriGold and then into a Region Sales Manager role overseeing brand expansion into Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas and the Mississippi Delta. After several years in that role I became the National Sales Manager for AgriGold in 2008 managing the sales operations of the brand across the country. In May of 2015, I graduated from KSU with my Master of Agribusiness degree. On October 1st, I accepted a position at AgriGold's parent company, AgReliant Genetics, LLC, as the Director of Product Management.

MB: Describe your current job and responsibilities.

AM: Currently, I manage the North American product strategy for AgReliant Genetics, LLC and its brands. Those seed brands include AgriGold, LG, Producers Hybrids, Wensman, Great Lakes Hybrids, Golden Acres Genetics, Eureka and Pride Seeds. In this role, I work with a cross-functional team to develop genetic and trait strategies, new product launches, product development

processes, supply and inventory needs, and product communication plans.

MB: What are the current issues AgriGold/AgReliant face in the industry right now? Where do you see the industry headed?

AM: With a stressed farm economy, there are challenges and opportunities for all the players up and down the supply chain. I see growers and suppliers spending more time in the future looking to better analyze their decisions and more closely managing their business partnerships

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and relationships.

Agriculture is a dynamic industry that is changing at a very rapid pace. I see success around every corner, but I do believe growers and suppliers alike must more closely manage their strategies and business decisions in the future as missteps can be much more

costly than maybe they have been in the past!

MB: Why did you decide to pursue the MAB program?

AM: Really I saw a need to be able to better see and understand business trends around me. I looked and local MBA/business programs, but I really wanted an ag focus and the ability to learn with others from within the agriculture sector. With those needs in mind, I was really drawn to the KSU MAB program as a way to get both the core business classes, but also the interaction with other agriculture professionals from around the country and the globe.

MB: Tell me a little about your thesis. Why did you choose your topic, what did you learn?

AM: I worked with my company's management to define several business needs within the organization that could be the focus of my thesis work. After several welcomed

meetings with company management, I decided to research a product extension project involving the AgriGold brand and its possible desire to enter the soybean seed market. The thesis project was great, giving me access to knowledge and people within my company that I did not normally interact with. I found the work not just rewarding, but a very welcomed process by all those that helped me along the way. In the end, the information generated from the thesis helped assist the AgriGold brand in launching a soybean line in 2016.

MB: How have you benefited from the MAB program?

AM: In many ways! The program gave me new perspectives that I had not seen in my roles at AgriGold, it gave me an international view of policy from my fellow international students that I very much enjoyed. It gave me access to peers from across the industry that I could share and bounce

industry?

AM: This a great program that keeps you grounded in agriculture, with skills and ideas that can be immediately applied to your daily work. In addition, I found the interaction with other industry peers to be extremely valuable in helping me grow and learn as a professional. The seed industry is evolving at the fastest rate that I have seen in my 18 year career and I found that the MAB program has helped me better understand the changes taking place and has enabled me to not just see the opportunities, but has helped me with approaches to take advantage of those opportunities.

MB: Other comments you'd like to share? About the program, your professional experiences, the industry, etc.

AM: I also wanted to mention that as a busy professional, I was extremely impressed with the MAB office and staff!

They were always very helpful and made me feel very welcome and that they were there to make my transition from professional to part-time student as easy and smooth as possible. I truly believe they love what they do, and it had a big impact on my success.



ideas off of that I still enjoy to this day. Finally, it got me out of my daily routine and enabled my mind to think in new ways that I believe really stretched my business and strategy skills. In today's work environment you can never stop learning and I am very thankful to the MAB program for taking me to the next level.

MB: What advice do you have for individuals regarding the thesis process?

AM: Really, the same advice that was given to me – you have to start somewhere! Even if it is small, daily, weekly and/or monthly progression forward is very important in moving the project ahead. I had a timeline, I stuck to it and focused on the milestones needed in order to complete the project in a timely fashion.

MB: Why would you recommend the program to others working in the seed



Montgomery with Vanessa, Corynn (13), Alaina (11), Owen (8).

Above: Montgomery (left) and some of his Class of 2015 classmates at K-State Commencement.