



# Alumni Spotlight

## Teresa Zube

Class of 2011  
Business Development Coordinator  
Sustainable Swine Resources  
Kiel, Wisconsin



**Teresa Zube recently spoke to MAB students during the January 2016 Campus Session. Mary Bowen, MAB Program Associate, sat down with Zube for a short chat.**

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

**TZ:** I was raised in a small little town called Cashton, Wisconsin, population approximately 450. My family lived on a small rural property where I grew up with many animals (dogs, cats, rabbits, gerbils, guinea pigs, etc.). As you can see, I am an animal lover at heart.

As a child, I could never have a horse, so at the age of 32, I bought my first one—it has been all downhill from there. Growing up in Northwestern Wisconsin amongst the Amish community, I fell in love with the Belgian draft horse. The heritage and majestic beauty of the breed is what stuck with me and drove me to become more involved with the breed and the industry. At the age of 35, I was fortunate enough to acquire my first Belgian, thus starting the breeding program at Mystery Hills Stable formed in 2001 by my husband, Scott, and I. Our program started with one mare. It has grown to a herd that consists of three breeding stallions, 17 brood mares and a group of 16 young stock two years and younger spanning Wisconsin and Indiana. We have been breeders of Belgian draft horses for the last 14 years. Within our program, we foal out an average of eight babies a year.

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Along with our breeding program, we have been active in the show circuit across the Midwest and internationally, primarily showing in halter.

My love of horses also keeps me involved in the Belgian Draft Horse Corporation of America and the Wisconsin Draft Horse Breeder’s Association as an active member, as well as serving as a director on their boards. In 2015, we achieved a huge milestone for our stable by

receiving reserve All-American status for our three-year-old mare. This accomplishment was very self-fulfilling as we not only own the mare, but we also bred her. Most animals that receive this type of title are typically owned by the person showing them, but are purchased from another breeder.



Along with raising Belgian Draft Horses, I am an avid dog lover. Our four-legged children consist of Callie (Cocker Spaniel), Hailey (Great Dane), Zoey (Great Dane), Dillon (French Bulldog) and Cooper (French Bulldog). In my spare time, I also enjoy breeding and showing my Great Danes.

As far as education, I received a Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Science and a minor in Chemistry from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. In 2011, I received my Master

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**Sustainable Swine Resources** provides a vast array of high quality pig co-products that can be utilized as sustainable resources within many human and animal industries. These industries include, but are not limited to Medical, Human Health, Industrial and Consumer, Zoological, Companion Animal and Animal Health.

- **Viscus Biologies** - A joint venture formed with respected leader in the medical industry. The finished product is a medical device using the peritoneal membrane of the animal (Xenomem).
- **Carnivore Essentials** - Finished product manufactured and distributed by Sustainable Swine Resources. Product is an all pork raw diet for carnivores within the zoological community.
- **JTI** - A joint venture formed with respected leaders in the rendering industry. Converts pork co-products into finished products for sale (pork meal, blood meal, choice white greases) in 2016.
- For more information about all Sustainable Swine Resources, go to [www.sustainableswineresources.com](http://www.sustainableswineresources.com)



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of Agribusiness from Kansas State University.

Since graduation from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls all of my work experience has been in the food industry. Right out of school, I spent approximately 4 1/2 years with Armour Swift-Eckrich in both quality and supervisory roles. After I left Armour Swift-Eckrich, I moved to Kraft

Foods where I spent approximately 7 1/2 years in management roles. I have worked for Johnsonville Sausage the last 15 years in Plant Manager roles, and the last six years as the Business Development Coordinator for Sustainable Swine Resources.

**MB:** Describe the process of launching Sustainable Swine Resources. Lessons learned?

**TZ:** I would say we are still very much

in the infancy stages of this division. We have accomplished a lot. However, there is a great deal more to do. The concept and division were very well embraced by the organization, but like anything, you would like to see progress quicker than what we are realizing. At times, you need to step back and realize that you are literally creating new business from scratch in industries that aren't typically your competencies.

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As far as what I have learned along the way, you have to have passion for what you are doing. Without that, you aren't going to make progress. From there, it is all about learning the industries and applications, as well as building strong relationships with those industries and thought leaders to move initiatives forward. Another key lesson learned is that you have to have patience and not be afraid to stand alone or stand up for those things you are passionate about. You have to be comfortable with selling ideas and concepts at all levels and be prepared to be the subject matter expert for what you are doing. This experience has brought me the closest I will ever be to being my own entrepreneur, and you have to treat the business this way.

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

**TZ:** I pursued the MAB program because I wanted to enhance my education and round my skill set to improve myself personally, as well as make me a better member of Johnsonville Sausage for the future. By improving my skill set, I feel like I can make a better contribution to my employer and help to drive their future success.

**MB:** Let's talk about your thesis. Why did you choose your topic and what did you learn?

**TZ:** At the time I joined the MAB program, we were just in the beginning stages of creating the Sustainable Swine Resources division. As I looked at the topic for my thesis, I thought what a great opportunity to use the skills that I am going to learn through the MAB program to help

create the roadmap for the future of the division. Through the program, I learned key skills around business planning, entrepreneurship, finance, leadership and overall business success that enhanced the foundation that had been created through my experiences, both at Johnsonville Sausage, as well

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*Zube shared information about Johnsonville Sausage and Sustainable Swine Resources with MAB students during the January 2016 campus session banquet.*

as the other companies I worked.

**MB:** How have you benefited from the MAB program?

**TZ:** I feel like I have grown both personally and professionally as it relates to my skill set. The things I have learned through the program have helped me be a better leader and manager of the Sustainable Swine Resources division, and they have also helped me in my personal life with

managing our horse business (Mystery Hills Stable).

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

**TZ:** Don't be afraid of it and don't talk yourself into believing it is more overwhelming than it is. At the end of the day, you are the expert and it is a matter of taking the skills you have learned through the program and imparting them into your topic. I think we hear the word "thesis" and immediately feel that there is no way we can do it. It really is about making the time to sit down and work on it. Put your thoughts and learning into action.

**MB:** Why would you recommend the program to others working in the industry?

**TZ:** I personally like the program because I was able to enhance my skill set, but it was geared around the working professional. Many of the Master's programs today aren't designed for the working professionals. With the Master of Agribusiness program you also get to interact with your classmates. At first I was concerned that the long distance learning would be an issue for me. However, I found it to be a great program because I could learn long distance, but I still got to meet my classmates, make a bond with them and learn about their backgrounds.

**MB:** Other comments you'd like to share?

**TZ:** Overall, the MAB program was a great experience for me both personally and professionally. It pushed me out of my comfort zone and gave me a number of new skills that have helped me drive success both for the organization and for me personally.