

# THE SYLLABUS

A newsletter for Kansas State University  
Master of Agribusiness students, alumni & friends.




Student and Alumni Networking Lunch during the October 2020 Hybrid Campus Session

 Kansas State University  
Department of Agricultural Economics  
306 Waters Hall  
1603 Old Claflin Place  
Manhattan, KS 66506

 [mab@ksu.edu](mailto:mab@ksu.edu)

 [mab.ksu.edu](http://mab.ksu.edu)

 785-532-4495

 **Dr. Allen Featherstone**  
Program Director  
[afeather@ksu.edu](mailto:afeather@ksu.edu)

**Deborah Kohl**  
Program Coordinator  
[dkohl@ksu.edu](mailto:dkohl@ksu.edu)

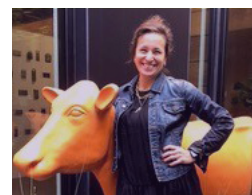
**Mary Bowen**  
Communications Coordinator  
[mjbowen@ksu.edu](mailto:mjbowen@ksu.edu)

 @ksumab

 @ksumab

 @kstatemab

## What's inside:



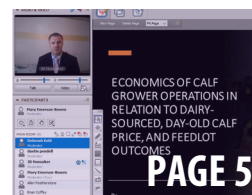
### Alumni Spotlight

Q&A with Class of 2004's Alison Rosenblum, business development for the Tillamook County Creamery Association.



### Calendar of Events/Student & Alumni

Here's a list of our upcoming events and updates on our students and alumni.



### MAB Theses

Several students completed their thesis projects during the fall.



### Dr. Barry Flinchbaugh passes away

Dr. Barry Flinchbaugh, an economist who influenced decades of U.S. farm policy and thousands of students and farm leaders, died Nov. 2.

# Alumni Spotlight: Alison Rosenblum

2004

**Mary B:** Tell me a little about your background, education and work experience.

**Alison R:** I think I am what they tend to call a “jack of all trades.” After studying Public Policy and Comparative Literature at a small liberal arts school I went back to the west coast and got into the food and wine industries. I was part of the “farm to table” movement as a marketer, as well as a brief diversion as a cook (and found I am much happier as a home cook). When I came to Oregon, like many good Oregonians, I worked at Nike to gain experience with larger, more established processes and workflows. And now I have worked for larger, high quality food and beverage businesses.

**MB:** Describe your current job and responsibilities.

**AR:** I do business development for the Tillamook County Creamery Association, a dairy cooperative that has produced “everyday premium” dairy products since 1909. If there is a new channel, product, segment or geography, I likely have a hand in it. Most recently, I have been developing our plan to grow into export markets; our first ice cream arrived in Singapore this March.... and I really would have loved there to be a class in how to launch during a pandemic as part of our studies!

**MB:** Are there current issues your company is facing in the industry right now?



**AR:** The big question for food businesses this year seems to be whether you serve retail or food service. The majority of our business is in retail, and so the pandemic has boosted our sales this year. We are incredibly fortunate in this position, and that our safety-first approach has helped us stay (mostly) healthy and operational during the pandemic. In turn, we have made efforts to support those in our industry and communities who have not fared as well. On a macro scale, we are owned by farmers, and so our brand ultimately exists to serve them. The challenges

facing family farms today – even with the strength of a brand like Tillamook behind them – are not for the faint of heart. We are very concerned about the threats that face farmers in our and other industries that has led to a decline in the number of family dairy farms by 10% in the last decade.

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

**AR:** After working for several businesses that were focused on high quality food

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and beverage experiences, I found myself drawn to the idea that if quality foods made and using responsible methods was to really have impact in our food system, it would need to be financially beneficial at a larger scale. I chose the MAB both for both convenience – it offered a unique way to continue work while connecting to my fellow classmates and professors – and for the experience of learning outside of my community, where the value system inherent in specialty foods was a “given.” Yes, I got teased just a little, by my MAB friends about all of my talk about organic food when we went out for biscuits and gravy after studying late at night... but I learned a lot from them!

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

**AR:** I focused on the opportunity for mass retail to embrace and capitalize on “premiumization” in the coffee industry. This was relevant to my work at the time, and a continuation of the reason I shared above, about why I pursued my MAB. I examined how as more consumers become more exposed to and educated about high quality products, they are willing to pay more for them. Grocery stores – and all aspects of our supply chain – have the opportunity to respond to this, and to elevate their premium experiences – and charge more! Too often, high quality, high value products are treated the same as canned green beans. Elevated experiences elevate revenues. It’s good for consumers, and good for business.

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

**AR:** My work focuses on new business development, I am an “intreprenuer” within a 110-year old business. The MAB program empowered me with tools that I use to take new business ideas, evaluate them and their potential, and

make them actionable – IF they are deemed worthy. With learning from the program, I can better understand the opportunity, the potential investments, and the level of risk, and ultimately make better decisions.

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

**AR:** I sometimes joke with MBA friends that people think I made a typo on my resume, AND I had to do a thesis! In the words of one of my former employers, “Just do it!” I will share it took me longer than most to complete my thesis (I won’t say how long). Life was happening, and as a solo, working mom, I had trouble making time.

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**I’ve found nothing more challenging – or more rewarding – than doing the [thesis] work, and relished the opportunity to dig into a topic that encompassed both my current work, and something that had driven me for my whole career. A sign I saw once while running a marathon said, “the pain temporary, the pride forever,” which every MAB candidate should know!**

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After periodic calls from Dr. V [Vincent Amanor-Boadu] he encouraged me to “give him a week.” I did. While I didn’t finish that week, it gave me the momentum I needed. I’ve found nothing more challenging – or more rewarding – than doing the work, and relished the opportunity to dig into a topic that encompassed both my current work, and something that had driven me for my whole career. A sign I saw once while running a marathon said,

“the pain temporary, the pride forever,” which every MAB candidate should know!

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

**AR:** The innovative hybrid model brought the best of both worlds: connection to classmates and professors, while allowing me to continue to work and raise my daughter. I’ve taken other graduate level courses since my MAB and been disappointed with the lack of interactivity with professors or other students. I would never have gotten through finance without Dr. Featherstone’s group sessions. And the professors’ engagement and commitment to us, even as remote students is priceless.

I was born in New York – there are no farmers in my blood, I got interested in Ag through love of food. Today, as I work for a co-op owned by 80 farm families, and I am inspired by my small role in helping support the business, and hence farms that may be passed down for generations. But I think often about a few of my classmates who were pursuing their MAB in order to support and hopefully continue their own family’s farms. I’ve taken on roles recently supporting the farm community as a Commissioner on the Oregon Dairy Products Commission and as Vice Chair of the US Dairy Export Council’s Cheese Committee, so I can use what I have learned in the MAB and beyond to continue to support and strengthen our farm communities that contribute such value to our society.



# Students and Alumni

**Misty Trumble** ('08) is now a Specialty Ingredients Category Expert for Cargill Animal Nutrition.

**Rick Palermo** ('09) is now a Safety Specialist at the Whole Foods Market Northern California Distribution Center.

**Abby Amick** ('10) was elected to the position of Wabaunsee County (KS) Clerk. She will be taking office in January 2021.

**Bill Davis** ('10) and his wife, Tammy, welcomed their first grandchild, Sophie Schur, on July 24. Sophie and her parents, Jacob and Katie Schur, live in Berlin, MA.

**Nikolas Haas** ('11) is now the Director of Operations at Equinox Nutraceuticals

**Nate Smith** ('11) has a new role at John Deere as a Performance Upgrade Solutions Marketing Manager.

**Jose Ignacio Castillo** ('12) is now the Executive Director at Berry Hill.

**Brook Mitchell** ('15) is now a Retail Product Agronomist for Brevant Seeds at Corteva Agriscience.

**Zach Gregoire** ('16) was promoted to Quality Assurance Investigator at Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica.

**Travis Schieltz** ('16) has taken a new position as John Deere as a Manager, Enabling Solutions.

**Tiffany Ligtenberg** ('16) is now the General Manager at The Fresh Green Chile Company.

**Carly Cummings** ('17) married Clint Hodson in June.

**Andrew Lauver** ('17) is now a Golden Harvest Seed Sales Representative for Syngenta.

**Michelle (Mensing) Hiscocks** ('17) has taken a new position as the Communications Program Coordinator for the Department of Animal Science at Iowa State University.

**Cassie Schneider** ('19) accepted a new position as the Production/Maintenance Manger for Kansas Protein Foods, LLC.

**Allison Jenkins** ('22) was married to Chad Simpson in late July.

**Sarah Niederee** ('22) was promoted to Regional Assistant Manager/Supply Chain Coordinator for ADM Milling's Hudson and Buffalo, NY flour mills.



**Todd Marsh**  
December 27, 1962 - November 18, 2020

The MAB Program was saddened to learn of the passing of alum Todd Marsh ('04).

Todd is survived by his wife Stacie; sons Jared, Jackson, Justin and Jacob; mother Millie of Plentywood; brothers Ron (Robynn) Marsh of Huson, MT, Tom (Karen) Marsh of Viola, Idaho and Greg Marsh of Billings, MT; sisters Angie (Randy) Jones of Charles City, Iowa and Milissa (Gary) Brensdaal of Plentywood; special uncle and aunt Gaylen and Kathie Marsh of Plentywood; as well as numerous cousins, nephews and nieces.

He earned a B.S. in Zoology from Montana State University and a Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine from Colorado State University. Todd was a life-long learner. His desire and drive for furthering his education never slowed. He studied beef production at the Meat Animal Research Center at the University of Nebraska and in 2004 he earned a Master of Agribusiness from Kansas State University.

Not only was Todd a successful veterinarian and proud rancher, but he was sought out for his advice and infinite knowledge. We are thankful to have known Todd as a student and alum. Our thoughts are with his family.

His full obituary can be found at: <https://www.fulkersonsplentywood.com/obituary/todd-marsh>

## SAVE THE DATE



### January 3-8

Manhattan Cohort Campus Session

### March

MAB at Virtual Commodity Classic

### March 6

MAB at Cattlemen's Day in Manhattan, KS

### March 14-19

Manhattan Cohort Campus Session

### March 26

Last day to schedule Final Defense for name to appear in commencement program

### April 8

MAB at MANRRS in Atlanta, GA

### April 16

Defense ballot and final copy of thesis due to be Spring '21 graduate

### April 21-23

MAB at NAMA in Kansas City

### May 14

Spring Commencement at Bramlage Coliseum in Manhattan, KS

### June 5-9

MAB at VMX Expo in Orlando, FL

Be watching for more **#TuesdayTalks** and **#MABforLife** professional development and networking webinars in 2021!



# — THESIS DEFENSES —



**Shayna Allison**  
Class of 2021  
*"A Herd Health and Cost Savings Analysis for the Hyperimmunization of Sheep in Polyclonal Antibody Production"*



**Scott Feldt**  
Class of 2021  
*"The Feasibility of a Centralized Production Facility"*



**Larry Gilmore**  
Class of 2012  
*"Taking a Chinese Agricultural Company Public in the United States: The Case of Yongye"*



**Randy Hobert**  
Class of 2020  
*"Public Comment on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Interim Report for the Texas Resiliency Study: A Hedonic Regression Analysis of Tax Appraised Land Market Values"*



**Kevin Horn**  
Class of 2020  
*"A Feasibility Study of Building Shuttle Unit Train Shipment Capability at an Upper Mississippi River Barge Terminal to Transport Grain to Pacific Northwest Export Terminals"*



**J.D. Hunsaker**  
Class of 2020  
*"Economics of Calf Grower Operations in Relation to Dairy-Source Day-Old Calf Price and Feedlot Economic Outcomes"*



**Erin Stickel**  
Class of 2020  
*"Organic Cropland in the United States, is Perceived Value Reality?"*



**Brad Swartz**  
Class of 2008  
*"Determining the Impact of Semolina Extraction Rate with Low Hard Vitreous Kernel Durum Wheat"*

Thesis projects can be found at <http://krex.k-state.edu> or by logging into the MAB Community Page on Canvas.



# Farm policy expert Dr. Barry Flinchbaugh passes away

Dr. Barry Flinchbaugh, an economist and Kansas State University professor who influenced decades of U.S. farm policy and thousands of students and farm leaders, died Nov. 2, 2021. He was 78 years old.

There are a lot of different and talented agricultural economists in this country. But Flinchbaugh was unique in his style, his colorful stories and his convictions. If you ever met him, you wouldn't forget him.

"While Barry was well-known for his contributions to U.S. agricultural policy, Dr. Flinchbaugh also had a great passion for teaching and his students," Dr. Allen Featherstone, Agricultural Economics Department Head, said. "He continued to teach his Ag Policy course via distance this fall. He will be deeply missed and leaves a big hole in the Agricultural Economics Department that can't be filled with someone of his knowledge and wit. Our hearts go out to Cathy and his family."

We were always honored when he was able to speak to MAB students and alumni. Dr. Flinchbaugh will be greatly missed!

His full obituary can be found at: <https://www.irvinparkview.com/obituaries/Barry-Lee-Flinchbaugh?obld=18839425>.

## Flinchbaughian Rhetoric:

"We've got a solid Kansas delegation with Sen. Moran and Sen. Roberts, and with Dr. Marshall we have a member on the House Ag Committee again. . . . If the other 49 states had the kind of delegation Kansas does, there'd be a lot fewer problems. But unfortunately, they don't."

"There is a big lesson that needs to be learned or re-learned [regarding trade]. This is a global economy and we aren't going back. In 1960, about 9% of our GDP came from trade. In 2016, it was 24%."

"We've been through the nonsense of having congressmen fall for the idea of separating the two [regarding food stamps]. . . . If you take food stamps out of the bill, then that's the last Farm Bill you'll see. Urban congressmen don't have any reason to support crop insurance without a nutrition program. The two have got to stay together."

"You've got people saying if food stamp recipients need to be drug-tested, then so do farmers getting subsidies for crop insurance. . . . It's a no-win position."

"TPP was probably the most lucrative bill for farmers in my lifetime. It put the U.S. in a strong, countervailing position of power to China. It put two powers in the region instead of one bully. Rejecting it played right into China's hands. We have to get across the point that multi-lateral agreements are far superior to bi-lateral agreements for farmers."

"At the end of the day, the question is, if you don't have exports, you need to cut ag by 25%. Which 25% do you want to put out of business?"

"You get all this talk about H2A workers, but we don't need seasonal workers. Cows have to be milked 365 days a year. We need permanent workers."

"The reality of the last several years has been that net migration is going south, wages are going up and labor shortages are becoming common."



Dr. Barry Flinchbaugh the ladies of MAB Class of 2018 during the January 2017 Campus Session.