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Fields & Future Plans: My Summer Internship Report

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When this internship position crossed my radar, I applied thinking I was unqualified for the position, but it sounded interesting. I recieved an email saying I got an interview and honestly leaving the interview that day my thoughts were “I am so unqualified, they would NEVER want to hire me.” So, you can imagine my surprise when I received the call offering me the position. From that moment on my thought process switched from “I am so unqualified” to “I can work hard and learn, to be qualified.”

In school I am studying Marketing Communication, I have found a passion for storytelling and sharing information with creativity. My other passion is agriculture, although I personally did not grow up on a farm, I visited my grandparents’ farm often throughout my childhood and loved it. In middle school and high school, I was involved with FFA. At the time, I did not realize how much that education meant to me, but after my first semester of college is was clear something was missing. Unfortunately, I am unable to get the agriculture specific education at school, I made it a goal to find ways to be involved outside of school. This internship gave me the opportunity I have been waiting for, to learn, not behind the desk of a classroom but a desk of an office.



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I have gotten asked a handful of times “What are you looking to get out of this opportunity?” My one true answer is just knowledge, and sitting here on my final day, I am happy to say I have gained an abundance of knowledge through this experience.

My summer consisted of CRP contract plans and CRP status reviews. I won't lie, they were both pretty intimidating from the start, it seemed like I just did not know enough. But I am very thankful to everyone on staff who worked with me and taught me everything I needed to know to complete the tasks with the best of my ability.

Throughout the summer I was also involved with the office's participation in things such as our Farmers Market Booths and County Fair. The outreach was a fun change from my normal work. Getting to interact with farmers, landowners, and Madison County residents was insightful in many ways. I enjoyed getting to be involved in these activities, as I have never been a resident of Madison County, so it gave me ways to be here on the weekends and explore more of what the county has to offer.

Another valuable experience was the “Intern Field Days.” These were days specifically planned for the Southern Iowa IDALS Interns to learn and connect with each other. Throughout these days we visited many different sites; feedlots, wetlands, urban projects, mines, and many more. These days were beneficial to see other conservation practices outside of the ones we were seeing in our offices.

I would like to give special thanks to everyone who helped me throughout this summer. Everyone in the office has been great in teaching and helping me in anyway possible. I would also like to thank the commissioners for always greeting me with a friendly smile and showing me kindness. Everyone has taught me so much valuable information that I will carry with me throughout my personal and professional life.

Lastly, I'd like to share a quote that Anna shared with me from her daily quote desk calendar: **“Too many people miss the silver lining because they are expecting gold.”**

I believe this is a great reminder that some of the best opportunities come in unexpected ways. Changing our focus from waiting for the “perfect” opportunity to focusing on what is right in front of us. Every opportunity is a chance to learn and grow as an individual. Some of the best things in life don't start out as “gold” but take time, energy, and care to become the gold.

This internship has been “gold” for me. I have grown so much in my personal and professional life because of things I have learned in the last three months.

Thanks again!
Emma Shields

