

# Alumni Spotlight: The Haugers

## MAB's first married couple to complete the program: Jarah and Mike Hauger ('14).



### Jarah Hauger

The agriculture industry became a part of Jarah Hauger's everyday life at a young age on a row-crop farm in East Central Kansas. She earned her Bachelor's in Agricultural Economics in '09, and finished her Master of Agribusiness in '14. While completing her undergrad, she held various legislative internships in Topeka and Washington, D.C., then went to work full-time with John Deere after graduation.

At John Deere, she's been in the marketing rep program, Global Training Organization, Dealer Development, and currently works in Public Affairs. In her role she manages state affairs in Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee, Mississippi and Alabama.

When legislative issues arise in these states, Jarah represents John Deere's interest and works with other manufacturers, industry groups and lobbyists to ensure that adverse legislation doesn't affect their ability to do business with dealers and customers.

"Precision Ag and the Data Revolution are enabling technology to make our customers and equipment more efficient. However, the lack of broadband and wireless infrastructure in rural areas limits how much precision ag technology can be used in some areas of the country," she said.

When it came time to complete her thesis, Jarah was working within Dealer Development in Large Ag Strategy. While working on a project to help dealers create a successful customer contact center they

could implement at their dealerships, she realized, "Call Centers are not the forte of many ag equipment dealerships, so I was gathering lots of information from dealers who were doing it to try and create some best practices."

Jarah's thesis focused on learning more about what dealers were currently doing and the barriers to implementation.

"I surveyed our dealers, and learned that very few of them had what would fall under the definition of a customer contact center, and the top barrier was lack of budget and resources," Jarah said. "From this data, I knew what tools and resources would be most helpful to dealers as they considered implementing more advanced methods of customer support."

Jarah believes she gained a much broader understanding of the agriculture industry from the MAB coursework and her classmates. Her thesis also provided valuable and tangible information she could apply to her job.

"The MAB provides a perspective that I wouldn't have gotten in the workplace. It's given me tools to make me more valuable to my employer," Jarah said. "It was a very well-run program in the fact that it catered to working professionals. Mary and Deborah were immensely helpful and ensured we had everything we needed to be successful."

### Mike Hauger

Growing up on a small farm in Southwestern Minnesota, Mike was exposed to agriculture at a very young age. Mike attended Southeast Community College in Milford, Nebraska, where he majored in a John Deere dealership training program. After completing his associate's degree, he transferred to the University of Nebraska where he received his Bachelor's degree in Mechanized Systems Management. Upon graduation, he was offered a job at John Deere in customer support with various rolls at the John Deere Seeding Group, Harvester Works and Des Moines Works.

Currently, Mike is a Senior Marketing Representative at John Deere in the Parts Marketing group in Olathe, Kansas. He works with dealers across America and Canada to develop marketing programs, retail incentives and tactics to increase sales of John Deere Harvesting parts.

Mike believes the biggest potential issue agriculture is currently facing is the oversupply of commodities. "Farmers have done a great job at increasing production through technology and farming practices," he said. "The positive is that demand keeps increasing every year for commodities."

As he approached the thesis, Mike inherited some land in South Dakota, and was forced to analyze his best options for managing the land. His thesis, *What to do with a gift of farm land?*, was inspired by his inheritance as he dug deeper

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into cash rent, share crop and custom farming.

He looked at the potential long-term profits while also taking into consideration any risk factors.

“While custom farming had the greatest profit potential in the long run it also came with the most risk. Cash rent was the least risky option,” he said.

Mike’s thorough work helped land his thesis in an article in the *Journal of American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers*.

Mike credits the MAB program and faculty for providing him with valuable knowledge. He believes the classes that focused on logistics and econometrics have been most beneficial in his career as he regularly estimates the price of used farm equipment.

“A huge benefit of the program is that everything is agricultural based,” Mike said. “It’s been a great networking resource to connect with ag industry professionals across the U.S.”

*Mike and Jarah were engaged coming into the program, then later got married before graduating. Currently they live in the KC Metro are, where their family resides. They have two future Wildcats (or Huskers): Jefferson, who turned 3 in September, and Joycelyn who turned 1 in October.*

## Completing the program together

**Q: Why did you both decide to pursue the MAB program? Was it a mutual decision or did one have to convince the other?**

**A:** I had several people I worked with that were in the program that spoke highly of it, so when Mike mentioned he was considering it, I jumped on board. We were at an ideal place in our lives to devote the time necessary to the program. I also knew it would be much easier if the person I spent the majority of my free time with was also devoting his time to the same thing. – Jarah

**Q: What was it like going through the program together? Do you think it made the program easier/less stressful?**

**A:** It was easier to go through the program together. It allowed us to work on homework together and bounce ideas off each other. We also could remind each other when homework was due! It made the whole experience less stressful because we weren’t as tempted to more fun things in our free time. – Jarah and Mike

**Q: Did you work on homework together? Or try to work with others in your class?**

**A:** We worked a lot together but also bounced ideas off classmates. It was also helpful to have 5 others in our class that were John Deere colleagues that we could just instant message. When given the chance to do group projects, we took the opportunity to split up and work on different things. – Jarah and Mike



*Class of 2014 at the Spring Commencement Ceremony. Jarah and Mike Hauger are pictured far left.*