

Evan Mellott

MS Student, Agricultural Engineering, Advanced Machinery Systems

Hometown: Red Oak, IA

Interviewed by: Paul Pelech

During the fall of his senior year at Iowa State, Evan began interviewing for jobs following graduation. "I talked to companies, but I didn't feel a spark." Until then, he had never really considered the possibility of pursuing a graduate degree. However, after talking to masters students in his department, he decided to apply to Iowa State's masters program in agricultural engineering, planning to build a greater set of skills as an engineer before joining the private sector.

Evan describes his acceptance into Dr. Darr's research team as his proudest achievement. "They usually accept only 2 graduate students every semester from all over the world," he explained. Evan's research is focused on improving the boom stability on John Deere sprayers, a challenge he describes as both demanding and rewarding. "I get to drive \$500,000 machinery every day and collect data from it... It's rewarding absolutely. The most rewarding part is that the decisions from my analysis and my research go directly into the field."

To keep himself sane in grad school, Evan spends time restoring tractors. "You get so sick of doing the same thing, you gotta do something different... I get intrigued by learning something new." Evan's also a member of the Iowa State Crew Club, usually spending races somewhere in the stern of a racing shell. "Get involved," he advises current undergraduate students. "Join at least one club because the friends you make will probably be your friends for life."

Evan just recently defended his thesis, which means he will graduate in May after finishing his courses, earning his Master's degree in only one year. He is headed to Peoria, IL to work for Caterpillar as a test engineer at their proving grounds, applying the skills he learned from his research. Reflecting on his graduate experience, he concludes, "This will definitely be a part of my life that I look back on and say, 'I'm glad I did that.'"

