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*Amy and Harlan Asmus of Asmus Farm Supply have established the Into the Field Fund to provide support for sharpening the diagnostic, critical-thinking and communication skills of agronomy graduates.*



# INTO THE FIELD

By Melea Reicks Licht

## ASMUS FARM SUPPLY PARTNERS WITH AGRONOMY DEPARTMENT TO CULTIVATE FUTURE AGRONOMISTS

Asmus Farm Supply and the Department of Agronomy have teamed up to take students “Into the Field” to prepare them for the demands of today’s agriculture industry.

The Into the Field program will help faculty and students develop relationships with practicing agronomists and provide field experience for agronomy students to enhance their value and viability in the workforce.

Asmus Farm Supply of Rake, Iowa, is a family-owned agricultural business specializing in farm chemicals, plant nutrition, seed and seed treatment. Amy Asmus, vice president of Asmus Farm Supply, sees the program as a win-win for companies and students.

“It has benefits for everyone in the future as we release into the field students that are well-trained and passionate about what we love, and that is ag retail,” Asmus says.

Asmus Farm Supply started the fund in 2010 as part of its 50th anniversary celebration. They asked those who had planned to present them with gifts to instead donate to the fund. With a donation by Asmus, along with their partners, enough was raised and pledged to kick off the program. More will be needed to sustain the program over a long period of time.

“We wanted to make an impact on the future for ag retail and manufacturers,” Asmus says. “We can cultivate the excitement of new students, carry it through four years of college and into the field which is how the program gets its name.”

Kendall Lamkey, professor and chair of the agronomy department, says the program will allow students to take their education to the next level.

“At Iowa State University we are really good with teaching the technical knowledge that exists behind the scenes, but that is just one part of them being a professional. Into the Field will help further round out these young people into professionals,” Lamkey says.

The program will provide support for teaching improvement. This will include opportunities for faculty to shadow industry agronomists; develop case studies for use in classes; pay fees to attend technology workshops and short courses; and accommodate travel to teaching conferences.

As part of Into the Field the agronomy department, in conjunction with industry, will develop a curriculum that will give students a broad range of experiences. It will also include an experiential field course for agronomy seniors with a focus

on sharpening diagnostic, critical-thinking and communication skills.

“Into the Field will give students a broader vision of what we do in the ag world and show them what’s available to them,” Asmus says. “It’ll give us well-rounded agronomists that will take the industry into the next 50 years.”

New industry partners are welcome to join Into the Field to help grow the fund and potentially endow the program, and to further develop relationships with the agronomy department. 

Contributed Photos



*Amy and Harlan Asmus recently hosted members of the agronomy faculty, including department chair Kendall Lamkey (right), to discuss strategies to strengthen field experiences for undergraduates.*