



# Starting the Future

*What do you want to be when you grow up?*

*by Megan Silveira, editorial intern*

This question has been hovering over many young adults since the moment they could talk. Despite the popularity of the question, even college students struggle to develop a firm answer.

The Angus industry is home to junior members who exude confidence in and out of the ring. But even the best junior members are intimidated with the thought of leaving the comfort of their college campuses and exploring the world awaiting them upon graduate.

## Dealing with uncertainty

Constantly peppered with questions about her future career, Hailey Traynham, an animal science and agribusiness sophomore at Oklahoma State University (OSU), says she often feels disheartened she does not have a solid answer yet. Amidst a busy class schedule, Traynham is working to narrow down a field in the cattle industry she would call home after graduation.

“My current, main focus is to choose a direct career path,” Traynham says. “Thankfully, the Angus industry gave me a clear view of where I want to be.”

Traynham says she has no doubts her future will center around the

breed. She pictures herself finding a career in the cattle industry, focusing on either nutrition or embryology. Traynham is not worried about deciding which direction to go, saying she has time to take different classes at OSU and learn more about what will fit her best.

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*“My biggest fear after I graduate is the real world.”*

— *Megan Green*

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Tyler Bush, an agribusiness sophomore with a minor in animal science at Hutchinson Community College, understands Traynham’s relaxed attitude. Bush describes college as an opportunity to find himself and a career path he can succeed in.

“There’s so many directions to go,” Bush explains about the future. “I have a couple years before I need to make a serious decision.”

Megan Green, agricultural communications and journalism senior at Kansas State University (K-State), says she is taking her future one step at a time. Green is still working to decide what she will do after graduation.

“My biggest fear after I graduate is the real world,” Green admits. “It is a completely different environment than college and there are a lot more responsibilities.”

Even with these worries, Green says she is optimistic about the future. She describes this time as a college student as her biggest excitement in life. While she still has important decisions ahead, Green says she is eager to start the next chapter in her life.

Bush believes a decision as important as choosing a career takes time to make. He encourages students to accept the fact that they do not have all the answers yet and learn as much as they can about all their options for the future.

## Business with the “Business Breed”

Traynham says the cattle industry shaped her future, and all her current goals are revolving around livestock. She credits the Angus industry with teaching her about her passion and how to pursue it.

Bush thanks the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) for providing him with the skills necessary to succeed at Hutchinson. Bush has been thriving on campus,



becoming extremely involved with the livestock judging team as well as the Collegiate Farm Bureau.

“The Angus breed really helps mold young members into who they are,” Bush says. “It sets you up to be a leader.”

Green has also used the leadership skills Bush described to leave her mark on K-State’s campus. Green has been as involved as possible, finding time to be a contributing member of the Collegiate Farm Bureau and Block and Bridle at K-State.

Green says the NJAA taught her how to face every day with a positive outlook, but still gave her the tools to handle the difficult situations naturally arising in life. She is thankful for the events and shows she attended as an NJAA member, they taught her many life lessons.

Bush encourages junior members to stay involved in the NJAA. He says the opportunities it provides allow Angus members to become well-rounded college students.

Traynham did exactly as Bush suggested and immersed herself in the Angus industry, especially before leaving for OSU. She says the cattle industry helped her develop several skills she believes will help her down the road.

By traveling to various shows and serving on the California Junior Angus Association (CJAA) officer team the past five years, Traynham has been forced to grow as an individual.

Traynham says this growth is crucial to thriving in a college environment and allowed her to become an influential member of OSU’s campus.

### Working for the future

While Traynham might not have an answer to the age-old question about her future, she knows she will always be involved in the Angus industry.

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*— Tyler Bush*

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Being part of the Association allowed Traynham to feel prepared for the future. She says she is constantly looking for work opportunities in the cattle industry.

“I’m trying to make all the connections I can,” Traynham says. “The people I’ve met in the Angus

industry have impacted me in such a big way that I want to be able to do that for someone else.”

Green says it is never too early to start looking for available internship positions. She believes internships are the best opportunity for students to discover which career will suit them best and help them achieve the most success.

Traynham and Bush are both planning to enter internships in the future and have already begun to prepare for these experiences.

Bush says the key is to find a company with values and goals matching your own. He wants to go somewhere he can learn the “whys” of the industry, instead of performing tasks he does not fully understand.

“You need to focus on personal interests and company values,” Bush advises. “And remember that it’s all about learning.”

Green experienced what Bush and Traynham are preparing for, as she worked for the editorial and communications teams at the American Angus Association this past summer.

While Green was happy and content in her position, she says she did not gain the job without a lot of

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hard work. She thoroughly reviewed her application and résumé before submitting an application.

Green says the interviewing process can also be nerve-wracking. She suggests students stay confident in their personal abilities. She believes the best interviews occur when individuals are not afraid to be themselves.

Even if the process of applying was not the simplest, Green says deciding

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to work at the Association was not a hard one to make.

"I chose to apply at the Association because I have been a part of it for as long as I can

remember," Green says. "Being able to work for this organization is an amazing opportunity."

Green encourages students to find internships where they will be able to learn more about their personal likes and dislikes while still contributing to the company. Staying calm during the application process and striving to always communicate with companies what you are capable of is key to landing the dream internship.

## Words of wisdom

Bush appreciated the chance to attend college, as it is an opportunity to meet people and learn what he's capable of. He encourages other students to make school a priority and push themselves.

"Don't hold back and don't be afraid to get out of your shell," Bush says. "If you're willing to learn, you're going to be okay."

Green warns students to never let their nerves hold them back from an opportunity. She says individuals should always be ready to take the next step in their life.

Bush says the worst thing you could leave college with is regrets, so take every chance to experience new things. At the end of the day, Bush strongly believes any hard work put into a project will result in success. He hopes other college students take school seriously and are able to see the rewards from putting their best efforts into their courses.

Green hopes NJAA members set high goals for their futures. She believes college is a time for students to experience new things and adapt personal goals to match those life lessons. **AJ**

*Editor's note: This is the second article in the Paving Your Path series. Check out next month's issue to learn about the final step of solidifying a career.*



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