



# Purdue News

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## **Agribusiness MBA students fly in, fly out, log on**

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. – With silos bursting with corn and soybeans in Indiana, 27 students in [Purdue University's executive MBA in agribusiness program](#) are planting seeds for the future of the industry and their careers.

The group has just kicked off the program's third class of agribusiness professionals with an intensive two-week introduction on the West Lafayette campus. The students are now back on their jobs, continuing their MBA studies via the Internet.

Purdue's agribusiness MBA program is the only distance-delivered MBA in the nation with a focus on the food and agribusiness industry. The MBA underlines the new skill set needed to compete in the increasingly complex business of food production, marketing and delivery in the global marketplace.



**Photo caption below**

Jay Akridge, the agribusiness economics professor who directs the program, says Purdue's combination of in-person, on-campus and Internet-based study has proved itself a stronger educational model than completely online programs.

"Our courses focus on the study of food and agribusiness through a management foundation, industry-specific topics and the networking that occurs among our students who come from across the food and agribusiness industries."

One of the students is Brian M. Foster, country manager for Bulgaria and Ukraine for Pioneer. "I'll use 100 percent of what I learn in the program – human resource management,

quantitative analysis, marketing management, and agribusiness economics trade and regulation," Foster says.

"There's no way that I can stop my career, and Purdue's agribusiness MBA is both career-enhancing and good for Pioneer."

Karen Wieman, an account manager for FIS North America, a business unit of Nestlé SA, spends most of her time calling on food manufacturers.

"With my crazy travel schedule, the distance technology makes this program work for me," Wieman says. "I can dial up with my laptop, download lectures, submit assignments and communicate with my classmates."

"The students always become very close," says Luanna DeMay, the executive MBA in food and agribusiness program manager.

She says the students take their time on campus together to get to know each other. When they return to their jobs, they spend about 20 hours per week on the three classes per 22-week semester online taking classes, doing team projects and "talking" to their professors and each other about the complicated, modern business of food.

After a total of seven weeks on campus and untold hours in front of the computer, participants in the two-year executive MBA program finish up with a two-week international trip to the Wageningen Agricultural University and Research Centre in the Netherlands or other Purdue partner schools in Europe.

Employees of the following companies have graduated from, or are currently enrolled in, the agribusiness MBA program at Purdue: John Deere Co., Pioneer Hi-Bred, Arthur Guinness Son & Co., Syngenta Seeds, Schering-Plough Corp. and Merial Ltd.

For information and entrance requirements, prospective executive MBA students may contact DeMay at 1145 Krannert Building, West Lafayette, IN 47907; (765) 494-4270; or via e-mail at [luanna@purdue.edu](mailto:luanna@purdue.edu).

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**PHOTO CAPTION:**

Brian Foster and Karen Wieman, students in Purdue University's executive MBA program in agribusiness, take classes on the West Lafayette campus as well as complete assignments online while continuing their employment. (Purdue University Photo by Vickie Maris).

*A publication-quality photograph is available at  
<ftp://ftp.purdue.edu/pub/uns/demay.agbiz2002.jpeg>.*

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