

News Release

A Background in Agriculture Leads to a Career in Agronomy

By Amber Johnson on Tuesday, March 10, 2020

Growing up on her family farm instilled a strong love for agriculture in Frazee, Minn. native, Olivia Mickelson. Her background ultimately influenced her to pursue a degree in Agronomy here at the University of Minnesota Crookston.



In her free time, Mickelson likes to ride horses, drive around and look at fields, hang out with family and friends, go for walks with her dogs, make quilts when it's too cold to be outside, go skiing in the winter, go hunting and fishing.

"I love to do anything outdoors. I think part of that comes from growing up on a fifth-generation turkey farm. My background in agriculture from a young age really inspired me to stay within an agricultural field in college and my future career," noted Mickelson.

Mickelson's decision to come to the University of Minnesota Crookston was influenced by coming to campus in high school when her school would come here for FFA competitions.

"I always loved the campus and the atmosphere around it. I also loved the "small town" atmosphere. When I met everyone here at UMN Crookston for the first time they were super helpful and really personable and that is what drew me here to be a part of the UMN Crookston family," explained Mickelson.

Before coming to UMN Crookston, Mickelson had some knowledge about agronomy from working with her dad on the farm. However, she was excited to learn more and take opportunities that would allow her to apply her education to a real-life setting.

"I chose Agronomy because I really love agriculture, and I love the idea of helping feed the world with what I can help contribute as an agronomist," explained Mickelson.

According to Mickelson, her favorite part of being a student at UMN Crookston is the small class sizes, the professors, and the fact that you still get the same U of M degree.

"I enjoy all of the professors I have had here at UMC. I would have to say that Rob Proulx and Sarah Kazmierczak have been my favorites so far. I appreciate how personable they are, how understanding they are, and that they will always try to help you when they can," noted Mickelson.

On-campus, Mickelson is involved in clubs such as Ag-Arama, NACTA, Dairy Club, and the Agronomy Club. Her favorite experience so far at UMN Crookston, has come from her involvement in the Ag-Arama club. For the last two years, she has participated in the beef showmanship competition, and this year she was the 2nd place experienced beef showman.

"I enjoy being a part of the Ag-Arama club because of the fun and welcoming atmosphere of the group. I also like having the ability to learn a lot about animal handling and fitting through hands-on experiences. I really appreciate the connections that I have been able to make through this club," stated Mickelson.

Along with her club involvement, Mickelson also has a work-study on campus with Theresa Helgeson. Her work study has her working in the greenhouses and sometimes in the outdoor garden. Her favorite time of the year to work in the greenhouse is February-May because that is during their planting season.

This past summer, Mickelson was able to put her education to work with an internship with West Central Ag Services in Park Rapids. She spent the summer scouting crop fields and learning as much as she could.

"I would go out to local fields and look for different plant diseases and take tissue samples. This experience helped me learn a lot about these two areas that are critical to my degree," stated Mickelson.

This summer, Mickelson is looking forward to her Internship with LG Seeds. She will spend her summer traveling between Fergus Falls and Fertile. She will spend her internship learning more about ag sales, selling seed, and also doing some more crop scouting.

After graduation, future plans for Mickelson consist of getting a job in the agronomy field. She would like to stay in a career path that leans more towards the sales side of agronomy.

"I am thankful for my education and the experiences I have had here at UMN Crookston. I know that it has given me a foot in the door of the knowledge that I will need to do my job. I feel well prepared to enter the workforce as an agronomist," stated Mickelson.

About UMN Crookston

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