GOAL: To create awareness and tolerance of agriculture among the general consuming public through social media.

TACTIC: Utilize college students studying agriculture or communications or college students with a general interest in agriculture to increase positive ag presence in social media outlets. Selected students would be encouraged to pursue Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, or Instagram—whichever fits their talents and interests—and to explore ways to increase readership, build a fan base, and engage the non-farm public in meaningful dialogue.

TIMEFRAME: Applications (please include a resume and writing sample) are due on May 2, with interviews being held in Bloomington, IL May 10-12, 2016. Selected interns will be notified by June 1 and will begin their social media programs on August 22. Students will be required to attend a meeting in Bloomington on September 30, 2016 to evaluate progress. Receipt of a final report by January 1, 2017 will conclude the internship.

REQUIREMENTS: Students will be expected to maintain social media outlets like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, and Instagram. At times, students may be required to develop unique and interesting concepts for these outlets in order to develop fan base, post interesting content, increase interactions, and perpetuate positive information about agriculture. In most cases, content should be updated daily. IL Corn staff will send periodic writing prompts to facilitate the generation of content. Additional content will be the responsibility of the student based on web searches, information gained in college classes, or personal experiences. Students will also be required to maintain and analyze data on the growth of their readership, fan interactions, and other feedback.

COMPENSATION: Students will be paid $1,000 for their social media work on behalf of the Illinois Corn Marketing Board. This income will be provided in two installments, one at the midterm meeting and one upon receipt of the final report, and will be taxable income.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: This opportunity should be considered an important professional development opportunity. Students can expect to exit the internship with a meaningful portfolio of work to present to future employers. In addition, as more and more companies and associations become active in social media outlets, this experience and the data and exploration of what works and what doesn’t will be invaluable to future employers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact Lindsay Mitchell at lmitchell@ilcorn.org or 309-827-0912 for any additional information on this internship experience.

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