

TRANSCRIPT: JOHN E. WINDWEHEN

John E. Windwehen · General Manager- Cargill Animal Nutrition

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Interview with Mr. John E. Windwehen, General Manager – Cargill Animal Nutrition. Windwehen is a 1976 Graduate from Texas A&M and an inducted member of the Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry.

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Mr. John E. Windwehen | Transcript
Tyurus R. Timm Honor Registry | Department of Agricultural Economics | Texas A&M University

Could you please introduce yourself?

My name is John Windwehen and I graduated from A&M in 1976. Doesn't seem like that long ago, that was with my bachelor's degree and I was studying for a master's degree in the Agricultural Economics Department.

Could you tell us a little about your career?

I interviewed with three different companies when I got out of school. One of them was Cargill incorporated. Doctor Vernon Snyderman was in the Ag Eco department at that time and he recommended I interview with Cargill. Cargill is based in Minneapolis, Cargill is the largest family owned incorporation in the world. I ended up going to work for Cargill and I stayed with them my entire career. I just retired November first, after 32 years with Cargill.

What experiences at Texas A&M most helped you in your career?

One of the things that I always thought was fascinating, at A&M I learned a lot about integrity and values. Not only conservative values in Agriculture, but the value of ethics and your character. All those attributes that A&M talks about. You hear all the time about the Aggie code of honor, and if I could convey one thing to young people, is that's really important in business. We've seen too many cases of companies getting in trouble because they did not exercise integrity and character the way they ran their business. One of the things about Cargill was that I found that same set of values with Cargill. Cargill's family owned, they're a high integrity level, very high character. So I was able to take what I learned at A&M, take what my mom and dad taught us first. Then it fit well with what A&M taught us, then it fit well with Cargill.

You spent much of your career working for a single company (Cargill) would you recommend a similar path for graduates?

I know the average is people change jobs 5 or 6 times, something like that in a career. You can do both, I've seen both be successful. I can tell you I put a high value in loyalty and dependability in people we can count on and people we can trust. So you can be successful both ways, but I have to tell you I admire people that have the dedication and loyalty to have a long term career with a company.

What advice do you have for students of Agricultural Economics today?

My advice for Agricultural Economics students is that you can do anything with your career. That's one thing I would share with you. It'll prepare you for agriculture business, but it also prepares you for legal degrees. It prepares you to go into other facets of industry. So it's a well-rounded career. You get business, you get finance, you get economics, you get agriculture, you get a very broad base of knowledge that you're taught. I think our Ag Economics here is one of the best in the country. Another thing I would advise students on, is again, keep the values of integrity, and character, and ethics that you were taught here. It's important, and the older you get the more it's going to you. And another thing that I think A&M teaches is a set of conservative values, and some of those values are hard work and dedication, and I think that serves people well in their career.

Are there any other insights that you would like to offer students?

One, I like to give back to A&M when I can. Some financially, some time. The older you get the more A&M is going to mean to you. I know I sound like an old guy now, I guess I am. But the older you get, the more traditions going to mean to you, the more A&M is going to mean to you, so stay in touch with the university, stay in touch with these professors, they'll help you. And then as you get to the point in your life where you want to give back, I would encourage you to do that because you'll get a whole lot more in return than you'll ever give back.

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