

TRANSCRIPT: **JODY HALL** **INTERVIEW**

Mr. Jody Hall · Director of Global Sourcing at H-E-B

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An interview with Mr. Jody Hall, Director of Global Sourcing at H-E-B. Hall is a Class of 1987 Agricultural Economics graduate from Texas A&M and an inducted member of the Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry.

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Mr. Jody Hall | Transcript
Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry | Department of Agricultural Economics | Texas A&M University

Please introduce yourself and tell us about your career.

My name's Jody Hall. I got a undergraduate degree in animal science from Texas A&M in 1987 and a master's in ag economics, ag business in 1989. My career started with H-E-B shortly thereafter, and for the last twenty nine and a half years I've worked with H-E-B in San Antonio as well as across the state of Texas.

What do you value most about your experiences at Texas A&M?

I think what I value the most about my experiences at Texas A&M were the relationships I had, not only with fellow classmates. I had a lot of friends from Texas as well as from South America and as well as the professors, so those relationships for me have spanned now almost three decades. Whether I'm a guest lecturer back here in the college of ag or over the May's Business School or... actually some of the classmates I studied with are actually suppliers to H-E-B now, three decades later.

What impact has your degree from Texas A&M had on your professional career?

A degree in ag economics and certainly understanding all of the ag policies have served me well in my career. I had the opportunity to intern in Washington DC in the foreign ag service and in that capacity learned a lot about the, the workings of Washington, D.C. and the ag attachés around the world. So, in my capacity with H-E-B, I lead a dynamic team who sources products from across the state of Texas, across the US, and from 92 countries in the world, so the firm foundation I got here at Texas A&M has served me well because there's hardly a day that doesn't go by that ag policy or some type of understanding I gained here at A&M continues to serve me in the role I have at H-E-B.

What has been the biggest challenge in your career? How have you faced it?

There have been many challenges in my career at H-E-B, but I think the whole challenge around competition is one that's ever-changing. The consumers are changing. The dynamics and the marketplace are changing. When I started my career with H-E-B, it was brick and mortar stores, but today with the Internet and the way that consumers shop it's ever-changing. So, the way that I and my team face these challenges is we have to remain relevant, and that means either bringing the products and the services that consumers are looking for and each day trying to earn their, their business. There's no guarantee that we're going to have the same consumers again tomorrow, so we have to do everything in our power to keep earning that trust, that loyalty, and then the consumers' confidence for them to purchase from us.

What is your proudest accomplishment in your career?

Really proud of the team that I work with, and this team in particular has done an amazing job looking and helping small entrepreneurs or small businesses and entrepreneurs bring their products to the store shelves at H-E-B. Several years ago we kicked off a campaign called H-E-B's Quest for the Texas Best, and again this, this enterprise, the contest is really identifying local entrepreneurs who have a dream or passion or maybe be selling in a farmers market to one day get in the shelves in H-E-B. So, watching small businesses grow, it's no different than when our company started in the year 1905 because we had an entrepreneuring woman, Florence Butt, who opened our first store in Kerrville, Texas, and she was buying local produce, local eggs, local fruits and vegetables from neighbors and friends and farmers and ranchers in that community. Here we are 114 years later, just emulating what our founder did so well. It goes back to some of the principles I learned here at Texas A&M, and again those would be the six core principles. When we talk about excellence, we talk about integrity we talk about leadership, our loyalty, our respect, our selfless service. I see that in the workplace, and I see how successful executives, successful partners when a company like H-E-B grow their careers, and again that foundation I learned here at Texas A&M has served me well, but certainly it serves a lot of the Aggies that work in a company like H-E-B.

What kind of goals do you continue to set? How do they help you to grow?

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I think my goal-setting nowadays focuses more on helping others, and I think as I look at the team I have the privilege to work with and to lead, watching their careers grow, watching their aspirations being fulfilled at the end of day, that is where like setting those goals and seeing others succeed, and I've always, often heard when you see others very successful at what they do, that makes you successful in yourself.

How do you balance your career with your family life?

It's a, it's been important for me always to keep that work-life balance in play. Fortunately, I worked with a company that has given me a lot of flexibility in that, and then the capacity, as I, I travel a lot with my job, whether domestically or overseas. I've had the opportunity to have my family join me on, on many of my business trips, so that work-life balance has been good because I've actually been able to travel on many occasions with that family, but I also can dictate my schedule where if it's a significant event, carving that time out to make that family time as important as it needs to be.

What advice do you have for Agricultural economics students who are about to graduate and start their careers?

I think that advice I would have for soon-to-be graduates of Texas A&M and certainly those in ag economics is really to choose wisely their career choice. Undoubtedly, by choosing to get a degree at Texas A&M, that was already a wise decision. The decision of where to work or where to spend the next chapter of one's life is, is equally important, so the amount of research, the amount of understanding, the amount of interviewing, really to know, "Is this a fit?" because not every job, not every company's a fit, just as not every university or every degree program's a fit. So, as much work that someone puts into applying for a university such as Texas A&M, I'd say put even more into your career choice.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Another piece of advice I have for Aggies is understand and utilize the Aggie Network. It is live and well. So, whether you look across the room and you see an Aggie ring on someone's hand or in a conversation, you understand that they spent time in College Station. Understand that Aggie Network opens lots of doors. It helps facilitate lots of opportunities, and I see how live and well it is, whether it's a soon-to-be Aggie reaching out to me because they found me on LinkedIn, or they just did a Google search. So, as an Aggie, understand that importance of the Aggie Network and, and helping others.

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