Experiences with Elanco Animal Health

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Throughout my internship experience with Elanco Animal Health not only did I grow professionally but also personally. I had a truly incredible experience as a sales intern working specifically with beef cattle. This is an industry I am very passionate about and am excited to further pursue a career in the animal health field post graduation.

I had the opportunity to wear many hats throughout my internship and gain a wide array of experience. Some of the significant activities that I accomplished over my almost 4 months with Elanco were countless sales experiences with an experienced rep, interviewing customers to gain knowledge on areas Elanco can better provide value, the opportunity to attend summer sales meetings in Denver, Colorado and so much more. I was able to learn a lot of the animal health industry in a relatively short period of time thanks to my peers and mentors within Elanco and also my previous curse work at Texas A&M.

Elanco is an animal health company that is working diligently to enrich lives through food and companionship. This is accomplished by using proven technologies to sustainably deliver more food using fewer resources and keep animal companions (pets) living healthy lives. Within Elanco there are very clear lines of communication from the top down. Elanco’s homes office is located in Greenfield, Indiana which I made frequent visit’s to, but they have employees all
over the United States and also internationally. I had the pleasure of meeting and having several conversations with various Elanco employees from the head of the beef business unit, industry pioneers, wonderful sales reps and other interns. Everyone I visited with was interested in learning about my specific project as an intern and where I might fit within the company. I even got to meet and hear about what Elanco is doing to make a more food secure world from the president of the company, Jeff Simmons. Culture is often a word that is over used but this company truly has the secret sauce to what I would describe as great culture. One of the main goals at Elanco is humility and that was proven to me time and time again. I was in the cattle west division of the beef business unit and had the pleasure to work closely with an incredible team of people in the Texas panhandle, Oklahoma, and Kansas area that share a passion for people, agriculture, and a more food secure world. I worked diligently with my supervisor Jim Bob Carver, a former Aggie and many other Elanco employees to learn the industry and complete my summer intern project. Each intern had a different project to complete, mine being to find what (if any) value Elanco could add to their feedlot customers specifically around people management and human resources. Elanco is all about proving more than a product so my goal was to find out if there was a need, what we could do, and come up with some possible solutions to then take it to the decision makers at Elanco and provide them with the insight I gained on the subject and allow them to decide if they wanted to play in the game of “people” or not.

The first week of my internship was spent at the home office in Indiana with all the other interns for a week of orientation to allow us to get our feet wet and
learn about the company before going into our separate territories and starting on individual projects. After my first week in Indiana, I moved to Amarillo, Texas and met with my supervisor and his boss and we discussed what success looked like for me and how I would accomplish this project. We decided that I would ride with the assigned sales rep for each customer when doing my interviews and I was to come up with some high gain questions to help guide our conversations. I contacted various sales reps and worked closely with my supervisor on developing this project. There was a lot of pre planning done before actually doing any interviews and even before just riding out to follow reps on their daily sales calls. This was usually done over a meal or on the car ride over to the customer, as we got quite comfortable behind the wheel this summer. Each Elanco sales rep was different on how we pre called any customer interaction but there was always some discussion on what we would be talking about, goals of the meeting and previous established relationships. After each customer interaction we also talk on what was achieved and what we should “start, stop and keep” in the future. These customer conversations were very helpful to me with the ability to ask my countless questions and learn how things operated in the feedlot world.

My responsibilities to successfully complete my assigned project were to create and establish clear communication for the sales reps in charge of the targeted customer for my interviews, to come up with a brief one page summary to send out to customers as a “pre think” before interviews happened, create high gain questions to guide our conversations, maintain and learn people skills to read customers and use appropriate techniques to gain more knowledge from specific
customer types. This project was right up my alley because the two things that I am most passionate about are people and agriculture, so what better project than to do a people project on ways that an animal health company can add value to their customers through an out cry that had already been established by the way of help with people management. My educational background was very helpful to me this summer although I did initially feel clueless on the inner working of a feedlot when I first started. Thankfully I had a great supervisor who was incredible patient with me and even gave me a “cattle kindergarten” class early on to provide me with a good foundation. I had a little bit of an agriculture background through FFA and showing animals which was helpful as well as my previous course work at Texas A&M. My course work has been extremely beneficial especially AGEC 315, 314 and 340 since I was in selling situations often and needed many of the skills taught in these class to be successful. I also found that I used the other interns and the Elanco reps in cattle west regularly as a network for questions and learning about the animal health and beef industry.

This internship program confirmed that I definitely want to go into a career that is highly involved in making a difference in the world through agricultural innovation. I really love sales because I love people and love the relationships that come from having several customers. I also love the kind of customers you generally get in the ag industry. The panhandle was a great place to be with so many people that had similar interest in ag like I do, I am so thankful to have gotten this opportunity with Elanco and am excited to continue my career with them in the future. Aside from fulfilling my love for people and agriculture, Elanco also has a
greater cause and purpose beyond what and why they do what they do. Being that they are an animal health company working to enrich lives through food and companionship, they are very passionate about using their innovation and technology to solve the very real issue of food insecurity. Before I was even hired as an intern with Elanco I was introduced to their “why” which is a very big word at Elanco. It is incredible to know you are a part of something that is truly making a difference in many lives and working diligently to solve the very real issue of the 9 billion people that will be on the earth by 2050 needing access to enough affordable and nutritious food. Elanco has taken many steps to say that they have had “Enough” of food insecurity and are doing everything they can to provide more meat, milk and eggs to the world through innovation. This was the main reason that I was initially drawn to Elanco because as much as I want a “job” after graduation, more so I want a career and a place where I can actually make a difference which is what Elanco is doing.

I would highly suggest other students to take every opportunity to pursue internships before graduating. If enough research is done before hand and you get as lucky as myself to work with some awesome people, it will only help grow you as the person you want to be both professionally and individually. Any one interested in sales, agriculture or animals, I would highly suggest looking into and pursuing Elanco. I could not have been more blessed to have gotten this opportunity and would encourage the chance for any Aggie to see what Elanco has to offer as a top employer in agriculture.
After this internship I plan to work toward building an even larger network in the ag industry. I am so grateful to have gotten the opportunity to work full time with Elanco after. This experience has established a very high bar of where I believe company values and culture should be. I plan to work in an environment that is nothing short of what I saw this summer. I also plan to evaluate the “elective” credits I still have to take and if at all possible work in some additional animal science classes.

This report was written from my learning’s, experiences and growth gained over this summer. I would highly suggest going to sensibletable.com and reading about why Elanco does what they do and why food security is such an important issue as this is the source from which I referenced the 9 billion people that will be requiring meat, milk and eggs by 2050. This website has a lot of great information that has been instilled in me over the summer and has empowered me to share with others and speak confidently about what I’ve been doing.