

**PRESS RELEASE**

**IIM Ahmedabad Food and Agribusiness Management students pushing the frontiers of their field**

**July 16, 2018 | Ahmedabad**

The portrayed image of Agriculture in India is fraught with challenges and distress. However, despite these challenges, the sector holds immense positivity and potential. A reflection of this optimism was observed in the recently concluded internships of the Food and Agribusiness Management students at IIM Ahmedabad. The students interned with a diverse set of companies, varying from fertilizers to food, private-equity (PE) to policy, and technology to strategy.

Nithin worked on ‘Karnataka Turnaround Project’ in the retail strategic business unit of Coromandel International Limited. “The objective of my internship was to perform diagnosis study of retail stores and design a strategy to make the state operations profitable”, said Nithin. Working across seven categories (fertilizers, pesticides, organic manure, animal feed, seeds, insurance and specialty nutrients), his project had a direct impact on the Karnataka retail operations which is the only loss making division for the firm. “This project would help the company reduce supply chain inefficiencies and come up with area specific strategic marketing plan to make state operations profitable by next financial year”, he said.

In the food sector, Vedansh Jain interned at the northern division of Unibic Foods. Contributing to the company’s aggressive expansion strategy, he added 100 new outlets and suggested improvements for enhancing operational efficiency of the existing business. Vedansh said, “Unibic is the first company to use wire cut technology in India, and operates in the premium segment of the crowded biscuit industry. Increasing incomes are shifting the biscuit market in India towards premium category. This holds a huge market potential, which can be further tapped by companies.” However, it is to be noted that with increasing “premiumization”, the health awareness of consumers is also growing, which necessitates product innovation in order to make healthier food products, suitable for the Indian palate.

Aakash Kashyap, who interned with one of the PE firms in agribusiness and supply chain area, explains how this space holds a multifold growth potential. He says, “Contrary to the earlier trends, PE and Venture Capital firms have now started showing interest in agriculture and allied sector, given a large number of agritech and agribusiness startups being setup. The investments are being extended beyond warehousing, to seed care, IOT, food processing and plantation. The most crucial part here is to understand the existing value chain and to strategically break it down into subdivisions, with respective business and profit centers.” At his internship, he was responsible for preparing a business case on a value-added product line, within the current business. The idea was to identify synergies in the existing value chain.

Meanwhile, Kevin John interned with Government of Telangana under the Telangana State Food Processing Society. During his internship, he worked on two-fold objectives, including those of policy and social. On the policy front, he worked on the export policy of key agri commodities of the State, whereas on the social front, he worked on marketing of the spice park project proposed by Government of Telangana. His project had a direct impact on the lives of turmeric-producing farmers in and around the turmeric belt of India at Nizamabad district. He said, “This would help the farmers move up the value chain and help them obtain better value for their produce."

It was observed that even agritech-startups in agriculture are vying for attracting talent from the Food and Agribusiness Management program of IIMA. A US-based company - Precision Agriculture for Development - recruited Umang Agarwal to develop and pilot an advisory system for dairy farmers. “An extensive market research led us to develop a personalized information system for smallholder dairy farmers. The information is tailored to the individual farmer, such that it would help in improving the milk yields and ultimately increase farmer profitability”, said Umang. The use of new technologies, that are easily scalable, allows the organizations to reach their customers in a targeted and cost-effective way.

The significant contributions of these students, through their respective internships, helped various firms within the Food and Agribusiness sector unleash their untapped potential. Moreover, it helped the students push the frontiers of their field and offer tangible benefits to the sector. The Food and Agribusiness sector in India holds a promising future, which would therefore be a corollary of the skills and business acumen of budding, young management professionals, with the aforementioned caliber and experience.

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About Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIMA)

Established in 1961, the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIMA) is recognized globally for excellence in management education. One of the top management schools in the world, IIMA educates leaders of the enterprises.

The Institute’s strategic priorities include: strengthening connection with its various constituencies, including academics, practitioners, alumni, and the community; nurturing a high-performance work environment of stretch, autonomy, and teamwork; and strategic growth while maintaining emphasis on quality.

The flagship Post Graduate Programme (PGP) is ranked 21st in the Financial Times Masters in Management Ranking 2017. As per the Financial Times’ Global MBA Ranking 2017, IIMA’s Post Graduate Programme for Executives (PGPX) is ranked 29th in the World. The postgraduate program in food and Agri Business (PGP-FABM) is ranked 1st in the Eduniversal Masters Ranking 2018. IIMA has been ranked as #1 Management institute as per the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) rankings of Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

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