



## From Concept to Crunch

Each semester the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS) hosts a Case Competition in partnership with a company or organization, sponsored by the Renk Agribusiness Institute. This spring 25 students across 12 CALS undergraduate majors joined forces to impress Kerry, an international food company and leader in taste and nutrition innovation. In the process, the students gained an understanding of the detail and compromise that goes into creating the perfect snack.

Students were divided into groups of five, and asked to come up with an idea for a new chip. The students spent three weeks sifting through market research, developing a supply chain, and working through other production logistics. After the initial information collection, they condensed their research into a professional proposal to be pitched to Kerry.

In March the groups presented their ideas to a panel of judges from Kerry Taste and Nutrition. After each presentation members of the judging panel had the opportunity to pick the brains of these young professionals, giving students the chance to highlight their expertise and provide feedback on their proposals. Panelists were impressed by the students' thorough and comprehensive research.

*Their presentations showcased a deep understanding of the complexities involved in product development. The teams demonstrated exceptional analytical skills, creativity, and a strong grasp of market trends.*

- **John Kaufmann**, VP – Snack End Use Market

Preparing students for the 'real world' outside of the classroom is a priority for the Renk Agribusiness Institute and CALS. Undergraduates have several *experiential learning opportunities* in which they can develop skills and experience in their area of interest before entering the workforce. The Case Competitions are one example, and students have found them extremely valuable.

*"These events (Case Competitions) are an amazing way to apply classroom knowledge to real-world challenges, gaining hands-on experience in problem-solving and strategic thinking"*

- **Morgan Knilans**, AAE Senior and CALS Case Competition participant

On presentation day each of the teams impressed the judges by introducing new and innovative ideas, but one team in particular hit the mark. *Spud Jackets*, proposed by Camille Bender (AAE), Sydney Miller (ABM), Kathryn Leonard (AAE), Emily Stumpf (Life Science Communications),

Ben Tirtawiguna (Food Science), would convert potato skins usually discarded in production into a snack. In addition to the novelty of their proposal, this team effectively communicated their approaches for obtaining supplies, potential waste management, processing, and marketing.

*“I left Friday’s session energized after seeing the students’ new ideas that they will be bringing into the Food and Beverage industry over the next few years. As an alumnus, it made me proud to know that UW- Madison continues to prepare students to lead in the years to come. On Wisconsin!”*

- **Eleanor Hanson**, RD&A Senior Scientist

Thank you to all the students who participated, to Kerry for facilitating a productive and knowledgeable competition, to Jeremy Beach for organizing and supporting the students, and to CALS for hosting such an influential educational experience.

