

LETTER OF INTEREST AND EXPERIENCE

April 1, 2017

Dr. Mike Tokach, Chair
Animal Science and Industries Department Head Search and Screening Committee
246 Weber Hall
Manhattan, KS 66506

Dear Search and Screening Committee:

Thank you for your letter of invitation to apply for the Professor and Head, Department of Animal Sciences and Industry, Kansas State University. Kansas agriculture and the production of food has been the livelihood to at least the past and present five generations of my family. I truly believe that nothing is more noble than caring for the land and raising the food that feeds our local and global communities. My lifelong passion is to not only to honor the history that was created before me, but concurrently be recognized for my visionary approach to future food production. This position is of upmost interest to me as it not only involves service to the same institution that allowed me to be where I am today, but also centers on leadership in progressing the animal and food-related industries. With great humility and pleasure, I am providing the Department Head Search Committee with my letter of interest along with my vision, administrative philosophy, qualifications, curriculum vitae, and references to apply for the Department Head Position. My broad industry experience in business and technical team leadership, multi-species exposure, global food supply chains, food safety operations oversight, influential industry organizations, as well as my background in research, teaching, and extension has provided me with the qualifications for this position.

My roles at Cargill have all involved leadership, customer relationships, business and optimization. Currently as a research, development and business leader, my responsibilities are to provide leadership and innovation vision to the organization and develop the individuals that directly report to me along with the extended business teams. One of my strongest leadership skills is to connect with people, to quickly establish trust, and develop a relationship that results in influencing them to be fully committed to the goals and to improving overall performance. Highly engaged teams have substantiated their connection to my leadership and to me individually substantiated through formal Cargill-wide engagement surveys. While being the Cargill North American technical lead for a dedicated customer, I was selected to lead their beef supplier technical committee. In this leadership role, I had the opportunity to connect the customer's Canadian and United States protein quality teams. My overall responsibility was to establish more transparent and united oversight of the beef supply by having direct responsibility to advise and create alignment with suppliers. The supplier team working together resulted in

improved food safety, quality, and an enhanced product development program for the respective customer. These experiences allowed me to develop and refine my skills related to the greatest asset any company or organization has: its human resources. I was able to successfully build pipelines of talent that developed leaders in food production for Cargill and other companies. Also, through leadership of people I have had multiple experiences in handling individual's professional, legal, and personal challenges. In 2009, I was 1 of 24 people in the entire Cargill Americas team selected for a yearlong North/South/Central America leadership class called Transitioning into Leadership. This high performance leadership program consisted of four phases focusing on understanding yourself and personality preferences, managing change, systems thinking, and building strategic agility. Learning and experiencing these principles allowed me to develop leadership competencies that greatly influenced my servant leadership style that some describe as strategic, transparent, and promotes collaboration and teamwork. Coaching, motivating, increasing productivity, setting vision, and knowing when to delegate and form working teams have all been integral components of roles I took to build successful working teams.

My research interest and experience is broad. However, whatever the problem is to solve I apply research principles of experimental design, collecting accurate data, and making unbiased summaries to provide recommendations that are substantiated by future success. My responsibilities have been to provide research learning's that have developed innovative product lines, optimized equipment, and solved food safety crises. To gain insight into the Cargill worldwide technologies and innovations, I serve as a judge for the highest global technical award program, which evaluates 40 to 80 annual applications.

Throughout my 15-years at Cargill, I have used strategy, financial data, and commercial acumen to guide where to focus execution. Understanding drivers of profit and loss, navigating different types of financial statements, and developing and maintaining budgets have contributed to the build of \$20 million dollar project pipelines that have contributed over \$45 million in earnings. Additionally, soliciting funds and providing oversight of maintaining facility infrastructure has provided me appreciation of having a long-term infrastructure plan. This has allowed me to combine leadership with technical and business knowledge to grow the animal and food industries. I have managed multi-million dollar budgets and oversaw the food safety operations and regulatory relationships at multiple locations in both the United States and Canada. Additionally, I have been a team member of building a \$14.9 million innovation center with an emphasis of working with equipment vendors to buy or donate processing equipment and have had oversight of other operational capital improvements. Cargill has provided me a diverse experience across pork, case ready beef, cooked meats, value-added beef, turkey, and chicken businesses for food service, retail, industrial, and distribution market segments that spanned research, development, business management, and leadership focuses of the business which allowed me to develop a well-rounded foundation from which I can anchor future challenges and responsibilities.

Our family's expatriate experience of living and working in Canada provided both personal and professional development. Living in another country is humbling as your daily comforts and personal networks are minimal at first and need to be realigned with the new reality. Professionally, working with diverse cultures provides an environment of different norms than one has experienced and allows for an enhanced appreciation for the values of cultural diversity. To be effective I had to develop creative connections to new and different teammates. However, I found technical knowledge and core leadership values of integrity, communication, and trust are consistent regardless of geography.

I received my doctorate from the Kansas State University Department of Animal Sciences and Industry with emphasis in porcine and bovine muscle growth and development and meat science. Concurrently I held the position of Extension HACCP Assistant with my primary role to provide guidance to companies in Kansas and Missouri and collaborate with faculty and staff from two other universities. My emphasis during my M.S. degree was determining how feed supplements affected pork quality and the influence of anatomical location throughout the pork loin on pork chop quality and teaching. Meat judging, coaching the meat judging team, and participating in both agriculture-related and academic organizations were some of my activities while completing my B.S. in Animal Science. Additionally, I had an undergraduate research project designed to develop a technique to predict beef ribeye size. This was my first exposure to research and writing a technical paper and it provided me the spark to continue with graduate degrees and have the opportunity to lead influential research teams and transfer my knowledge to others. In my youth and as a young adult I participated in our family-owned Angus commercial cow/calf operation. I continue to have oversight of the family ranch.

In addition to my business responsibilities, I have also focused on association and academic activities. I have been active in the American Meat Science Association (AMSA) and served on the board of directors. As a sustaining member, I secured grants and funding for AMSA. In Canada, I represented Cargill and was a founding member of Safe Food Canada, an organization that tied the Canada Food Inspection Agency, commercial industry, and academia together to collaborate and build technical knowledge for the Canadian food industries. For eight-years I have been a Kansas State Department of Animal Science adjunct professor and served on two M.S. graduate student committees.

My professional objectives are aligned with the position of Professor and Head, Department of Animal Sciences and Industry, at Kansas State University. My career goals include returning to academia leadership and being able to guide teaching, research, and extension programs. This will provide an opportunity to interact with faculty, students, and industry stakeholders, in the fields of Animal and Food Science and to collaborate with other agriculture disciplines. Throughout my career I have been involved in many leadership activities and have had business, technology, research, teaching, and extension responsibilities. Under my guidance, teammates,

industry personnel, students, and workshop participants have gained knowledge through formal and informal presentations, lectures, and hands-on activities about different segments of agriculture. Because of these experiences, I feel that I am a viable candidate for the open position and appreciate your consideration of application materials.

I would be honored to have the opportunity to serve as the Kansas State University Department of Animal Sciences and Industry Head. I am passionate about Kansas and Kansas State University and feel indebted to the University that provided me with so many opportunities for business and personal growth and development. With my current network and along with establishing new relationships, I am dedicated to building local, state, regional, national and international partnerships. My personality, skills, and experiences provide me with the foundation to be a transformative leader and I have the commitment to create and advance missions of and promote excellence across teaching, research, and extension activities to further position the department as a state, national, and global animal and food leader. If you would like more information not included in the materials I have uploaded, please contact me.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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VISION AND ADMINISTRATION PHILOSOPHY

Animal Science departments are foundational institutions for progressing agriculture throughout the United States and across the globe. Scholarly instruction, research, and extension outreach are core pillars that help establish a solid structure that supports a successful Animal Science Department. An effective department head promotes a balance between honoring the past and forging new advancement in these three core capacities. As the speed of change continues to accelerate vision, leadership, collaboration, planning, and infrastructure are required to sustain and support the progress needed to meet the local and global demands. Overall, my vision is to have the Kansas State University Department of Animal Sciences and Industry continue to thrive and be recognized as a leader in advancing animal agriculture and food science industries.

A department should reflect its mission and vision and have an active and intentional plan to accomplish its goals. The Kansas State Animal Sciences Department would continue expansion of teaching and specifically improve student success with increased freshmen-to-sophomore retention rate and industry interactions; attain growth in research capabilities; and apply the enhanced research to support extension with additional knowledge disseminated that assists Kansas agriculture to produce profitable, safe, and high quality food products. Department's internal and external stakeholders are active with input into the strategic planning process and collaborate to review/revise the mission and vision, which ensures relevance. The department head has to be a recognized leader that instills integrity, conviction, courage, and upholds ethics and values. A department head must be a trusted and servant leader to the faculty, students, staff, and stakeholders. Additionally, provide an emphasis on expanding faculty development opportunities to sustain energy and momentum. As the department leader, it is critical that one is accessible, provides solid guidance, and is accountable. Responsible decisions are made through gathering of information and sound judgment. An effective department head seeks to learn, delegates authority, appropriately advocates for and allocates resources, and champions the department's excellence. The department head is responsible to further develop the department's mission and vision and foster an environment of open communication and accountability, all the time acting to align with the mission and vision of the College of Agriculture and Kansas State University.

Kansas State University was the first land grant university established in 1863 under the first Morrill Act (1862) and with this institution distinction the Department of Animal Sciences is vital to upholding the progress of Agriculture in the state of Kansas and globally. To maintain its prominence, a department must be innovative and evolve technology, build sustaining partners, and enhance agriculture by building knowledge, training the next generation, and developing technology. A department will accomplish these goals through exercising a balance of teaching, research, and extension activities.

Teaching: The transfer of knowledge and development of critical thinking requires educating members of society. An Animal Science Department must be innovative in attracting, instructing, and developing students to have productive lives in agriculture or food-related industries. To extend the department's reach, a fundamental course on the animal and food sciences should be evaluated as an avenue for non-Animal Science majors to gain a sense of appreciation for animal agriculture and the story of their food.

Consistent with the United States, Kansas has increasing population diversity. The population diversity refers to both ethnic and racial composition of the population. Specific to Kansas, migration has occurred to support the food processing industry. The emphasis on the change of population composition has to be also taken into account on how the department connects with these non-traditional students with limited agriculture experiences. The availability of financial aid and scholarships to support access to affordable education is critical to keep recruitment of high performing students at the forefront of expanding diverse student enrollment. To attract students now and in the future it is necessary to have both leading-edge facilities for on-campus and creative connection tools for the diverse and distance education students. The curriculum has to provide the foundation for both basic and applied knowledge and experiences for students to have the know-how to be lifetime learners, to have proficiency in their respective area, and to have awareness of the global agriculture system.

Teaching is a valuable function of the department because it is providing knowledge for the future. It is visible and its effectiveness measured by student's successes. Instruction should prepare students in subject matter, critical thinking, decision-making skills, and prepare them to be contributing members of society. Students are from diverse backgrounds, hence exposure to a broad spectrum of agriculture opportunities are needed. These opportunities include companion animals, large animal production and processing, food processing, new product development, food safety, food and meat regulations and policy, and biotechnology. Students should experience these sectors of agriculture through the classroom, hands-on activities, research projects, higher education teaching and externally with industry interactions, collaborative projects, internships, and abroad studies. Specifically, undergraduate research projects are instrumental in providing students insight and connection into the sciences involved in the animal and food industries. Providing different teaching medias enriches the student's training and allows students to learn through multiple experiences.

The department is responsible to have resourcing that provides students with optimized academic opportunities. During higher education, students should have a pleasant experience and at the same time be challenged. Professors need to be recognized in their respective disciplines and compensated fairly. On-going commitment to reviewing teaching programs, gathering input from stakeholders,

and knowing academia and industry needs are key factors to use to adjust curriculums to broaden employment opportunities.

Through teaching, I am energized to see individuals grow knowledge and develop skills that last a lifetime. My academic teaching experiences have been with undergraduate Animal Science and Meat Science courses, laboratory training in a muscle growth and development lab, and meat judging teams. Recently, I served as a member of the Safe Food Canada industry competency committee. This committee collaborated across food industries to identify fundamental core competencies relevant to guide academia in development of food safety curriculum. In industry, I have taught customers, colleagues, and operations the principles of meat science, food processing, and food safety through formal courses I developed to daily activities and interactions in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Japan. Because of my ability to connect and mentor teammates, I have been recognized as a 'developer of talent' and have multiple individuals in leadership positions that I hired. My first formal teaching with students was when I was an undergraduate and was the assistant meat judging coach. Even at that young age I was highly energized by helping the team members learn both technical knowledge and how to interact and communicate. One of the contributing reasons I returned to obtain a Ph.D. was to gain additional knowledge to be a lifetime teacher. Regardless the setting, I try to assist individuals to develop to not only be their best, but be able to stretch further and accomplish goals they thought would be unattainable.

The Kansas State Department of Animal Science will have on-going recognition for its teaching because of: its strong connection to undergraduate and graduate students through advising and mentoring; innovative facilities; recognized faculty; and student success. These recognitions will promote the department. This success will continue to draw students and provide for growing enrollment and sustain the teaching program. Good teachers and effective instruction have positive effects on students that last a lifetime.

Research: Knowledge gained through agriculture-based research is required to feed the growing world-population. Efficiency in animal growth and development will continue to be at the forefront of animal research. However, consumer's connection to food has evolved because their experience has changed from being a part of their livelihood to an expectation of having an experience with their food. Research that focuses on efficiency through natural means is essential because of this change of consumer's expectations in developed countries. Additionally, discovery of new technologies are of continued economic importance to provide efficiently produced food. However, to sustain the nutrition of the world, the research focus needs balanced between requirements of both developed and developing countries.

If food is thought of as a system, then research cannot be independent. Hence, successful research is dependent on collaboration across the different disciplines from the general sciences to the specialized areas in grain, milling, feed, bakery,

nutrition, growth and development along with business and technology. Ingenious ways to support collaboration among these fellow researchers and providing research facilities to allow the research to come together is essential. Overall, the funding and success metrics have to be in place to reward collaboration.

Research is vital to make agriculture competitive and sustainable. The overall department strategy includes the function of research and its core areas. A department has to choose core research areas to plan and facilitate infrastructure and collaborations, develop a funding plan, as well as identify where to focus resources. When goals are defined, collaborations can be identified and resources sought collectively to address the identified priorities. Funding has to be multi-faceted involving sustaining sponsors, industry organizations, industry, and government resources. A balance of basic and applied research is necessary to fully develop solutions that meet today's state and regional industry needs as well as to solve future challenges.

My research has been both applied and basic across species of beef cattle, swine, turkey, and chicken. The focus of my research has spanned multiple disciplines: how genetics, nutrition, and processing impact meat quality; animal welfare; pre-/post-harvest and finished product food safety; food ingredient functionality and food processing; processing technology development; and cellular growth and development. This research was not only domestic but also had a global impact. We developed and followed United States pork product to the Japanese market, connected poultry food safety interventions and programs between the United States, Canada, England, and China, as well as transferred product processing capabilities from Canada to China as a few examples of how connecting and collaborating globally improves food production safety and competitiveness. Diversified funding resources are vital to augment the research program and would continue a multi-faceted fundraising approach utilizing department, industry, and government stakeholders. While on the American Meat Science Association board of directors, we grew sustaining partner contributions by communication and ensuring that the needs were met. To establish if the department stakeholders are receiving applicable knowledge a process is in place to evaluate relevancy of programs. In general, my quest is to continually improve the overall protein supply chains from the development of animals to the quality of food products for consumers.

Extension: Extension is the Animal Science Department mechanism to provide knowledge that advances agriculture practices and the vehicle to connect the community to agriculture. The Animal Science Extension faculty provide a vital link between department researchers and county agents, animal and food producers, industry groups, regulatory bodies, and consumers. Animal agriculture and food processing are facing many challenges and emerging issues. The department must be committed to having outreach programs that addresses the immediate and critical problems. The applicable information and technology has to be provided timely to increase the competitiveness and profitability of the states animal and

food agriculture industries. To maintain the strong extension programs, a resource plan of diverse funding sources from the private sector, associations, sustaining industry supporters, and agencies are required. The department has to interface responsibly as the challenges and demands compete for limited resources. The future of the Animal Science Department is closely linked to the efficient and effective use of resources to enhance agriculture in Kansas.

The network of Extension professionals in the county and district offices across the state is instrumental in sharing unbiased research-based information and expertise. These public educators provide an important conduit to the department in providing the issues being faced and feedback for the direction of the department. They are critical resources in preparing and recruiting students, as well as, conducting applied research. The collaboration between the department and extension agents is necessary to successfully address the animal and food issues important to the state of Kansas.

The Department of Animal Sciences and Industry is core to providing the state of Kansas with research-based information and expertise to nourish the youth and older generations and strengthen their connection to agriculture industries. Knowledge shared through the extension network is vital to the Kansas economy and the global food supply.

Extension has played a role throughout my life starting in 4-H where I was an 8-year active-member. Concurrently with my Ph.D. program I held the position of Extension HACCP Assistant, which consisted of assisting food and meat companies in Kansas and Missouri with HACCP plans and government regulations, and other food safety concerns. In conjunction with faculty from two other universities, I facilitated regional HACCP, SSOP, and GMP workshops. This position also entailed a positive working relationship with the Kansas Meat Processors' Association. The rewards of disseminating information and helping employees of both family and commercially owned businesses, made these experiences invaluable.

The on-going success of teaching, research, and extension requires teamwork within the department, collaboration with other departments, and connections with constituents across Kansas and the globe. These collaborations will continue the thriving Kansas State University Department of Animal Sciences.