

INTERNS BEEF UP BUSINESS



After several years of highly volatile cattle markets, Jolene and Kirk Pisel were looking for a way to add value to their cattle operation. In 2009 they launched JoKir's Wild to allow for the family's locally raised and processed, state inspected, natural Black Angus, dry aged, beef cuts to be sold in retail locations. Jolene (Jo), Kirk, and their daughter, Lacy, spent many hours working to create a product comparable to what was only available in fine steak houses and specialty meat shops.

As the success of the business continued, they once again sought the opportunity to expand their product offerings. Cyburdog, a new product to utilize surplus ground beef, was conceptualized. Since conception, the JoKir's Wild team and Semester, Inc. interns have been working with Iowa State University to create a co-branded and licensed product. This unique partnership has allowed for the business to tap into a new market and expand their customer base.



The Pisels found the opportunity to work with the Agricultural Entrepreneurship Initiative's Semester, Inc. program, during product development, a huge asset.

"Having AgEI students working with us allowed us to get valuable feedback for a truly authentic Iowa State University product that has been inspired, designed, tested and endorsed by the Iowa State University community. All the goals that we set were met, if not

exceeded, by the four interns in two short semesters," Jo Pisel explained.

Semester, Inc. interns, working alongside the JoKir's Wild team, were given many unique and hands on experiences. Fall semester interns assisted with developing business growth strategies, conducting market research, and finally introducing the possibility of a co-branded product with Iowa State University.

Product development was a huge project for spring semester interns as they held sampling sessions during campus events to gather customer feedback. The students then assisted with the licensing and labeling process and worked to identify other retailers to sell this specialty product.

"Ensuring the interns had a successful learning experience has led to the culmination of many people working together on a project that has the potential to

take our business to a new level of success," said Jo. "The Agricultural Entrepreneurship Initiative is an exceptional program. Working with the staff and students has been a highlight in our business venture."

If you would like more information on how to get your organization involved with Semester, Inc. please contact Amanda Blair at acblair@iastate.edu or 515.294.4945.