

N.C. Cooperative Extension
NC State University
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Lee County Extension Intern

Location: Lee County

Program Area: Agriculture and Natural Resources, Community and Rural Development

Immediate/Site Supervisor: Meredith Favre

Other Mentors and Supervisors: Ashley Szilvay, Amanda Bratcher, and Bill Stone

Position Description/Responsibilities:

The Pilgrim's Sanford Agricultural Marketplace this is a brand-new facility with no existing social media footprint. The intern will be tasked with helping to create the brand's voice by:

- Filming behind-the-scenes updates, "Meet the Vendor" spotlights, and teaser videos of the commercial kitchen
- Conducting "gap analysis" surveys with local farmers to determine exactly how they plan to use the new commercial kitchen
- Designing systems to track visitor foot traffic and vendor sales
- Producing a "Foundations to Harvest" digital series
 - Designing and launching the Marketplace's dedicated social media presence (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok) and create a 12-month evergreen content calendar
 - Creating a professional "Media Kit" for the Lee County Center
 - Developing success metrics for the facility
- Implementing "dot surveys" and attendance counts during early market days
- Developing a system to track vendor sales growth and new customer acquisition and retention
 - Analyzing engagement data from social media campaigns
- Conducting structured interviews with local farmers to identify specific equipment needs in the commercial kitchen
 - Surveying local restaurants and grocers
 - Hosting focus groups or digital polls
 - Creating innovative resources by creating a "Marketing 101" guide specifically for Marketplace vendors

Benefits/skills student will gain through this internship:

- Building a brand from scratch for a multimillion-dollar facility
- Mastering the art of "Ag-Comm" through professional-grade photography, drone capture, and short-form video storytelling
- Learning how to manage the high-pressure environment of a "Grand Opening" and coordinating with media outlets like The Sanford Herald
- Planning and executing a 10-week marketing "sprint" with specific conversion goals
- Learning how to build an evaluation system for a new project
- Developing professional interviewing and qualitative research skills
- Translating raw market data into "Impact Infographics"
- Gaining experience in documenting the ROI of public-private partnerships
- Gaining a deep understanding of the "farm-to-table" pipeline and the logistics of a year-round Agricultural Marketplace
- Developing "Extension-style" teaching skills by creating marketing toolkits
- Learning to navigate complex partnerships between local government, corporate donors, and non-profits
- Understanding the intersection of public space management, food safety regulations, and community programming
- Managing a high-visibility project with minimal supervision, fostering "Intrapreneurial" skills
- Learning to work across Extension disciplines to achieve a unified goal
- Presenting findings and project updates to diverse audiences

Preferred qualifications/previous coursework:

- Proficiency in capturing and editing high-quality photography and short-form video (Reels, TikTok, or YouTube Shorts)
- Ability to develop a cohesive brand "voice" and manage a multi-platform content calendar from the ground up
- Experience creating and implementing surveys (Qualtrics, Google Forms) and the ability to translate raw data into "Success Story" reports
- Foundational understanding of local food systems, small farm operations, and the role of Extension in rural economic development
- Skill in using tools like Canva or Adobe Creative Suite
- A self-starter who thrives in a "startup" environment and can identify and solve problems without a pre-existing manual
- The ability to communicate effectively with a diverse audience
- Strong organizational skills to balance multiple high-priority tasks
- A willingness to experiment with new media techniques
- Comfort level in representing the Lee County Extension office at public events, market days, or community meetings

Additional Information

This internship offers a unique professional opportunity that blends creative media, economic research, and community development. By tasking the student with the development and launch of the Pilgrim's Sanford Agricultural Marketplace outreach efforts, we are providing a high-visibility stage where their innovation directly fuels the success of a multi-million dollar public investment. It is a one-of-a-kind opportunity for a student to prove they can lead, create, and measure impact in the modern agricultural landscape.



National Institute of Food and Agriculture
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



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