

FORMER COE STUDENT JULIA KNUDSON MAKING HER MARK IN THE POULTRY INDUSTRY

Julia (Heller) Knudson was a student at the University of Illinois when she heard about the COE program and took classes in 2021, she completed her COE internship with Pilgrims. Reflecting on her experience with COE, Julia said, “The program helped me decide the poultry industry was definitely something I wanted to be a part of.”

Julia was able to earn her bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois in only 2.5 years, graduating in December of 2022. She was happy to have received multiple job offers by the start of her last semester, which allowed her to focus her attention on her remaining courses and her upcoming wedding. After graduation she got married and moved to Wisconsin with her husband. In January, Julia started working with Jennie-O.

She is currently a Live Production Assistant Area Supervisor in Barron, WI. “In my job I work with the live production supervisors and visit brood farms that just received poults and check on the conditions of farms. Additionally, I assist the Barron area with projects and work on reports, such as safety walk-throughs and tilling reports. I am the supervisor at one of the farms, which allows me to further develop my management and problem-solving skills. Taking on this role helps me refine the skills Jennie-O teaches in training.”

During COE Julia learned about areas of the poultry industry including hatcheries, layer farms, processing plants, and technology used in the industry. She feels the guest speakers gave her a general overview of different companies in the poultry industry. From COE she gained a deeper understanding of the poultry industry as a whole and she is able to relay information intelligently about the industry.

She was also able to make industry connections, such as meeting Abby Scott (COE 2013/2014). Abby helped Julia secure a summer internship with Jennie-O in 2022 where she learned more about the company. Julia and Abby still work together, serving on Jennie-O's Learning & Development Committee with the goal of developing training and coaching materials to help new and current team members build their skills in live production related to current operation practices. Julia has had a lot of changes already in 2023 being newly married, moving to Wisconsin, and starting her career. While getting settled in their new home, the couple made a personal goal to visit all the Wisconsin state parks; after each new hike they check another one off the list.

