

Howdy! My name is Morgan Mink and I am currently a junior at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. I attended the 2008 PMA Fresh Summit in Orlando, Florida and had the time of my life!

I was not really sure what to expect when I first found out that I had been accepted as a Pack Scholarship winner. I was not really familiar with the produce industry other than what Dan'l Mackey had explained in her talks to various groups on campus at Texas A&M University, but I was interested in the potential to learn about an exciting industry. As time grew closer, the more excited I became to attend the PMA Fresh Summit.

The group from Texas A&M flew out early Thursday morning from College Station. When we finally arrived in Orlando, we settled into the hotel and made our way to the convention center. Our first session where we met fellow students, as well as our mentors, other mentors, and Jay and Ruthie Pack, was a blast and it began the excitement for the entire conference. Everyone that I talked to was so enthusiastic about the industry and very welcoming.

Attending all of the different sessions was helpful in gaining more knowledge about jobs and entry into the industry. Being able to attend two of the workshop series was also enjoyable to add perspective on the industry in a more in depth way. The receptions were a good way to mingle with fellow students and faculty, as well as professionals, in a more relaxed setting. All of the build up really did get me energized for the expo. Walking into the expo hall for the first time was overwhelming and to see the many elaborate booths was amazing. Many of the booth exhibitors were really nice and interested in talking to me. Of course, there were a few who were really more into business than talking, but that was understandable. I was more impressed and pleased with the ones who stopped me because they realized I was a scholarship winner; they were not necessarily exhibitors but there for other reasons. Walking around the floor with my mentor, Dan'l was interesting and beneficial in meeting lots of new people. I feel that the best part of the trip was not only meeting a lot of people, but also listening to the keynote speakers at the General Sessions, they were awesome.

I feel very privileged for the opportunity to experience the PMA Fresh Summit and look forward to a possible career in the produce industry. I realize that it would not be possible without a lot of people that make it happen. I really want to thank the Pack's for everything they have done for the program; Cindy Seel and Stephanie White for coordinating the event for students and making so many arrangements for me; Dan'l Mackey and her DMA Solutions girls from whom I learned a lot and had an awesome time hanging out. Dan'l was a phenomenal mentor. I am also appreciative of Jose Pena, our faculty member that accompanied us on the trip. He was helpful in informing us what to expect and making sure we did everything we should. I really want to thank PMA for allowing the PACK Students be part of the convention, which was an awesome opportunity. Since coming back to school, I have told many people of the trip and I am already encouraging others to be on the look out for information on when to apply to attend next year. Thank you for an incredible opportunity.