Bailey, Grace and Claire Bokelman grew up in Washington, KS harvesting wheat, soybeans, corn and sorghum with their parents, Scott and Debbie, and brother, Keith. They believe those years of planting and harvesting set a solid foundation of interest in grain science.

Claire is beginning her sophomore year in the Feed Science & Management program. She said, “I absolutely loved my first year in the Grain Science and Industry Department! I was really able to get a feel of what it is like to be a part of such a unique and in-demand field. I especially loved being able to see just how diverse and exciting the career opportunities are in, Feed Science especially.” Claire has enjoyed the benefits of having two sisters graduate from GSI. They have proven to be a great resource for advice and support.

Grace also chose Feed Science & Management as her major, graduating in 2013. She enjoyed the grain aspect of the family farm, but also the animal side of agriculture. Through Feed Science, she was able to combine both interests. Grace is currently working on a Master’s Degree in Grain Science.
While an undergraduate, Grace spent a semester studying in Ireland at the University College of Dublin. She enrolled in their College of Agriculture, taking courses in crop science, beef science, and agricultural economics. The experience broadened her views on international agriculture and how countries vary in everything from production methods to agriculture policy. During her study abroad experience, Grace had the opportunity to visit several family farms and see agriculture in Ireland firsthand. The following summer, she had an internship with ADM Alliance Nutrition in Effingham, IL; Des Moines and Ankeny, IA; and Quincy, IL. Grace was able to experience different aspects of the feed industry; including quality assurance, feed mill management, and sales. It was during this time she realized that she wanted to further her education in the area of nutrition and formulation. She began graduate studies last fall under Dr. Cassandra Jones. She has completed research trials that focus on feed form and feed processing effects on swine performance in nursery pigs and finishing hogs. Grace plans to pursue a career in the swine industry after receiving her Master’s in 2015.

Bailey chose Milling Science & Management as her major finding the field to fork process interesting. She also liked the engineering and mechanical aspect of the degree. “I loved how the Milling Science and Management program brought those components together.” The fact that Milling Science is such a specialized discipline with job security was another factor in her decision. She graduated in Fall 2011.

Bailey had two internships while a student. The first was in Mt. Joy, PA with Wilkins Rogers Mills. She spent time in all departments; elevator, mill, quality and flour packaging. The internship was very hands helping with repairs, as well as the day to day operations. Her supervisor was Aaron Black, an MSM alumnus. The following summer, she went to Fremont, NE with ConAgra Mills. This internship had equal parts of hands on experiences, including rebuilding roll stands, and management experiences, which included preparing the facility for the anticipated effects of a flood in eastern Nebraska (down time, setting up repairs by ordering parts). Darren Zongker, also a MSM alumnus, supervised Bailey. Both internships taught her a great deal and opened her eyes to what the industry has to offer. She was able to implement in real situations what was taught in our core courses.

Bailey’s advice to students is to experience as many internships as possible. Include a variety of experiences; work with a small company as well as a large one, work hourly as well as with management. “Get involved with IAOM, GEAPS or other grain industry organizations. Many of the professionals at these conferences/meetings are KSU (Grain Science) grads too! It’s a great way to get your name out there and get involved in the industry. From experience, the flour milling industry is a very tight knit group where you know at least one or two people from every company because they all graduated from K-State!”

Bailey is currently a Head Miller with Ardent Mills in Alton, IL. She started her career with ConAgra Mills in Hastings, MN in January 2012; moving to Alton in January 2013. This past June, ConAgra Mills and Horizon Milling joined together to become Ardent Mills. This merger has provided greater opportunities and an added bonus-several former classmates and competitors are now co-workers. Bailey’s responsibilities include managing the milling department to attain
optimum utilization of machinery, materials and labor, to achieve optimum capacity, yields, overall cost reduction, and to drive safe work practices for all employees.

Even though Bailey, Grace and Claire grew up in the same place, attended the same university and studied in the same department; they have the opportunity to impact the grain foods and feed industry in unique ways in all areas of the world.