



# Mentorship Handbook

Canadian Agri-Marketing Association

## Welcome to the Mentorship Program!

On behalf of Canadian Agriculture Marketing Association, we welcome you to the CAMA Mentorship Program. We believe that you will reap huge benefits from this experience as you share your career passions, goals, and insights with one another.

## Overview

The **Canadian Agri-Marketing Mentorship Program** connects students, new and potential CAMA members with established agriculture and food marketing professionals in a supportive and engaging national community. Mentees will have the option to explore their career goals, network with others in the field across Canada and develop new skills with the guidance of their mentor. The mentoring relationship also enables mentors to promote their disciplines, support future industry members and share their passion for agriculture and food marketing with a larger network.



## Program Goals

The structure of the program facilitates the broadening of horizons for the participants, matching each mentee with a mentor based on mutual interests, goals and disciplines. It's a mentee-driven program. Mentees will outline goals and expectations for themselves and the program. The mentoring relationship can take place during CAMA networking events, in face-to-face meetings, online contact, and phone calls, all mutually agreed upon between the participants. The number of interactions will be decided upon by the mentor and mentee, but it's recommended 1 – 2 times per month.

## Program Objectives

- Connect mentees with established national network of professionals to develop, share and foster knowledge, skills, and a further appreciation of ag and food marketing
- Provide an enjoyable, supportive atmosphere for professional and personal development of mentees
- Develop strong colleague networks for ideas, advancement, and opportunity
- Provide a sense of community and cooperation among agriculture and food marketing professionals
- Provide participants with a diverse learning environment by offering a national program
- Help ensure a high level of performance and professionalism in the ag and food marketing sector
- Encourage a life-long commitment to learning and further education and involvement in CAMA

## Expectations

The primary desired outcome of the mentorship process is the greater appreciation, by all participants, about professionalism in agriculture and food marketing.

Mentees include students and recent graduates enrolled in an agricultural program with interest in agri-marketing, those new to the ag-marketing industry, and new CAMA members who are looking to establish relationships within the CAMA network and learn more about the organization. All mentees must be a CAMA member in good standing (CAMA memberships are free for students).

For the **mentee**, this program is expected to provide:

- The opportunity to identify and pursue areas for professional and personal growth
- A connection to the leaders, creators and thinkers of agriculture and food marketing trends and insights
- Skills in workplace communication and conduct
- The opportunity to network with agriculture professionals

Mentees to work with their mentors to establish their needs/wants/outcomes for the program.  
(Mentee-driven perspective)

For the **mentor**, this program is expected to provide:

- An opportunity to share their passion for their career and agriculture marketing
- The opportunity to be a role model and influence future professionals
- The opportunity to network with agriculture professionals
- Experience in mentoring, coaching, and developing personal relationships



## The Mentorship Experience

### What is Mentorship?

Mentorship focuses on the professional development of the mentee through the guidance of an experienced agriculture and food marketing professional (mentor). The relationship develops on a foundation of mutual trust and respect and allows the mentor an opportunity to share their passion and work experience, provide an understanding of and insight into the field of agriculture and food marketing. The mentee gains advice and assistance to achieve goals they have set for themselves. A successful mentoring relationship should provide positive outcomes for both mentee and mentor through the expansion of knowledge and skills and be a safe place to confidentially discuss work-related challenges and solutions.

A mentoring relationship does not replace formal training, nor will it guarantee career success for the participant. Rather, mentorship provides long-term personal and professional development through knowledge-sharing that strengthens the expertise, networks, and careers of both the mentor and student.

*“Mentoring relationships will open up doors for you, but you need to take the steps.”*

### For the Mentee

Mentorship can be a powerful tool. By building a relationship with a mentor, participants can:

- Accelerate personal growth and development
- Receive expert feedback on their approach and performance
- Practice their skills and discuss strategies
- Enjoy expanding networking opportunities and build a professional network
- Feel more empowered and supported
- Develop time management, leadership and communication skills
- Gain clarity on career, academic and personal plans

### Benefits for Mentors

The mentoring relationship also benefits the mentor by helping them:

- Enhance their existing leadership skills
- Enhance their interpersonal and communication skills
- Learn new approaches from their younger peers
- Be a role model to the next generation of leaders
- Support the development of the talent pipeline
- Give back some of the support and inspiration they may have received in their careers
- Make additional contacts within the industry and build a professional network
- Develop and maintain connections and contribute to building a stronger industry and community



## Setting Expectations

### Ground Rules

Mentors and mentees can enter a mentoring relationship with assumed expectations of each other. Sometimes disappointment arises when expectations aren't met; however, it may be that the expectations weren't even discussed. To prevent this, be clear of your expectations and responsibilities from the beginning. A mentoring relationship is a partnership, with all parties respecting and supporting one another. The following ground rules can help enhance the mentoring relationship.

The mentor(s) and mentee(s) will:

- Discuss expectations and work towards goals for the mentoring relationship
- Work together to communicate and arrange meetings as needed
- Attend CAMA Mentorship Program events together
- Always maintain confidentiality and professional conduct during the mentoring relationship

### The Mentee

The mentee will strive to:

- Actively participate in the mentoring relationship
- Be flexible in the mentoring relationship and understand its bounds
- Listen to what their mentor has to say
- Be respectful of the mentor's social and cultural environment
- Be open and clear about expectations of the mentoring relationship
- Formulate and articulate their career goals
- Ask questions of their mentor and take advantage of advice and wisdom received in a non-defensive manner
- Be proactive in pursuing opportunities and networking relationships
- Provide the mentor with honest and constructive information and feedback

### The Mentor

The mentor will strive to:

- Actively participate in the mentoring relationship
- Be honest and realistic
- Be supportive and encouraging
- Be flexible and reliable in the mentoring relationship
- Help build confidence in the mentee and other members of the program
- Be respectful of the mentee's social and cultural environment
- Establish a foundation for clear, open communication with the mentee
- Help the mentee articulate their career goals
- Advise the mentee on career paths and development opportunities
- Provide guidance in networking and business relationships
- Share their experience, knowledge, and wisdom with the mentee
- Provide the mentee with honest and constructive information and feedback



## How Does The CAMA Mentorship Program Work?

Mentors and mentees will be matched based on their respective profiles and interests by the program coordinators. During your first meeting, it is a good idea to set goals and expectations. Items to cover should include the following points:

1. **Introduce** yourself by sharing your work experience, your experience with mentorship, and your motivation for joining the mentorship program
2. Discuss and clearly outline:
  - a) **Mentoring expectations**/ground rules with one another;
  - b) Mentee's **Goals** and use them to build an **Action Plan** together, indicating how each individual can help achieve these goals;
  - c) Set a **schedule** for meetings, either in person or via email or phone. This may include setting a rule for cancellations to avoid frustrations later;
  - d) Read through and sign the **Mentoring Agreement** together
3. Mentor(s) can discuss what they hope to share with their mentee and any items they may have planned

### Commitment

To ensure that everyone is satisfied with the relationship commitment, it is a good idea to set up a meeting schedule. Mentors and mentees should meet at least once a month, but they can also agree to meet more frequently.

- How frequently would you like to meet?
- Which communication method is preferred between meetings or formal CAMA events?  
Phone, email, text?
- Do you prefer to meet in person or will meetings via phone or video chat fit your schedule better?
- What happens if you are unable to make a scheduled meeting?

### Successful Relationships

As in almost any relationship, the key to success is communication. You use important communication skills every day – networking, giving feedback, evaluating ideas, asking questions, brainstorming, and leading discussions. These same skills are an important part of a successful mentoring relationship. Be open, honest, and transparent within your mentoring relationship to ensure that all individuals have fun.

### Professionalism

All forms of professionalism should be maintained in the mentoring relationship. One of the most important ways mentees learn from mentors is simply by observing them. The mentor can help develop professional skills by encouraging them in:

- Time management
- Diplomacy
- Networking
- Reliability
- Etiquette



## Introductions

The initial, kick-off meeting gives the mentor and mentee the opportunity to get to know one another and feel comfortable with the mentoring relationship. Share details of your work experience, your interests, and your motivation for joining the mentorship program.

- What are some highlights of your educational and professional background?
- What is your current role and how long have you been with the organization?
- What prompted you to choose the field you are in?
- What successes have you had in your career? What led to these successes?
- What are your short- or long-term career goals?
- What decisions are easiest for you to make? Which the most difficult? Why?
- What are some of your interests outside work? What are you passionate about?
- What is your most important role in life?
- What is one thing about you that is important for people to know?
- What do you think are the greatest strengths you can bring to this relationship?
- What motivated you to join this mentorship program?

## CAMA Mentorship Program Mentee Registration Information

Registration form can be found here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CAMAMentee>

## CAMA Mentorship Program Mentor Registration Information

Registration form can be found here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CAMAMentor>

## Action Plan

The mentor(s) and mentee should work together to determine the actions that they and their supporting networks can take to further and achieve these goals. Plan on returning to this Action Plan as the mentoring relationship progresses and update it as needed. Action plan can be downloaded here: [link to writeable pdf of action plan](#).

## Suggested Activities

Each mentoring relationship will be unique. The program revolves around attendance of CAMA events organized for the participants and hopes that the mentee and mentor will meet at least once each month. However, the sky is the limit! If members of the partnership wish to take part in additional activities together or with other groups, there are endless possibilities to partake in. Share your contact information and plan some exciting events together to enhance your relationship.

Ideas can include:

- Attending a CAMA webinar virtually or in person.
- A mentor giving their student a tour of their workplace
- Joining another mentoring group and going out for coffee or lunch
- Attending an agricultural event together (i.e. farm shows, webinars, conferences)
- Volunteering together (i.e. local conference or agricultural event)



## How Does The CAMA Mentorship Program Work? continued...

### Checking In

Checking-in is a simple way to ensure that the mentoring partnership is working effectively together to further the mentees career goals.

- Are we meeting with appropriate frequency and for the right length of time?
- Do we often have to reschedule? If so, why? Is there a way to make the meeting time more convenient?
- Are we following up on our action items after each meeting? If not, what can we do differently?
- What skills are we building because of our monthly meetings?
- Are we achieving the goals discussed in the Action Plan?
- What are you enjoying the most in the mentoring relationship? What would you like to improve?

### Challenges

Occasionally problems arise, communication breaks down, disagreements happen, or one participant is not able to keep their program commitments. It is important to remember that, as in any relationship, individuals don't always get along perfectly or agree on every point.

For example, sometimes mentors and mentees feel that their match is not working because the mentee's career goal is different than the mentor's occupation or their personalities are dissimilar. Mentors and mentees do not have to be on the same path to connect and benefit from one another's experiences or passions.

Remember that a mentoring relationship is teamwork. Even if you run into undesirable issues within your partnership, use the time as a learning experience. Act professional. This mentorship experience is a 6-month program. If you feel at the end of the time commitment that the relationship has reached a natural end, so be it. Some of the most successful mentoring matches are based on sharing general information, ideas, guidance, and experience concerning all aspects of career development and professional life, rather than specific discipline information or personal identity.

Establishing a strong mentoring relationship should include:

- Realistic expectations
- Willingness to share information, thoughts, and ideas
- Desire to actively participate in the program
- Active listening, so everyone feels respected and heard

If problems arise within your partnership, try speaking directly with the individual(s) involved. If the issue continues, please communicate with the Program Coordinators.



## Wrapping Up

The formal mentorship program will be completed in 6-months. For some individuals, this program will be the beginning of a life-long relationship with a fellow professional. For others, this mentoring relationship will reach its natural end much sooner. Regardless of the relationship's time frame, everyone will have gained valuable insight into their career decisions and had the opportunity to achieve their professional goals and met others in the agriculture and food marketing industry.

The mentoring relationship lifespan is dependent on many factors, including the mentee's goals and the pace of their progress. By recognizing the point at which the mentorship begins to deliver diminishing returns, the mentor and mentee can ensure that they continue to make the best use of their professional time.

At the conclusion of the program commitment, be open about your view of the relationship.

- What have you learned from this relationship?
- What other actions can be taken to improve the relationship?
- Has the relationship reached a natural conclusion?

## Resources

As a mentor, don't feel like you need to have the answer to everything! If you do not feel qualified in a certain capacity or cannot commit the time, then request additional support. Other mentors in the program may be able to help or know a contact who might be better able to answer your question.

Additionally, a mentee's life may get complicated by personal, financial, academic or health issues, which can be addressed in the context of a career. However, if these issues go beyond the scope of your mentoring relationship or your comfort level, request support from the Program Coordinator. Your responsibility as a mentor is to introduce your mentee to the professional world.

CAMA also has resources that can aid participants, including:

- Career listings
- CAMA Academy
- Best of CAMA
- Cambassadors

## Timeline

Date	Task	Method, Location
May & June	Mentor Recruitment	Emailing, e-news, contacts
September	Mentee Recruitment	Emailing, posters, e-news
September, October	Mentee Orientation	CAMA organized event
October	Partnerships Established	Email
October – April	Activities & Mentoring	CAMA events, virtual events, in-person events, and other activities
April	Program Assessment	Email survey
June	Program Report	Email





## Program Evaluation

### Surveys

Assessment of the program and events will be administered to all participants at the end of term (April) in the form of email surveys. This feedback will help quantify the impact of the mentorship program and provide valuable information for future programming and events. A year-end report will summarize the findings.

All parties agree to provide confidential open and honest feedback about the CAMA mentorship program to each other and the Program Coordinators.

### CAMA Code of Conduct for Mentors

CAMA has outlined the following expectations and guidelines for its mentors. We ask that each CAMA mentor read, sign, and return this code of conduct to CAMA at [info@cama.org](mailto:info@cama.org)

As a CAMA Mentor, I will:

- Provide a brief biography and photo that can be used on the CAMA website and in promotional items related to the CAMA mentorship opportunity.
- Provide feedback to CAMA through informal and formal evaluation.
- Share my experience and expertise with my mentee.
- Check in with my mentee regularly over the 6-month period, according to mutually agreed upon meeting dates and times (phone, Zoom, in person) regarding their progress, challenges and achievements.
- Help to identify the unique talents and strengths of my mentee and foster them in a positive manner.
- Allow the opportunity for my mentee to develop networks as deemed appropriate.
- Be a safe and confidential sounding board for my mentee.
- Help my mentee gain a stronger sense of purpose and a greater sense of identity.
- Be respectful and professional in all aspects of the mentor/mentee relationship.
- Represent CAMA in a positive light at events hosted by or involving CAMA.
- Provide feedback to CAMA through an online survey that helps to evaluate the impact of the mentoring experience.

There is no financial compensation for mentoring.

As a mentor, you agree that CAMA will be able to share your name, occupation, and biography when we promote the CAMA mentorship program.

By reading this document, I understand that I am expected to abide by the CAMA Code of Conduct for Mentors.

---

Signature of CAMA Mentor

---

Date



## Acknowledgements and Resources

1. Mentoring Handbook. Faculty of Agriculture & Food Sciences Mentorship Program. Faculty of Ag & Food Science. University of Manitoba. Winnipeg, Manitoba. Accessed May 2021 <http://cwse-prairies.ca/pages/mentorship/docs/MentorshipHandbook.pdf>
2. Cattlemen's Young Leaders Road Map. Cattlemen's Young Leaders, 180 6815 8<sup>th</sup> Street NE, Calgary, AB T2E 7H7 [https://cattlemensyoungleaders.com/cyl\\_application\\_form.html](https://cattlemensyoungleaders.com/cyl_application_form.html).
3. L.E.A.D Mentor Tool Kit- final.pdf. Leadership Excellence Awards of Distinction. (L.E.A.D) Mentor Tool Kit. 4-H Canada.
4. Career Mentor Program. U of Manitoba. 474 University Center. University of Manitoba. Winnipeg. R3T 2N2 [cmp@umamitoba.ca](mailto:cmp@umamitoba.ca)

## For More Information, contact the Program Coordinators:

Mary Thornley: [info@cama.org](mailto:info@cama.org); 519-389-6552  
Jodee Karlowsky: [jkarlowsky@allianceseed.com](mailto:jkarlowsky@allianceseed.com)  
Ben Lanthier: [ben@sportswood.on.ca](mailto:ben@sportswood.on.ca)