

# JENNIFER LUEKEN

## An Eye-Opening Moment: How Compassion for Others Changed a Life-Long Plan

Graduate: Class of 2006    Occupation: Student, Laboratory Technician  
By Morgan Davis, Spring, 2010

As valedictorian of her graduating class, Jennifer Lueken planned to attend Purdue University for their veterinary medicine program. Throughout her childhood, high school, and even into college, she chose veterinary medicine as her career choice. Growing up and working on her father's dairy farm allowed her to gain more interest in animals.

Because she focused on a career in helping animals, a spot in Purdue's School of Veterinary Medicine Vet Scholar Program became an option for Lueken before she graduated from Forest Park High School. As one of six high school seniors selected annually for this distinction, Purdue chose her for a guaranteed spot into Purdue's School of Veterinary Medicine, following completion of her bachelor's degree at Purdue University. She recalls one of her greatest achievements beyond her high school experience: becoming a Purdue Vet Scholar.

During her sophomore year of college, Lueken decided to make a major career choice. She found herself exposed to an extraordinary amount of science courses, which sparked an interest in human medicine. After careful consideration, she made a decision to give up her earned position in Purdue's School of Veterinary Medicine to apply to medical school. The application process for medical school has gone well for Lueken, and she anticipates attending Indiana University in the fall of 2010.

Before making this decision, Lueken explored her interest in animal health by interning and working with Dr. Charles Johnson, DVM and Dr. Lori Mehringer, DVM at the Dubois County Animal Medical Center. Finding herself bored with her animal science classes, she explored her newfound curiosity by shadowing several doctors in various fields and volunteering at the local hospital in Lafayette. Looking back, her first inspiration for a career in the medical field arose at the age of nine - when she became aware of her mother's diagnosis of breast cancer.

Pursuing her career in human medicine surfaced many fears. Doctors require twelve additional years of education beyond high school. To overcome her fears, Jennifer has spent time interviewing and shadowing various types of doctors, and spending hours upon hours searching inside herself for the right answers. While it may come as a big adjustment for her, she now imagines herself doing nothing other than human medicine.

Currently a senior in animal sciences within the School of Agriculture at Purdue University, Lueken has spent a tremendous amount of her time fulfilling requirements for her degree. One example included studying abroad in China. Also, she has spent a large amount of her time as an undergraduate at Purdue doing research in the area of cancer detection and treatment with NOX Technologies.

Lueken declares her secret to her successfulness when she says, “If you want to live a meaningful and fulfilling life, you must put yourself out there and push yourself to your limits. Life will take you on an unexpected path if you are not afraid to take advantage of the opportunities that are presented to you.”