STAYING IN THE GAME

By David Lundquist

In his final game as a college football player, Brian Schaetz did what he was trained to do: tackle any running back or quarterback on the other side of the ball.

The defensive tackle did his job well, and so did the rest of his North Dakota State University Bison teammates when they won an unprecedented fifth consecutive national football championship.

Today, Schaetz still is doing his job well as a CHS Country Operations management trainee, working to get his arms and head around the diverse products and services offered by his co-op, CHS Dakota Plains Ag, based in Kindred, N.D.

"My college major was ag economics, so grain marketing has been a natural for me," says Schaetz.

His role doesn't end with marketing, however. Schaetz has gone through rigorous safety training at CHS Dakota Plains Ag, plus 22 books of operational procedures for energy, grain and agronomy, says General Manager Dennis Novacek.

Schaetz credits many of his marketing skills to what he learned from his economics professor, William Wilson, Ph.D., distinguished professor in the Department of Agribusiness and Applied Economics at NDSU. Wilson was recently named the first CHS Chair in Risk Management and Trading, a position funded by a $2.5 million CHS Foundation endowment.

"[Wilson] had us look at the grain business from the farmer's perspective, as the local buyer of that grain — like one of our co-ops — and from the viewpoint of a West Coast export facility," says Schaetz.

Each day, Wilson chose five students and asked them to justify a market position to the class based on that morning's market report. That rigor helped him develop trading habits he uses every day, says Schaetz.

During the football season, keeping up with markets was part of his daily routine. In addition to early morning grain reports, he has weightlifting sessions, team meetings, practices, classes and, of course, plenty of studying.

"My biggest takeaway from my college football experience has been to be prepared and take a leadership role on a team," he says. "Coaches are great, but players have to step up and help inspire other players. That's Bison football."
During his senior year as a member of the North Dakota State University football team, Brian Schaetz and his Bison teammates outscored the competition by a combined margin of 130-36 in four 2015 playoff games, and he earned his fifth championship ring. Today, Schaetz brings his commitment to hard work, leadership and teamwork to CHS.