

# AGEC 296

## 360° Agribusiness Industry View

### Instructors:

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### Office Hours:

By appointment

### Course Description:

The course introduces freshman to food and agricultural businesses through conversations with professionals in food and agribusiness firms. The firms represent the full diversity of sectors and functions in the food value chain. Students will learn roles and responsibilities of professionals, leaders, consumers and producers in food and agricultural business.

The purpose of the class centers on the education of the value chain through agriculture, and a foreseen complement of the class is great networking, especially for these freshmen, but even for the companies. This introduction of the value chain will be done by engaging ~40 companies from all sectors of agriculture, plus the Dean of the College of Agriculture and AGECE's distinguished and named professors. This would give the students a solid foundation for the rest of their academic career as the students interact with personnel and view facilities of genetics and seedstock, input suppliers, services, producers, merchandisers, processors, wholesalers and retailers.

The structure of the class will be rotational: in the class one week and in the field the following week. The class will split up into three groups of no more than 7 students and each group will go to a different company for an educational field trip to view physical facilities. The week after a field trip, the class will start off by presenting information from each of the three groups. These presentations will be followed by presentations of representatives from two companies with a class debrief of all information from all five companies presented that day.

### Credit and Class Meeting Time:

Students receive 3 hours of credit and the course will meet on Thursday afternoons 2:30-5:20. When class meets in-class, the class will be in WTHR 360.

This course involves several field studies which may extend beyond the scheduled class time. Students should not have additional class commitments after 5:20 as field studies may return later than 5:20. The goal and intention will always be to arrive back at Krannert before 5:20, but traffic or industry presentations may prohibit this. Anyone with requirements on campus at 5:30 must notify [Ryan](#) before noon on Monday the week of the trip to be accommodated in case of late arrival. This communication prior to class will excuse students from the class, but work will be required to make it up. No communication or late notice will not excuse students from class.

### Prerequisite:

None.

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### **Purpose:**

This course provides a broad exposure to practical business principles and managerial concepts necessary for success in food and agricultural business. The course is heavily oriented toward case studies, guest lectures from business leaders, and field studies to leading food and agricultural businesses. The course will provide students with the unique opportunity to experience how the concepts learned in their undergraduate program are effectively implemented in real world situations.

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Identify roles and responsibilities of employees in the agribusiness value chain and list attractive future internship and career prospects;
- 2) Describe the food and agribusiness value chain by naming key players in the industry and identifying linkages among the players;
- 3) Demonstrate operational leadership by industriously contributing to a team through presenting information of personal experience to educate peers;
- 4) Analyze and interpret the financial statements of a food and agribusiness firm using the DuPont Profitability Linkage Model;
- 5) Assess the performance of the food and agribusiness value chain using economic and business analysis of data;
- 6) Present a critical assessment of a food or agribusiness firm's operating and financial performance using tools such as SWOT and PEST.

Weekly objectives include:

- 7) List all major and local players in the sector, specifically competitors of the companies presented;
- 8) Prepare for conversations with industry representatives and University faculty to build a valuable, functioning network;
- 9) Implement reading material to interactions with agribusiness personnel by diagnosing trends, similarities, differences, etc.
- 10) Classify information into SWOT / PEST categories to explain the state of the business' & sector's present and future;
- 11) Choose which company to invest in either time (job), money (stock), or consumer utility (products) based on ennobel, financial and operational performance;
- 12) Formulate high-level questions to demonstrate critical thinking by putting elements together to form a coherent or functional whole.

### **Course Reading List:**

- 1) *Rats in the Grain* by James B. Lieber
- 2) *In Defense of Food* by Michael Pollan
- 3) *The Economics of Food* by Patrick Westhoff

### **Course Policies:**

#### **Instructors' commitment:**

You can expect your instructors to be courteous, punctual, well-organized, and prepared for class and other activities; to answer questions clearly; to be available for office hour appointments; to provide a suitable guest instructor when they are traveling; and to grade uniformly and consistently according to the posted guidelines.

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### Consulting with faculty:

We strongly encourage students to ask academic or personal questions with either of the course instructors during office hour appointments arranged by email. Students are expected to read the syllabus/Blackboard, know the syllabus/Blackboard and refer to the syllabus/Blackboard before asking questions. When there are questions, email these people for the following questions:

[Tanner](#): assignments, difficulties with group members or checking what you want to ask company representatives.

[Ryan](#): time conflicts with class, Blackboard issues, preferences or optional experiences and all major general questions.

[Mike](#): reading assignments/quizzes, dress code, participation or holding instructors accountable.

All email communication should have the subject line starting with AGECE 296 - ... where the dots are what the summary topic of the text body below that you are sending. This subject is an example: AGECE 296 – Company & Book Preferences. Emails without this subject line are not likely to be responded to as quickly because of Outlook folder filters. After the first month of class, emails not starting with AGECE 296 – will not receive a response.

### Teamwork:

This course will involve the preparation of many short presentations in different teams each week. Students will be expected to be productive team members by contributing to documenting their experience, compiling information, preparing the class presentation and conducting the presentation. There is an expectation that students will work effectively in investigative teams and carry out meaningful performance assessments of individual team members. Peer reviews will keep students accountable to be neither a free-rider nor controlling. These peer reviews will be part of the figuring of participation grade. Though only three students will present each week, the entire group is expected to help prepare the presentations. Students that aren't presenting will receive the same grade for the week that the students presenting get – a uniform grade for the entire team.

### Field Study Tours:

Before the second class, students will be able to give their preference of which companies they tour. This is not required, but if preferences are not given, students will be placed in tour groups by the instructors. Travel time will not be wasted. Laptops will be a necessity for this class, especially for travel time. Students will use travel time to the agribusiness as preparation to ask representatives questions and go over material as a group. Travel time on the way back to campus will be used to reflect on the experience at the agribusiness. This time can and should be used to get presentations started.

### Calculation of course grade:

Weights used to assign a grade for the class will be as follows:

Class and field study participation	20%
Weekly Reflection	20%
Job Prospects Assessment	20%
Firm Assessment	20%
Final Paper	10%
Final Video	10%

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The course grades will be determined as follows:

≥97	93 - 96.9	91 - 92.9	86 - 90.9	81 - 85.9	77 - 80.9	73 - 76.9	69 - 72.9	67 - 68.9	<67
A+	A	A- or B+	B	B- or C+	C	C- or D+	D	D-	F

If you fall into one of the “gray areas” (A- or B+, B- or C+, C- or D+), your grade will be determined by whether your performance has improved or remained constant (student receives the higher grade) or gotten worse, especially on the final exam (student receives lower grade).

Note: *We do not curve grades in this course.* It is possible for everyone in the class to get an A (or F). Your performance depends only on how you do, not on how everyone else in the class does. Therefore, it is in your best interest to help your classmates within the limits of the academic integrity policy.

#### **Class and Field Study Participation:**

This course is highly dependent upon the student’s full engagement and participation. The quality of your experience will depend upon the extent to which you challenge yourself to prepare and to make the most of the opportunities to interact with our faculty, guest speakers, and field study hosts. Students are expected to be prepared, ask questions, and interact in this class. When on field studies it is critical that you represent yourself in a positive, polite and professional manner, follow directions, and learn from the experience. For these reasons 20 percent of your final grade will be participation. By preparing, attending, and participating in class it is easy to ensure that you receive a high score for these points. Students wishing to pass this course are required to fill out a Student Information Sheet by the 2<sup>nd</sup> week so instructors can get to know the students.

Each day you have opportunities to participate well. Some examples of things we are looking for: asking insightful questions, abiding by dress code, attentiveness, taking notes, paying attention to others questions to build off of them. Each day you also have opportunities to participate poorly. Some examples of things we are looking for: asking basic questions that don’t tie in information shared or gathered before class, not in business casual or wearing a hat, not paying attention to speakers – distracted or distracting others, not taking notes or asking completely unrelatable questions. At the end of each day, you will be given a plus (+) for good participation, minus (-) for poor participation or zero (0) for no good or poor participation or absent from class (no free absences, we meet only once a week and 16 times a semester!). Yes, a zero is better than a minus but not near as good as a plus. At the end of the semester, we will add up your pluses, minuses and zeroes to determine your participation as a whole for the semester.

This means ask meaningful questions that you REALLY want to know, then let your classmates ask their questions that they REALLY want to know. There are 21 students and typically 5 presentations in class each day (3 from students and 2 from representatives) meaning there will be an average of more than 4 questions per speaker. The company reps will be presenting for ~30 minutes with ~15 minutes for questions. This leaves plenty of time to ask at least 5 questions to the company reps.

**Students are expected to attend class in business casual attire** or better (unless tours dictate otherwise). All tours are expected to be closed-toe and long pants in addition to

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business causal. For female students, business causal may include dresses and skirts in the classroom. Your attire shouldn't be too low on the top or too high on the bottom. If you question it, probably not going to work. Be conservative in your dress; these are potential employers; treat them that way! No student will be allowed to participate in field study/class wearing pajamas, running gear, hats or inappropriately revealing clothing.

A key part of class participation some weeks will be leading a discussion of the books that we will read as part of the course. Active participation in the discussion will be impossible without reading the books. Active participation will be heavily rewarded.

#### **Given Materials:**

The Company Questionnaire is a guide for notetaking to aid in organizing notes. It is NOT an assignment. Questionnaires can be downloaded from Blackboard. It is recommended that students use one per company to separate information between the companies. This is not required to be used, but designed and given to be helpful, especially when looking up the company in the news for prep-work before class, and used in class as well. This will help keep track of info for PEST/SWOT

Similar to above, the PEST/SWOT sheet is a guide to help you organize your analysis of PEST/SWOT. This resource is given to help you organize questions to ask company representatives. It is NOT an assignment. There are good links to help learn PEST, SWOT and DuPont in the Schedule spreadsheet; check them out! Don't ask questions straight from questionnaire or PEST/SWOT.

#### **Weekly Reflection:**

Students will answer three questions (What?, So What?, Now What?) every week. Reflections are meant to be to the point, but are to be used to help cement lessons that are learned during the lectures and field studies. They are also designed to help identify areas where students aim to learn more in the future. These **reflections will be submitted on Blackboard**, expected to be professionally written, and due by midnight Tuesday after the class you are reflecting on.

#### **Job Prospects Assessment:**

Every Thursday at the beginning of class students will have evaluated a job prospect for each company. The assignments will ask students to identify a role in each firm and discuss responsibilities of employees in that role. For small/private companies that do not have careers posted online, research/brainstorm positions that the firm would have in their company and look up the positions on [AgCareers.com](http://AgCareers.com) or [agexplorer.com](http://agexplorer.com). Download and print the Job Prospect document on Blackboard. **Handwrite in pen/pencil** on a different sheet for each company (stapled together) to turn in at the beginning of class Thursday. The second week of class will have an assessment due for the first week's companies as well as the second week. After that, the assessments due each week will be for **all** of the companies presenting that week.

#### **Firm Assessment:**

Students will present thrice during the semester a full analysis of one of the firms considered. Students will present in groups of three. The week that a student presents, they can choose to complete a job prospects assessment for just one company that visits that day.

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Students should tell what did they see/heard on the visit – TELL THE STORY, don't read through the list of what we are looking for; cover it naturally through your story! Incorporate into presentations: company name, name of representatives and their positions, the company's function(s), the sector of agriculture the company is in, company demographics, personnel demographics, DuPont Profitability Linkage models, customers and competitors of the company, challenges and opportunities of managing an agribusiness, a visual tour of the business (pictures), PEST and SWOT analysis, and what fascinated you on the tour. As presenters, you will be graded on your ability to answer questions and professionalism in your attire, language, tone, volume, flow, PowerPoints, handouts, gifts, videos, and pictures.

#### **Final Paper:**

The final paper will be due by 2:30 on 12/15/16. More detail regarding the final paper will be provided during the semester, but among the factors asked to consider are areas found to be particularly interesting and areas the student hopes to pursue in more detail during the course of their academic career. Additionally the paper will require students to develop a list of the five most important lessons that learned during the semester. Lastly, the paper will require students to give the opportunities most appealing and intriguing to them for future internships, as well as full time employment.

#### **Final Video:**

Students will create a video to share their experiences from the course with key stakeholder groups. Stakeholders include perspective AGECE recruits, AGECE faculty, current AGECE students, company representatives, and Purdue alumni (AGECE alumni in particular). More details to come.

#### **Optional Experiences / Only Extra Credit Opportunities:**

The first is a field study visit to Farm Oaks Farms the last day of Fall Break. [Fair Oaks](#) is a dynamite add to our class; truly a visit like you won't get anywhere else! This would not have added if it was not going to be anything less than an exceptional experience, though it is on your own time and wallet. \$25 is a great value and worth the students' money for the transportation, tours and lunch. The second optional experience is watching the either [Enron](#) or [The Informant](#) at Dr. Gunderson's house the Monday night before Thanksgiving.

#### **Computer Use:**

Computers are allowed for taking notes only. If/when they become a distraction for one student, no computers will be allowed for taking notes in the class. Don't ruin it for your classmates! I personally recommend not using them for taking notes in class. NO COMPUTERS, PHONES or TABLETS for taking notes on tours!

#### **Communication:**

Please note that the instructors' primary out-of-class method of communication will be via email to Purdue e-mail address. Instructors will not generally attempt to contact students at e-mail addresses other than Purdue e-mail address. It is the student's responsibility to check for mail on a regular basis. It is recommended that students check their Purdue e-mail account at least once every 24 hours.

#### **Late Homework:**

Completed assignments should be turned in at the beginning of the class period. Late assignments will receive a 50% grade deduction. Late assignments will be accepted up until

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8:30 on the Monday after the due date, turned in to Dr. Gunderson's office, KRAN 754J.  
*However, once a student hands in three late assignments, they will no longer be accepted.*

#### **Special Needs:**

If you have a disability that requires academic adjustments, please make an appointment to meet with me during the first week of classes to discuss your needs. Please note that university policy requires all students with disabilities to be registered with [Adaptive Programs](#) in the [Office of the Dean of Students](#) before classroom accommodations can be provided.

#### **Academic Integrity:**

University policy on academic dishonesty is clear: academic dishonesty in any form is strictly prohibited. Anyone found to be cheating or helping someone else cheat will be referred directly to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action. Penalties are severe and may include dismissal from the University. The risks associated with cheating far outweigh the perceived benefits. Academic dishonesty includes citing someone else's work as your own, using "cheat sheets" or sharing your answers with someone else. If you are unsure whether your planned action constitutes academic dishonesty, seek clarification from your instructor. Other information regarding your rights and responsibilities as a student is contained in the Purdue University [Code of Conduct](#). Writing assignments for this course will be checked for originality using the iThenticate software.

#### **Campus Emergencies:**

In the unusual event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. To get information about changes in this course visit the course home page, contact me by e-mail at [mgunders@purdue.edu](mailto:mgunders@purdue.edu), or call me at my office (49-62010).

To report an emergency, call 911. To obtain updates regarding an ongoing emergency, sign up for Purdue Alert text messages, view [www.purdue.edu/ea](http://www.purdue.edu/ea). There are approximately 300 Emergency Telephones outdoors across campus and in parking garages that connect directly to the PUPD. If you feel threatened or need help, push the button and you will be connected immediately.

If we hear a fire alarm during class we will immediately suspend class, evacuate the building, and proceed outdoors. Do not use the elevator. If we are notified during class of a Shelter in Place requirement for a tornado warning, we will suspend class and shelter in the basement. If we are notified during class of a

Shelter in Place requirement for a hazardous materials release, or a civil disturbance, including a shooting or other use of weapons, we will suspend class and shelter in the classroom, shutting the door and turning off the lights.

Please review the Emergency Preparedness website for additional information.

[www.purdue.edu/epps/emergency\\_preparedness/index.html](http://www.purdue.edu/epps/emergency_preparedness/index.html)

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### Weekly Outline for AGECE 296

<b>Date</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Topic</b>
8/25/16	1	Services: Extension, Halderman, FLM+
9/1/16	2	Land Grant Mission: Akridge, Fernandez, Hertel, Doering, Gray
9/8/16	3*	Agricultural Producers: Traditional row crop, Swine, Dairy
9/15/16	4	Agricultural Producers: Family business, Non-family business
9/22/16	5*	Merchandisers: Cargill, Gaviion, ADM
9/29/16	6	Processors: CGB, Tate & Lyle
10/6/16	7*	Retailers: Bane-Welker, Reynolds, MacAllister
10/11/16	8*	<b><i>Optional</i></b> ; Production: Fair Oaks Farms
10/13/16	8	Services: Farm Credit, First Farmer's
10/20/16	9*	Wholesalers: Tyson, Frito Lay, US Foods
10/27/16	10	Input Suppliers: Stine, AgriGold
11/3/16	11*	Input Suppliers: Helena, Dow AgroSciences, Syngenta
11/10/16	12	Services: Farm Bureau, ISDA
11/17/16	13*	Genetics & Seedstock: AgReliant, Becks, Remington
11/21/16	14	<b><i>Optional</i></b> Thanksgiving: Movie Night; <i>The Informant</i>
12/1/16	15*	Retailers & Wholesalers: Co-Alliance, CPS, CERES
12/8/16	16	Services: Hageman Group, Agri-Green Farm Management
12/15/16	17	Final Paper & Movie Due

*Note: An asterisk (\*) is used above to denote field trips.*

#### CURRENT COMPANIES:

1. FLM+
2. Halderman Farm Management
3. Purdue Extension
4. Select Sires
5. *Stillwater Farms*
6. *Willow Dairy*
7. *BioTown Ag*
8. *M Farms*
9. *Howell Farms*
10. Cargill
11. Valero Energy
12. Gaviion
13. Archer Daniels Midland
14. Consolidated Grain & Barge
15. Tate & Lyle
16. Fair Oaks Farms
17. Bane-Welker Equipment
18. Reynolds Farm Equipment
19. MacAllisters Machinery
20. Farm Credit Mid-America

21. First Farmer's Bank & Trust
22. Tyson Foods
23. US Foods
24. Frito Lay
25. Stine Seed
26. AgriGold
27. Helena Chemical Company
28. Dow AgroSciences
29. Syngenta
30. Indiana Farm Bureau
31. Indiana State Department of Agriculture
32. AgReliant Genetics
33. Beck's Hybrids
34. Remington Seeds
35. Co-Alliance
36. Crop Production Services
37. CERES Solutions
38. Land O'Lakes
39. Hageman Group
40. Agri-Green Farm Management

#### POSSIBLE REPLACEMENTS:

- Elanco
- Kokomo Grain
- Bunge
- The Andersons
- Butcher Block
- Rose Acres
- Perdue Farms
- Whyte Horse Winery
- Weaver Popcorn
- JBS United
- Indiana Packers Corporation
- Maple Leaf Farms
- Red Gold
- Maplehurst Bakeries
- Nestle
- Walmart
- Kroger
- ConAgra
- Spensa
- Vinsense
- BASF
- Monsanto
- Bayer Crop Science
- Wilson Fertilizer
- GrowMark
- Indiana Soybean Alliance
- Taeyes River Investments
- CoBank
- Fleece Insurance
- Bower Trading
- Huffman & Hawbaker Farms
- Tom Farms
- McKinney Farms
- Tip Top Farms
- Walker Ag Group