



AGSC 260
Agricultural Markets and Products

Spring Semester, 2009; 3 credit hours; Tuesday & Thursday, 9:00-10:20, MG1094

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Office Hours:

schedule with office hours posted
on Blackboard website

Course Overview

An introductory course examining the production, handling, and marketing of agricultural products. Investigates changing patterns of food consumption and analyzes the causes and consequences of the changes. Focus is placed on understanding the market structures ordering the flow of food and fiber goods from the producer to the consumer and the economic principles underlying these structures.

Prerequisites: None

Objectives

1. To develop students' knowledge and understanding of the structure of the food and fiber system; specifically, through this course, you should gain knowledge of:
 - a. The geographic and economic characteristics of farm production in the United States, including size, type, ownership structure, and concentration of commodity production on U.S. farms.
 - b. The physical and economic infrastructure which moves food and fiber products from farms to consumers, including its production, handling, and marketing stages, pricing system, and competitive environment.
 - c. Trends in consumption of major foodstuffs in the United States, including the factors driving these trends and their implications for food production, processing, and marketing.
 - d. How economic principles of supply and demand can illuminate processes of pricing, resource allocation, and decision-making in the food and fiber system.
 - e. The principles and strategies underlying successful marketing of agricultural commodities and of differentiated food products.
2. To enable students to critically analyze changes in the food and fiber system, their causes, and their consequences for farmers, consumers, processors, and marketers;
3. To build the student's communication, problem-solving, and team-working abilities through group activities and oral and written presentation of ideas and concepts
4. To well-acquaint students with sources of information about the agricultural and food system so that they will be able to revisit these sources for future data needs

Textbook

Kohls, Richard and Joseph Uhl. *Marketing of Agricultural Products* (9th edition). Prentice Hall. 2002. Plus handout and online readings.

Blackboard/CourseInfo Web Site

The course web site will contain links to relevant web sites, important announcements and assignment information, and will allow you to submit assignments electronically. **You are expected to check the Blackboard web site announcements daily as additional assignment clarification, reading assignments, etc. may be posted there after class.** You can reach the course web site through Truview (truview.truman.edu) or directly by going to <http://blackboard.truman.edu>.

Academic Integrity

This should go without saying, but I expect you to maintain the highest standard of academic honesty, and you should hold that same expectation of me and of other students. This means that you should do your own work on assignments, tests, and papers. Any suspected incident of cheating or plagiarism will be discussed with the student and appropriate follow-up action (warnings, reduction of grade for assignment or class, and referral to Student Affairs) taken as deemed necessary.

Please read, for clarification, the statement on Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct at <http://conduct.truman.edu/docs/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>.

Course Topics

Topic	Readings
Introduction to Course	Handouts/web
Overview of Food & Agric. Systems	Ch. 1, 2, 3
"You are what you eat": U.S. food consumption patterns & marketing implications	Ch. 4 Online readings
Economic concepts; supply & demand basics, price analysis; cost concepts & profit maximization	Ch. 8 Online readings
Market structure/Forms of competition	Ch. 9
Farm & Food Prices	Ch. 10
Food Marketing Costs—the "marketing bill"	Ch. 11
Food Processing & Manufacturing; Product Differentiation	Ch. 5
Wholesaling, Retailing, and Food Service	Ch. 6
Food System Issues, Trends, & Changes	Ch. 12
Standardization, Grading, & Food Quality Issues (as time allows)	Ch. 17
Livestock & Meat Marketing	Ch. 23
The Equine Industry	
Fruit & Vegetable Marketing	Ch. 29
Direct Marketing and other alternatives	

Semester Calendar

Week	Begins	Calendar Items
1	1/12	
2	1/19	
3	1/26	
4	2/2	
5	2/9	Exam 1 (Th 2/12—tentative)
6	2/16	Th 2/19—NO CLASS—Univ. Conference Day
7	2/23	
8	3/2	
		Mid-term Break 3/9-3/13
9	3/16	Exam 2 (Th 3/19—tentative)
10	3/23	
11	3/30	
12	4/6	T 4/7-Student Research Conference
13	4/13	
14	4/20	
15	4/27	Exam 3 (Th 4/30—tentative)
16	5/4	FINAL EXAM—Thurs 5/7 7:30-9:20

Basis of Student Evaluations

Item	Weighted Percent of Final Grade
In-class exams (3)	45%
Comprehensive Final exam	20%
Team Projects (3)	25%
Homework, Reading Questions & Quizzes	10%

All deadlines and examination dates must be met unless you make prior arrangements with the instructor and have a valid excuse. Homework is to be turned in during class time on the due date.

Final letter grades will be based on the weighted percentage, according to this scale (A= 90.0%+, B=80-89.9%, C=70-79.9%, D=60-69.9%, F=Below 60%).

Team Projects

Students will work in teams of four to five persons to analyze a current situation in the food and fiber system using the concepts covered in class. Groups will discuss and analyze the situation in a small group format, then submit a one-page outline (and in some cases other supporting documents) and orally present their findings to the class in a short presentation (approximately 10 minutes, using PowerPoint).

Planned topics for the three team projects are

1. Food diary and food consumption trends analysis
2. Tracing the marketing path of a food product
3. Agriculture around the world

Homework Exercises

Homework exercises will be used to illustrate key concepts throughout the semester. You are encouraged to work together on these exercises, but be sure you understand the problem, and don't just copy the answers from someone else. *Take home questions and in-class quizzes (both announced and unannounced) will be used to encourage coverage and retention of assigned reading material.*

Americans with Disabilities Act

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, please contact both me and the Disability Services office (x4478) as soon as possible. More information on support services, accommodations, and eligibility determination is available on the Disability Services website, <http://disabilityservices.truman.edu/>