

A Mentor Program

James C. Frisby

Abstract

The Agricultural Engineering Department, University of Missouri and John Deere Company of Kansas City, Missouri have developed a cooperative program, the John Deere Mentor Program. A John Deere Company representative serves as a mentor for each student. Each student is guaranteed two summer work experiences with John Deere Company. The first class (14 students) will start the program during the Fall 1990 semester.

There is always concern that academic programs may, over time, lose touch with the industry which students plan to enter after graduation. Some updating technique is needed to be sure students are prepared for entry level positions.

The University of Missouri Agricultural Engineering Department has cooperated with the John Deere Company of Kansas City, Missouri to design a program that maintains liaison with industry. The program is called the John Deere Mentor Program.

The John Deere Mentor Program is an Agricultural Mechanization program with business management emphasis. It meets the basic education requirements of the College of Agriculture and the Department of Agricultural Engineering. Elective courses have been identified by John Deere Company representatives to give the desired knowledge in business management to supplement technical Agricultural Engineering courses. Program graduates will be awarded the Bachelor of Science in Agriculture with a major in Agricultural Mechanization.

Throughout the four-year program, each student will receive guidance from two advisors:

- an academic advisor from the Agricultural Engineering faculty,
- a mentor who is a representative of John Deere Company.

Each entering student must be sponsored by a John Deere Dealer. Each student will spend two summers gaining work experience. The first summer (between either the freshman-sophomore or sophomore-junior years) will be spent working in a dealership. The goal is that the student understand day-to-day operation and management of a John Deere dealership. After completing the summer, the student should be able to:

1. List three major strengths of the sponsoring dealership,
2. List the major job responsibility of each dealer employee,
3. Properly fill out a work order,
4. Properly fill out a counter ticket,
5. Stock parts,
6. Use microfiche to find and process parts,
7. Use instructions to set-up and pre-deliver a selected piece of equipment,

8. Identify three criteria required for a successful sales call,
9. Assist a technician with major repair of a tractor or combine, and
10. Assist bookkeeper in daily and monthly activities.

The second summer (between the junior-senior years) will be an internship with either a dealer or the regional office. A project that is beneficial to both John Deere Company and the Agricultural Engineering Department will be started during the summer and completed during the fall semester after the student returns to campus.

The program consists of 128 semester hours credit and includes the following:

Communication (9 semester hours)

Exposition and Argumentation

Technical Writing

Introduction to Speech Communications

(Two courses identified as "writing intensive" must also be taken.

They are included in courses list below.)

Natural Science and Mathematics (18 semester hours)

College Algebra & Trigonometry

Introductory Chemistry

General Biology

Elementary Statistics

Social Science/Humanistic Studies (14 semester hours)

Introduction to Political Science

General Psychology

Applied Psychology

Elementary Spanish or Elementary French

Basic Courses (19 semester hours)

Computer and Programming Concepts

Crop Science

Introduction to Soils

Farm Animal Management

Engineering Graphics

Business and Economics (29 semesters hours)

Agricultural Economics

Accounting I

Accounting II

Introduction to Management

Introduction to Business Law

Legal Aspects of Business Organizations and Operations

Introduction to Marketing

Financing the Farm Business

Farm Programs

Agricultural Mechanization (28 semester hours)

Internal Combustion Engines

Welding

Agricultural/Industrial Buildings

Mobile Hydraulics

Farm Water Management

Electricity: Wiring and Equipment

Agricultural Machinery

Agricultural Accident Prevention

Mechanization Systems Management

Internship

Elective (11 semester hours)

This program is thought to be innovative and perhaps a trend of the future. It is surely a winning situation for the student. Quality, educational, money-making jobs are guaranteed for two summers. A mentor from industry is available to answer questions and offer suggestions throughout the four-year program. After graduation, the student enters the job market with valid, documented work experience. However, there are no post-graduation employment obligations by either the student or John Deere Company.

Frisby is professor and chair of the Agricultural Engineering Department, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri 65211.