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Bringing Agriculture and Non- Agriculture Students Together to Develop Mutual Understanding

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Presentation at the 2019 NACTA Conference

College of Southern Idaho

Background and motivation



PETA
@peta

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If you eat a hamburger, you are literally eating a cow's heart 🤢



If You Eat a Hamburger, You Are Literally Eating a Cow's Heart | PETA

We all know that hamburgers contribute to heart attacks, but as it turns out, there's another reason why they might make your heart stop.

peta.org



pankaj @pankajrao591 · 8 Feb 2017

Replying to @peta

it's really sad 🤢



Ewa Julia S. @ewa_julia · 7 Feb 2017

Replying to @peta

just wrong and heartbreaking 😭😭



Wendy @wendytm · 7 Feb 2017

Replying to @peta



Mariugenia Pereira @Artismareas · 7 Feb 2017

Replying to @peta

HORRIBLE CRUEL!!!



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Background and motivation

Recent trends show:

- Consumer knowledge of GMO's has not increased at the same rate of producers using them (Wunderlich and Gatto, 2015).
- “The gravest concern is that large-scale animal production is accompanied by unnecessary animal suffering” (Centner, 2010, p. 470).
- Younger adults have more trust in technological sources such as blogger, fitness apps, and TV personalities. The percentage of consumers using bloggers as their reliable resource for food choices continues to increase (“2018 Food,” 2018).
- **The majority of people trust family farmers (Tolman 2009).**



Background and motivation

“Farmers have not done a good job telling their ... story, and we’re losing the public perception battle because of it.”

— Bruce Peterson, President of the Minnesota Corn Growers
(Peterson, 2015)



Rationale

- This study seeks to:
 - Measure how agriculture students *believe* the ag industry is perceived by non-agriculture students
 - Measure how non-agriculture students *actually* perceive the ag industry
 - Provide opportunity for agriculture students to advocate for the ag industry



Methods

- AGR 213: Farm Management
- ANT 385: Visual Anthropology
- 1 semester (n=18)
 - Pre-questionnaires
 - Paired student experience
 - Post-questionnaires

IRB-2018-23

Methods

- Questionnaire topics include:
 - Perception and beliefs about the ag industry
 - Awareness of agricultural issues
 - Changes in perception, beliefs, and awareness resulting from the experience



Methods

- Frequency distributions
- Independent samples t-tests
- SPSS Version 25

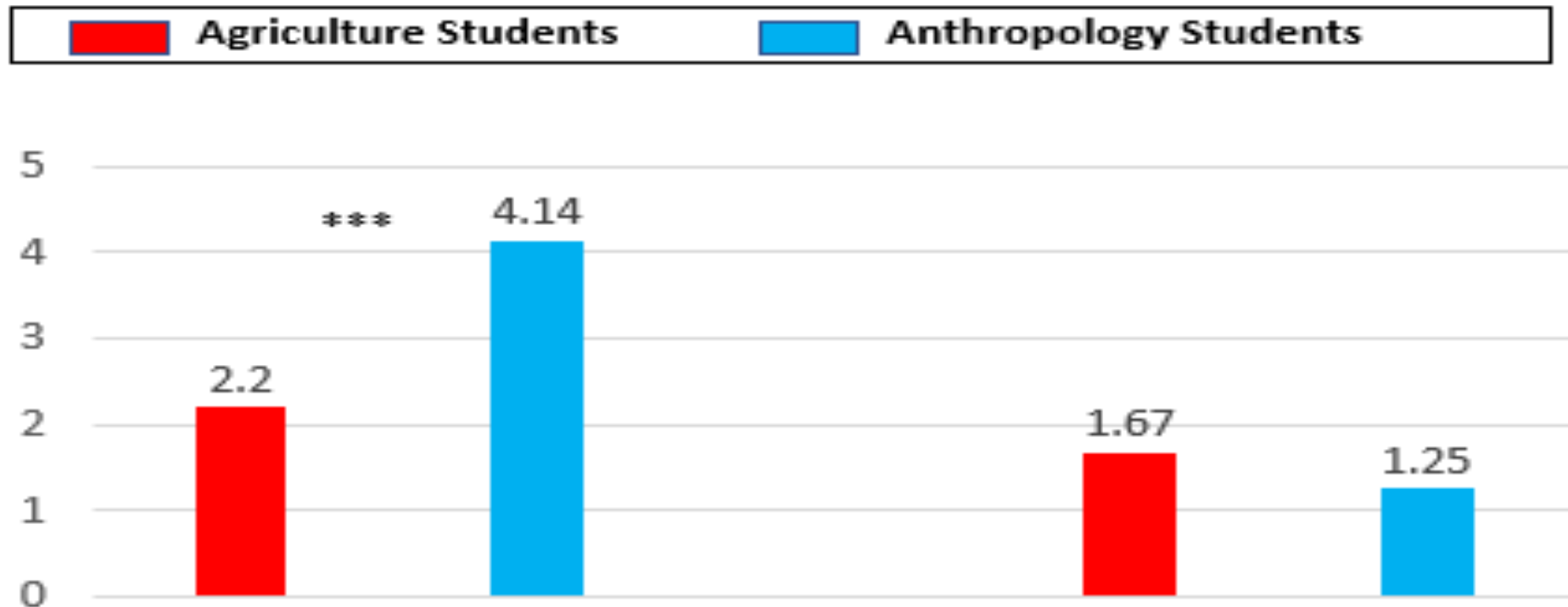


Results: Student backgrounds

- AGR 213
 - All reported rural/farm background
 - Majors included agribusiness and agronomy management
- ANT 385
 - No farm background reported
 - Majors included anthropology, psychology, sociology, English, theater & film, journalism, and graphic design



Results: Non-farm opinion of agriculture



Pre-Questionnaire

- 1= very negative
- 2= somewhat negative
- 3= neither negative nor positive
- 4= somewhat positive
- 5= very positive

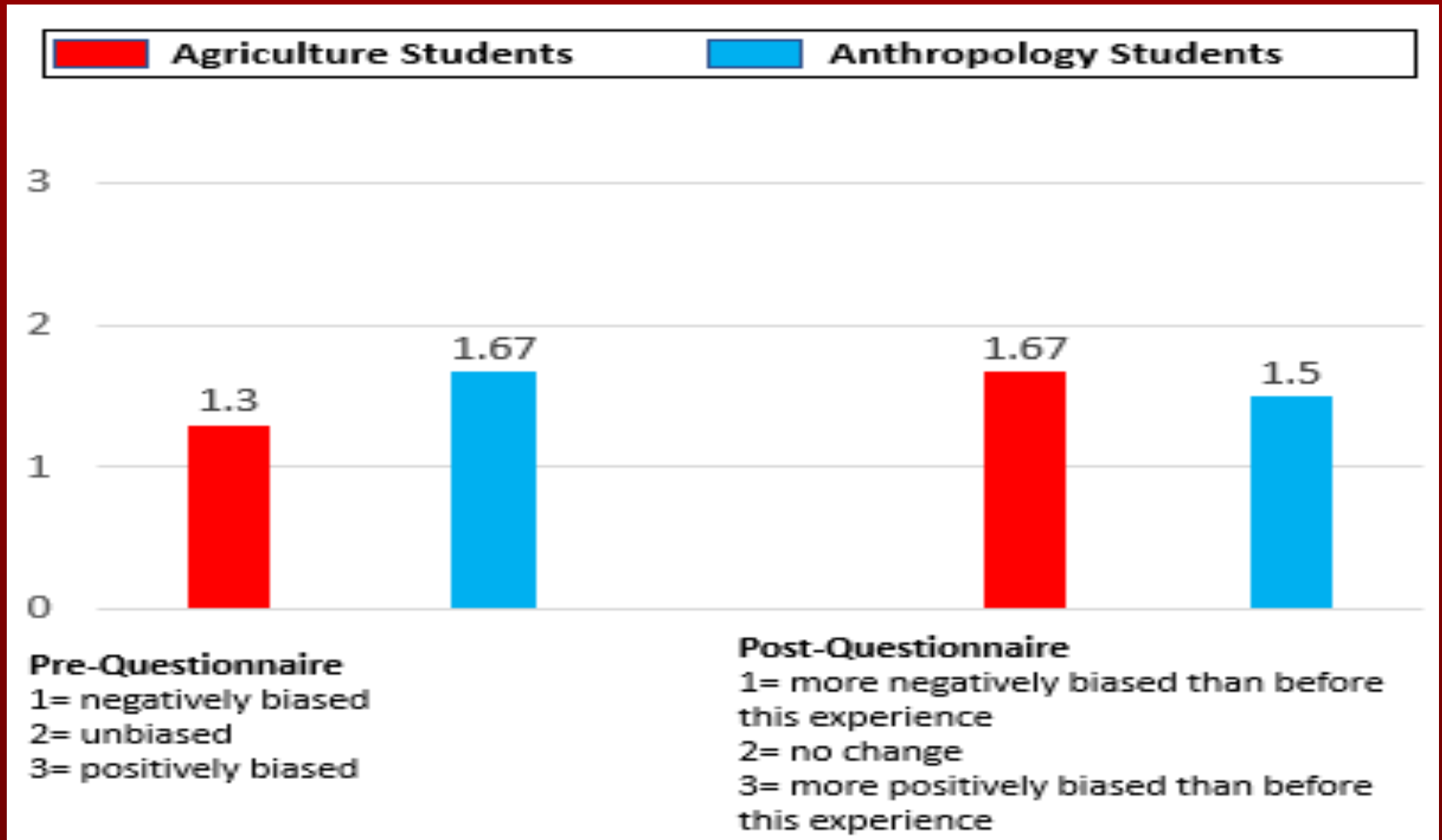
*** P < 0.001

Post-Questionnaire

- 1= a more positive opinion than before this experience
- 2= no opinion change
- 3= a more negative opinion than before this experience



Results: Perception of media bias



Results: Impact of this experience

- ANT 385:
 - 89% reported greater familiarity with issues faced by farmers
 - 67% reported more positive opinion of agriculture
- AGR 213:
 - 67% reported increased confidence in ability to communicate about the industry
 - 67% reported increased level of advocacy for the industry



Implications

- Farmers see themselves and the industry viewed negatively by the non-farming public
- Non-farmers actually have a **significantly** more positive opinion of farmers and the agriculture industry



Implications

Opportunities for farmers to tell their story can positively impact the non-farming public's opinions about the agriculture industry.



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Questions?