



DELAWARE VALLEY
UNIVERSITY

CONNECTING STUDENTS AND DAIRY PRODUCERS THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

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OVERVIEW

- Introduction
- Purpose & Objectives
- Course Framework
- Evaluation of Student Work
- Results = Course Evaluation
- Conclusions
- Implications

INTRODUCTION

Course Development

- Objectives based upon survey results and observations
 - Alumni and Industry surveys in 2011

Needs:

- Skill development/proficiencies
 - Technology, communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, leadership, team work
- On-farm Experience
- Application and Analysis
 - Dairy cattle biology, industry standards, management practices, financial principals

PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

Purpose: Prepare career-ready students with experience in applied dairy business management, analysis of farm operations, and interaction with dairy producers.

Upon successful completion of this course students will:

- Apply knowledge obtained from previous coursework
- Understand and utilize the SWOT analysis method
- Access, interpret, and analyze computerized dairy records
- Analyze various aspects of a dairy farm operation independently and as a team member
- Perform and analyze basic financial calculations
- Effectively present findings and recommendations to dairy producers
- Understand the benefits of professional networking

COURSE FRAMEWORK

Week 1 – Review

Week 2 – SWOT analysis and case studies

Week 3 – Campus dairy

Week 4, 7, 9 – Farm visits/analysis

Week 11 – Final farm visit/analysis

Week 14 – Final presentations

MEASURING STUDENT SUCCESS

Exams – Midterm and Final

Quizzes

Assignments

- SWOT Analyses, Case Studies, Financial Calculations

Attendance/Participation

Final Project & Presentation – Rubric

- **Instructor, Producer, and Peer Evaluation**
 - **Farm business analysis**
 - **Area of interest**
 - **Future projections**
 - **Conclusions**

RESULTS

Assessment of Learning Outcomes (n = 6)

Quantitative

- Midterm Exam average = 74%
- Final Exam Average = 87%
- Final Project Average = 88%

Observed

- Communication skills
- Critical Thinking, Problem-solving & Analytical skills
- Confidence
- Team work



RESULTS

Qualitative Assessment – student feedback

- Themes
 1. Analytical Skill Development – knowledge + confidence
 2. Real-world Experience – farms are all different
 3. Professional Networking – communication is key
 4. Comfort Zone - scary but necessary
 5. Want for More – farm visits, producer interactions, case studies, assignments, discussions







RESULTS

Student Evaluations (n = 6)

- Rating Scale: 1 = Outstanding, 2 = Very Good, 3 = Average, 4 = Passable, 5 = Poor

Item	Mean	S.D.
Major objectives of the course were made clear	1.5	0.84
The purposes of projects were clearly defined	1.00	0.00
Assignments are challenging; thought provoking	1.17	0.41
The course enhanced your understanding of the subject	1.00	0.00
Course was a valuable learning experience	1.17	0.41

CONCLUSIONS

Successes

- Skills developed and/or improved
 - Communication, Application, critical thinking, problem solving, analytical, math?
- Exposure to new facilities, technologies, & practices
- Professional networking & career exploration
- Inquiry & self-motivation
- Producer feedback and participation

Improvements for Next Year

- More farm visits & case studies
- Diverse farms
- Mock presentations and/or instructor examples

IMPLICATIONS

- Model for many agricultural programs/majors
 - Livestock science, food science, plant science
- Participation in North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge
- Career exploration
- Recruitment

QUESTIONS??

