

WHAT'S BEHIND THE BARN DOORS? *AN INQUIRY PROJECT FOR ANIMAL SCIENCE*

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THE PROBLEM

- Inquiry-based project work has been a major component of our introductory Animal Science 200 class for 15 years.
- Most projects have been well-defined and students work on them for 8-10 weeks of the term.
- Issues with sustained student engagement have been seen towards the middle and second half of the term.
- Overall, most students finish the term feeling positive about the project however much of the term seems to be characterized by less positive feelings.

OUR RESEARCH QUESTION

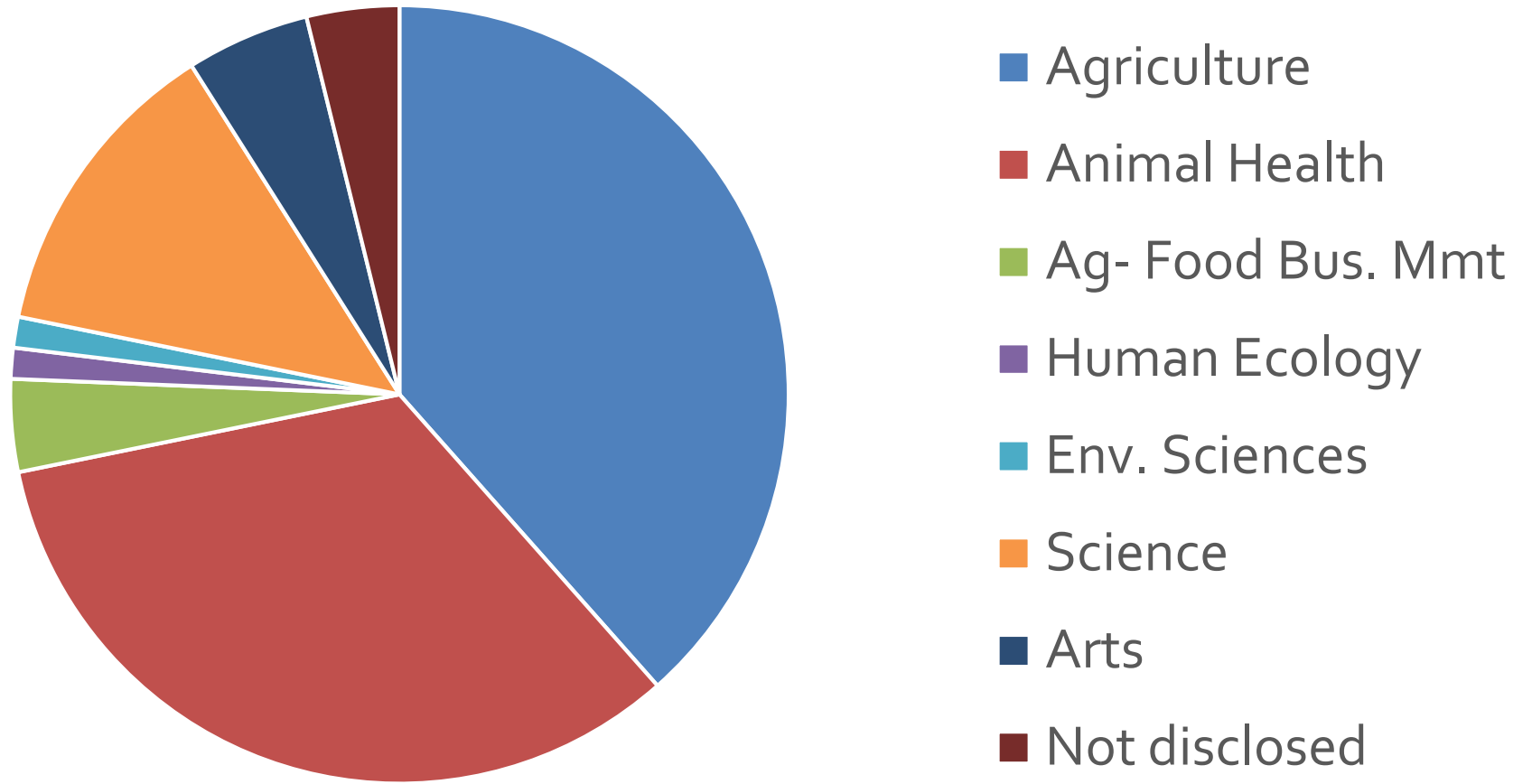
Can student engagement be sustained throughout the term when a term project is split up into several small segments and not fully disclosed at the start of the term?

THE CLASS

Animal Science 200: Principles of Animal Agriculture

- *116 Students*
- *No prerequisites*
- *13 week semester*
- *3 hours of lecture per week*
- *3 hours of laboratory per week*

Student Demographics: Program



Course Objectives:

1. To provide students with exposure to current Western Canadian animal agricultural practices.
2. To introduce students to the interactions of genetics, physiology and nutrition in managing various classes of livestock.
3. To make students aware of the complexity of animal agriculture, and sensitive to concern for the welfare of agricultural animals.
4. To create awareness for changing consumer interests, non-traditional agriculture, and value-added commodity production, and how these issues impact the Western Canadian animal agriculture scene.
5. To provide opportunities to work independently, or in small groups to develop fluency in agriculture.

THE PROJECT



What's Behind the Barn Doors?

What's Behind the Barn Doors?



Door #1
Inquiring

Open Jan 11
Closed Jan 13

Formulate a specific question that you want to answer this term



Door #2
Mastering

Open Jan 20
Closed Feb 10

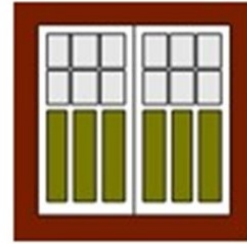
Learn about the answer to the question and submit a two page report



Door #3
Creating

Open Feb 17
Closed Mar 10

Create a learning module for a lay audience about the answer



Door #4
Sharing

Open Mar 20
Closed Apr 04

Use the module to teach a minimum of 10 people in any setting



Door #5
Reflecting

Open Apr 05
Closed Apr 12

Reflect on your experience in this project in a brief report

What's Behind the Barn Doors?



Door #1
Inquiring



Door #2
Mastering



Door #3
Creating



Door #4
Sharing



Door #5
Reflecting

Voluntary Student Surveys



1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

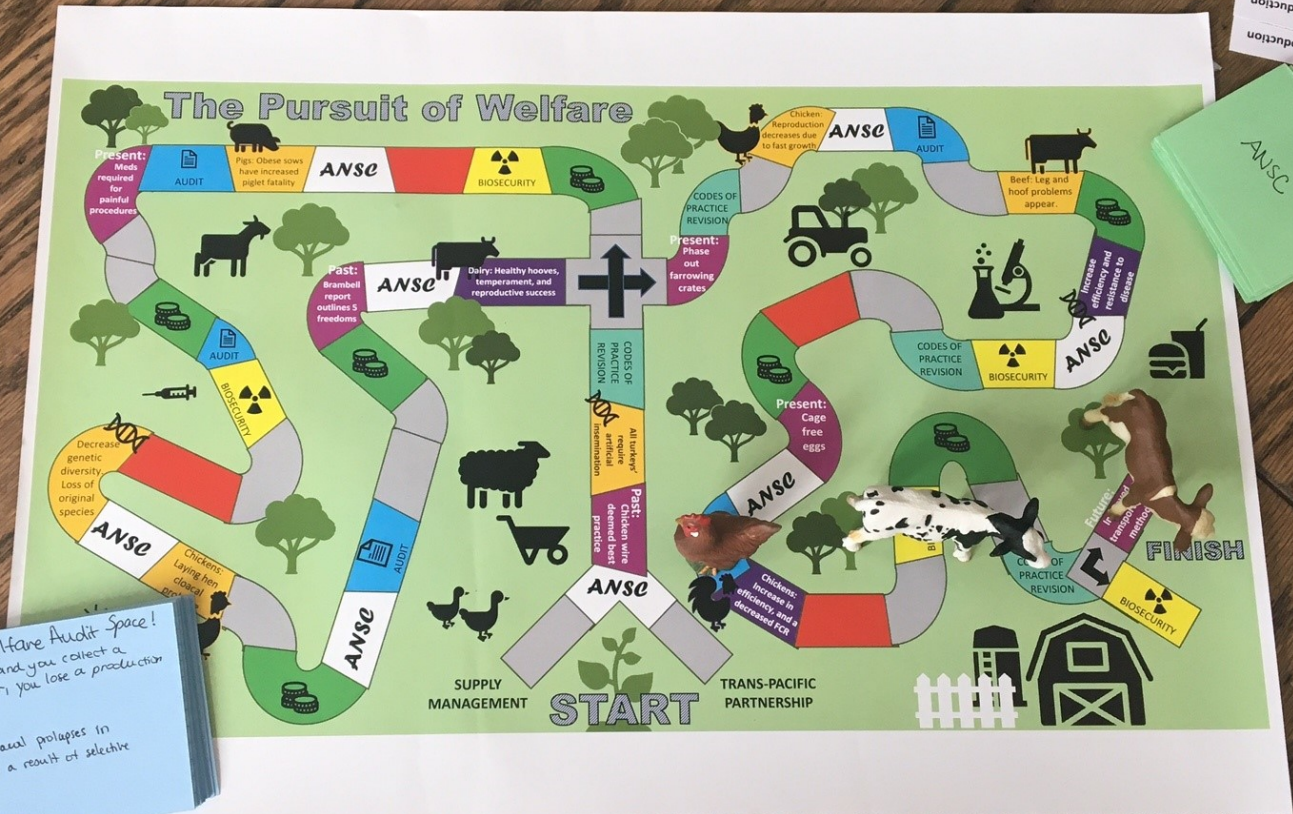
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Survey Questions: 1. Project Questions

- As of **today**, how do you feel about the class project?
- As of **today**, do you feel the project has been well defined for you?
- As of **today**, do you feel adequately prepared to excel in the project?
- As of **today**, do you feel excited about the project?
- As of **today**, do you feel frustrated about the project?

Survey Questions: 2. Course Questions

- As of TODAY, how do you feel about being a student in Animal Science 200?
- As of TODAY, how engaged (interested and connected) do you feel that you are with the class?
- As of TODAY, if you were asked by a friend who had a similar background as you if they should take this class, what would you say?



You've hit a Welfare Audit Space!
 Answer this question and you collect a production card; if not, you lose a production card.

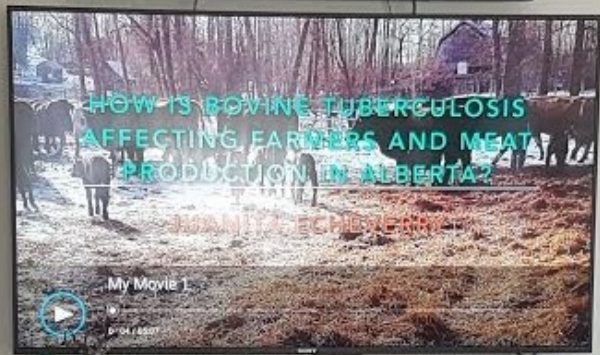
What causes cloacal prolapses in laying hens as a result of selective breeding?

Production
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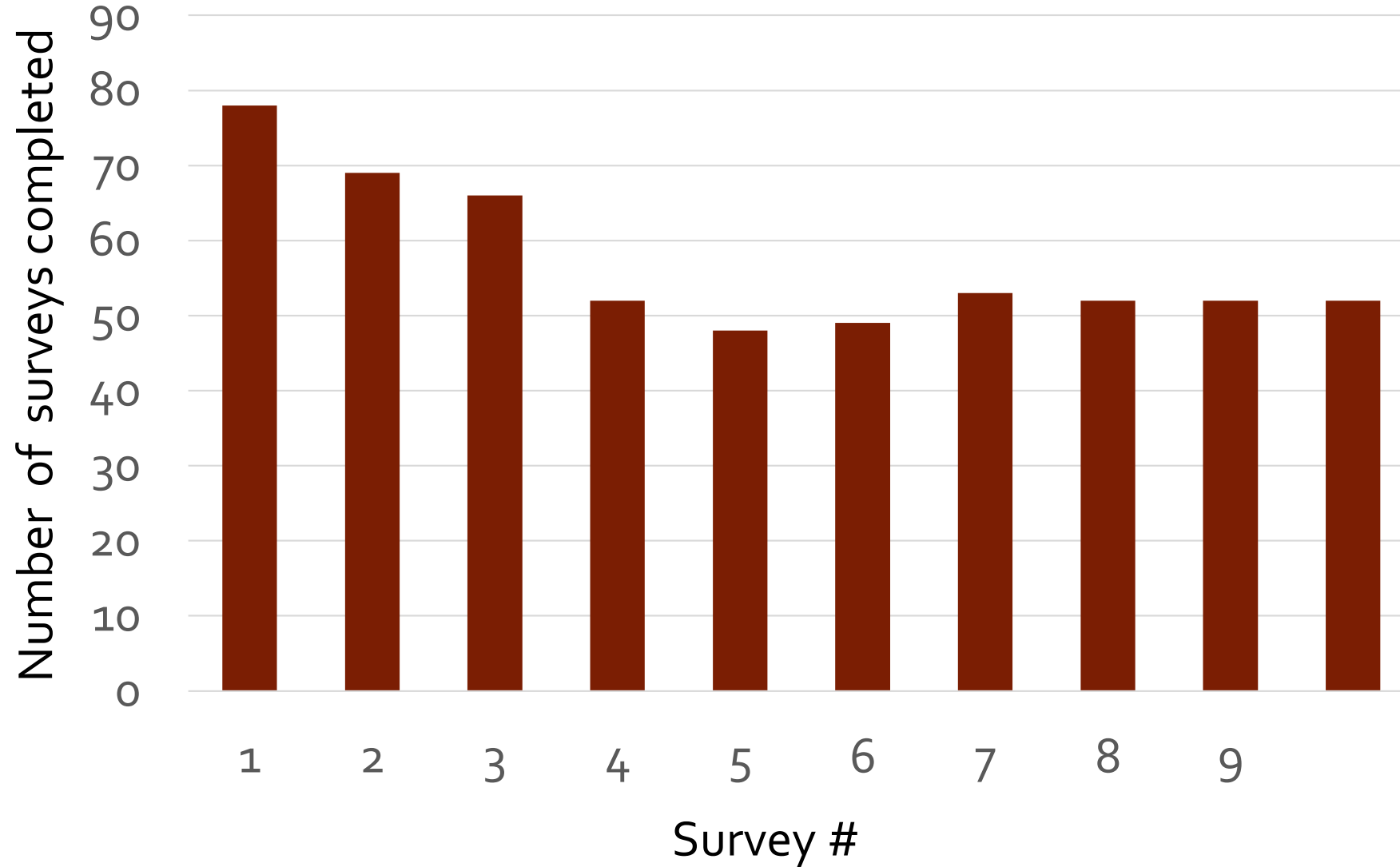
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ANSC





Number of Completed Surveys



Student Comments

I love that the project causes you to do things in steps. Because the next door is closed, and you don't know what's coming, you aren't worried about anything but the task at hand.

I also like how the projects connect so that when the next door opens, you feel more prepared for it because of the work you did for last door.

Student Comments

I know you think that only opening one door at a time is fun but it literally just increases the stress involved by like 1000%

Student Comments

The further I get into this project the more I love it and the more I understand the reason behind it and how it can help spread important knowledge and the truths about some common misconceptions in agriculture.

Student Comments

Although along the way the project got frustrating, in the end it was a gratifying experience. Once Frank explained why the project was formatted the way it was, I realized that the project was really well thought out and cool.

TAKE AWAY POINTS

- Telling students that their question would be part of a major project would seem to be appreciated by most students.
- Breaking up the project into small components was perceived positively by most students.
- Some students did not like not knowing what was coming next and found it stressful, while other students liked it.
- Some students said they were tired of working on the same project all term.
- Students were most positive and less frustrated at the end of the term.