



# COMMUNICATING AG ISSUES

A Case Study Approach to Teaching & Learning

## Using Multimedia Case Studies to Teach Agricultural and Natural Resources Issues

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# Authors

- Agricultural Education and Communication(s)
  - Ricky W. Telg, professor, University of Florida
  - Becky Raulerson, lecturer, University of Florida
  - Jessica Harsh, graduate student, University of Florida
  - Courtney Meyers, associate professor, Texas Tech University
  - Alexa Lamm, assistant professor, University of Florida
  - Katie Abrams, assistant professor, Colorado State University
  - Erica Irlbeck, Texas Tech University



# Background

- USDA Higher Education Challenge Grant
  - Funded for three years
- Three collaborating institutions
  - University of Florida
  - Texas Tech University
  - Colorado State University

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AGRICULTURAL  
EDUCATION AND  
COMMUNICATION



# Background

- Create and implement multimedia case studies focusing on food, agricultural, natural resources, and human sciences (FANH) issues
  - Illustrate how different issues not only impact an individual case, but how they are also interrelated.
- Invasive species
  - Rural community development/resilience
  - Crisis communication
  - Food safety
  - Animal health/welfare
  - Water conservation
  - Food security
  - Biotechnology
  - Climate variability and change
  - Marketing and trade
  - Conservation

# Background

- Timeline

- Spring/Summer 2016 – Development of case studies and curriculum (video production/writing)
- Fall 2016 – Each case study was pilot-tested
  - University of Florida – Rural Community Resilience - Apalachicola & Invasives - Citrus Greening (AEC 3065 – Issues in Agricultural and Life Sciences)
  - Texas Tech University – Crisis Communication – Blue Bell, Water Conservation, & Antibiotic Use in Animal Agriculture (ACOM 3300 – Communicating Agriculture to the Public)
- Spring 2017 – All five case studies taught at all three collaborating institutions
  - University of Florida: AEC 3065 – Issues in Agricultural and Life Sciences
  - Texas Tech University: ACOM 3300 – Communicating Agriculture to the Public
  - Colorado State University: JTC 419 – Food and Natural Resources Issues Communication
- Summer 2017 – Review and revise case studies
- Fall 2017 – Launch case studies to instructors of other courses at the three collaborating institutions
- Spring 2018 – Launch case studies for other institutions/universities

# Objectives

- Enhance instructors' abilities to teach communication process through case study approach
- Increase students' awareness and knowledge of FANH issues
- Increase students' critical thinking skills



# Intended Outcomes

- Improve quality of undergraduate education in the food and agricultural sciences through case study modules
- Prepare students with the critical thinking, problem solving, and communications skills necessary to address FANH issues
- Seek out additional information, understand other opinions, and develop messages that advance the understanding of agriculture and the environment to a variety of audiences



# Components of Case Studies

- Instructor's guide & script for each
- PowerPoint presentations with notes for each
- Videos
- Worksheets
- Teaching activities/suggested discussion questions



Communication x +

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**TRACY IRANI**  
Community Outreach Researcher, University of Florida

**Apalachicola: Communication/Collaborations**  
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# Apalachicola : Rural Community Resilience (UF)

1. Describe how Apalachicola has been affected by environmental and human factors.
2. Identify potential solutions to help problems facing Apalachicola and, by extension, small Gulf Coast communities.
3. Identify the role organizations, such as governmental agencies and universities, serve in addressing issues in Apalachicola, and potentially in small Gulf Coast communities.
4. Explain the role communication serves when several organizations work together toward one goal.
5. Design strategies for promoting collaboration between organizations that could assist small Gulf Coast communities in distress.
6. Analyze the role communicators play in addressing the issue.



# Citrus Greening : Invasive Species (UF)

1. Describe the role of the citrus industry's cultural impact in Florida.
2. Assess the implications of citrus greening to the citrus industry.
3. Identify the connections between citrus greening and invasive species (exotic diseases).
4. Explain how citrus greening has impacted various stakeholder groups.
5. Describe potential solutions, including genetic engineering, to combat citrus greening.
6. Summarize consumers' understanding of the issue.
7. Design strategies for promoting consumer understanding of citrus greening.
8. Analyze the role communicators play in addressing the issue.



# Antibiotics in Animal Agriculture (CSU)

1. Describe the problem of antimicrobial resistance and its connection to antibiotic usage in animal agriculture.
2. Describe why antibiotic usage in animal agriculture is controversial.
3. Analyze sources of controversy in the issue.
4. Describe and apply relevant communication theories and concepts.
5. Analyze and critique communication efforts.
6. Create messaging.



# Water Conservation (TTU)

1. Describe the relationship between the Ogallala aquifer and agricultural production in the Texas High Plains.
2. Discuss the need for water conservation in the Texas High Plains.
3. Apply relevant communication theories to analyze how communication efforts can influence water conservation behaviors.
4. Identify agricultural producers' barriers and incentives to implementing water management practices.
5. Suggest communication strategies to influence the adoption of water management practices.



# Blue Bell: Crisis Communication (TTU)

1. Define crisis communication and how it relates to a food recall situation.
2. Identify communication strategies to prepare and respond to a crisis.
3. Discuss how brand reputation management can influence a crisis response.
4. Develop effective social media messages to use during a crisis situation.



# Impact

- Initial data indicated students' critical thinking styles were mixed, ranging from engagement to seeking information.
- Students were more apt to discuss issues about FANH more often after completing an issues course with the case study approach.

“The case study was on of the most interesting of them all because of the circumstances. I thought it was interesting how a local economy can be damaged just by perception. The fact that no oil ever touched their bay or shores, yet there was an overwhelming perception that the area was unsafe to visit and purchase oyster from.”

~ Student, Apalachicola

“It was a topic I was unsure of at first, but once I listened, I was extremely interested and thought it was a great presentation.”

~ Student, Apalachicola

“I liked the personal testimonies from the various farmers the best. I thought having that in addition to the scientific side really made it all fit together.”

~ Student, Citrus Greening



# Impact

- Become a template for future work with agricultural and natural resources faculty.
- Incorporate in training with county Extension agents.
- Engage general public with major issues through case studies.



# Questions?

- Becky Raulerson, Lecturer  
University of Florida  
Department of Agricultural Education &  
Communication  
122 Bryant Hall  
Gainesville, FL 32611  
352-273-2751  
[beckyraulerson@ufl.edu](mailto:beckyraulerson@ufl.edu)

