

Course information

AGBE 315—Agriculture in a Global Context

Meeting Times: TBD

Room: TBD

Instructor information

Dr. Anton Bekkerman (anton.bekkerman@montana.edu)

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Course resources

Desire2Learn (<https://ecat1.montana.edu/>)

Course description

A global perspective of production agriculture and agricultural markets is critical. Agricultural and international trade policies play an extensive role in Montana's agricultural industry. Recent discussions and negotiations about U.S. agricultural (e.g., 2018 Farm Bill) and trade policies (e.g., North American Free Trade Agreement, Korean-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, Trans-Pacific Partnership) provides an important opportunity to understand how potential changes in these policies may impact the U.S. and Montana's agricultural sector.

The Agriculture in a Global Context 2018 program will focus on facilitating research-based understanding of agricultural and trade policy and its impacts on the U.S. and Montana's agricultural sectors. Students will examine current and past U.S. policies and their impacts on Montana's agriculture. They will also focus on a unique current situation of the United Kingdom, which is currently in the process of exiting the European Union and, correspondingly, the European Free Trade Association and the Common Agricultural Policy. Understanding the challenges and opportunities the United Kingdom is facing as a result of these changes will help inform students about potentially similar circumstances that may arise from amendments in U.S. agricultural and trade policies.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Better understand agricultural and trade policies in the United States and the European Union.
2. Develop a research-based knowledge about policy has impacted wheat and livestock markets in Montana, United States, and the United Kingdom.
3. Understand the connections among agricultural industries and policies around the world through an international learning experience.

Course framework

Students will have weekly class meetings, during which they will interact with invited speakers who have extensive knowledge and experience in crop production, marketing, and policy in Montana, the United States, and the European Union. Speakers will include university professors specializing in production and marketing, agribusiness leaders and agricultural producers, and agricultural policy and trade researchers.

In the early part of the semester, students will form groups of 2-3 people and identify a topic related to agricultural and/or trade policy that is related to the objectives of this course. Throughout the semester, groups will work on conducting a literature review about the selected topic, providing a historical perspective as well as data- and research-based hypotheses of changes to a policy may impact the U.S. and/or European agricultural sectors in the future. At the conclusion of the semester, each group will submit a research paper describing their work and present a short discussion of their work to the class.

Additionally, prior to each week's speaker, students will be required to read a short discussion related to the topic and come up with at least 3 questions to ask the upcoming guest speaker. These questions will need to be submitted via D2L.

Lastly, immediately after the conclusion of the semester, students will participate in a 7–10 day international experience to the United Kingdom. Students will visit and learn about historical and on-going agricultural and trade policy debates related to the U.K.'s European Union exit from policy makers, university research faculty, small- and large-scale farming and livestock operations, multinational agribusinesses, among others. This experiential learning will offer unique opportunities to obtain hands-on knowledge about the impacts of policies on the agricultural sector.

Topics and speakers:

1. Dr. Randy Rucker, professor, DAEE: overview of U.S. agricultural policy
2. Dr. Anton Bekkerman, assc professor, DAEE: writing an effective paper
3. Dr. Eric Belasco, assc professor, DAEE: overview of the U.S. cattle sector
4. Dr. Vincent Smith, professor, DAEE: overview of international trade
5. Dr. Joe Janzen, asst professor, DAEE: overview of the U.S. wheat market
6. Mr. Collin Watters, executive vice president, Montana Wheat and Barley Committee: U.S. grains promotion in international markets
7. Mr. Errol Rice, executive vice president, Montana Stockgrowers Association: how the JD.com deal was made
8. Mr. John Youngberg, executive vice president, Montana Farm Bureau Federation: how agricultural policy is formed
9. Dr. Greg Gilpin, assc professor, DAEE: overview of international financial markets