MAJOR IN AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS

The Agricultural Business major teaches students the operating techniques and business skills used in the modern food and fiber industry. This program builds student knowledge and skills needed to manage small- and medium-sized businesses in agriculture and allied industries. This is true whether the business is directly involved in production, value-adds to raw agricultural products, or provides support services including the distribution, processing, packaging, and marketing of agricultural products.

Two things distinguish the major in Agricultural Business from a typical business degree: first, our focus is on small- and medium-sized businesses where the decision maker must be more attuned to all dimensions of their operating environment, whereas more traditional business degrees often focus on a larger business organization where functions are more specialized. Second, the major emphasizes the importance of understanding the underlying technical processes that drive business decisions through formal course requirements in the agricultural sciences. The interface between technical training in agricultural sciences, economics, and management sets this degree apart.

Completing this program enhances students’ professional development, technical competence, problem-solving skills, and communication skills. The program operates in the nexus of business management, public policy, and agriculture. Strong interdisciplinary coordination in the department allows majors in agricultural business to strengthen their technical training by simultaneously completing a second major in allied fields including animal science, equine science, soil and crop science, agricultural education, technical journalism, and other fields of interest.

Learning Outcomes

Successful students will demonstrate:

- Technical competency including appropriate use of economic theory in formulating analytical problems, identifying and gathering appropriate data, and employing appropriate economic methods to analyze those problems, utilizing appropriate available computer technology
- Ability to solve real-world problems beyond the pedagogical context. Students will be able to identify a problem and its scope, evaluate resources to address the problem, formulate alternative solutions, and select the solution(s) most consistent with a stated objective
- Proficiency in oral and written communication including the ability to communicate critically and analytically at a professional level

Potential Occupations

Although students from farms and ranches choose this major each year, business-oriented students with a wide variety of backgrounds have launched successful careers with this versatile degree. Graduates establish careers in management, marketing, sales, finance and other areas. Participating in internships and experiential opportunities is strongly encouraged to enhance practical training and development. Graduates who seek further specialization are prepared to pursue advanced studies.

Examples of career paths of recent graduates include, but are not limited to: commodity broker, agricultural statistician, loan officer, farm manager, supply chain analyst, farm machinery sales representative, grain merchandiser, operations manager, landscape contractor, human resources specialist, ranch manager, credit analyst, crop insurance agent, precision ag technologist, feedlot manager, agricultural chemical sales representative, real estate appraiser, and elevator manager.

Concentrations

- Agricultural Economics Concentration (http://catalog.colostate.edu/general-catalog/colleges/agricultural-sciences/agricultural-resource-economics/business-agricultural-economics-concentration/)
- Farm and Ranch Management Concentration (http://catalog.colostate.edu/general-catalog/colleges/agricultural-sciences/agricultural-resource-economics/business-farm-ranch-management-concentration/)
- Food Systems Concentration (http://catalog.colostate.edu/general-catalog/colleges/agricultural-sciences/agricultural-resource-economics/business-major/food-systems-concentration/)