

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

Upon successful completion, graduates will exhibit:

Professional Development: Graduates will embody a general awareness of issues in agricultural and their implications in a larger societal context. Students will begin to develop a network of personal and professional connections which will foster an understanding of the culture surrounding professional expectations and conduct.

Technical Competence: Graduates will demonstrate technical competency within their chosen discipline including the ability to use the appropriate theory and methods in approaching problems, identifying and gathering appropriate evidence, and employing appropriate methods to analyze that evidence, utilizing appropriate available technology in all phases.

Problem-solving Skills: Graduates will demonstrate the ability to solve real-world problems beyond the context of the classroom. Students will be able to identify a problem and its scope, evaluate resources available to address the problem, formulate alternative solutions, and select the solution(s) most consistent with a stated objective.

Communication Skills: Graduates will demonstrate proficiency in oral and written communication in terms of substance, organization, mechanics, documentation, and synthesis. Proficient students will have the ability to clearly communicate findings, critically and analytically, at a professional level within their chosen career.

Leadership: Graduates will have developed leadership qualities that they will use in their professional, personal and community interactions leveraging the other competencies acquired in the program. These leadership qualities include vision, initiative, personal responsibility, team building, and motivating collective action.

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/>)