

**Econ 135 - Agricultural Firms, Markets, and Prices**  
**Course Syllabus - Fall 2002**

**Instructor:**

Dr. Helen H. Jensen  
578 Heady Hall  
294-6253

Email: [hhjensen@iastate.edu](mailto:hhjensen@iastate.edu)

**Teaching Assistant:**

Subbu Kumarappan  
B11 Curtiss  
294-5694

Email: [kmsubbu@iastate.edu](mailto:kmsubbu@iastate.edu)

**Office Hours:**

Mon. & Tue. 11:00-12:00  
or by appointment

**Office Hours:**

Mon. & Wed. 12-2 pm

**Course Web Site:** <http://www.econ.iastate.edu/classes/econ135/jensen/homepage.htm>

**Course Description:** This course provides an overview of agricultural and food markets and marketing systems using basic economic principles and concepts. The functions performed by the marketing system, from input to retail levels, are analyzed. Marketing methods and strategies for major agricultural commodities are covered, with particular emphasis on the use of futures and options markets. The structure of agricultural markets is also considered, including conduct of marketing firms and the resulting economic performance of the marketing system. The role of government in agricultural markets is considered, along with other topics of current interest and related to trends in markets for agricultural and food inputs and products.

**Course Objectives:**

After successfully completing the course, students should be able to:

- Understand the functions performed by the marketing system.
- Apply economic principles in understanding the behavior of markets and marketing firms and in analyzing price behavior in the food and agricultural sector
- Identify basic market problems and assess the effect of market imperfections on the performance of the marketing system
- Understand the role of government and public policy on the marketing system, and apply economic tools to predict the effect of changes or interventions on prices and quantities
- Know the basic workings of futures and options markets and their role in risk management and in speculation
- Be aware of current issues and trends in agricultural marketing.

**Course Prerequisite:** Principles of Microeconomics (Econ 101) or equivalent.

**Required Text:** (KU) Kohls, R. L. and J. N. Uhl. *Marketing of Agricultural Products*, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition. (2001 or 2002)

The assigned readings are listed in the course schedule on the class web-page, along with a tentative schedule of topics. Additional reading materials will be provided in class or will be available on the class web site. All texts are on reserve in the Econ. and Soc. Reading Room, 368 Heady Hall.

Tentative dates for the tests are October 2 (Wednesday) for Test 1 and November 6 (Wednesday) for Test 2. The final exam will be at the scheduled time during the exam week.

**Learning Assessment and Grading:**

Two Mid-Term Tests	40 percent
Homework, other assignments and quizzes	35 percent
Final Exam	25 percent

Grading will be based on a curve. In borderline cases, class participation (e.g., regular attendance in class, offering relevant comments or answers to questions) will be used in determining the final grade.

**Course Policies and Procedures:**

1. Students should study the material covered in the assigned readings and in the class lectures to prepare for the exams.
2. Make up examinations and quizzes will be permitted only under specific conditions:
  - a. You were ill and had called or emailed me before the quiz or examination. You must provide a written statement from the Student Health Center or a medical doctor indicating the nature of the problem.
  - b. You had a personal or family emergency, and you had informed me prior to the quiz or examination and received permission from me for the makeup exam.Having other examinations or quizzes on the day of an exam or quiz is not a valid reason for missing a quiz or examination.
3. Homework assignments should be turned in to the teaching assistant by the end of the class period when they are due. Late homework or group projects will be docked 10 percent of the score for each day late.
4. Some of the required course material and readings will be posted on the course web-page.
5. Lectures will focus on economic concepts behind the material covered in the textbook. Therefore, to get the most out of the course, students should read the respective "Readings" in advance of each lecture.
6. This course will be conducted in compliance with the policies and procedures of Iowa State University. Any form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.

**Special note:**

The ultimate goal of this course is that you understand the material so that you can apply it successfully in your career. To achieve that goal, you *must attend lectures, study and understand the basic concepts!* Although we cannot study for you, we are here to help you in understanding the material. **Please ask questions and let us help you!!**