

Industrial Organization in Iowa Agriculture

Students are required to write a term paper that addresses an important issue in industrial organization. Students may work in groups that are no larger than three.

Essential elements of the paper. The paper must contain the following elements.

(i) Title, author information and abstract. The title should be concise and informative of the specific topic that is being addressed in the paper. The abstract is a brief (100 words or less) synopsis of the problem that is addressed and the main findings.

(ii) Introduction

The introduction should motivate the problem/question that you will address, provide background information that will allow the reader to understand the issue, why it is important or possibly how a solution will improve people's lives. This section may also include a brief (1-3 paragraph) review of relevant literature.

(iii) Model

The model section is the most important section of the paper and should command the bulk of your time and effort. The model section provides a theoretical foundation that is used to analyze the implications of your topic/issue/problem. For example, the model may be used to analyze effects on industry organizational structure, market prices and quantities, economic efficiency, income distribution, implications for government intervention (anti-trust policy).

(iv) Discussion (optional section)

It is likely that in order for your model and analysis to be tractable, you have had to make some simplifying assumptions. You may wish to include a discussion section to extend or generalize the basic lessons from the Model section to other settings. It is appropriate for this discussion to be less formal than the analysis contained in the model section.

(v) Conclusion

The conclusion should briefly summarize and reiterate the most important points that you make in the body of the paper. You may also wish to discuss directions for future research on this or related topic in this section.

Topics are to be chosen by the student. However, please discuss your topic with me before you begin working on your paper.

If you commit plagiarism and are caught you will receive an F on the paper, an F in the course, and will have your name submitted to Student Affairs. Contact the instructor if you have any doubts as to what constitutes plagiarism.

The following statements are intended to spur ideas for a paper topic. The statements are intended to represent the views of a person that knows very little about industrial organization in Iowa agriculture.

1. Contract farming is a response to increasing consolidation in the agriculture sector and does nothing to benefit small independent producers in the state.
2. Some recent innovations in genetic engineering, specifically the development of genetically modified organisms, will permanently change agriculture in the State of Iowa, for the better.
3. There have been a large number of mergers in the agriculture input sector in recent years. Examples include seed, equipment and chemical companies. The effects of these mergers on Iowa agriculture will be devastating.

4. There is no coherent, long-term strategy of environmental regulation in the Iowa agriculture industry.

5. Conversion of agricultural land to residential housing and commercial uses has increased tremendously in many states. The Iowa state government should implement strict controls on agricultural land conversion rates before more damage is done.

6. Without subsidies (assistance) provided by the US Congress, the agricultural sector would be unable to feed the people of the United States.

7. Value added agriculture will save Iowa agriculture. More government resources should be allocated toward promoting and developing value added activities.

If you have trouble formulating a paper topic please contact me during my scheduled office hours, or by appointment.

Term Paper - "Top Grade Checklist"

___ The topic has been thoroughly researched and the important elements of the problem have been clearly stated in the introduction.

___ The main theses of the paper are clearly stated in the introduction and are summarized in the concluding section.

___ The paper is the original work of the authors. If you are not sure what constitutes plagiarism, contact the instructor.

___ The main focus of the paper is the economic implications for market structure, conduct and performance.

___ The section containing the market-level analysis utilizes a mathematical or graphical model to support the discussion.

___ The arguments in the paper are based on research and are supported by analysis and a model. They are not just the opinions of the author(s).

___ The paper has been proof read at least 5 times to improve writing style and to refine the presentation of arguments.

___ The paper does not contain any spelling and/or grammatical errors.

___ All mathematical symbols are defined and all graphs and charts are clearly labeled.

___ All citations appear in the bibliography.

Words of advise: Start your paper early. It is very difficult (impossible) to produce a high quality paper unless you have had time to think carefully and deeply about the subject, problem and solution.