ECON 496: TRAVEL COURSE
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, BUSINESS, AND TRADE IN MEXICO
RESEARCH PROJECTS

Purpose:
To learn more about some aspect of agricultural business or trade that involves both the United States and Mexico, and to share this information with the rest of the class.

Topics:
• A common agricultural commodity that is traded between the U.S. and Mexico.
• A policy, institution or program that affects agricultural business and trade in the U.S. and Mexico.

A commodity research paper should include the following basic information:

Part 1.
• History and origin of the commodity
• Production in the U.S.: Analysis of U.S. production (look at last 5-10 years, at least)
• Consumption in the U.S.: Animal feed, human consumption, exports, industrial use, etc.
• Commercialization in the U.S.: Main institutions and issues regarding the marketing channel for the commodity in the U.S.
• U.S. trade: Destination of U.S. exports and origin of U.S. imports, especially focusing on trade with Mexico
• Effects of free trade agreements, tariffs and quotas, subsidies, etc. on production and trade, especially over the last decade

Part 2.
• Similar information to Part 1, but from the Mexican perspective.
• Problems and issues related to U.S. Mexico trade, prospects for the future.

A policy, institution or program research paper should contain the following basic information:

Part 1.
• History and origins
• Purpose and objectives. What problems was it created to address?
• How is it supposed to function?

Part 2.
• How does it appear to function in Mexico?
• How does it affect trade, production, and consumption in/between the U.S. and Mexico today?
• What opinion do people in Mexico have of it?
• What are the issues of challenges in the future for it?

The total paper length should be about 20-25 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font.

Sources of information:
• Chapters 23 through 29 of ag marketing book on reserve in the Reading Room (368 Heady Hall):
• Internet searches
• ISU library
• U.S. Department of Agriculture (www.usda.gov, FATUS)
• Web sites from the Mexican government, etc.