

AGRON/ECON 496: TRAVEL COURSE

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, BUSINESS, AND TRADE IN SPAIN

TRIP REPORT

The Trip Report is the permanent record of your travel and will be due the last class meeting, Wednesday of Dead Week (April 28, 2010). It is the tangible evidence of your learning during the trip and should reflect your best efforts. The report should be more than a travel log; it should be an evaluative summary of your observations during travel. You will be seeing many new (and exciting) things; this will allow you to compare those things to your existing experiences. Areas to include are cultural, educational, and agricultural activities. Late reports will receive a reduced score equaling 10% per day (M-F). The reports will be graded by all three course instructors.

Please organize your report and label the seven (7) sections in the following manner, which will facilitate grading and ensure that your materials are complete.

TRIP REPORT CONTENTS

- Section 1. **Outline (2%).**
- Section 2. **Introduction (5%).** This sets the stage of timing and facts leading up to the trip. It addresses your feelings and expectations of the travel.
- Section 3. **Body (40%).** This section is broken into three separate subsections centered on cultural, educational, and agricultural experiences or stops. Remember, some of your most revealing cultural experiences may be during 'free time' when you are alone or with a small group of fellow travelers. Your group cultural, educational, or agricultural stops must be included in this section. Pictures will greatly aid your professional presentation and will be important for your memories in years to come. Either plan to take your own photos or work with others to record the events. Remember, this is not merely a travel log, but it is an interpretative summary of your learning.
- a) **Details of the experience or stop (25%).** These details are quickly lost with time so be sure to record them in your notes as they occur.
 - b) **A narrative description of the experience (10%).** This should include your assessment of the experience. Relate it to your background culturally, educationally, or agriculturally. What was noteworthy? You should record these thoughts in your journal, perhaps at the end of each day.
 - c) **An evaluative statement (5%).** This is best done upon reflection, perhaps after returning to the U.S. What did this experience mean to you in helping form your overall assessment of the learning experience?
- Section 4. **Overall summary and conclusions of the travel experience (10%).**
- Section 5. **A summary of your Topical Report Findings (15%).** During your travel, you likely will have an opportunity to expand your knowledge of your topical area. Furthermore, after travel, you will evaluate conditions/resources in the U.S. and make comparative evaluations between the U.S. and Spain. Section 5 should include your pre-trip and post-trip fact sheets and a summary of your findings (the pre-trip and post-trip fact sheets will be graded elsewhere). Additionally, it should include a written comparative summary of the two countries (perhaps this will take 5 pages to be complete). This written summary is the basis for your post-trip fact sheet and oral presentation.
- Section 6. **References (3%).**

Section 7. **Raw Notes (10%).** These are the detailed daily notes that you took during each stop. Use the questions provided in the spiral-bound notebook to help you document factual information, key observations, reflections and feelings about each stop. Take time at each stop, during bus travel, or in the evening to reflect on the daily stops. These notes are to be in your own words in a form you can read and understand. Instructors may wish to review with you your notes during travel, especially to ensure that you are taking adequate notes. Use these raw notes to formulate your Trip Report upon returning to Ames. You are required to submit your raw notes as an attachment to your report or contained in a pouch at the end of your report.

Overall appearance and professionalism (15%). Your finished Trip Report should be professionally done and professionally presented. At the beginning should be an outline of contents with corresponding page numbers. Be sure to number each page of your report. Your report should be bound into a booklet format. Check carefully for content to make sure your report is complete, grammatically correct, has good sentence structure, correct spelling, etc. All of these components are important to positively reflect on your overall effort.

Hints: Students should pay attention to the following suggestions regarding content, organization, and style of the report:

1. Content:

- Allocate space according to relevance (i.e., make sure that the important issues are adequately covered, and don't devote much space to issues that are of only marginal interest).
- Emphasize economic and production issues but also include cultural observations, feeling, and social aspects of the country being visited.
- Support your statements with hard data. That is, document the data sources that allow you to make certain claims (e.g., if you claim that "The U.S. Grape Exchange is the world's most important grape trade institution," you must provide data supporting your assertion).
- Discuss all the tables and graphs that you include in the report.

2. Organization:

- Provide an index or outline at the beginning of your report.
- Provide a succinct description (i.e., one or two sentences) of the organization of the report in the introduction section. It might be best to organize your report chronologically but you may choose to organize in another fashion. Regardless of your organization, your report needs to be complete to cover educational, cultural, and production/economical observations.
- Number all pages.
- Divide paper into sections (and subsections, if appropriate). Tabs or divider pages will assist the reader in finding sections.

3. Style:

- Carefully check your spelling, grammar, and sentence structure.
- Font size should be at least 11 point.
- Be careful when constructing paragraphs (appropriate length, content, breaks, etc.)
- Write objectively, avoid looking like an advocate (e.g., avoid sentences like "The U.S. has demonstrated that it is the world's best at ..." Note, however, that it is quite appropriate to write statements like "The U.S. is the largest producer of corn." as long as you have appropriate documentation).
- Include references where appropriate throughout the report to support your statements.
- Make it clear when stating observations/feelings vs. facts.
- Have a reference section where you site the references used in the Trip Report and Topical Report Findings.