

AGEC 5011

Non-Thesis Seminar

Guidelines for Case Assignment

Spring 2019

The assignment for spring 2019 is to develop and present a policy education seminar/presentation on the impact of the 2018 Farm Bill on Arkansas (focusing on commodities, particularly Rice and Soybeans; and programs for beginning / small farmers). As you may know, the national congress has to enact new policies governing assistance for American farmers. The latest “Farm Bill” was signed into law on December 20, 2018. As with every Farm Bill there will be a lot of questions as to how the bill impacts farmers / processors / consumers / taxpayers.

Your assignment is to develop an educational program/lecture/presentation that explains the key policy issue to stakeholders and the public for Arkansas’ main crops of rice and soybeans and for encouraging new entrants into farming. Your program should be guided by the policy education principles outlined in, *Public Issues Education – Increasing Competence in Resolving Public Issues*. As outlined in this publication, your program should (1) define and frame the issue, (2) present the relevant facts known about the issue, (3) outline at least three alternative ways to deal with this issue, (4) select the evaluative criteria on which the alternatives will be assessed and analyze, as best you can, the knowable consequences of each alternative approach, and (5) help your audience develop their own conclusions about the issue. Your program should not try to “sell” one opinion of the situation. Rather, your job is to present the facts, provide relevant analysis and allow your audience the curtesy of making up their own minds.

The class will work together as a team. The team will make their presentations to a panel of faculty and other interested parties the week of April 22, probably April 25.

You should use your knowledge of economic theory and the skills you have learned so far in your AGECMS education. Also, you will be expected to analyze the probable outcomes from a series of likely, desirable and undesirable environments for the passed policy.

Need to demonstrate

1. Knowledge of the subject
2. Ability to analyze and explain economic concepts
3. Ability to analyze and explain data/research results
4. Ability to conceptualize potential outcomes from changes to relevant forces (weather, trade disruptions, economic downturn, ...) and the potential consequences of those changes – in economic terms related to farm productivity and profitability and public sector costs.
5. Ability to quantify the economic impact from the alternative outcomes.

Along the way requirements

1. Interview at least one person/institution who supports the changes in the Farm Bill and one person/institution who opposes the changes in the Farm Bill
2. Interview at least one member of Congress or a congressional staffer who has worked on or is currently working on the Farm Bill
3. Attend one or more meetings/webinar discussing the merits or shortcomings of the Farm Bill
4. You may video or audio record these interviews if given permission and you may use clips from these interviews in your PowerPoint as you think helps to tell the story

Expectations

High quality PowerPoint presentations

- Good color schemes and graphics
- Readable slides – from the back of the room
- Use original audio and video clips as outlined above

No plagiarism: Cite sources

Creative & effective display of information

Recorded script should allow this presentation to be viewed on-line

All team members must contribute and be a part of the presentation

Presentations can run as long as 40 minutes

Work schedule:

January 31	Key changes to the 2018 Farm Bill identified
February 21	Conceptual approach and data needs identified for analyzing the impact
March 7	Interviews with stakeholders complete and data collection underway
April 4	Preliminary analysis complete
April 18	Practice run
April 25	Final presentation to faculty judges

There are many publically available resources you can tap as you research this issue and develop your program. You are encouraged to examine the materials developed by the USDA Economic Research Service, Farm Service Agency, Risk Management Agency, and most Land-Grant universities (including the UA), the media and other sources. Several U of A faculty members have worked on this issue. I encourage you to talk with these faculty, but please let their Department Head know what you are doing. One key resource and gatekeeper as you explore this issue is Dr. Harrison Pittman, Director of the National Agricultural Law Center.

If your programs are of sufficient quality, they may be used in future Extension programs. You may want to chat with a faculty member who has an Extension appointment to gain some insights into the elements of successful Extension programs.

If funds are available, the team judged the best by the faculty may be invited to participate in the AAEA Case Study competition this summer at the annual meeting in Atlanta, GA.