

Course Structure

The Ag 450 farm is the only completely student managed farm at a land grant university. Each semester, students are split up into seven committees. Students are challenged by daily issues facing the farm. The farm currently manages roughly 1,400 acres of crop land and 1,200 hogs. While students serve only on one committee, they quickly find out that they must collaborate with every committee to make the farm a success.



Course organization consists of the following daily activities:

- Lecture/discussions related to farm management and operation in today's agricultural situation
- Hands-on laboratory opportunities to obtain information, observe operations, learn skills, and function as committees
- Farm committees that solve problems and make decisions related to the planning and evaluation of farming operations
- Officer elections and business meetings used to decide and implement decisions related to the current and future operation of the farm
- Significant experiential learning experience related to the farming operation
- Semester-long strategic issues designed to identify, study, analyze, and make recommendations for solving critical short and long-term issues facing the farm

Mission & Goals

The mission of the farm is to be a practical, educational resource for Iowa State University and the Department of Agricultural Education and Studies demonstrating quality and sustainable production agriculture in the Midwest. To achieve the farm's mission, the following goals have been articulated for the farm and course:

- Maintain a self-supporting agricultural entity
- Engage in practical and economical Midwestern production agriculture
- Develop an agricultural farming system (crops and livestock) that uses farming resources (land, labor and capital) efficiently and effectively
- Efficiently and competitively produce and market quality agricultural products
- Implement agricultural production technologies that maintain economic efficiency, agricultural sustainability, and complement cropping and livestock production activities on the farm
- Provide exposure of production agriculture to the public
- Function as a farm management laboratory for students enrolled in AGEDS 450



Committee Details

Students are selected to be in one of seven committees in the 450 class. Each committee has two to six students. Descriptions of each committee's responsibilities are listed below. The committees present a "state of the farm" report each semester to discuss short-term and long-term goals.



450 Committees

Buildings & Grounds

Works with the farm operator to coordinate the construction, operation, maintenance, repair and records for the buildings and grounds of the farm

Crops

Maintains a monthly crop inventory, manages stored grain and the crop enterprise

Finance

Develops and monitors the farm budget including cash flow, year-end financial summaries, and debt

Machinery

Acquires, repairs, maintains, keeps machinery management records, and use of all farm machinery

Marketing

Monitors grain and hog markets on a weekly basis, reports to the class, and makes marketing recommendations throughout the semester

Public Relations

Promotes the farm by helping with farm tours, writing news releases, updating the Web page and communicating with the public

Swine

Manages the swine growing, finishing, and breeding programs; Monitors grade and yield, selling and carcass quality; Maintains monthly inventory and monitors herd health

Swine Operation

The 450 farm has had a farrow-to-finish swine operation since opening doors in 1943. Selling market hogs brings in nearly half of the farm's annual income.

Committees have worked on the following tasks: improving genetics of the herd, lowering costs of production, working with Kent Feeds to improve feed nutrients, tattooing and identification of breeding stock, locking in input costs and exploring different alternatives to market the hogs. To keep better records on the farm, the swine committee decided to purchase Pig Champ software.



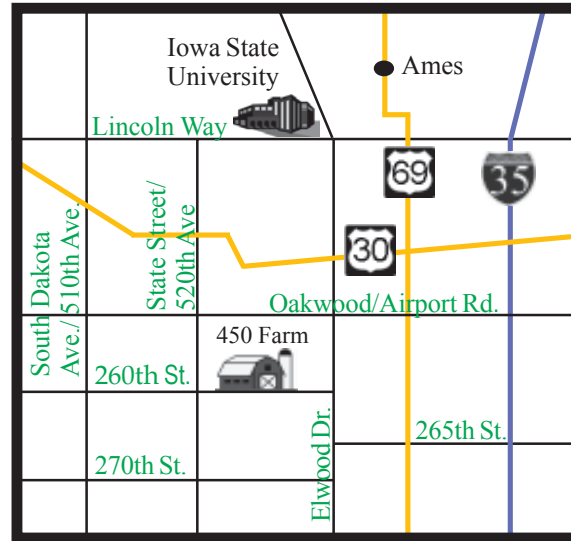
Crop Production

Over the past decade, the average corn yields on the farm have been slightly higher than the county and state averages. Each year roughly 60 acres are set aside for a corn test plot. Local seed dealers donate seed for the plot. Students pick top yielding hybrids from the plot to plant during the next year. Soybean yields over the last decade have been relatively the same as the state and county averages. Each year

the farm uses liquid manure from the finisher as fertilizer on the soybean and corn acres. Students calculate proper amounts of Potassium, Phosphorous, and Nitrogen that go into the liquid manure concentrate.



Directions to the Ag 450 Farm



Contact Information

Farm Address

52097 260th St.
Ames, IA 50011
Phone: (515) 292-0742
Farm Manager: Greg Vogel

Agricultural Education & Studies Department

217 Curtiss Hall
Ames, IA 50011
Phone: (515) 294-0047
Lecturer-in-Charge: Dr. Charles Steiner

www.ag450farm.iastate.edu/

Iowa State University AG 450 Farm

DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION & STUDIES



“Many individuals don’t know the demands of managing a profitable farming operation. This class gives students the opportunity to apply what was learned in other agricultural classes to make critical farm management decisions everyday.”

—Josh Sponheim,
Marketing Committee

GIVING IOWA STATE
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE
AND PRACTICAL FARM
MANAGEMENT SKILLS
SINCE 1943.