Much like the agricultural industry the course prepares its students to enter, the AgEdS 450 course is changing to meet the needs of an ever growing number of Agricultural Studies majors enrolled in the Agricultural Education and Studies Department. Over the past ten years, the average size of the AgEdS 450 course has hovered around 36 students in the fall and spring semesters with 10 - 12 students enrolled in the summer. In 2012, that number has increased by over 40 percent to 50 students per semester.

Most readers of this newsletter realize that the classroom at the Ag 450 Farm was actually designed for 25 students, so the large increase in enrollment has created an opportunity to implement a new course structure. All students meet on campus on Tuesday afternoons from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. where they participate in lectures, listen to guest speakers, conduct committee meetings, and participate in weekly business meetings. In order to keep student numbers at the farm manageable from a teaching and learning perspective, students then enroll in one of two laboratory sections that meet at the farm from 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday or Thursday. Each week, students are introduced to a laboratory activity based upon the management and operation of the Ag 450 Farm in each of the eight committee function areas: Buildings and Grounds, Crops, Custom Operations, Finance, Machinery, Marketing, Public Relations, and Swine Production.

However, what makes things interesting is that each committee is represented in each laboratory section. That means that not all students meet with their full committees face-to-face in the laboratory. This situation has created yet another real-world challenge to overcome in the management and operation of a real, working farm. Good communication provides a both a challenge and opportunity.

Cont. on Pg. 2
It did not take students long this semester to discover that communicating between the laboratory sections was critical in the operation of the Ag 450 Farm. Students quickly recognized the advantage of having committee members’ “feet on the ground” two days per week. With an average laboratory committee made up of three to five students, the opportunity to get many more things accomplished certainly existed.

As enrollment in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences continues to grow, additional enrollment pressure may be placed upon the Ag 450 Farm and AgEdS 450 course. Additional considerations for adding a third laboratory section have already surfaced. What is the future of the AgEdS 450 course? Only time will tell, but regardless of the structure, students will continue to participate in a course that helps them develop the leadership, critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills needed for the real world of agriculture.

COMMITEE PHOTOS

CROPS
Aaron Cling
Randy Schroeder
Dustin Teig
Marcus Heineman
Calvin Hefty
Ryan Ruzicka
Kent Reimers
Jamie Imboden

BUILDINGS
AND GROUNDS
Stephan Prather
Ryan Dunne
Brandon Maier
Marshall Wernimont
Nathan Brinkman

MARKETING
Wesley Christensen
Andrew Lauver
Ryan Schroeder
Joseph Hora
Jordan Voss
Brent Vanderloop

FINANCE
Douglas Rice
Amanda Price
Kyle Fischer
Nichole Gent
Colin Hurd

PUBLIC RELATIONS
Ellie Weiss
Shelby Klocke
Rachel Norby
Erin Tucker
Jamie Myers

MACHINERY
Andrew Guy
Colton Penning
Jason Opperman
Kyle Holsclag
Donald Brommel

CUSTOMS
Skyler Rinker
Kyle Carpenter
William Wynn
Cody Boldt
Andrew Heineman
Randy Kuehn
Joel Ver Steegt

SWINE
Wesley Clark
Austin McClellan
Jodie Myers
Raymond Wedeking
Matthew Brissey
CROP COMMITTEE UPDATE
Looking back on all the projects the crops committee has worked on you can see they were busy this fall. They started by doing yield and moisture estimates on all our fields at the end of August and beginning of September soon after they prioritized their fall harvest schedule. Like many area farmers we realized our yields were higher than expected in some fields considering the drought conditions this past summer. The committee was also busy ordering and finalizing the corn and soybean seed for next year by setting up meetings with dealers from Heartland Co-op, Pioneer, and Agrigold. Along with ordering seed, the committee has contracted all 2013 fertilizer.

MARKETING COMMITTEE UPDATE
Documenting and understanding the markets is not an easy task to do, but our marketing committee is top of the line for the 450 Farm’s grain. The committee has been very busy selling and filling contracts along with closing contracts on our harvested crops. They are working very closely with Key Co-op and Lincoln Way Energy on where to send our current crop. As any good marketing committee, they have also been evaluating various marketing plans to continue to move the farm in a positive direction.

CUSTOM OPERATION COMMITTEE UPDATE
The Custom Operation committee started the semester off by hauling wood chips from the Farm Progress Show to the Animal Science farms. They also provided custom harvesting on 500 acres of soybeans for the Iowa State University Farms. Custom Operations is in charge of working with Marshall Ruble to provide management services for his sorghum production at the beef farm. This semester the custom committee was looking into a new field cultivator and finding out pricing and bids to report to the class. The class voted in favor of purchasing a new 850.5 Tiger-Mate 2 Cultivator from Vetter Equipment.

SWINE COMMITTEE UPDATE
Keeping up with our swine enterprise has been keeping the swine committee busy. They replaced panels in the barns, cleaned out the furnaces for winter, and started to pull out some old gates to do some welding work. As well as keeping up on the daily duties of the barns, this committee has been looking into putting a new curtain on one side of the barn and keeping up on monitoring the energy and water use for the energy audit.
FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE
This committee has adapted a slogan this semester of “squeezing dollars out of pennies” and it can be true at times! Finance started by cleaning up past bills and organizing financial documents so they can keep up with the books. They have done an excellent job of balancing the accounts and paying bills on time this semester and they are making sure the bills are paid, books are organized and keeping money in the balance for next semester’s class. According to our books, the 450 Farm should be debt free by the end of 2013.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE UPDATE
There is always something to do around any farm and our Buildings and Grounds committee has been working hard at the 450 Farm this past semester. They have reworked the lighting in the buildings, finished putting tin on the compost shed, moved around the LP gas lines and tanks, and made a wind break on the west end of the farm. Along with all the work they have accomplished, they put in new tile and waterways at the Vet Med farm. This committee has been busy, busy, busy!

MACHINERY COMMITTEE UPDATE
Before harvest could begin here at the 450 Farm, the tractors and wagons needed to be prepped for the big task and no other committee could do this better than our Machinery committee. They not only made sure all the tractors and wagons were ready for harvest, but also got the tillage machinery ready as well. Along with preparing equipment at the beginning of the semester and deciding upon what to do with the old gravity-flow wagon, the Machinery committee also has been lining up tractors for spring semester. The most recent purchase has been for new John Deere Starfire Receivers in each of our tractors.

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE UPDATE
The Public Relations committee is the heart of the 450 Farm. Since the beginning of the semester, the committee has revamped and reorganized many different aspects of the farm's communication outlets. One of the first changes implemented was switching the Ag450 Farm Facebook page from a 'friend' page to an 'organization' page. The committee has also been utilizing HootSuite, an online social media management tool. PR committee created a social media plan for future committees to be able to 'jump right in' at the beginning of the spring semester with content. Along with revamping the social media sites, the committee also redecorated the bulletin boards in the classroom and updated the class website, brochure, newsletter and land map.
LAB AND CLASS PHOTOS

THURSDAY LAB

WEDNESDAY LAB

FALL 2012 AG450 FARM STUDENTS