

## AGRI 130: Understanding Today's Agriculture Blog Assignment

Fall 2019

Blogsite: <http://sites.udel.edu/understand-de-ag>

Assignment Grade Value: 15%

### Objective

The purpose of our class blog assignment is twofold. First, it provides you with hands-on experience using WordPress, a communication tool for self-publishing that integrates well with social media. A good working knowledge of WordPress is valuable for expressing opinions on a number of topics of interest to you, or to potential employers. Agriculture needs positive voices that reflects the science behind our food production in digital media. WordPress is an ideal way to be heard and noticed in the digital arena. Second, the blog assignments and posts you are assigned to write, provide an opportunity to convey how you are processing the history, issues, and information learned from class lectures, field trips, and assigned readings as well as your reactions to external readings and current news sources.

### Content

Students will be asked to reflect on assigned readings, class field trips and lectures. Content should reflect your growing and expanding understanding of today's agriculture.

1. **Assigned readings:** Throughout the semester there will be assigned readings that are relevant to understanding agriculture. Students will provide reflections by summarizing the readings in 150-200 words on the blog at assigned dates.
2. **Guest lectures:** During this course there will be several guest lecturers. **Comment on all guest lectures and reflect on topic.** One paragraph, 150-200 words. Provide a brief overview. What did you learn new? What was the most surprising fact? **These blog post summaries are due by 9 pm one week after each guest lecture.**
3. **Field trips:** This class will have four Saturday field trips. 1. Poultry farm (September 07); 2. Commercial and retail orchard (September 28); 3. Ag equipment company (October 12); 4. University of Delaware's Newark research farm (November 2). **Discuss each of them** (150-200 words) providing an overview and interesting points discovered. Photos taken by students on trips are encouraged (when permitted). **These blog posts are due the Friday following each of the four Saturday field trips.**

#### Things you can share:

- Historical fact you discovered
- Interesting statistics
- During visits how does person/business:
  - Use technology
  - Use social media

- Ways in which they are innovative
- What challenges face these operations or businesses?
- Were any myths about agriculture dispelled?
- Did the visits change your mind about agriculture, or specifically your area of study?

**Poor Example:**



*I had a great time at Fifers. It was really fun!*

**Good Example:**



*Fifer Orchards*

*Fifers is one of Delaware's largest retail and commercial orchards in the state of Delaware. Most of the public sees a large, attractive and well-run retail operation, but the secret to Fifer's success is behind the scenes where an efficient staff processes xxxx bushels/pounds of fresh produce a day, harvested from xxx*

acres. Fifer Orchards also engages with the public through impressive social media presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, as well as present a visually appealing website: <http://www.fiferorchards.com/local-fresh-market/> which includes quality photographs and an online store. Fifer Orchards has invested heavily in promoting their Community Supported Agriculture or CSA program. What impressed me most about this operation was their commitment to their local community and their desire to supply regular and niche markets.

4. **Agriculture in the news:** Students will select current news regarding agriculture and provide a link and brief comment.

**Quality is valued over length! Optional pictures with captions and contributions beyond the assignments are encouraged.**

### **Example of a news item comment**

*Recently, there has been controversy over a large commercial development plan in Eastern Sussex County, north of Lewes, known as Overbrook Town Center. This article appeared in the Cape Gazette on August 19, 2015. <http://capegazette.villagesoup.com/p/overbrook-threatens-future-of-farming-in-sussex/1399920>*

*The article expresses concern from Delaware Agriculture Secretary Ed Kee, on the impact of the massive shopping center on Agriculture. I never thought about how shopping centers and new roads might affect farmers and agriculture lands. If approved the project would restrict farm work, such as agricultural spraying, and could spell the end to farming on adjacent lands farmed for generations. Kee also pointed out Delaware agriculture is a \$8 billion business.*

### Issues with WordPress

All blog posts will be accessed with your UDeINETID sign in and password. If you have any technical issues with WordPress, please send your assignment, with photo if applicable, to [walfred@udel.edu](mailto:walfred@udel.edu) and she will post on your behalf.