

A Situation Outlook for the Agribusiness Institute

"A Partnership Promoting Performance through Education, Research, Service and Technology Transfers"

A Review of Agribusiness Programs in the Division
of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine

at

Mississippi State
TM UNIVERSITY



Forward

This report was prepared as part of a review of agribusiness programs in the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine (Division) at Mississippi State University (MSU). There are many programs throughout the Division that directly or indirectly involve agribusiness. As a result, it can be difficult to identify the scope of such a review. Therefore, it is important to define agribusiness. It is defined, for the purpose herein, as those activities pertaining to 1) the management of firms operating within the marketing chain for agricultural or forest products, 2) the aggregate consequences and implications of firms' behavior, and/or 3) the factors affecting the performance of individual firms and the industry as a whole.

In compiling information and data for the review, the committee charged with preparing for the review opted to focus on providing a vision of the future for agribusiness programs at MSU rather than to inventory in detail the past accomplishments from the programs. That is not to say that past accomplishments were not noted. To the contrary, they are but only to the extent that they help identify the programs' trajectories into the future. For these reasons this report is entitled a "Situation Outlook." It is hoped the review team will provide their assessment of and recommendations to the plans contained herein.

This particular portion of the overall report is a Situation Outlook for the Agribusiness Institute. The Agribusiness Institute is a joint venture between the Colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences and Business and Industry. In as much as the Institute belongs equally to both Colleges, the agribusiness review is expanded to include intellectual and financial capital from outside the Division. Lastly, the content herein, save the section entitled "A History of the Institute," concentrates mainly on accomplishments since 1997.



Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

The vision at the Agribusiness Institute is to create innovative programs, provide helpful service, and transfer useful technologies to agricultural businesses in a manner that identifies the Institute and Mississippi State University as leading institutions for quality agribusiness education, training, research, and technology transfer.

Mission

The Agribusiness Institute's mission is to assist agribusinesses by offering up-to-date educational, research and training programs, and technology transfers that emphasize creativity and exploit the multidisciplinary perspective of the Institute.

Values

The faculty, staff, students and firms that participate in The Agribusiness Institute subscribe to the following values:

- Diversity of knowledge and background and unbounded thought foster creativity,
- Perseverance and accomplishments promote excellence, and
- Synergy among activities leverages limited resource.



Plans for the Future

"Focus on Management of Firms"

The Agribusiness Institute at Mississippi State University was established in 1991 in response to a study predicting a shortage of graduates with an education in agribusiness management. The Institute, therefore, was formed as a joint venture among the Colleges of Business and Industry and Agriculture and Life Sciences at Mississippi State University and agricultural businesses. Shortly thereafter the Institute's mission was formulated to assist agribusinesses in Mississippi, throughout the South, across the nation, and around the world through research service and a Master of Agribusiness Management (MABM).

The Institute's programs in the areas of learning, research, service and technology transfers aim to combine the multiple disciplines offered through the two Colleges to focus on management issues within individual companies. The principal activity at the Institute is the MABM degree. The other activities are managed to complement and support a knowledge base in agribusiness management, which helps agricultural enterprises.

The following outline lists the goals and objectives in the areas of education, research, service and technology transfer as well as the parties responsible for their implementation. A fifth area, entitled funding, is included in recognition of its importance to the support and success of the Institute's five-year agenda. Effort is made to integrate all five areas into a well-orchestrated, multidisciplinary program that focuses on management of agricultural and food firms.

A. 25-30 Graduate Students (House, Batista, and Spencer)

- 50% Mississippians, of which 60% from Agriculture and Life Sciences, 20% from Agricultural Economics, and 20% from Business
- 25% from outside of Mississippi, and
- 25% International

B. Research Programs (Batista, House, and R&D Committee of the Executive Committee)

- Southeast Center for Cooperative Management
- International Trade of Agriculture Products (Latin America, Asia & Africa)
- Technologies in Agriculture
 - Biotech & Geospatial
- Case Studies for at least 25% of the students
- Case Development with Sparks and Others
- Industrial Organization of Agribusiness
- Publications in IAMA, AJAE, and others



C. Service Programs (Batista, Taylor, Lee, and McGilberry)

- Mid-South Agribusiness Forum (annually)
- "Coop College" (annually)
- Owen Cooper Cooperative Executive Forum (annually)
- Mississippi's Agricultural Leadership Program
- Secretariat to the Southern Agribusiness Forum (annually)
- Staff the Agribusiness Roundtable

D. Technology Transfer (Whitehead, Salisbury, Sites, and Batista)

- Killer Web Site
 - Recruiting and Collection and Dissemination of Information
- Virtual Library for Agribusiness
- Database on Agribusiness
- White Papers
- Case-Study Publication (with Food & Fiber Center)
- Serve on Industry Advisory Boards

E. Funding (Batista, Fox, Freedman, McCarty, and Armstrong)

- Maintain funding by MSU @ \$250K/year
- Raise private dollars @ \$1 million
- Grants/Contracts/etc. @ \$250K/year
- Proceeds from programs @ \$10K/year



The Organizational Structure

The Agribusiness Institute is a joint venture among Mississippi State University's Colleges of Business and Industry and Agriculture and Life Sciences and agribusinesses. The multidisciplinary partnership answers to the Deans of the two Colleges and is managed by a staff of six, soon to be seven. The staff sets direction and policy with the help of two committees, one consisting of University personnel and the other comprised of industry advisors. Graduate students, faculty, staff and industry managers cooperate to tackle management issues and to deliver the programs offered through the Institute.

A brief description of the organizational structure is presented next.

The Managing Partners

Dean William Fox, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Dean Sara Freedman, College of Business and Industry

The Staff

Juan Batista, Executive Director
Lisa House, Associate Director
Vacancy, Associate Director
Mary Jean Whitehead, Administrative Assistant and Web Master
Cathy Sims, Assistant
Scott Jackson, Computers and Systems Analyst
David Sites, Virtual Librarian

The Executive Committee (University Advisors)

Garry Smith, Management and Information Systems
John Lee, Agricultural Economics
Joe McGilberry, MSU Extension Service
Lisa House, Agribusiness Institute
Steve Taylor, COBI's External Affairs
Barbara Spencer, COBI's Graduate Programs
Terry Obert, Marketing, Business Law and Quantitative Methods
Zoel Daughtrey, Accounting
Two vacant positions

The Advisory Board (Industry Advisors)

Bob Anthony (Chair), American Poultry International (Poultry)
Coley Bailey (Vice Chair), Mississippi Chemical Corp. (Farm Inputs)
Richard Adkerson, Freeport-McMoran (Mining and Chemicals)



Roger Malkin, Delta and Pine Land Co. (Seeds and Biotechnologies)
Bruce Scherr, Sparks Companies, Inc. (Economic and Management Consulting)
Chip Morgan, Delta Council (Agricultural Association)
Lester Myers, INDI-BEL, Inc. (Production, Farm Supplies, Feeds, Transportation)
Adolphus Baker, Cal-Maine Foods, Inc. (Egg and Dairy Processing)
C.W. Ritter, The Attala Co. (Feeds)
Wayne Boutwell, Southern States Cooperative, Inc. (Supply and Marketing Coop)
Mike Sanders, Jimmy Sanders, Inc. (Farm Inputs)
Tim Dawson, Mississippi Chemical Corp. (Farm Inputs)
Woods Eastland, Staplcotn Inc. (Marketing, Finance and Warehousing Coop)
George Barry, Consultant (Management Consulting)
Lester Spell, Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce
(Commissioner)
Stan Herren, Deposit Guaranty National Bank (Lending)
David Waide, Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation (Production)
Kenneth Hood, Perthshire Farms (Production, Ginning)
John Zobl, Bryan Foods, Inc. (Food Processing)

The Faculty

Faculty members participate in research and/or service programs as well as teach and supervise graduate students in the Master's of Agribusiness Management. The faculty comes from various academic departments. Albeit most of the departments are in the Colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences and Business and Industry, faculty members from other parts of the campus have worked or are working on activities sponsored by the Institute.

The Institute's faculty members are presented below under the sections that describe the Colleges or the University. Members belonging to the two Colleges are listed under their respective College and members who reside in other departments are listed under the section entitled "University."



The Master's of Agribusiness Management

This section of the report is divided into several components. The various components are:

- The Degree
- Agribusiness Strategy Field Study
- Internships
- Projects & Assistantships
- Extracurricular Activities
 - Orientation Week
 - The Arts and Sciences of Managing Technologies in Agriculture

- Graduate Students
- Alumni
- Recruiting Strategies



The Degree

FUTURE DIRECTIONS & GOALS

We believe the strengths of the Master of Agribusiness Management Program at Mississippi State University lies in the truly joint effort by the two Colleges, as well as input from industry. Capitalizing on this set-up through providing the students opportunities for joint research and industry experiences while taking courses will provide MSU MABM students with advantages that will set them apart when looking for jobs. Because this program has had some time to mature now, and has had the opportunity of a curriculum revision after a few years of experience, we feel the program is now ready to become one of the premier educational opportunities for students desiring agribusiness training beyond their undergraduate programs. Specifically our goals include eventually increasing the number of students enrolled in the program to 50 students per year. In the near future, we would like to see a steady enrollment of 25 students (currently there are about 15 students per year). However, this increase in numbers will not be at the expense of quality of students. With an improving program, and the opportunities this program provides students, we should be able to attract top students from around the nation, and World. However, the majority of students are expected to come from Mississippi State University, meeting a concern of the Advisory Board that we continue to train Mississippi students to be competitive in the job market.

The recent increase in the number of students participating in the internship option also shows that they students are beginning to "buy in" to our beliefs about the value of practical experience. Although there is not a goal of having 100% of students participate in the internship option (having the field study course allows this flexibility), having a majority of students choose the internship would be a measure of success of this philosophy.

A second goal of this program, as implied by the first, is to become recognized within our profession as one of the premier agribusiness programs at the Masters level. This will help our goal of being able to recruit the top students into the program. Because of the unique and cooperative relationship between the two Colleges, Mississippi State University's program can provide opportunities for the students that may not exist in other agribusiness programs. Research projects that involve both business and agriculture faculty help the students see the mix of business training and agricultural knowledge needed to excel in the agribusiness sector. Coursework from both fields will help give the students the knowledge needed to succeed in this environment. Finally, built-in practical experiences such as the internship program, field study course, assistantship projects, and orientation week, will round off the degree program for the students.



Research and Service Activities

The areas listed below represent major research and service initiatives for the Institute. They represent an alignment of the talents and resources on campus with the needs of the agricultural firms operating in the southeast. The Institute supports these initiatives in cooperation with various departments across campus.

These areas are being developed in an attempt to create strengths at and recognition for the Institute and Mississippi State University in agribusiness management. They also support the graduate program by providing opportunities for faculty, students and managers to work together and to expand their portfolio of professional experiences.

Research

1. Develop case-studies as research vehicles
2. Research into the management of farmer-owned cooperatives with special attention on the following issues:
 - Trust and Management
 - Risk Management
 - Application of Web Technologies
 - Mergers and Acquisitions
3. Web technologies and methods as a means of transferring information and technologies
4. Consumer Preferences and Attitudes
5. Decision Sciences and Fuzzy Logic
6. Agricultural (Export) Marketing and Economic Development

Service

1. Owen Cooper Cooperative Executive Forum (annually)
2. Southern Agribusiness Forum (annually)
3. Graduate Students' Projects
4. Case Studies
5. Field Studies

The following service activities are still in the planning phase:

- Agribusiness Management Seminar (annual event using case studies)
- Biotechnology Management Seminar
- Agricultural Marketing Workshops
- Mississippi's Agricultural Leadership Program



The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CAL S)

Vision

To be among the leading Colleges of Agriculture, Life Sciences and Human Ecology in quality of services to students, clients and citizens.

Values

- We believe in the dignity and intrinsic worth of the individual working in a personal and collegiate role of inquiry and scholarship.
- The search for truth, knowledge and understanding is humanity's most important endeavor. We expect the highest integrity of thoughts, words and deeds from each person.
- We expect to reward each person based upon results and achievements.

Mission

To educate people for leadership roles in Agriculture, Life Sciences and Human Ecology and improve their standard of living in a global society.

Strategies

To meet this mission the following strategies will be used:

- Expand the role and scope of the College to serve society with regard to:
 - An adequate and safe food supply
 - A changing global economy
 - An international vista of service for our citizens
 - Emphasize the environment and renewable natural resources.
- Seek fundamental truths, knowledge and understanding of the sciences, ethics, human relationships and intellect appropriate for a College of Agriculture, Life Sciences and Human Ecology in the 21st century.
- Focus our resources and energy on learner-based programs of teaching, research and service to provide leadership to our students, producers, processors, consumers, scholars and citizens of the state and world.
- To optimize use of expanding technology in the discharge and delivery of programs.
- To be competitive on an international scale.
- Enhance programs to prepare graduates to assume visionary, creative and persuasive leadership roles in society.
- Our graduates will have the following mobility:
 - Geographic and cultural
 - Economic and social
 - Career and professional

