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Offering Food Distribution-Related Courses in Agricultural Economics Curricula: Perspectives from Across the U.S.

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The vast majority of students who graduate with Agribusiness/Agricultural Economic degrees find themselves in non-traditional agricultural positions. Many of our students are finding work in stages of the food system closer to the end consumer (e.g., food wholesaling, food retailing, and restauranteering). A few Agricultural Economics departments have begun to offer courses related to food distribution in an effort to better prepare students who are responding to the demand for jobs outside of traditional production agriculture.

This teaching report session promoted a discussion of challenges and opportunities in preparing and presenting a food distribution-related curriculum to students. Presenters shared insights along the following seven fronts:

- (1) Presentation of background information on a particular food distribution-related course

(how this course fits a particular department's overall curriculum, if it is required for a major, number of students enrolled, how often it is taught, etc.).

- (2) Discussion of course content, including examples.
- (3) Illustration of unique aspects of the course such as field trips, guest speakers, projects, interaction with industry, etc.
- (4) Insight as to how course facilitators keep current with changes in the food system.
- (5) Future plans for the course/curriculum
- (6) How to attract students to a food-distribution based program.
- (7) How to find jobs for students interested in food distribution/food industry management careers.