Empty backhaul miles per trip represent 35 percent of the average fronthaul mileage of Florida FF&V truckers. There appears to be adequate exempt and nonexempt commodities coming into Florida to reduce this percentage; however, government regulation, lack of information concerning the locations of backhauls, the cost of finding a backhaul, and the opportunity cost of using specialized equipment to haul general freight have kept this from happening.

The cost of an empty backhaul mile represents 3.7 percent of the total roundtrip FF&V transportation bill and .65 percent of the retail value of an average truckload of Florida FF&V. Thus, if deregulation and better communications on the locations of backhauls does decrease empty backhaul mileage, the implication is that the consumer will not experience a large decrease in the retail price of Florida fresh fruits and vegetables.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN AGRIBUSINESS MANAGEMENT SIMULATION FOR CLASSROOM AND STORE MANAGEMENT TRAINING

by

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Introduction

The University of Delaware has given financial support for this research project entitled, "SIMAG," designed to improve classroom instruction of Agribusiness courses and Agribusiness training programs. Simulations are an instructional technique in which decisions are made at various stages. The game model interacts between the simulated environment and decisions of participants. Results are fed back to the students after which they may make another set of decisions and the cycle is repeated.

Games developed for management simulation make a valuable contribution to the development of decision-making skills which are not dependent upon practice in a realistic environment. A game designed for practice of these skills as applied to the agribusiness industry compliments students' learning.

Objectives

1. To provide an application of classroom knowledge in managing a full-line agribusiness firm:

   A. Making store policy and operation decisions

   B. Analyzing and solving managerial problems in a real world simulation.

2. To increase student comprehension of managerial techniques through application and practice via the use of PLATO.

Discussion

PLATO (Program Logic For Automated Teaching Operations) is an interactive computer assisted instruction system. The advantages offered by the PLATO system for this project are the rapid response, the ability of allowing the student to interact with the computer on an individual basis, the graphic capabilities of the display and the ease of updating the program. Utilizing the PLATO computer system allows for a more interesting game. A simulation is very versatile allowing for various levels of sophistication.

The simulation requires the student to make business and organizational decisions concerning an agribusiness firm. During the game, the student solves a series of problems occurring in the store. These involve labor relations, pricing and competition, and store policy changes. The decisions affect store performance and the student is evaluated according to this performance.

Data which will be available to the student is a complete financial history; payroll including individual salaries; sales and inventory; and other pertinent information concerning an agribusiness firm.

Instruction is improved because this simulation permits students to have real life management experiences and it is an intertwining of computers and conventional teaching techniques.

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