COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL AND LIFE SCIENCES
Proposed Catalog Changes

Effective Term (unless otherwise noted) = Summer 2015

Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology

1. Change the curricular requirements of Applied Economics (M.S.):

Candidates must fulfill the requirements of the College of Graduate Studies and the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology. See the College of Graduate Studies section for the applicable general requirements.

Master of Science, Major in Applied Economics. The M.S. program in applied economics is designed to prepare students for management, research, and policy positions in the public and private sectors of the economy, and for further graduate study. The M.S. thesis option is offered as a 32 credit stand-alone degree or as a 32 credit thesis degree with optional emphasis area(s). The minimum of 32 required credits can be satisfied by taking a combination of 500 and 400 level courses, with at least 18 credits at 500 level, plus no more than 3 credits of 300 level courses in supporting areas.

An emphasis may be selected in any of the following three areas: Agricultural Economics; Natural Resources; Agribusiness. Both thesis options include six letter graded thesis credits (AgEc 500) and 26 credits of course work including the following: AgEc 506 (0 cr), AgEc 525 (3 cr), AgEc 526 (3 cr), AgEc 527 (3 cr), AgEc 529 (2 cr), and 15 credits of AgEc electives.

A student has the option to not pursue an emphasis in which case the student must complete as part of the 15 credits of AgEc electives, 6-9 credits chosen from the following courses: AgEc 532 (3 cr), AgEc 533 (3 cr), AgEc 534 (3 cr), AgEc 535 (3 cr), and either AgEc 586 (3 cr) or AgEc 587 (3 cr).

If an emphasis area is chosen, two courses must be selected from those specifically listed in that emphasis area, which will be used as part of the 15 credits of AgEc electives. Emphasis areas are: Agribusiness: AgEc 535 (3 cr) & either AgEc 533 or AgEc 534 (3 cr); Agricultural Economics: AgEc 534 (3 cr) & AgEc 535 (3 cr); or Natural Resources: AgEc 532 (3 cr) and one additional course (3 cr). More than one emphasis area may be completed as long as each emphasis area requirement is met. However only the declared emphasis area will appear on the student’s transcript.

Students may take a non-thesis option M.S. degree. Under this option a student will take a minimum of 32 credits of course work including the 26 credits of departmental course requirements, which are the same as the stand-alone thesis option. For the non-thesis option, a three-credit paper will be written and presented by the student addressing a topic determined jointly by the student and the student’s graduate committee. This option is only available for students not receiving financial support from research funds.

Rationale: There are three changes to the requirements of the MS in Applied Economics set forth in this curriculum change. First, MS students will now be limited in the number of 300-level credits they may take toward the program to 3 credits. The AERS faculty feels that as graduate students, there should be a limit on use of 300-level (junior level) credits to meet program requirements. Secondly, we are increasing from 6 to 9 the number of AgEc elective credits required if a student chooses not to pursue an emphasis area. We want to ensure that our MS students have a sufficient number of 500-level electives such that they are well rounded in their knowledge of economic theory, methods and tools. Linked to that, the third change is that the AERS faculty wished to clarify in the catalog an intent which was not previously clear – students may take either AgEc 586 or AgEc 587, but not both, toward their 9 credits of AgEc electives when not pursuing an emphasis area. This was the intent previously as well, but we felt inserting the word ‘either’ leaves no uncertainty.