2013-2014 Assessment Report
Program: Animal Sciences, BS

College of Agriculture
Animal Sciences, BS

Expected Outcome 1:

Introductory knowledge and understanding of the meat industry and related career opportunities

Full Description of Expected Outcome:

Although our Department has a full four-year Animal Sciences degree option in Muscle Foods (ANMF), most students who select this option do not enter it until their late in their sophomore or early in their junior year. While all Animal Science students are exposed to the concepts of Meat Science in our freshman-level ANSC-1000 Introduction to Animal Science course (3 related lectures, 1 lab), this minimum exposure did not adequately prepared them for subsequent junior- and senior-level Meat Science courses (such as ANSC-3700 Muscle Foods and ANSC-4700 Meat Processing). To fill this void and better prepare students for a smoother transition into upper-level Meat Science courses, a new, focused, meat industry-supported course, ANSC-2720 Introduction to Meat Science, was developed. The new course was approved and first offered Fall 2013 (11 students enrolled). Fall 2014 marked the second term this course was offered (15 students enrolled, representing a 36% increase in enrollment over the first offering in Fall 2013).

Assessment Method 1:

Students taking ANSC-2720 Introduction to Meat Science are expected to have a greater knowledge and understanding of the meat industry and appreciation for related career opportunities. Students enrolled in the course Fall 2014 were administered an assessment instrument to determine the success of this new course in meeting the expected student learning outcomes.

Assessment Method Description:

At the end of the 2014 course offering, students were given an exit instrument to assess their overall satisfaction with the course. The instrument listed the instructors’ expected student learning outcomes for the course, as outlined in the syllabus distributed at the start of the course, and students were simply asked to reflect on what they learned in the course and “… comment on how [they] think this class [made] them better prepared to enter the meat industry or help to better prepare [them] for subsequent meat science courses.”

Findings:

Ten of the 15 students (67%) enrolled Fall 2014 (again, representing a 36% increase in enrollment over Fall 2013 enrollment) responded by turning in the assessment instrument. Very positive comments were made on all (100%) of the returned instruments. Typical student comments include, “fantastic intro to the major,” “this class does prepare us for entering the
meat industry”. “we learn real world problems and techniques of how the industry works,” “I
think it is a very necessary class for the muscle foods curriculum because it covers the various
sections of meat science and gives students a bigger picture of what is going on in the meat
industry.” “teachers were awesome, and we discussed a wide variety of pertinent topics,”
“awesome possum!,” “I have learned a ton from this class.” The only negative comment,
submitted by one student, related to a perceived inconsistency in format of exams given by the
three co-instructors (differences the instructors feel are, in themselves, a valuable learning
experience preparing students for a variety of reporting demands in industry and regulatory
settings).

How did you use findings for improvement?:

Overall, instructors and students are happy with the new course’s structure and material. In the
face of never-ending regulatory changes in the meat industry, the instructors will be challenged
constantly with keeping the material current and in context with a fast-paced industry. The
instructors also plan to advertise the course more in the future to help attract students from other
closely-related majors, such as Food Science, Poultry Science, etc., who would benefit from a
broader understanding of the meat industry.

Additional Comments:

The course continues to be modified to best meet program expectations and student needs. If
more non-majors begin taking this course in the future, that may necessitate additional changes
in content and approach to enhance their perspective and accommodate their special interests and
needs.
Expected Outcome 2:

Enhanced student understanding of animal nutrition and related practical applications

Full Description of Expected Outcome:

In preparation for the transition from quarters to semesters in Fall 2000, our Department was forced to remove the equivalent of 12 quarter hours of subject matter (from 192 hours down to 180 hours equivalent) and absorb the loss of another 12 credit hours through expansion of supporting science courses. For example, under the quarter system, our students formerly took only two of the three freshman-level Biology courses (Principles and Animal, but not Plant). However, after the semester transition, in order to get Principles and Animal Biology related subject matter, they were required to take both semesters (representing expansion from two quarters, or 2/3 of an academic year, to two semesters, or a full academic year). Similar expansions happened in Organic Chemistry and Physics sequences. To help accommodate this overall credit hour reduction and internal credit hour expansion, our Department merged two of our nutrition courses into one – which required removing considerable lecture material and a many laboratory exercises. While necessary at the time, it resulted in a reduction of subject matter knowledge our students gained in the area of nutrition.

Assessment Method 1:

Since the semester transition in 2000, it has become increasingly evident to our faculty that our students are not graduating with the depth and breadth of knowledge in animal nutrition that they once had and is still expected by our agricultural industries and allied livestock commodity groups. Our faculty began discussing some five years ago (or more) the need to reevaluate our nutrition course offering(s) to meet student and industry needs.

Assessment Method Description:

A formal proposal came from a member of our Department’s Nutrition faculty to reevaluate and revamp our undergraduate nutrition course offerings. This was followed by our Department Head (who himself has a PhD in Animal Nutrition) discussing informally with our undergraduate upper classmen (in our ANSC-3800 Careers class), alumni and livestock industry and commodity group representatives regarding industry needs and expectations when hiring Auburn Animal Science graduates. This was followed by a full faculty discussion at the end of which a committee composed of our Nutrition faculty was charged with thoroughly examining subject matter and student experience needs and developing proposals for completely new nutrition courses incorporating faculty, student and industry recommendations to replace the current single course and also proposing appropriate changes to each of our four curriculum option models to accommodate these any resulting new courses.

Findings:

The Faculty Nutrition Committee held a series of meetings spanning well over a year and ultimately proposed a sequence of two new nutrition courses: ANSC-3410 Animal Metabolism and Nutrition and ANSC-3420 Applied Animal Nutrition and Feeding. The former course will better integrate foundation concepts from animal biology, organic chemistry and biochemistry and will bolster student understanding of intermediary metabolism in animals. The latter course
will build on the first course and further emphasize practical aspects of feed identification and applied diet formulation for domestic livestock. The committee also presented proposals for incorporating the proposed two-course sequence into three of our four curriculum options: Pre-Vet/Pre-Professional (ANPV), Production/Management (ANPM) and Equine Science (ANEQ) and incorporating the former course only into our Muscle Foods Option (ANMF) since these students don’t normally need experience in balancing diets for animals.

How did you use the findings for improvement?:

The Nutrition Committee’s recommendations were all reviewed, discussed and approved by our Department’s Curriculum Committee and by our Departmental faculty as a whole, then by the College of Agriculture’s Curriculum Committee and ultimately by the University Curriculum Committee to become effective Fall 2015.

Additional Comments:

Effectiveness of these changes will be monitored and will be the subject of future assessment reports.