

Connecting Supply Chain Through Sustainability: Initiating a Multi-Disciplinary, Multi-Industry Approach Using the Case of Beef Cattle

Project director: Bradley J White

Project co-directors: Junehee Kwon, Melody LeHew, Patti J Dollarhide

Educational Need Area: Faculty Preparation and Enhancement for Teaching

Disciplinary perspectives of supply chains are influenced by the “silo” nature of academia. For example, educators typically train students about appropriate supply chain management starting with the manufacturer of products used in their particular industry, as opposed to investigating the entire supply chain from raw material producer to finished consumer product through disposal or recycling. **When educating sustainability, understanding the extent and interrelated nature of the entire supply chain is essential.** Without foundational knowledge and systems thinking, students may not understand the impact of business decisions on sustainability, and motivation to make sustainable choices may be lacking. This project aims to develop a Collaborative Grant Type 2 to infuse sustainability education into a variety of baccalaureate programs (e.g., animal sciences, hospitality and textile programs) **using the study of beef cattle.** Beef cattle present complex issues that involve a global view of the challenge to feed, clothe and fuel 9.6 billion people by the year 2050 while conserving finite resources.

A misunderstanding of sustainability can lead to fear of available biotechnology that can strengthen food safety and animal health systems. Our society needs leaders that can comprehend the interrelationship among diverse interests and strengthen a sustainable co-existence among different systems.

Planning objectives will be (a) seek and secure multi-institutional and multi-disciplinary academic and multi-industry collaborators; (b) gather data to evaluate the demand for comprehensive supply chain education and innovative delivery methods; and (c) organize and deliver a Sustainable Beef Cattle Supply Chain Symposium.

