

Australian Universities Crops Competition - An International Study Opportunity Provided by Reinvest ASA

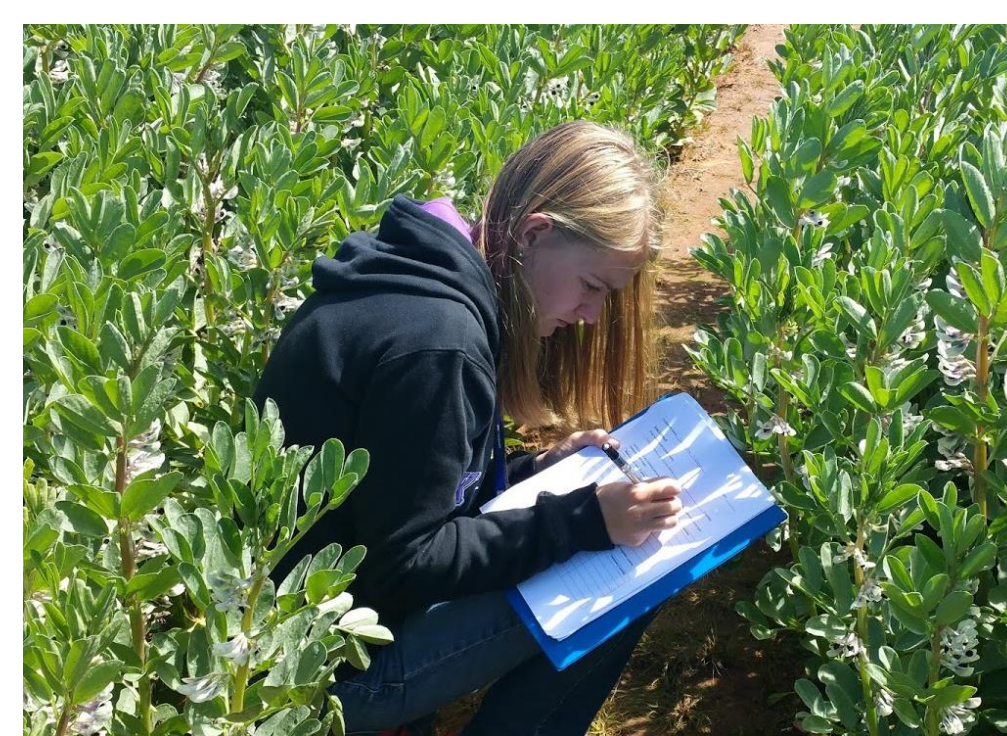
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Program Overview

Funds provided by the American Society of Agronomy Reinvest ASA program have supported an international study trip to Australia in both 2015 and 2016. The sponsored students competed in the Australian Universities Crops Competition (AUCC) held at Temora, NSW, hosted by Grain Growers of Australia. Students were selected from top placing individuals in the Intercollegiate Crops Contests held in Kansas City and Chicago. With additional support from companies and commodity groups plus personal funds, additional students have participated. In 2015, the USA Team was comprised of ASA supported students from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, Virginia Tech, and Oklahoma State University, with additional students from Virginia Tech participating. In 2016, the six ASA sponsored students competed on teams from Kansas State University and Wisconsin-Platteville, with teams from Virginia Tech and Iowa State also attending. Combined over the two years, 33 students have participated. Before and after the contest, students explored cultural and scenic sites, toured research facilities and agribusinesses, and visited irrigated and dryland farms with mixed animal and cropping systems to make the program a full international study experience.

AUCC Competition Format



The competition occurred over two days with two evening dinners, an industry networking session, and a tour and awards lunch on the third day. The contest components included:

- Business management calculations for a hypothetical Australian farm
- A grain grading exercise at a local grain elevator based on Australian standards
- Three exams covering cultivars, production, use and marketing of selected cereal, oilseed and pulse crops
- An exam covering the Australian grains industry and crop seed identification
- Field identification of weeds and diseases in different crops with control recommendations
- Live crop evaluations in the field with yield estimates and diagnosis of production problems
- Introduction to Grain Growers' ProductionWise crop management program



Thanks to Sponsors: Virginia Soybean Board, Virginia Corn Board, Virginia Crop Improvement Association, and CHS

ASA Reinvest Contribution

- Two year grant for \$17,500 per year
- Six students and one faculty leader each year
- Recipients selected from top placers in the Collegiate Crops Contests in 2014 and 2015
- ASA funds leveraged with additional support from agribusinesses and commodity groups to include additional students on the trips



Student Evaluation of the Experience

Rate these statements regarding the AUCC event (Responses from 2016 participants)	Rating*
Overall value of the AUCC competition	4.17
Value of interaction with Australian students	4.33
Value of interaction with Australian ag industry members	3.83
Value of the contest tours	3.39
Recommend to other students	5.00

* 5=extremely valuable 4=very valuable 3=moderately valuable 2=slightly valuable 1=not valuable

- "I am indescribably grateful for the ability to have this experience to explore agriculture in another country. After this, I feel even more passionate and motivated about working in agriculture. I now have a strong appreciation for the farmers in Australia and how they manage their land." Emily, 2016
- "I am truly blessed for the opportunity traveling to such a "rich" county and having the opportunity to compete in an international competition. I am thankful for being introduced to wonderful lifelong friends, seeing sustainable and photogenic agricultural practices, and learning and seeing a new culture." Austin, 2015
- "Our newfound knowledge of agricultural systems in Australia has allowed me to understand how differently crops are produced. I found the high level of livestock incorporation into field crop production systems to be very interesting." Robbie, 2015

International Study Experiences



The trips provided an opportunity to expand the learning experience well beyond the competition. Pre and post contest tours were arranged by the faculty leaders. Stops included agribusinesses, diversified farms, and research facilities, as well as cultural and scenic sites.



Summary of Benefits

- Preparing for the competition challenged students to learn about Australian crop production practices and the Australian grain industry to compare to US systems.
- Students met and interacted with agronomy student peers from Australian universities.
- The trips provided an excellent international agricultural study experience when enhanced with additional tours and farm visits before and after the competition.