

# ***USING UNDERGRAD TA'S TO IMPROVE INSTRUCTION***

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## ***Description:***

- (1) Course is AEM 3020, Farm Business Management: Topics include Income Statements, Balance Sheets, Cash Flow Statements, Business Analysis, Investment Analysis, Form of Business Organization, Machinery Economics, Human Resource Management, etc.
- (2) Three lectures and three lab sections each week
- (3) Normally 6 to 8 Undergrad TA's and 1 Grad TA
- (4) All Undergrad TA's have taken the course and done well
- (5) Undergrad TA's receive 3 credits of Supervised Teaching Experience
- (6) Each Undergrad TA will develop and teach at least one lab exercise and problem set
- (7) All will grade problem sets and exams
- (8) All will hold office hours
- (9) All will participate in holding review sessions for the exams
- (10) I conduct the field trips during lab as well as the lab the first week of class
- (11) Weekly meeting to organize and plan for the week ahead, usually on Monday at 8 am
- (12) Grad TA responsible for recording grades in Black Board and for one week of lectures, usually on economic principles

## ***Keys to Success:***

- (1) Labs assigned to Undergrad TA's at the beginning of the semester
- (2) Weekly meeting to coordinate "who is doing what" during the week
- (3) Send out emails summarizing responsibilities as discussed and assigned during Monday meeting
- (4) Review of printed material, lab exercises and problem sets, one week before it is sent to the printer. Review answer keys twice.
- (5) Review material so all are comfortable teaching the topic or ask who is most comfortable
- (6) Coordinate grading, each TA grades same questions on all exams and problem sets
- (7) Hire only those who want to be a TA
- (8) A good administrative assistant!
- (9) Good organization: Changing direction of a course is like turning a cruise ship around quickly, it can't be done!
- (10) A class that wants to learn and enjoys humor!