



RESEARCH

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2018

Enhancing UBC's Faculty of Land and Food Systems Student Understanding of the BC Dairy System through Experiential Learning Activities

Project Lead: Dr. Will Valley

Collaborating Partners: Nicomekl Farms
Donia Farms
Faculty of Land and Food Systems, UBC

Total Project Funding: \$5660.84

Contribution from DIREC: \$4,176.76

Objectives:

- Increase UBC Faculty of Land and Food Systems undergraduate students' understanding of regional food systems, with a focus on the BC Dairy System.
- Expose students to all elements of the agri-food system, including primary production, processing, distribution, retail, consumption, policy, and governance.
- Create an opportunity for undergraduate students to interact with and learn from farmers (and the animals, plants, water and soil) in a real-world context.
- Explore the processing, distribution, marketing, consumption and consumer preference of milk and milk alternative products.

Activity Description:

- Field trip to two local dairy farms for 350 second-year undergraduate students, four UBC instructors, and 10 graduate student teaching assistants. Visits took place in October 2018, for the duration of 3hrs.
- Dairy farm owners and staff, as well as soil experts and instructors from UBC, hosted different stations on the farm to allow students to experience the different components that comprise a dairy farm.
- Sensory evaluation of 12 milk and milk alternative products for 350 students in November 2018. Students sampled and rated a variety of different products on a scale of 0-12, from dislike extremely to like extremely.
- The data generated is then used to demonstrate statistical measures of central tendency (mean, median and mode) as well as standard deviation. Data demonstrate the range of preferences of the participants.
- Activity Description 5

Benefits & Analysis:

- Students learn about and discuss different aspects of the farm operation (e.g. milking parlour, feed and nutrition, genetics and breeding, crop production, soil analysis, and social context of rural communities). Many students report that this is their first trip to a working farm.
- Students get to see first hand the complexity of a dairy farm, witness the hard work required to produce high quality milk, and develop an appreciation for the knowledge, wisdom, and passion of the farmers and their staff.
- Students become familiar with evaluating sensory properties and are introduced to the role of packaging and marketing of common food products. Discussions stemming from the sensory evaluation activity touch upon a wide range of food industry topics such as marketing and consumer behavior, nutritional value of milk and
- Hands-on, experiential learning helps complement and enhance the theoretical, classroom learning that typically occurs in large enrollment courses in higher education.

Acknowledgements:

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Many thanks to the farmers and staff at Nicomekl and Donia Farms. Hosting 200 undergraduate students for the afternoon (while still running a dairy farm!) requires a lot of preparation and organization. The willingness to receive our students, answer their questions, and support their learning is incredibly generous.

DIREC Mission Statement:

The BC Dairy Association actively funds research and education projects. Our objective is to facilitate, encourage and financially support projects and programs that have been identified by the BCDA to benefit the BC dairy industry.

