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Economic Fundamentals of The Agri-Food System – Economics of the Agri-Food System

Prof. GABRIELE CANALI

COURSE AIMS

The main aim of the course is to provide students with an in-depth understanding of the complex structure of a modern agri-food system, and of major changes in the structure and competitive environment as well as in terms of product and process innovation. The programme will be focused on the agri-food system in developed economies, but few topics related to developing economies will also be considered. Attention will also be put on agricultural policies and their effects on the evolution of the agri-food systems, of different supply chains and their competitiveness. A basic knowledge of microeconomics (demand, supply, perfect competition and monopoly) is expected.

COURSE CONTENTS

<p>1. The modern agri-food system: origin, structure and trends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traditional agriculture: characteristics and organisation.• Transition to a modern agri-food system: determinants and effects.• The modern agri-food system: evolution and characteristics.• Technical change in the agri-food system.• Vertical disintegration of the production process and vertical integration.• The supply chain and the value chain.• Non-food uses of agricultural products.• The competitive scenario.	1
<p>2. The agricultural sector in the agri-food system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structural evolution of the agriculture sector.• The agricultural enterprise.• Role and characteristics of the family-run enterprise.• Part-time farming.• Specialisation and concentration of productions.• Demand and supply of agricultural products.• Price fluctuations of agricultural products.	1
<p>3. The food industry in the agri-food system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The evolution of the structure of food industry.• Competitive strategies of food firms.• Innovation in the food industry.• Internationalisation of food firms.	1



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<p>4. Structure and evolution of the food distribution sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• From traditional distribution to modern distribution.• Structure, concentration and development of the retail distribution industry.• Competitive strategies of retailers.• Performance and evolution of a modern food retail system.	1
<p>5. The role of consumer in the agri-food system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structure and trends of food regimes and food balances.• Evolution of food expenditure.• Evolution of consumer behaviour in developed economies.• The role of quality.• Globalisation of tastes and preferences and market segmentation.	
<p>6. Agricultural and food policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The evolution of the Common Agricultural Policy and its effects on Italian and European agri-food systems.• Agri-food policies and quality.• Elements of policies for food safety policies.• Tools for vertical and horizontal coordination, cooperation and competition.	

SCHEDULE

Fall semester

TEACHING METHOD

The course will be based on lectures, supported by the use of overhead slides, and supplemented with topic-specific discussions, seminars and group projects.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

It is strongly recommended to attend classes.

CREDITS

6 ECTS

ASSESSMENT METHOD

The final grade will be obtained as a weighted average of the results of an intermediate written test (45%) on the first half of the program, and a final written examination (55%) on the second half.



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COURSE READINGS AND MATERIALS

There is no specific course textbook. A reading list will be distributed at the end of each section of the course.

INSTRUCTOR BIO

Prof. Gabriele Canali

Prof. Gabriele Canali is associate professor at the Department of Agricultural and Food Economics, Faculty of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Piacenza-Cremona Campus. He teaches Environmental Economics, Economics of Agricultural Markets, Economic Fundamentals of the Agri-food market, Topics in wine marketing and Economics of food quality and safety.

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