

Hello. My name is Dr. Mark Manfredo, and I am the instructor for AGB 435 Commodity Futures and Options Markets. I am a professor in the Morrison School of Agribusiness and Resource Management in the College of Technology and Innovation here at ASU. I have been teaching this course at ASU since 1999 and I love the topic of commodity futures and options markets. I find these markets fascinating, so I hope that my enthusiasm will show through in the Online format --- I am pretty confident that it will. I think the only thing you will really miss out on taking this class online format are my jokes and funny stories --- well, perhaps that is a good thing as most would say my jokes are not that funny. Anyway, I will try to throw some jokes in here and there to break it up some.

So, a little bit about me. I grew up in the small farming community of Madera, CA just north of Fresno, CA. I became interested with agriculture and the food industry through my affiliation with the 4-H organization and through my part-time job working in a vineyard owned by a family friend. After high school, I attended California State University "Fresno where I completed a Bachelors of Science degree in Agribusiness in 1992. It was at Fresno State that I was introduced to commodity futures and options markets by one of my professors and mentors. I became fascinated with these markets, and knew I wanted to learn more about them. Little did I know then that over 20 years later I would still be studying these markets, and yes, I learn more about them every day. A disclaimer, I do not actively trade futures and options contracts, and I will explain why later in the class when we discuss speculation. After college, I attended New Mexico State University where I completed my Master's degree in Agricultural Economics. My Masters thesis examined the development of futures contracts for fresh fruits and vegetables based on an index of fruit and vegetable prices " sort of like a Dow Jones Industrial Average, but for fruits and vegetables. It was a creative and neat research idea, but ultimately not feasible. After my Masters degree, I knew I wanted a career in academics, so I went on to get a Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. While a Ph.D. student at the University of Illinois, I was the Gary Bielfeldt scholar in the Office for Futures and Options Research, " a research center at the U of I that focused specifically on futures and options markets. Interestingly, Gary Bielfeldt, a University of Illinois alumni, was at one time one the largest traders of U.S. Treasury Bond futures. You can read about Gary in the book entitled "Market Wizards" by Jack Schwager, this is an outstanding book for anyone who is interested in trading futures

contracts, or stocks for that matter. Anyway, my dissertation dealt with developing and evaluating forecasting models of commodity price volatility for grain and livestock markets. Developing and forecasting models of commodity prices and volatility is still an active research interest of mine. Within a few weeks of completing my Ph.D., I started working as an assistant professor at ASU and have been here ever since.

I am married to my lovely wife, Yvonne and we have twin sons, Ryan and Daniel, that keep us really busy. Interestingly, my wife Yvonne was a student at New Mexico State when I was going to school there, and my apartment was about a quarter mile from where she lived, but we never met until I moved to Phoenix. It's a small world. In my spare time, I enjoy fishing, in particular fly fishing.

Well, that is about it for me. I am really interested in getting to know you. To help me get to know you better, please fill out and upload the student information sheet. You will find the student information sheet under week 1 "Getting Started". Also, please introduce yourself to your colleagues through the Hallway Discussion. The Hallway Discussions are a great way to interact with your fellow students, much in the same way you might mingle with your student colleagues in the hallway before and after class if this were a traditional face-to-face course.

Also, I encourage you to follow me on Twitter at @AgriBizProf, that's a-g-r-i-b-i-z-p-r-o-f on Twitter. I regularly Tweet about topics we are covering in class, and often re-Tweet interesting stories related to class topics. I follow a number of food and agribusiness firms, futures exchanges, government agencies, and other organizations that are involved with the food industry. I have found Twitter to be a great source of timely news on the food and agribusiness industries, and oftentimes firms will actually post job openings via Twitter. Well, that is about it. I look forward to getting to know all of you, and look forward to a great class. My email is easy to remember it's just my last name, manfredo, @asu.edu (manfredo@asu.edu). Now let's get to work. Happy Learning!