Agricultural Production Practices in Italy
A CALS Signature Semester Abroad

Overview

Homepage
Information for incoming exchange students
About Parma

Semesters Available: Spring only (January-May)
Language of Instruction: Combination of English and Italian; Italian required for field placements

Agricultural Production Practices in Italy is coordinated and delivered by faculty at the Università degli Studi di Parma, Italy, in the College of Veterinary Medicine (where Livestock Science and Animal Production Technologies is housed).

Unlike traditional direct-enrollment exchange agreements, this program is individualized and experiential in nature, and includes:

• Pre-departure program and visa advising while still at Cornell
• Orientation program upon arrival in Parma
• Four courses delivered by Italian faculty, including EU Agricultural Systems (Economics); Italian Agricultural System (Economics and quota system); Principles of Food Safety and Quality; and Cultural Aspects of Food Production
• Italian language instruction
• Site visits to farms and agricultural-related businesses
• Academically-supervised hands-on industry placements, such as feedstuff producing plant providing feed for the farms of the region; dairy farm producing milk destined for Parmigiano Reggiano production; Parmigiano Reggiano cheese production facility; or Prosciutto di Parma Processing facility

CALS’ Animal Science Professor Mike VanAmburgh collaborated with his colleague Professor Federico Righi at Università degli Studi di Parma to develop this unique program. The ongoing organization and support relies heavily on the enthusiastic leadership of Righi. Initially designed with students in the animal science major in mind, today the program also attracts students from the agricultural science and food science majors.

Curriculum

The overall program has been designed to provide students with applied instruction on the following areas:

• EU Agricultural Systems (Economics)
• Italian Agricultural System (Economic and Quota System)
• Principles of Food Quality and Safety
• Cultural aspects of Food production
• Italian Language instruction
The exchange program covers ~13 weeks of (one semester). Below find a typical timeline for the experience. This curriculum is for the single semester program.

**Week 1: Exchange Student Orientation**
 Meet with professors, tutors and program advisor. The design of this period is to provide exchange students with a settle in period. Parma students will be able to introduce exchange students to life in Parma, as well as the principles of transportation, dining, etc. The program advisor (Prof. Righi) will introduce the students to the members of the Faculty, and will begin an informal language instruction.

**Weeks 2-7: Classroom Instruction**
Instruction will begin with professors in each of the focus areas. Typical set up will be approximately 7 days of instruction, with several field trips to visit industry.

**EU Agricultural Systems**
Instructor: Prof. Giuseppe Bonazzi
Focus: EU Agricultural Systems organization and main productions European politics for agriculture, rural development, food safety and environment (including quota system origin and organization in dairy productions)

**Italian Agricultural Systems**
Instructor: Prof. Giuseppe Bonazzi
Focus: National zoo technical contest; Italian market of agricultural products; producers’ organizations; fiscal reformation in agriculture; sources of statistical information in agriculture and economical survey of livestock

**Principles of Food Quality and Safety**
Instructor: Doct. Sergio Ghidini
Focus: Italian and European legislation on sanitary and hygienic control of food of animal origin; structure, organization and hygienic requirements of slaughterhouses and their equipment; meat cutting laboratories: hygienic and structural regulations; meat transport regulations and controls; hazards Analysis, Critical Control Points (HACCP) applied to the animal food industries; codified procedures for official sampling and analysis of foods; meat-based products, Minced Meats and Prepared Meats: specific regulations and controls.

**Cultural Aspects of Food**
Instructors: Prof. Enrico Bignetti; Doct. Stefano Bentley
Focus: History, places of production, warranty of quality, production process, nutritional value and related scientific aspects of the main traditional and typical product of the Po valley.

**Weeks 8-13: Practical Experience**
Students are assigned a rotational schedule of practice in the industry. The goal of this part of the program is to provide the students with hands-on experience, allowing them to integrate the classroom instruction with real world experiences. The program follows the supply chain from feedstuffs inputs all the way to food production and marketing. The rotation sites are described below.

**What makes this international experience meaningful?**
There are several aspects to this program that make it meaningful:

- Integration with locals and other international students within a new cultural environment
- Language learning
- Exposure to an area of study that is not available in the classroom at Cornell
- Ability to see and experience agricultural production systems from a different viewpoint
- Because of the small, customized nature of this program, students develop strong relationships with each of the faculty members abroad
- Need to be independent, flexible, and tolerate ambiguity
- Finally, according to one student who attended in 2013, “the internships were beneficial beyond compare. Lots of what I learned in Italy I have used to help me with the courses at Cornell. They also helped with understanding how the dairy industry compares between Italy and the US, and I learned more about the strengths and weaknesses of each.”
Credits – All counted as Cornell credit, not factored into GPA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION TOPIC</th>
<th>US CREDITS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU Agricultural Systems</td>
<td>1.5 (CALS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italian Agricultural Systems</td>
<td>1.5 (CALS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principles of Food Quality and Safety</td>
<td>5 (CALS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Aspects of Food</td>
<td>5 (CALS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italian Language instruction</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE (comb. 4 placements)</td>
<td>3 (CALS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>~16</td>
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Accommodation

There is a wide variety of housing options available, ranging from private apartments to university housing to home stays. In the past CALS Exchange students lived together in an apartment.

In the case of the experience rotations, there may be some opportunities for exchange students to stay with farm families or in on-site apartments.

Orientation

The first week of the exchange program is designed to provide the student with an orientation to the Parma area. Peer tutors may be available to assist exchange students in learning the use of public transportation, dining options, and recreational activities. The program advisor will assist exchange students in course preparation, and enrollment/registration.

Travel/Getting Around

Parma is an easy town to travel around. The city is very bicycle friendly, with designated bike lanes, and plenty of secure parking locations. The central district is very condensed, and easily navigated by foot. The Veterinary Faculty is situated outside of the city center, easily accessible by bus or bicycle.

Travel outside the city is achieved easily through Italy’s expansive train network. The Parma station has services to Milan, Venice, Rome, Bologna, Genoa, Florence, Turin, and Verona. High speed services are available in select cities along the Milan-Rome corridor. Major cities, such as Milan, have services to many destinations throughout Europe.

Parma also has a small regional airport with services to select cities including Rome, London, Catania, and Palermo.

Program Costs

Students are billed their regular CALS tuition, with no added administrative fees. Students purchase plane tickets and pay remaining costs such as housing, meals, student visa application fees, local travel, and personal expenses. Some partner institutions charge student activity fees and/or health insurance plans which students are also responsible for.

Financial aid travels with students going abroad. Students must complete with grades equivalent to a Cornell “C” or better. Financial aid for study abroad is need-based, consistent with university and government policies and covers all costs relevant to study abroad, including tuition, all mandatory program fees, housing, meals, books, personal expenses, and round-trip airfare. If you are currently receiving financial aid, your aid package will be adjusted based on your determined level of need and the projected costs for your study abroad program. University grant aid and loan awards may be either increased or decreased to meet study abroad need. The normal work-study component of aid packages will be converted to student loans.

How to Apply

You will apply to the exchange after meeting with the CALS study abroad and exchange advisor in 140 Roberts Hall. All application materials will be returned to CALS-not the university directly.