Teaching Farm and Rural Property Appraisal at America's Colleges: Synthesis and Reflections




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Abstract

The 2025 ASFMRA FutureEd Forum brought together university instructors, ASFMRA chapter leaders, and practitioners to examine how farm and rural property appraisal is taught across U.S. colleges. Using instructor surveys, forum discussions, and case studies from three land-grant universities, this article documents the objectives, structure, and challenges of university-based appraisal instruction. These courses emphasize foundational appraisal concepts, including scope of work, ethics, highest and best use, and the income, cost, and sales comparison approaches, reinforced through project-based learning and strong support from local ASFMRA chapters. We highlight effective teaching practices and opportunities to strengthen collaboration between academia and the profession.

INTRODUCTION

For nearly a century, the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers (ASFMRA) has provided the intellectual and professional backbone for rural property valuation in the United States. Since its founding in 1929, ASFMRA has linked universities, private practitioners, and policymakers to strengthen the professionalism of land management and appraisal. Its journal, educational programs, and ethical standards established a bridge between research and applied expertise.

Over the years, agricultural and rural property markets have become more dynamic and data-intensive. Appraisers must interpret spatial data, renewable energy leases, and environmental easements alongside traditional farmland sales. At the same time, the profession faces a generational transition as many experienced appraisers approach retirement. A strong pipeline of university-trained graduates—skilled in valuation methods, market interpretation, and communication—is essential to sustain the field (The Appraisal Foundation, 2024). Yet university teaching capacity in appraisal is uneven. Some land-grant and regional universities have maintained dedicated courses in *Farm and Rural Property Appraisal*, while others integrate valuation only briefly into farm management or real estate finance. Many programs

rely on one faculty member, creating a "single-instructor problem"—when that person retires or shifts roles, the course often disappears.

Recognizing these challenges, ASFMRA convened the FutureEd Forum in 2025 to reconnect academic and professional educators. The goal was to document where and how appraisal is being taught, share innovative course designs, and discuss how local chapters can strengthen classroom instruction.

University-based appraisal courses are not designed to replicate ASFMRA's accreditation, qualification, or continuing education programs. Rather, they serve four complementary purposes: (i) introducing students to appraisal as a potential career pathway; (ii) building valuation literacy for future agricultural lenders, farm managers, real estate professionals, and policymakers; (iii) providing analytical foundations for understanding land markets and valuation logic; and (iv) creating early entry points into professional mentoring, training, and certification through ASFMRA chapters. In this sense, university instruction complements, rather than competes with, ASFMRA's professional education system.

In this article, we document the current landscape of farm and rural property appraisal education across U.S. colleges and universities, drawing on survey data, forum discussions, and case studies from three land-grant institutions. We highlight how instructors structure appraisal courses, integrate professional standards, and collaborate with ASFMRA chapters to enhance student learning. The article also identifies common challenges, such as diverse student backgrounds, limited instructional capacity, and the broad scope of land markets, while also highlighting effective teaching practices and technologies that bridge the gap between the classroom and professional context. Finally, we outline opportunities for deeper partnership between academia and ASFMRA, emphasizing how coordinated efforts in mentoring, shared materials, and professional engagement can strengthen the next generation of rural appraisal education.

OVERVIEW OF THE 2025 FUTUREED FORUM AND INSTRUCTOR SURVEY

The 2025 FutureEd Forum, held in Denver, brought together faculty from universities offering appraisal or farm management courses, ASFMRA chapter leaders, and industry partners. Its agenda featured presentations on teaching innovations, survey results, and two interactive sessions on curriculum design and outreach. The ASFMRA leadership emphasized how teaching appraisal is "a shared opportunity between universities and ASFMRA chapters" and encouraged participants to become academic members and to "use guest lectures and student networks as two-way bridges."

A pre-event instructor-based survey collected 33 responses nationwide. About 12% (four respondents) explicitly mentioned teaching farm or rural appraisal (see Tables 1 and 2). This limited, but geographically distributed, presence underscores both the importance and fragility of university-based appraisal education nationally. These instructors commonly emphasized project-based learning anchored in the income, cost, and sales comparison approaches, supplemented with highest and best use analysis and written capstone reports. Across institutions, students are explicitly required to define an appropriate scope of work for their appraisal projects, including the intended use and users, property rights appraised, definition of value, and assignment conditions. This step is used pedagogically to emphasize professional independence, ethical responsibility, and analytical discipline, reinforcing that appraisal quality depends on clearly defining the appraisal problem before applying valuation methods. Ethics and non-advocacy principles are reinforced through project design, instructor feedback, and practitioner guest lectures, particularly those provided by local ASFMRA chapters.

One respondent wrote, "*My students complete a full appraisal report—from market analysis to reconciliation—with weekly progress checks*." Another emphasized guest engagement: "*We invite seven to eight appraisers and auctioneers over the semester to talk about real cases and ethics*."

The pre-forum survey showed how these courses differ in format. Roughly half are taught annually; others alternate by year depending on faculty availability. Class sizes range from small seminars of 15-20 students to large sections exceeding 100 in introductory agribusiness programs.

Most courses rely on real appraisal reports, Multiple Listing Service (MLS) or public sales data, and geospatial mapping exercises. A few respondents referenced using the ASFMRA (2019) textbook *Valuing Rural America,* or the Appraisal Foundation's *USPAP Manual*, but many developed in-house materials, such as William Murray's *Farm Appraisal and Valuation* (Murray et al., 1983) at Iowa State University. The pre-survey also revealed regional clusters of teaching institutions, summarized in Table 2. Together, these institutions represent a modest

but nationally dispersed footprint of formal appraisal instruction. The relatively limited number of standalone courses highlights the reliance on individual faculty champions and strong local chapter partnerships to sustain offerings.

CASE STUDIES FROM THREE LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITIES

We consider three university case studies of how appraisal is taught to explore and understand what topics are covered, which materials are chosen, what teaching methods are used, and what lessons can be learned from their structures. This allows us to gain insight into the current priorities, trends, or shifting areas of focus. Comparing courses across universities exposes differences in teaching emphasis and curriculum design (see Table 3). The appraisal courses of interest for Iowa State University, Texas A&M University, and Auburn University are taught by Drs. Rabail Chandio, Chrystol Thomas, and Mykel Taylor, respectively.

Texas A&M University

The Agricultural Economics Department at Texas A&M University has incorporated appraisal instruction since its founding in 1922 through a *Land Economics* course that includes appraisal components. Over time, *AGEC 432: Rural Real Estate and Financial Analysis* was added for students in the finance and real estate (FRE) track, enrolling more than 130 juniors and seniors each spring and covering investment analysis, agricultural finance, market analysis, and valuation. Both courses are required within the FRE track, and since 2009, students have received Appraiser Qualifications Board (AQB) credit toward licensure through the Texas Appraiser Licensing and Certification Board.

In the early 1970s, under Dr. Ivan Schmedemann's leadership, the department launched the Master of Land Economics & Real Estate (LERE), which later transitioned to Mays Business School as the Master of Real Estate (MRE). Many practicing general appraisers in Texas were trained through these programs, reinforcing strong ties between agricultural economics and professional appraisal and motivating the development of a new course focused exclusively on rural resource appraisal.

The *Principles and Concepts of Resources Appraisal* course, first offered as a mini-mester in summer 2023, has evolved over the years. This transition would not have been possible without the committed support from the Texas Chapter of the ASFMRA, as well as other real estate and financial institutions across the state. As a result, the course is heavily industry-focused, making it one of a kind in the AGEC department. The three-week hybrid course offers theoretical information online and asynchronously, followed by a week of daily eight-hour in-person application sessions. Appraisal topics are taught in person by Mr. Justin Bierschwale (ARA, MAI), a general appraiser, ASFMRA-certified educator, and member of the ASFMRA, Texas Chapter. The course uses the ASFMRA's *Valuing Rural America: Foundations of Data Analysis* textbook.

The course grading policy includes various assignment types: topic quizzes account for 20%, in-class assignments 20%, the mid-term exam 15%, attendance and participation 15%, and a group project 30%. The project involves a real-world example using an operating farm that students visit. Students are not allowed to choose the property themselves to ensure fairness in grading and to allow the instructor to be familiar with the property. Each student is provided with comparable sales and given the freedom to select at least two comparable properties to help determine the value of the assigned property. Student feedback has been positive; they appreciate having industry leaders in the classroom and the opportunity to apply theory in real-world settings. The hands-on and laid-back nature of the course was noted to create a stress-free classroom environment. One student's feedback on Mr. Bierschwale was, "*Holy cow, where to begin? His real-world experience, perspective, and anecdotes were the glue of the class. I could not imagine a better teacher, encouraging, approachable, and who stands out in his profession for his excellence. A role model. Inspiring.*"

Guest speakers from across the real estate industry provide additional insights to students on the use of appraisal not just as an appraiser but as a real estate agent, financial professional, and individual. Guest speakers from Capital Farm Credit, Capital Ranch Sales, Mays Business School, Kokel-Oberrender-Wood Appraisal, Lewis & Seely Appraisals, Inc., and Above & Beyond Real Estate Services, Inc., have presented to the students over the years. Besides guest-speaking in the classroom, the AGEC department has received donations from Bierschwale Land Company, LLC, and Capital Farm Credit to support course-related expenses. Many real estate and appraisal companies, as well as ag lenders, also offer internship opportunities to students.

Students who complete the course have mostly entered the real estate profession as appraisers, real estate agents, or agricultural lenders, while some have pursued further education in real estate.

The appraisal course is scheduled to transition to a full 16-week format during the fall and/or spring semesters, which will allow the university to reach a broader student audience across the FRE option and other related fields, as well as host at least 10 invited industry guest speakers per semester, further expanding the professional exposure and applied learning aspects of the course.

Iowa State University

At Iowa State University, undergraduate instruction in appraisal is offered annually through a semester-long course titled *Rural Property Appraisal*. This course was taught in the 1970s-1980s by legendary professor Dr. William Murray, who wrote the classic textbook *Farm Appraisal and Valuation*, but it was discontinued for many years. In 2013, it was restarted with initiatives and monetary contributions from the ASFMRA, Iowa Chapter. This is an elective course, primarily taken by junior and senior students majoring in agricultural business or agricultural studies, with a minority of students from other majors, such as agronomy or engineering. Enrollment typically draws students planning a career as farm managers, agricultural lenders, or agricultural sales professionals, with only a small number of students planning to pursue appraisal as a career. Class size ranges from 25-50 students. The curriculum emphasizes the scope of work, highest and best use, and all three approaches to appraisal—income, cost, and sales comparison—while connecting these methods in broader economic theories of land valuation.

A key aspect of the course is the semester-long appraisal project, which accounts for 40% of the grade. Each student selects a parcel of their choice, often a farm to which they are personally connected, and receives approval for the property within the first few weeks of the semester. Then, in the form of four subsequent deliverables, students gradually complete a comprehensive narrative appraisal report, as though presenting to a potential buyer. Students begin by learning about and documenting the parcel's location, ownership history, and characteristics, utilizing software and platforms recommended by professionals. This is followed by collecting comparable sales information, again supported by licensed software, and applying the three appraisal approaches to their chosen parcels, synthesizing everything into a professional final report.

This stepwise structure not only mirrors the appraisal process but also allows students to spend ample time on each step and benefit from the opportunity to discuss it with an appraiser in the form of a guest speaker. As a student highlighted, "*I think the biggest help was either the in-class assignments or the appraisal project reports that were due throughout the semester. They both related well to the class and helped me piece together what we were learning with how it works in an actual appraisal.*"

The course relies heavily on industry partnerships. ASFMRA guest speakers participate throughout the semester, engaging with students at key stages of their appraisal projects to discuss professional approaches, scope of work, and ethics. Members of the ASFMRA Young Professionals Network (YPN) also highlight career pathways and networking opportunities. Additional speakers, including county assessors, institutional investors, lenders, and real estate brokers, demonstrate how appraisals are used across the broader agricultural industry, strengthening the connection between classroom instruction and professional practice.

Technology integration is another distinctive feature of this course. Students are trained to work with digital resources, including CamoAg, Acres, AgriData's Surety Pro, AcreValue, county assessor databases, and landowners' records at Iowa Land Records. While the county assessor databases and landowner records through Iowa Land Records are publicly available, the other platforms are licensed and require a formal request for use in classroom instruction. Using industry-standard software exposes students to professional standards and best practices.

Overall, Iowa State's *Rural Property Appraisal* course adopts a comprehensive and experiential approach to teaching farmland valuation that is useful for students going to a wide array of careers in agricultural markets, including as farm managers, agricultural sales professionals, agricultural lenders, and every now and then as appraisers, too.

Auburn University

Auburn University has been offering *Farm Appraisal* as a class for many years, giving students an elective that rounds out their agricultural business and economics degree. The class has evolved in recent years by expanding the material covered in class from appraisal methods to include understanding farmland market drivers and the use of statistics to describe land values and the impact of various land characteristics on overall value.

Farm Appraisal is a two-credit course that is referred to as a professional elective at Auburn University. The

idea of the professional elective is to give students exposure to concepts they will encounter in their professional careers, although appraisal is often something that many students will see in their personal lives as well. The class has no prerequisites and, therefore, will have students from freshmen to seniors. This means that the material covered in the class is also relatively basic and is more of a survey class than a deep dive into more complex concepts.

The course begins with an overview of farmland markets and key value drivers, including soil characteristics, production systems, and urban proximity, ensuring students from non-agricultural backgrounds develop a foundational market understanding about Alabama and the nation. The second part of the class teaches the students about sales, income, and cost methods of appraisal. Students survey these methods, with a learning goal of having a basic understanding of the difference between the methods and the data needed to conduct an appraisal.

The final portion of the class focuses on statistics of farmland data, including the ability to perform basic summary statistics and understand the impacts of outliers, leading to basic concepts in data collection and cleaning. The final step introduces students to a simple statistical hedonic land price model used for market analysis and price decomposition, not as a valuation method. This exercise is explicitly framed as an analytical tool for understanding how land characteristics correlate with observed market prices rather than as an appraisal technique. In addition to the prescribed material, students are exposed to professionals in the appraisal field with guest lectures from ASFMRA appraisers located in Alabama. These guest lectures allow students to see how the material they are learning in the classroom translates into professional careers. They are also given assignments to listen to webinars by land professionals in other states and make comparisons to what they know about land markets in Alabama.

Students who have recently taken this class have gone on to work in the fields of agricultural lending and as appraisers for lending institutions, as well as county appraisers.

PEDAGOGICAL DESIGN AND ASSESSMENT

Although instructional approaches vary across institutions, most appraisal courses follow a three-pillar structure encompassing the income, cost, and sales comparison approaches to appraisal. The capstone appraisal report remains the focal point of learning and assessment, integrating analytical methods with communication and reasoning skills.

Several instructors employ iterative feedback structures to reinforce learning. One instructor noted, *"Students submit sections weekly—market analysis, income, cost—and we reconcile at the end."* Another model introduced short oral defenses, teaching students to justify adjustments and explain their valuation logic. Forum participants emphasized that communication is as critical as computation in developing appraisal competence, with one remarking, *"We can teach formulas all day, but appraisal is communication."* Peer review assignments, modeled after journal referee reports, were also cited as effective tools in teaching critical reasoning and concise written justification.

With the world becoming increasingly digital, and numerous new tools and platforms emerging in the land markets industry, incorporating them into the classroom ensures that students are exposed to and can critically engage with the fast-paced changes in technology. In an individual capacity, platforms like AgriData's Surety Pro Maps (https://www.agridatainc.com/), CamoAg (https://camo.ag/), Acres (https://www.acres.com/), AcreValue (https://www.acrevalue.com/), and Growers Edge (formerly Farmland Finder, now rebranded as the RangeAg (https://insights.farmlandintel.com/) have been supportive in providing student access to their licensed software, which allows students to see the amount of real-world data that is available to professional appraisers and the difficulties associated with seemingly subjective decisions. Leveraging them in the classroom through guided assignments and tasks helps students learn the theoretical processes involved in key choices, such as selecting the right comparable sales, while also appreciating the complexity of the decision.

CHALLENGES IN TEACHING APPRAISAL

Several challenges remain when it comes to teaching appraisal.

Serving Students with Different Backgrounds

Many agricultural economics programs now draw students from urban or non-farm backgrounds, and instructors across institutions have reported that students often lack early familiarity with rural land uses and valuation contexts. To bridge this

gap, faculty shared strategies for experiential and contextual learning by showing aerial imagery, sharing assessor records, and doing short site visits. Instructors recommended building storytelling into assignments, asking students to narrate property histories or community significance. These techniques help non-traditional students connect emotionally and intellectually to rural assets. As one instructor summarized at the FutureEd Forum, "*We start with what land means to people before we teach valuation.*"

At Texas A&M, the hybrid format and structured prerequisites allow students with different backgrounds to build the foundational knowledge essential for understanding the rural component of the course. The course textbook reinforces this by introducing what constitutes "rural," along with clarifying key definitions and concepts essential to understanding appraisal. Additionally, students participate in a site visit, where they gain hands-on experience with rural land and learn what is expected when conducting an appraisal report.

At Iowa State University, a different challenge has emerged in recent years: accommodating out-of-state students whose agricultural experience may differ markedly from Iowa's row-crop farming context. While local students engage readily with examples specific to Midwestern production systems, students more familiar with specialty crops or new types of agriculture often need additional context. Because the course allows students to select their own subject parcels, those from non-local regions invest extra effort in locating suitable information sources and consulting the instructor to adapt local examples and appraisal frameworks to their chosen properties.

Students at Auburn from a non-agriculture background have not necessarily thought about farmland, its various uses, and the drivers of farmland markets. As such, the course must begin at a foundational level to bring students up to speed before progressing to more advanced concepts.

Finding the Right Structure for Capstone Appraisal Projects

Another challenge lies in student projects. Choosing a parcel of their choice allows students to pick something they are interested in and emotionally connected to, supporting motivation to engage and learn beyond completing a course project. According to one Iowa State University student, this was the most liked aspect of the course: "*[I liked] learning the proper material to give my family feedback on a potential piece of farm land we were looking at buying.*" However, it creates challenges to finish grading within a fixed timeline, especially when student numbers rise. In addition to grading several individual and unique project assignments, it's also challenging for the instructors to be familiar with the property and evaluate student decisions in detail. This is likely why institutions have gone different ways for student projects with the course at Texas A&M, i.e., assigning a specific parcel to be appraised, while Iowa State's course allows students to choose their own subject properties. We also emphasize that regardless of whether students choose their own subject property, the projects were intentionally made simpler, often with a more straightforward, fee simple, market value intent, and a narrower scope of work than reality.

Student Reflections on Learning and Barriers

Across institutions, students consistently valued appraisal courses that connected theory to practice. Auburn students appreciated learning how soil type, parcel size, and other characteristics affect value and hearing from "real appraisers who explain what happens beyond the textbook." At Texas A&M, feedback emphasized the hands-on, industry-led format, while Iowa State students highlighted the semester-long appraisal project, structured checkpoints, and individualized feedback as central to their learning. As one student noted, completing a full report "made everything come together." Guest lectures were widely praised for demonstrating how the income and cost approaches operate in professional settings. Overall, students learned most when rigorous valuation methods were reinforced through applied projects and practitioner engagement.

Students also identified recurring challenges, particularly locating reliable comparable sales data and managing report logistics. Some noted inconsistencies across county data systems, uncertainty about formatting expectations, and timing mismatches between guest lectures and project milestones. Across campuses, many students expressed interest in appraisal careers, yet internship opportunities remain limited due to required supervised training hours and the small scale of many appraisal firms. These reflections suggest that clearer scaffolding, shared data guidance, and closer alignment between coursework and practitioner contributions could further strengthen an already highly valued educational experience.

Evolving Influences on the Land Markets

Technological and structural shifts are reshaping how land markets are analyzed and valued. The emergence of automated valuation models (AVMs) and artificial intelligence (AI) represents such a change and warrants classroom attention, but it can be hard to figure out to what extent to teach that material when the impacts on the profession are rapidly changing and remain uncertain. Some mapping and data platforms used in coursework now include embedded AVM features, giving students a glimpse of how algorithmic valuation tools operate. However, their integration in the class or teaching remains introductory and is limited to a conceptual overview of how such models estimate value and the professional judgment still required to interpret their results.

Beyond technology, broader market forces such as foreign investment, renewable energy development, and evolving government policies may also influence land markets. At Auburn University, a dedicated lecture on foreign agricultural investment provides students with an alternative perspective on how state and federal policies can influence land markets, in addition to serving as a break from the appraisal methods. Similarly, the Iowa State University course introduces students to the valuation implications of wind and solar leases, as well as conservation and government payment programs to highlight how non-traditional income streams (whether from renewable energy or policy incentives) can also be considered through the income approach. The course also includes a dedicated lecture to discuss how bankers and agricultural lenders use appraisals. At Texas A&M, students learn about the role of appraisal in agricultural financing, as well as specialty appraisal topics presented by invited guest speakers. The specialty topics discussed by the general appraisers include vineyards, production agriculture, recreational properties, agricultural facilities, and conservation.

OPPORTUNITIES AND BEST PRACTICES FOR STRENGTHENING APPRAISAL EDUCATION

Several local chapters of the ASFMRA currently have informal partnerships with educational institutions and participate in the classrooms as guest speakers and lecturers, contributing to the success of the university-based appraisal courses. Including professionals like appraisers in the classroom enriches discussion by connecting academic concepts to real-world practice and problem-solving. Their firsthand experience helps students see how learning applies beyond school, making lessons more relevant, engaging, and practical.

Professional Standards, Ethics, and Mentoring

Professional standards, including USPAP, ethical obligations, scope of work development, and highest and best use analysis, are integral components of university appraisal instruction. These topics are frequently reinforced through guest lectures and applied examples provided by ASFMRA chapter members, helping students connect classroom learning with professional expectations and practice. Courses that incorporate the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) and ASFMRA's Rural Valuation Topics (ASFMRA 2025) provide students with a tangible link to the profession's ethical and procedural foundations. As Dr. Chrystol Thomas from Texas A&M remarked at the Forum, "*The more students see the actual forms and standards, the more they appreciate the rigor of the field*." Including the ASFMRA textbook can prove highly useful, especially given the increase in students from non-farming and non-traditional backgrounds.

The Forum's discussion on mentoring highlighted gender and generational inclusion as well. "*Visibility matters*," Dr. Mykel Taylor said. "*When students see women and early-career appraisers, they imagine themselves there*." Several ASFMRA chapters expressed commitment to establishing student-mentor partnerships tied to university appraisal projects, combining faculty supervision with a local professional reviewer.

Utilizing the Young Professionals Network

An opportunity lies in increasing the role of the YPN by directly interacting with and inviting aspiring appraisers and farm managers to join the organization. Greater YPN participation in classrooms would not only introduce students to the professional community at an earlier stage but also facilitate natural mentorship linkages and deeper exposure to professional standards such as USPAP. Such engagement helps students better understand the expectations of the profession and fosters long-term connections that can extend into internships and early-career guidance. Meaningful collaboration with YPN members also provides a practical pathway for chapters to identify and coordinate guest speakers, further strengthening

the connection between local ASFMRA chapters and academic institutions.

Sustaining and Scaling Courses

One recurring theme at the forum was the fragility of appraisal course offerings within universities. Perhaps the most candid exchange came near the session's close: *"We're one retirement away from losing our appraisal class,"* a faculty member admitted. This sentiment, echoed across institutions, sparked a broader conversation about course continuity.

Participants suggested an ASFMRA "teaching commons," where instructors can share syllabi, datasets, and recorded guest lectures. This would reduce duplication, ease onboarding for new faculty, and ensure consistent professional framing.

Build the Teaching Commons and Guest Speaker Network

To strengthen the connection between academia and the profession, an opportunity lies in ASFMRA curating a central resource hub, a shared repository of instructional materials such as sample case studies, grading rubrics, and recorded guest lectures. Making these resources accessible to all academic members and organized by topic and level of complexity would help new and existing instructors more easily integrate appraisal content into their courses.

At the regional level, local chapters could coordinate a guest speaker network, maintaining a shared spreadsheet of professionals by state and area of specialization. This structure would allow chapters to offer consistent classroom engagement and ensure that every program, regardless of size, has access to practicing appraisers and industry perspectives. As one forum participant observed, *"If every chapter gives one guest lecture a semester, no program goes unsupported."*

Ultimately, the discussions at the FutureEd Forum showed that revitalizing appraisal education is not a one-time effort but an ongoing collaboration between universities and ASFMRA. As one panelist concluded, *"If we share what works, the students—and the profession—will follow."*

CONCLUSION

The 2025 FutureEd Forum confirmed that while appraisal instruction remains strong in several flagship programs, its national presence is uneven and vulnerable. Courses at Iowa State, Texas A&M, and Auburn demonstrate that effective appraisal education integrates valuation theory, applied analysis, and professional engagement. Yet most programs depend on a small number of faculty champions—often a single instructor—making them susceptible to turnover and resource constraints. Building a stronger, more connected network of instructors through shared materials, guest speaker networks, and ASFMRA-supported training will be essential to sustain appraisal education nationwide.

Forum discussions and student feedback alike emphasize that students learn best when rigorous valuation methods are paired with hands-on, data-driven, and mentored experiences. They value project-based assignments, timely feedback, and direct interaction with practicing appraisers. Incorporating modern data tools such as Acres, CamoAg, and SuretyPro, along with consistent use of USPAP and ASFMRA teaching resources, strengthens alignment between classroom learning and professional expectations. Expanding ASFMRA's YPN participation, supporting internship pipelines, and sharing teaching modules across universities could bridge educational and workforce gaps while helping attract new and motivated entrants to the field.

Sustaining the next generation of rural appraisers will require ongoing collaboration between academia and the profession. The FutureEd Forum demonstrated that revitalizing appraisal education is not a one-time initiative but an evolving partnership—one that thrives when universities and ASFMRA chapters share innovations, respond to market and technology shifts, and mentor new educators. By linking classroom instruction with the profession's evolving needs, ASFMRA and its academic partners can ensure that appraisal education remains relevant, inclusive, and essential to the stewardship of America's agricultural and rural assets.

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Table 1. Instructor Survey and FutureEd Forum Appraisal-Highlights	
Metric	**Value**
Respondents mentioning teaching farm management	13
Respondents mentioning teaching appraisal	6
# academic members at FutureEd Forum	31 (in-person and online)
Most common appraisal topics (top 5)	Sales comparison approach, farm appraisal project, income approach, cost approach, highest and best use

Table 2. Geographic Distribution and Teaching Frequency of Appraisal Courses			
Institution	**Avg. Class Size**	**Course Structure**	**Teaching Frequency**
Texas A&M University	20-25	Standalone, industry-led *Rural Appraisal* hybrid course	Annually
South Dakota State University	34-62	Sequence of two courses: *Farm and Rural Appraisal* and *Advanced Farm and Rural Appraisal*	Annually
Auburn University	40	Standalone *Farm Appraisal* course	Annually
Iowa State University	40	Standalone *Rural Property Appraisal* course	Annually
University of Nebraska*	NA	Standalone *Agricultural and Rural Property Appraisal* course	Annually

* Did not participate in the survey.

Table 3. Detailed Comparison of Appraisal Class at Iowa State, Texas A&M, and Auburn			
Topics	**ISU**	**Texas A&M**	**Auburn**
Course Title	*Rural Property Appraisal*	*Principles and Concepts of Resources Appraisal*	*Farm Appraisal*
Year Class Started	Taught in 1970-'80s, restarted in 2013	2023	It's been offered for decades
Class Time & Frequency	Twice a week, 75 min, offered once a year	Mainly offered as a mini-mester (3 weeks hybrid course); theoretical information is provided online and asynchronously followed by in-person for application (8 hours)	Twice a week for 50 minutes, offered once a year
Class size	25-50	20-25	35-45
Student Majors	Primarily ag business, ag studies, agronomy	Primarily agricultural economics, ag business, & animal science	Agricultural business and other ag majors
Student Years	Sophomores through seniors	Sophomores through seniors	Freshmen through seniors
Required vs Elective Class?	Elective	Elective	Elective
ASFMRA Involvement	Guest speakers for content, Young Professional Network (YPN) for career	Industry-led course with ASFMRA, Texas Chapter	Guest speakers, some slides/ material from the Valuing Rural America textbook
Appraisal Project Details			
Project Subject Property Chosen by Students?	Yes	No	No
Appraisal Approaches Covered	All three	All three	All three
Appraisal Approaches & Key Concepts Covered	Land valuation economic theory, understanding land markets and drivers of land value, highest and best use, reconciliation	Topics covered from the *Valuing Rural America: Foundations of Data Analysis* textbook include the appraisal process, property rights and interests, land valuation, reconciliation, highest & best use, depreciation	Understanding land markets and their drivers, use of statistical methods to understand land price data
Other non-ASFMRA Guest Lecturer	County assessors, institutional investors, and sometimes ag lenders	Real estate agents, financial professionals, and real estate educators	Real estate agents
Student Career Goals (if Known)	Farm managers, ag lenders, ag sales, farming, potential appraisers	Trainee appraisers, real estate agents, ag lenders, graduate degree in real estate	Agricultural lenders, farming, sales, agricultural policy
Computer Technology	TopHat, CamoAg, Acres, Agridata SuretyPro, assessor databases	Google Earth; assessor databases	Limited, but have plans for Acres platform