

Institute for Agriculture, Food, and Resource Management

Just a few weeks into his new position as Director of the Institute for Agriculture, Food, and Resource Management, Rich Crow is laying out the stepping-stones for a successful 2020-21 academic year.

A big focus this summer is on the instructional farm BVU recently acquired through an innovative leasing agreement with the Circle C Ranch. The Institute is currently working on protocols to address safety and conduct as students begin using the space to engage in hands-on learning in the coming academic year.

Crow says, “On a regular working farm, some areas only fit one to two people versus 20 students who will be using the area as a lab. We are determining how to make some of the needed modifications, and I’m excited about introducing this opportunity to BVU students.”



As part of Crow’s new role, he plans to build new recruitment avenues for BVU’s agriculture programs including printed materials, attending events and fairs, and placing ads in partnership with UMC and Admissions. The Institute is currently scheduled to sponsor a livestock judging contest at the Buena Vista County Fair in July in hopes of raising awareness and highlighting the opportunities for prospective students who are interested in working with animals in college while earning a degree in any of our four major offerings (agricultural business, agricultural studies, agricultural science, and agricultural education). With the cancelation of the Iowa State Fair and other smaller fairs due to COVID-19, Crow is unsure of whether or not he’ll be able to attend as many events as previously planned.

Through events like fairs and school visits, the Institute for Agriculture, Food, and Resource Management is well on its way to becoming a regional resource for high schools and their students.

“This connection to ag programs in local high schools adds value and connections between members of our community. I look forward to meeting more members of Storm Lake and the surrounding areas and being able to engage them in working together to educate the next generation of rural ag leaders,” says Crow.

Because recruiting students and building awareness of one of BVU’s newest programs has changed in light of COVID-19, Crow is adjusting his strategy.

“Since we are a new program to the University, many people aren’t aware of all of our ag offerings yet,” says Crow. “It’s a little more challenging because we have to engage prospective students in other ways besides physical meetings. We are working on innovative and unique ways to encourage students to come to BVU.”

Up next? Crow will be partnering with a professor at Texas A&M in July to facilitate a virtual class for high school ag teachers on integrating virtual reality into K-12 curriculum, made possible by a grant from Farm Bureau. Crow says there are teachers from as far as Pennsylvania signed up for the course.

“This is a unique way for us to get BVU’s name out across the country. This virtual class will help teachers learn how to integrate new immersive technologies into their classroom experiences in a way that is engaging to students and enhances the educational impact of their lessons by virtually moving beyond the confines of their classroom walls,” says Crow.

Initiative: Institute for Agriculture, Food, and Resource Management

Initiative Description: Launch the new Institute for Agriculture, Food, and Resource Management by creating new academic majors in Agriculture, Food Systems, and Resource Management, as well as through connecting with the Agricultural Community in Iowa and beyond.

Success Metric: Increased enrollment

Initiative Owner: Director of the Institute for Agriculture, Food, and Resource Management

Cabinet Sponsor: Provost (primary), Vice President for Enrollment Management, and Vice President for University Development and Alumni Engagement