AgXperience- Industry Room

This session connects students with industry professionals to tackle real-world agricultural challenges. Students will engage in a problem-solving case study focused on climate-resilient crops. Each group will focus on a different crop.

Student Directions:

1. Work with your table group to identify innovative, scalable solutions that support climate resilience in your assigned crop sector. Think like an industry professional, what helps growers while meeting business goals?
2. Use your technology (phones, laptops or provided materials) to support your research and problem-solving.
3. Assign roles within your group (e.g., notetaker, researchers, timekeeper, presenter) to stay organized and efficient.
4. Use the brainstorming worksheet provided to capture your group's key ideas, trade-offs, and proposed solutions.
5. On Sunday's session, you will have 20 minutes to develop your initial recommendations and solutions. Think about both short-term practices and long-term strategies farmers might adopt.
6. On Tuesday's session, you will then have 10 minutes to finalize your recommendations and prepare your presentation. You will present your solutions with the industry participants. They will provide feedback, share how the industry is addressing similar challenges, and collaborate with you to refine your ideas.

What to Expect:

- Sunday:
  - 20-minute work session with your producer group
- Tuesday:
  - Welcome & Room Transition
  - Round 1: Professional Introductions & Group Prep
    - Professionals introduce themselves
    - 10 minutes for student groups to finalize solutions
  - Round 1: Group Presentations
    - 3 minutes per presentation
  - Round 1: Group Feedback
    - Industry/professional guests share reactions, advice, and insights
  - Break & Room Reset
    - Students switch rooms

Group 1 – Corn

Problem:

You work at a seed company preparing to launch a new climate-resilient hybrid corn. While the corn performs well in trials, grower adoption has been slow due to costs, skepticism and a lack of localized data. Your team must design a rollout strategy that accelerates adoption, boosts farmer profitability and proves long-term value to the supply chain.

Challenges:

- Growers are hesitant to invest in unproven technology.
- Extension and educational resources are limited.
- Retailers need support in marketing new hybrids.
- ROI data is incomplete for many regions.

Student Tasks:

- Create a rollout strategy that helps drive adoption of climate-resilient corn.
- Identify support tools (e.g., demos, rebates, data partnerships) to help de-risk the transition for farmers.
- Propose messaging to connect resilience traits to supply chain and consumer outcomes.
- Consider how partnerships (e.g., with universities or conservation organizations) could expand impact.

Group 2 – Soybeans

Problem:
Your agribusiness is developing climate-resilient soybean varieties with improved disease resistance and better performance in variable conditions. But success does not depend only on the seed—it also requires market support, processor buy-in and alignment with sustainability goals. How can you position this product as a climate solution worth investing in?

Challenges:

- Processors demand high protein content and consistency.
- Environmental benefits are hard to quantify for marketing.
- Growers need incentives to try newer, costlier seed.
- Policy support is limited for row crop innovation.

Student Tasks:

- Develop a value proposition that connects climate-resilient soybeans with processor and consumer needs.
- Propose incentive models or partnerships to support adoption.
- Identify ways to quantify and communicate climate benefits.
- Explore how sustainability certifications or carbon markets could play a role.

Group 3 – Grapes

Problem:
You work for a winery that sources grapes from multiple regions. Climate stress shifts harvest timing and impacts grape chemistry, creating inconsistencies in flavor and alcohol levels. To preserve brand quality and relationships with growers, your company needs to adapt sourcing, support growers and communicate with consumers.

Challenges:

- Growers are struggling to maintain fruit quality under climate pressure.
- Your winery's brand is built on consistency and regional identity.
- Consumers are unfamiliar with climate-driven flavor variation.
- Transitioning to new varietals may take years.

Student Tasks:

- Propose a strategy for working with growers to preserve grape quality under changing conditions.
- Identify ways to adapt winemaking processes to variability.
- Recommend how to communicate changes transparently with consumers.
- Explore options for diversifying sourcing while protecting brand identity.

Group 4 – Almonds

Problem:
You are on the sustainability team at an almond processing company. Water regulations and public scrutiny are putting pressure on growers and the brand. Your leadership wants to support grower transition to more sustainable practices without disrupting supply, raising prices or risking PR backlash.

Challenges:

- Limited tools for monitoring orchard-level water use.
- Growers face high costs for upgrading irrigation or planting drought-tolerant rootstocks.
- Consumer trust is fragile due to negative press.
- Regulatory deadlines are approaching.

Student Tasks:

- Design a support strategy to help growers transition to climate-resilient practices.
- Propose tech, incentives or training tools to ease the cost and complexity of adoption.
- Recommend how to track and report sustainability outcomes.
- Create a communication plan to share progress with buyers and consumers.

Group 5 – Rice

Problem:

Your company develops technology for sustainable rice production. With growers facing erratic weather, you are piloting a tool to help manage alternate wetting and drying (AWD) irrigation, which saves water and reduces methane emissions. However, uptake is slow due to labor concerns, initial costs and lack of policy support.

Challenges:

- Many rice producers are unfamiliar with AWD or lack the capacity to implement it.
- Equipment upgrades are expensive and labor-intensive.
- Environmental markets do not reward reducing emissions in rice.
- Water access and climate conditions vary widely.

Student Tasks:

- Develop a market plan for scaling your AWD tech among rice producers.
- Identify adoption barriers and propose targeted support strategies.
- Explore partnerships with conservation groups, co-ops or carbon markets.
- Propose a way to measure and market the climate benefits of AWD adoption.