Risk Management Education and Its Impacts on Southern Brazil’s Agriculture: A Philosophical Approach

Scott R. Mickelsen
Iowa Lakes Community College
smickelsen@iowalakes.edu

Brazil is going through major changes in the agriculture sector of the country. Vast amounts of land are being uprooted from pasture and forest land to crop ground for soybean production, irrigation systems are being designed, American farmers are investing money in land for farming purposes, and large scale equipment is needed for planting and harvest. Is the infrastructure of the country and rural Brazil going to be able to adapt to these changes?

Risk management educational programs in the United States have gained momentum as agriculture has been caught in the crosswinds of change. Some of these changes include opening of foreign borders, introduction and application of global markets, volatility of markets, access to capital, age of producers and many others (Mickelsen, 2001). Do these same problems and concerns exist in Brazil? Are educational programs dealing with risk management issues needed in Brazil? If so, how do we as educators and professionals address the issues? And, how do we educate so producers receive a meaningful and beneficial education?

Purpose
The purpose of this discussion is to expand the knowledge base concerning current information regarding Brazil and some of the issues, related to six sources of risk in agriculture (crop production, livestock production, marketing, financial, human, and institutional risk) they are faced with as they continue to expand the farming area. This carousel discussion is one step in advancing a research agenda looking at risk management across boundaries, cultures, and agricultural issues.

Method
Information will be gathered during a 10-day visit to the country. Producers, educators, and researchers will all be able to give input to the current status of agriculture in Brazil and visualize whether the changes are beneficial for them and their country. Also, they will have the opportunity to expand on the questions previously stated in the introduction.

Conclusion and Educational Importance
Discussions such as this will lead to continued understanding and knowledge of the educational needs of Brazilian agricultural producers. Partnerships with institutions and educators may be developed to carry out risk management programs. This continued dialogue among researchers, educators, and professionals will help the profession understand the real-life needs of these producers and what we may do to help them enhance their management capabilities.