



UW College of Agriculture and Natural Resources
Global Perspectives Grant Program

Award Period: Summer 2018

Principal Investigator(s) Cole Ehmke

Department: Agricultural and Applied Economics

Email: cehmke@uwyo.edu

Project Title from Application: Summer 2018 Scotland Travel

Amount spent: \$5,000

Non-technical summary (max 1500 characters plus spaces):

This travel solidified the foundation for an undergraduate student class to be offered in summer 2019. The objectives it achieved were to

- Preview the route to be taken in the class, including assessing lodging locations and travel routes, and interviewing partners who will be visited.
- Further research farming and livestock systems in the areas in the tour area, and
- Meet with colleagues at the Scottish Rural University College (SRUC) in Edinburgh.

Overall, this successful project resulted in a revised itinerary for the trip – one that will better serve the participants. This class is part of the *UW in Scotland* program, a collaborative and transdisciplinary research and teaching project at UW. Its aim is to build, sustain, and enable a faculty committed to international and transdisciplinary research, and to exploratory teaching in Scotland.

Summer 2018 Scotland Travel Report

Cole Ehmke, Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics and UW Extension

Rural Scotland is an area rich in comparative learning for Wyoming students. Wyoming and Scotland are central to the production of one of the world's most rapidly growing food markets, that for protein—beast, fish, or fowl. And Wyoming and Scotland are also both feeling the effects of one of the most significant demographic changes of our age. In 2017, for the first time, more of the world's population lived in urban rather than rural areas. So, while there are fewer rural people on-site to manage environmental and natural resources, the need for these resources is greater than ever. One way to help UW students understand these changing dynamics is to visit agricultural and rural areas of the world so that they may see the importance of these areas for national culture, the environment, and food production.

In summer 2019 I will co-lead HP4152: *Scottish Rural Spaces: From Ancient Fields and Forests to Modern Food Systems* with Mariah Ehmke. Preparatory work had identified potential locations for the class to visit – some were identified during the summer of 2017 when we were part of the *UW in Scotland* group's initial visit (the purpose of which was to bring faculty to Scotland to explore the concept of future study abroad experiences in Scotland). There we developed the concept of the class. Later work developed a rough itinerary and course objectives.

This trip, taken 5 – 18 August 2018, was a step-by-step preview of the route that the class will take.

The Planned Course

The course offers students a trans-disciplinary exploration of Scotland in the Borderlands and Highlands. Over the course of three weeks in June 2019 students will build their background in rural and agricultural economics, political science, Scottish literature, history, environmental sciences, animal science and biology, and physical sciences.

The first leg of the will be to Abbotsford, the home of Sir Walter Scott, for a week's introduction to the area. Starting with readings from his vast works, students will explore the introduction of sheep into the Scottish landscape, the economy that evolved around them, and the ripple effects of the decline in textile activity in the region, which extend to the present day. We will visit a textile mill, area estates, and sheep farms. Students will engage with rural Scottish ballads and literature of the region.

The location will then shift to the Highlands where the class will visit the Scottish Rural College's Hill and Mountain Research Centre between Kirkton and Crianlarich, which will be an excellent location to learn about livestock production, ecosystem services, and agrotourism. This is a 2,200 hectare agricultural research station with sheep, Highland cattle and a successful accommodation enterprise for a popular hiking trail (the West Highland Way). Further visits in the Highlands will showcase the dramatic scenery (a contrast to the gentle and peaceful rolling valleys of the Borders area), the Highland history (including conflicts with the English for including Stuart's struggle to regain the monarchy in the Jacobite Rising of 1745, and the resulting conflicts and cultural change brought upon the area by the English), and the industries of tourism, livestock, and fishing (salmon).

Moving east toward Aberdeen (British center of the North Sea oil industry) and St. Andrews in

the Fife area we will see value-added products (whisky is notable), the history of the area (there has been an important church in St Andrews since at least 747 AD, and it was an important center of pilgrimage in medieval Scotland and one of the most important in Europe.)

Finally the class's survey of Scottish rural culture and development will culminate in the world-class city of Edinburgh at the annual Royal Highland Show – an iconic showcase of farming, food and culture.

Numerous revisions to the itinerary were made because of this trip – I realized some aspects of the rough itinerary would be unrealistic or not as appropriate as first suspected.

Travel and highlights of this trans-disciplinary course include

- Botanical gardens and historic estates
- Scottish literature and rural culture
- The Royal Highland Show
- Tracing Adam Smith's footsteps as part of the Scottish Enlightenment and founder of economics and social psychology.
- Highland agricultural and environmental research
- Working farms and food marketing strategies
- Livestock genetics and marketing
- Landscape design and use
- Historical agricultural policy and Brexit developments
- Food technology research and the food industry
- Scottish food fraud

A partner in setting up the itinerary has been the Scottish Rural College (SRUC). Dr. Cath Milne has identified types of farms and livestock production to visit in various areas, and provided invaluable assistance on sites, readings, geo-political issues and travel.

Summary

The outputs of this travel have lead to a more succinct course itinerary and more well-planned experience for 2019 UW students, and thus will deliver a course that will have lifelong impacts on the students and the state of Wyoming. Early indications of interest from students in the course are very positive, and selection of the 12 that will go is proceeding. With this course I will also be advancing UW's partnership with the Abbotsford Trust and building a partnership with the SRUC. In addition, the sites visited and contacts made will augment my Extension programming in rural entrepreneurship.

In close, I thank the Global Perspectives program for supporting this endeavor. I believe that this initiative could provide important and life-changing educational opportunities for our students, and better inform the work that the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources performs.

Photographs of Scotland, Summer 2018 by Cole Ehmke



Left: Scottish Rural College's Hill and Mountain Research Centre director Davy McCracken explaining modern sheep handling equipment (two conveyer belts). The station is also testing feed monitoring equipment. **Right:** A bothy (a (very) small cottage for farm workers), here attached to a shed.



Left: Reenactors at Fort William (in the Highlands), near the battlefield of Culloden.

Above: Sheep at the Scottish Rural College's Highland research station along a popular hiking trail.

Right: Arms and armor at Stirling Castle.

Lower left: Windmill blades in port, a familiar element of economic development to Wyomingites.

