Teaching and Educational Methods

Exploring the Evolution of Cotton Policy: Linking Politics and Policy in Agricultural Economics Education

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Abstract
This article presents a structured approach for instructors in agricultural economics to explore the evolution of U.S. cotton policy, focusing on a podcast to build background knowledge and the use of real-world letters between agricultural leaders to link political decisions to policy outcomes. By examining key legislative changes, international trade disputes, and correspondence between the Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture and the Secretary of Agriculture, students gain insights into the intersection between politics and agricultural policy. Classroom activities, discussions on the World Trade Organization (WTO) case of Brazil vs. United States, and assignments involving real-world letters and composing a follow-up letter in an ongoing correspondence enhance students' understanding and critical thinking skills. The discussion and activities accommodate various levels of student preparedness. Optional homework and class discussions further reinforce the practical applications and real-world implications of cotton policy for both domestic and international stakeholders. These discussions and learning activities help students critically analyze policy decisions, examine the global implications of U.S. agricultural policies, and develop persuasive arguments for policy advocacy.

1 Introduction

The evolution of U.S. cotton policy provides an effective educational framework for understanding the interplay between politics and agricultural policy. By using a podcast to build background knowledge of key legislative changes and international trade disputes, along with real-world policymaker correspondence, students can grasp the complexities of policymaking and its impact on the agricultural sector. This article outlines activities, discussions, and assignments, including the analysis of real-world letters and composing a follow-up letter in an ongoing correspondence, to guide students through this learning process. These interactive resources aim to enhance students' understanding and critical thinking skills, highlighting the real-world effects of agricultural policy decisions on different stakeholders.

2 Background Information for Instructors

Historically, cotton's significance to the U.S. economy has driven various government support mechanisms aimed at market stability and producer profitability. However, these policies have often drawn criticism and scrutiny on the global stage, leading to significant disputes and reforms. Sumner (2003) underscores the broader implications of U.S. agricultural policy on international trade, setting the stage for understanding disputes such as the WTO case of Brazil vs. the United States. One of the most notable instances was the WTO case of Brazil vs. the United States, where Brazil challenged U.S. cotton subsidies, arguing they violated international trade agreements by depressing global cotton prices and harming Brazilian farmers. The WTO's ruling in favor of Brazil in 2004 marked a pivotal moment, compelling the United States to reevaluate and modify its subsidy programs (World Trade Organization 2004).

In response to the WTO ruling, the 2014 Farm Bill removed cotton from Title I commodity support and introduced the Stacked Income Protection Plan (STAX) as a temporary measure to mitigate economic effects while ensuring compliance with international trade rules. However, the low participation and farmer dissatisfaction with STAX prompted further policy shifts. Economic challenges and declining revenues led the U.S. cotton sector to push for the reintroduction of cotton as a covered commodity. This advocacy resulted in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (BBA), amending the 2014 Farm Bill to include seed cotton as a covered commodity eligible for Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs. This reintroduction aimed to provide stronger support and address STAX's shortcomings, reflecting both political pressures and the need to adapt agricultural support mechanisms to evolving demands.

These policy shifts highlight the complex interplay between domestic policy decisions, international trade obligations, and the economic realities faced by cotton producers. The projected $3 billion cost over ten years for including seed cotton in the ARC and PLC programs (Congressional Research Service 2018) raises concerns about potentially reviving the WTO U.S.-Brazil cotton dispute, underscoring the balance between supporting domestic agriculture and adhering to international trade agreements. For a more detailed background, refer to the Congressional Research Service Report on the WTO case against the U.S. cotton program (Schnepf 2005 and Schnepf 2013).

In addition to programmatic changes, it is important to understand the key policymakers' roles. The Secretary of Agriculture leads the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and is responsible for implementing agricultural laws passed by Congress, administering programs, and ensuring compliance with international obligations. The Chair of the House Committee on Agriculture sets the legislative agenda for agricultural policy in the U.S. House of Representatives and plays a key role in shaping farm bills and responding to constituent and stakeholder needs. Understanding these roles helps students appreciate why direct correspondence between these officials is both politically and substantively significant.

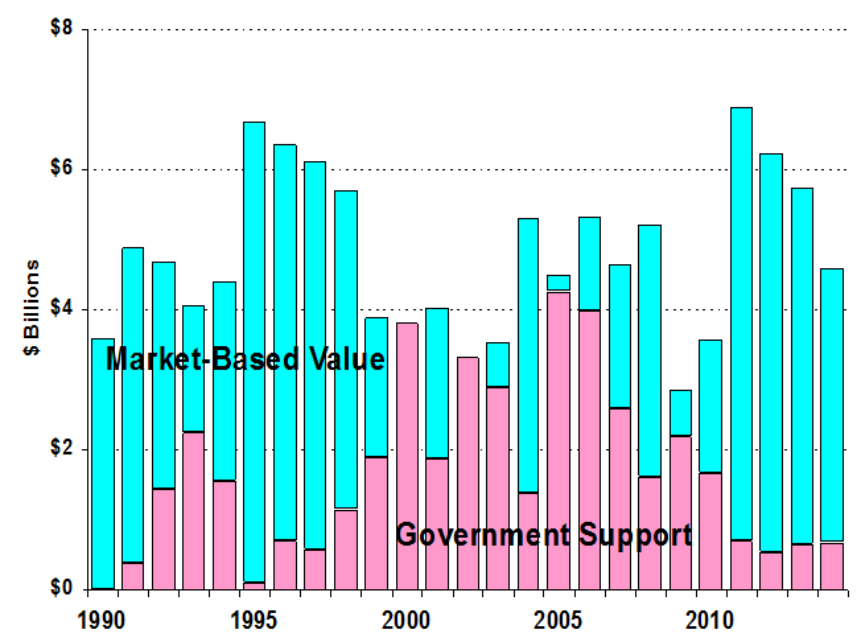

Figure 1: Value of Annual U.S. Cotton Production.

Source: World Trade Organization 2014

2.1 U.S.-Brazil WTO Dispute

The WTO dispute between the United States and Brazil, initiated in 2002, revolved around allegations that U.S. cotton subsidies violated international trade agreements. Brazil argued that these subsidies were trade-distorting, allowing U.S. producers to maintain high output levels and increase exports even when global prices were low. Large U.S. subsidy outlays (Table 1) reinforced this dynamic. When market prices declined, government support programs made up a substantial portion of U.S. cotton producers' total revenue (Figure 1). The WTO panel observed that because the United States accounted for approximately 20 percent of world production during the 1999–2002 marketing years and held between 23 percent and 40 percent of the global export market share, it exerted a "substantial proportionate influence on prices in the world market" (World Trade Organization Panel 2005, ¶ 7.1285, see Figure 2). The panel also found that global cotton prices had fallen about 30 percent from their 1980–1998 average during the 1998–2002 marketing years and that U.S. and international prices moved closely together. As a result, the panel concluded that price suppression had indeed occurred in the "same" world market within the meaning of the subsidies rules (World Trade Organization 2014). From Brazil's perspective, the subsidized U.S. cotton output suppressed global cotton prices, making it difficult for Brazilian farmers to compete, ultimately causing them harm (Figure 3). In 2004, the WTO ruled in favor of Brazil, finding the U.S. subsidies inconsistent with the Agreement on Agriculture and other trade rules. This ruling compelled the United States to reform its cotton subsidy programs to comply with international obligations.

Within the WTO's domestic support framework, agricultural subsidies are categorized into different "boxes" based on their degree of trade distortion. Amber box payments, in particular, refer to domestic support measures considered highly trade-distorting, making them subject to strict limitations under the Agreement on Agriculture. In 2004, the WTO dispute settlement panel ruled in favor of Brazil, finding that the United States had indeed violated the Agreement on Agriculture and other trade rules. The United States had argued that its Step 2 payments to exporters and domestic mill users should be

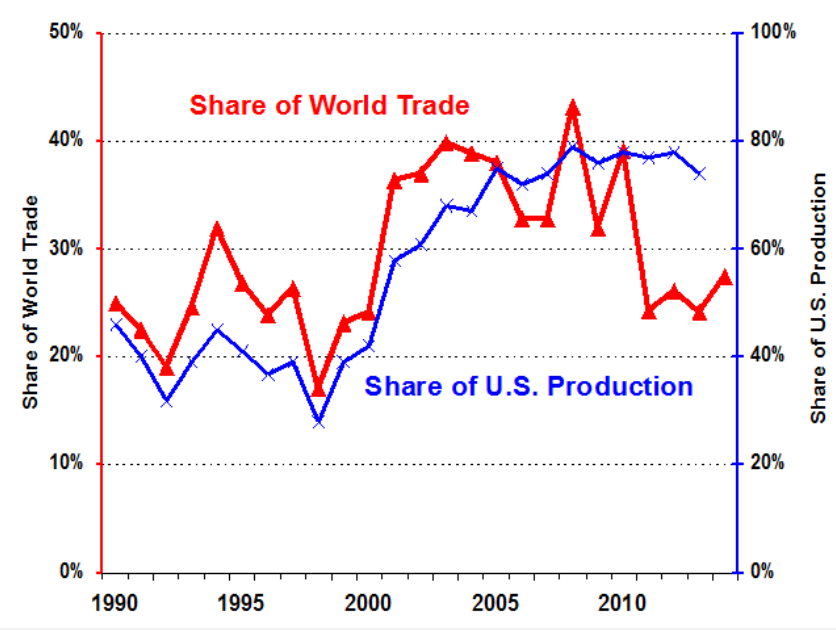

Figure 2: U.S. Cotton Exports as Share of U.S. Cotton Production and World Cotton Trade.

Source: World Trade Organization, 2014

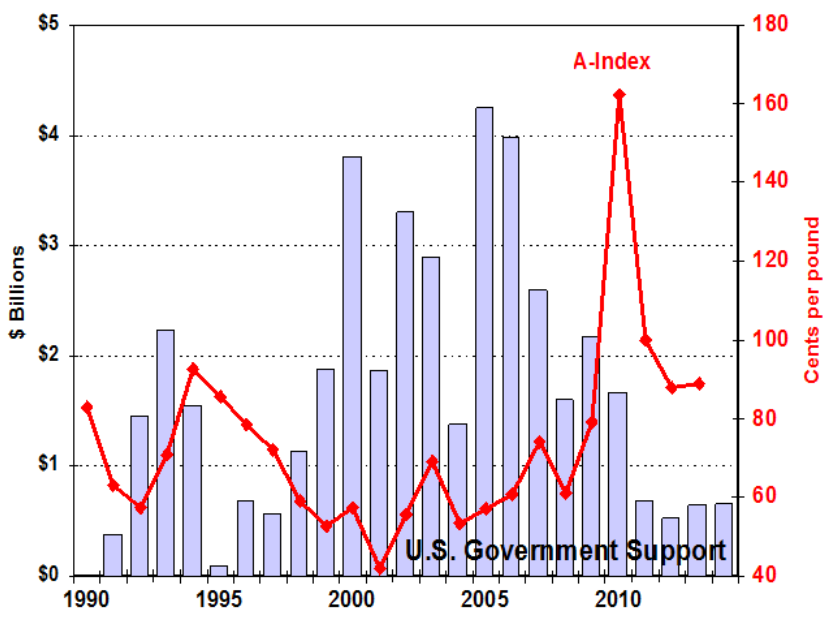

Figure 3: U.S. Cotton Support versus International Cotton Prices.

Source: USDA, PSD online data base, December 10, 2009.
Notes: The A-Index is a composite index of world cotton prices.

notified as amber box payments, which are considered trade-distorting but allowed within certain limits. However, the WTO ruled that these payments and agricultural export credit guarantees for cotton and other unscheduled commodities were prohibited subsidies and needed to be withdrawn. The ruling highlighted that U.S. export credit guarantees and other subsidy programs were effectively acting as illegal export subsidies and were causing serious prejudice to the interests of Brazilian cotton producers.

Following the ruling, the United States made several attempts to bring its policies into compliance, but Brazil deemed these changes inadequate. In 2007, a WTO compliance panel confirmed that the United States had not fully implemented the necessary reforms, and in 2009, a WTO arbitration panel allowed Brazil to impose countermeasures, including cross-retaliation in intellectual property rights. The threat of these significant sanctions led to negotiations between the two countries, ultimately resulting in a framework agreement in 2010 and a final settlement in 2014. This settlement included the United States making substantial changes to its cotton subsidy programs and providing compensation to Brazilian cotton farmers (see Figure 4 for a timeline of the dispute settlement case).

2.2 Removal of Cotton from Title I in the Farm Bill

In response to the WTO rulings and the need to comply with international trade obligations, the U.S. Congress enacted the 2014 Farm Bill (U.S. Congress 2014), which removed cotton from Title I commodity support programs and introduced the STAX. STAX, an insurance-based program, aimed to provide revenue protection for cotton producers but faced low participation and dissatisfaction due to administrative burdens and perceived insufficient benefits (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service 2014; Glauber and Westhoff 2015; Orden and Zulauf 2015).

2.3 Letters: Behind-the-Scenes Look at Policy-Making

The letters exchanged between House Agriculture Committee Chairman Mike Conaway and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack were instrumental in shaping the policy discourse surrounding cotton subsidies

Figure 4: Timeline of Brazil/U.S. Dispute.

during a pivotal time for U.S. agricultural policy, and are located in the Appendix. These communications provide insights into the practical aspects of policy advocacy and the strategic considerations in shaping agricultural policy.

In February 2016, Chairman Conaway wrote to Secretary Vilsack requesting the designation of cottonseed as an "other oilseed," which would have made it eligible for ARC and PLC payments under Title I without further action by Congress. Conaway's letter highlighted the economic difficulties faced by U.S. cotton producers and argued that additional support was necessary to stabilize the industry. Vilsack responded by explaining that the 2014 Farm Bill did not authorize such a designation and pointed out potential legal constraints and noted that cotton already had two programs—the Stacked Income Protection Plan (STAX) and the Cotton Transition Assistance Program (CTAP). Vilsack argued that Congress could amend the farm bill to allow upland cotton producers to participate in ARC or PLC, or it could remove a provision that prohibits the USDA from providing emergency assistance through the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC).. Despite Conaway's subsequent follow-up letter in early February 2016, reaffirming his request and providing further arguments, the designation was not immediately granted.

2.4 Reintroduction of Cotton as a Title I Commodity

The shortcomings of the STAX program and ongoing political pressure led to further legislative changes. The BBA reintroduced cotton as a Title I commodity. This reintroduction allowed cotton producers to benefit from traditional commodity support programs, including PLC and ARC payments (U.S. Congress 2018). This legislative change aimed to provide more robust support and address the economic challenges faced by cotton farmers, ensuring compliance with international trade agreements.

Fiscal year[b]	Total Outlays ($ million)[c]
1991	382
1992	1,443
1993	2,239
1994	1,539
1995	99
1996	685
1997	561
1998	1,132
1999	1,882
2000	3,809
2001	1,868
2002	3,307
2003	2,889
2004	1,372
2005[d]	4,721
Sum: 1991-2004	23,026
Average: 1991-2004	1,658
Average: 2000-2003	2,968

Table 1: U.S. Upland Cotton Program Outlays (Schnepf 2005).

In December 2017, agricultural policy proponents in the House were able to include cotton and dairy proposals into an emergency appropriations bill that was intended to provide assistance for victims of hurricanes and wildfires that had occurred during 2017. The cotton proposal was reshaped as a "seed cotton" program that uses a weighted average of both lint and cottonseed. However, the House-passed supplemental appropriations bill was not considered in the Senate. On February 9, 2018, Congress passed a two-year budget deal—the BBA—that included the emergency supplemental bill provisions along with both the seed cotton and dairy provisions that were in the House-passed supplemental appropriations bill. Both of these farm program changes have long-term policy implications because they change the 2014 farm bill statutes. In particular, Section 60101(a) of the BBA amends the 2014 farm bill to add seed cotton as a "covered commodity," making cotton eligible for the PLC and ARC programs (Congressional Research Service 2018). These letters highlight the strategic considerations and real-world implications of policy advocacy, demonstrating how sustained efforts can affect legislative decisions. This reintroduction underscores the dynamic nature of agricultural policy and the continuous balancing act between domestic political pressures and international trade obligations.[1]

[1] The report "Seed Cotton as a Farm Program Crop: In Brief" by the Congressional Research Service (2018) provides instructors with comprehensive background reading on the inclusion of seed cotton in U.S. farm programs, detailing policy changes, economic implications, and legislative context essential for understanding the crop's role in agricultural policy.

3 Objectives and Application in the Classroom

These activities and discussions introduce students to the evolution of U.S. cotton policy, focusing on government subsidies, international trade disputes, and legislative changes. Before starting the activities, students should understand key agricultural economics concepts, such as PLC and ARC payments, how agricultural subsidies operate, and the basics of international trade policies and agreements. They begin by listening to the NPR Planet Money podcast "Episode 224: The Cotton Wars," discussing how U.S. policies affected Brazil and global markets.

To provide additional context, instructors should also discuss global cotton market conditions around 2016. At that time, China held large cotton stocks, influencing world supply and prices, while India's production and export policies also affected price dynamics. These global factors created a challenging environment for U.S. producers, intensifying pressure to secure domestic support programs and informing the advocacy seen in the letters exchanged between Congress and the USDA.

By incorporating letters between House Agriculture Committee Chairman Mike Conaway and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, students see how domestic political advocacy and global pressures converge. It is crucial to clarify that while these 2016 letters illustrate the process of policy advocacy and highlight the desire to reintroduce cotton as a Title I commodity, they were not the sole factor leading to the 2018 policy change. Instead, the letters exemplify one aspect of sustained pressure and dialogue. The eventual reinstatement of cotton as a covered commodity in 2018 was also influenced by a broader political context, including a change in the administration and USDA leadership, evolving stakeholder lobbying efforts, ongoing dissatisfaction with STAX, and shifting domestic and global market conditions. Thus, the letters serve as a teaching tool to understand policy negotiation rather than a direct causal link to the 2018 legislation.

3.1 Activity/Discussion Learning Objectives

1. **Recall** key facts and concepts related to U.S. cotton policy and the WTO dispute between the United States and Brazil.
2. **Identify** the key legislative changes in U.S. cotton policy, including the 2014 Farm Bill and the BBA.
3. **Explain** the role of government subsidies in the agricultural sector and their impact on both domestic and international markets.
4. **Apply** knowledge of agricultural policy and international trade dynamics to analyze the implications of U.S. cotton subsidies on global markets.
5. **Analyze** the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments presented in the letters between Conaway and Vilsack.
6. **Evaluate** the effects of the WTO ruling on U.S. agricultural policy and its compliance with international trade agreements.
7. **Compose** a well-structured and persuasive reply letter from the perspective of Secretary Vilsack, addressing Chairman Conaway's arguments and providing policy recommendations.

Students will be expected to achieve these objectives through a combination of activities, discussions, and assignments, which will enhance their understanding and critical thinking skills.

4 Course Implementation and Scalability

These discussions and activities are used in a 400-level majors class called U.S. Agricultural Policy, which has a prerequisite of Intermediate Microeconomics and ranges in size from 40 to 100 students. I have also implemented this assignment in a 20-person Honors Agricultural Policy course with no prerequisites. Regardless of the course, all students need a basic understanding of PLC/ARC payments,

how the WTO operates, the Brazil/United States WTO cotton case, and a general understanding of subsidies.

4.1 Scaling for Different Levels of Student Preparedness

Core Components to Retain Across All Levels

- **PLC Payments:** Understanding the basics of PLC payments is fundamental to the activities and discussion.
- **WTO's Role**: A basic understanding of the WTO and its influence on international trade agreements is crucial, including the significance of the WTO ruling in the Brazil vs. United States cotton case.

For Classes without Prerequisites

- **Simplified Content**: Focus on fundamental concepts of PLC payments and how they are calculated, and the role of the WTO in international trade. Minimize or omit detailed discussions of programs such as STAX and CTAP.
- **Key Concepts Emphasis**: Emphasize key concepts and the broader impacts of U.S. cotton policy, without going into the intricate details. Ensure students understand the basic idea of agricultural subsidies and the main outcomes of the WTO case, but they do not need every graphical and technical detail.
- **Adjusted Discussions:** Tailor discussions to avoid overly technical analysis. Focus on primary arguments and essential policy changes to ensure all students can follow and engage with the material.

For Classes with Prerequisites

- **Welfare Analysis:** Students should be able to explain and identify Consumer Surplus (CS), Producer Surplus (PS), and Deadweight Loss (DWL) on graphs.
- **Familiarity with export subsidies and associated graphs:** Students should be able to model an export subsidy on a graph and identify and interpret welfare measures.
- **Detailed Discussions:** Include in-depth discussions of specific programs such as STAX and CTAP to provide a comprehensive understanding of all relevant agricultural support mechanisms.
- **WTO Classifications:** Advanced classes should cover WTO classifications such as amber box, green box, and blue box payments, providing a deeper understanding of how different types of subsidies are treated under international trade agreements.

Instructors will find that the assignments and discussions are adaptable to various teaching environments and student backgrounds. Using real-world examples, primary source documents, and interactive assignments helps students connect theoretical concepts with practical applications. Incorporating the NPR podcast and detailed policy correspondence discussions enhances student engagement and a comprehensive understanding of the topic. The activity structure encourages active participation and fosters the development of critical thinking and policy analysis skills.

5 Suggested Timeline for Cotton Policy Activities/Discussion

To effectively cover the cotton policy unit within the usual two class periods, it is essential to allocate time efficiently for each component. Figure 5 shows a general timeline for each part of the unit, assuming each class period is 75 minutes. A more detailed breakdown of time spent on each activity can be found below.

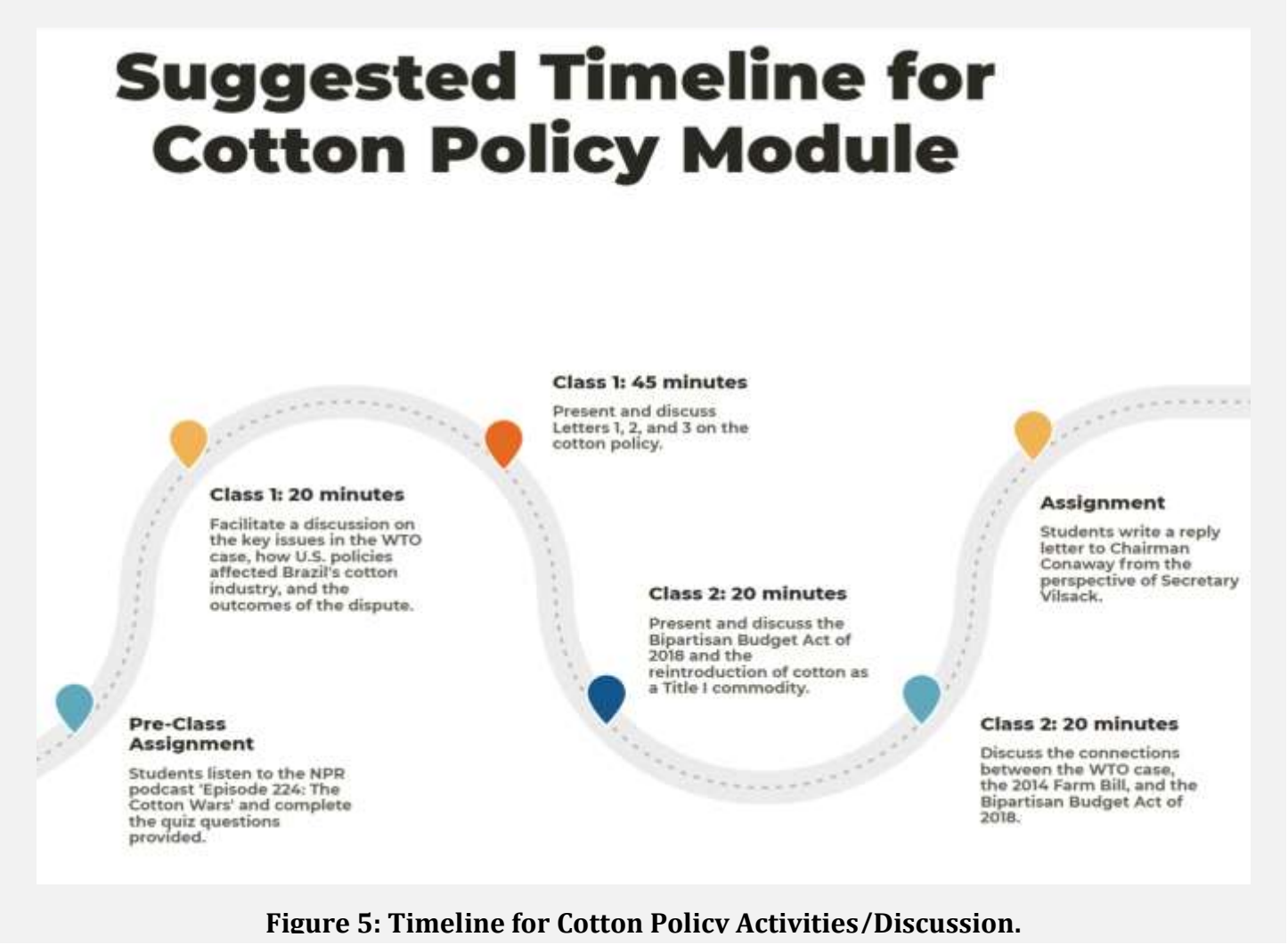

Figure 5: Timeline for Cotton Policy Activities/Discussion.

6 Classroom Activities

6.1 Pre-Class Podcast Assignment: Introducing the WTO Case

- **Objective 1:** Recall key facts and concepts related to U.S. cotton policy and the WTO dispute between the United States and Brazil.

Assign students to listen to the NPR podcast "Episode 224: The Cotton Wars" (NPR 2013) to build background knowledge on the cotton policy dispute prior to discussing cotton policy in class. This activity replaces a background presentation to preserve class time for discussion. Students can listen to the podcast and answer questions prior to coming to class as either a quiz grade or a class participation

grade, reducing the time needed to introduce the topic.[2]

6.2 Podcast Class Discussion

Facilitate a discussion based on the podcast, encouraging students to form small groups to analyze the key issues presented.

- **Objective 3:** Explain the role of government subsidies in the agricultural sector and their impact on both domestic and international markets.
- **Objective 4:** Apply knowledge of agricultural policy and international trade dynamics to analyze the implications of U.S. cotton subsidies on global markets.
- **Objective 6:** Evaluate the impact of the WTO ruling on U.S. agricultural policy and its compliance with international trade agreements.

Use the following questions to guide the discussion:

1. What were the key issues in the WTO case?
    a. **Possible Student Response**: The key issues were the U.S. subsidies for cotton that Brazil argued were depressing global cotton prices and harming Brazilian farmers. The WTO found that the U.S. had violated several trade agreements by providing subsidies that suppressed world prices and distorted trade.
2. How did U.S. policies affect Brazil's cotton industry?
    a. **Possible Student Response:** The U.S. subsidies led to lower global cotton prices, which negatively impacted Brazilian cotton farmers by making it harder for them to compete in the international market. This created economic hardship for Brazilian cotton producers.
3. What were the outcomes of the dispute?
    a. **Possible Student Response:** The outcomes included the WTO ruling in favor of Brazil, allowing Brazil to impose trade countermeasures against the United States. This eventually led to negotiations and a settlement in 2014, where the United States agreed to make changes to its cotton subsidy programs.

6.3 Introduction and Discussion of Letters

- **Objective 2:** Identify the key legislative changes in U.S. cotton policy, including the 2014 Farm Bill and the BBA.
- **Objective 5:** Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments presented in the letters between Conaway and Vilsack.
- **Objective 6:** Evaluate the impact of the WTO ruling on U.S. agricultural policy and its compliance with international trade agreements.

The letters between Conaway and Vilsack show the policy negotiation process. Before class, instructors can assign the letters as a short reading, or they can be distributed and read during class. In a large classroom, the instructor might read excerpts aloud to ensure everyone follows, or assign small groups to read and discuss portions before a whole-class conversation. This helps students engage with the material regardless of their comfort with complex policy texts.

Discussion questions guide students through the strengths and weaknesses of each letter and the strategic considerations. These letters are a snapshot of an ongoing policy conversation rather than the

[2] Podcast multiple choice questions and answers are located in the appendix for instructors to use to assess student comprehension.

singular cause of the 2018 policy change.

The inclusion of these letters not only provides critical insights into the strategic considerations and real-world implications of policy advocacy but also humanizes the policymaking process. Students can observe the personalities and motivations of the policymakers, which helps them understand the intricacies and often personal nature of legislative negotiations.

Present the letters written between House Agriculture Committee Chairman Mike Conaway and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack[3]:

1. Letter 1 (December 14, 2015): Conaway to Vilsack, requesting the designation of cottonseed as an "other oilseed."
2. Letter 2 (February 3, 2016): Vilsack to Conaway, explaining why the designation is not authorized.
3. Letter 3 (February 5, 2016): Follow-up from Conaway, reaffirming the request.

6.4 Guidelines for Discussion

Present each letter separately, facilitating discussions after each to ensure students understand the arguments and policy implications before moving on to the next letter.

- Instructor's Role in Discussions:
  Instructors should facilitate discussions by guiding students through each letter's content, encouraging them to critically analyze the arguments and policy implications. Use the suggested questions below to stimulate deeper thinking and ensure that all students have the opportunity to contribute. Instructors can highlight the strategic considerations and real-world implications of the policy advocacy discussed in the letters.
- Classroom Management Strategies:
  For larger classes, consider using interactive tools such as Google Slides or Padlet to record group thoughts and responses during discussions. This approach allows students to see a collective record of ideas and facilitates participation from all students, even those who may be less inclined to speak up in a large group setting.

6.5 Discussion Questions for Small Group Discussion (Instructors are not expected to cover all of these questions, but they offer a range of topics for small group discussion):

1. What are the strengths of each letter?
    a. Sample Student Responses:
        i. Letter 1: Clearly outlines the economic challenges facing U.S. cotton producers and provides a specific policy request (designating cottonseed as an "other oilseed").
        ii. Letter 2: Provides a detailed legal and policy rationale for why the designation is not authorized under the 2014 Farm Bill.
        iii. Letter 3: Reaffirms the request with additional legal arguments and examples of past uses of similar authority. Quick response time.

[3] Letters are located in the Appendix.

2. What are the weaknesses of each letter?
    a. Sample Student Responses:
        i. Letter 1: Lacks consideration of the WTO case and potential international trade implications.
        ii. Letter 2: May come across as rigid and dismissive without offering alternative solutions.
        iii. Letter 3: Relies heavily on legal arguments and may overlook practical implementation challenges.

3. What are the economic challenges outlined by Conaway, and how do they affect cotton producers?
    a. Sample Student Response: Economic challenges outlined by Conaway include low cotton prices, increased input costs, and trade competition. These challenges negatively impact cotton producers by reducing their profitability and competitiveness.

4. Why does Conaway request the designation of cottonseed as an "other oilseed"?
    a. Sample Student Response: Conaway requests the designation of cottonseed as an "other oilseed" to qualify for benefits under agricultural assistance programs.

5. How does Conaway justify this request, and what are the strengths and weaknesses of his arguments?
    a. Sample Student Response: Conaway justifies his request by highlighting the similarities between cottonseed and other oilseeds, emphasizing the need for parity in treatment. Strengths include economic rationale and historical precedent, while weaknesses include potential distortions in market dynamics.

6. What legal constraints does Vilsack cite in denying Conaway's request?
    a. Sample Student Answer: Vilsack cites legal constraints related to the Farm Bill and WTO agreements that limit the designation of cottonseed as an "other oilseed."

7. How does Vilsack justify the decision from a policy perspective?
    a. Sample Student Answer: Vilsack justifies the decision from a policy perspective by emphasizing the importance of adhering to legal obligations and avoiding trade disputes.

8. Are there any alternative solutions or suggestions provided by Vilsack? If not, what might be some possible alternatives?
    a. Sample Student Answer: Vilsack does not provide alternative solutions in the letters. Possible alternatives could involve exploring other avenues for supporting cotton producers or addressing their economic challenges within existing frameworks.

9. How does Conaway strengthen his argument in the follow-up letter?
    a. Sample Student Answer: In the follow-up letter, Conaway strengthens his argument by citing additional legal and policy precedents, as well as emphasizing the urgency of the situation for cotton producers.

10. What legal and policy precedents does Conaway reference, and how do they support his case?
    a. Sample Student Answer: Conaway references legal precedents such as the Agricultural Act of 2014 and policy precedents related to the treatment of other agricultural commodities. These references support his case by demonstrating consistency and fairness in policy application.

11. What are the political and economic pressures influencing Conaway's advocacy?
    a. Sample Student Answer: Political and economic pressures influencing Conaway's advocacy include the need to support constituents, maintain competitiveness in the global market, and address challenges facing the agricultural sector.

6.6 Instructor Key Points of Emphasis for Each Letter:

1. Letter 1:
    a. Economic Challenges: Conaway highlights the economic difficulties faced by U.S. cotton producers due to low global prices and the inadequacies of the STAX program. Emphasize the context of these challenges and why cotton producers were seeking additional support.
    b. Policy Request: The letter requests the designation of cottonseed as an "other oilseed," which would make it eligible for ARC and PLC payments under Title I. Discuss why this specific designation was sought and the implications it would have for cotton farmers.
    c. Advocacy and Representation: Conaway's role as the House Agriculture Committee Chairman involves advocating for agricultural interests. Highlight the political pressures and responsibilities that come with such a position.
    d. Policy Arguments: Conaway presents arguments justifying the request, including references to past instances where similar actions were taken. Examine the validity and strength of these arguments.

2. Letter 2:
    a. Legal Constraints: Vilsack explains that the 2014 Farm Bill does not authorize the designation of cottonseed as an "other oilseed." Discuss the legal constraints and the interpretation of the Farm Bill's provisions.
    b. Policy Rationale: Vilsack provides a rationale for why the designation is not authorized, including concerns about compliance with international trade agreements and potential market distortions. Analyze these policy considerations and their implications.
    c. Alternative Solutions: Although the letter denies the request, it is important to discuss any alternative solutions or suggestions Vilsack might offer, even if implicit. Emphasize the importance of considering alternative approaches in policymaking.

3. Letter 3:
    a. Reaffirmation of Request: Conaway reaffirms his request and provides further arguments and examples to support his case. Discuss the persistence and importance of sustained advocacy in policymaking.
    b. Legal and Policy Precedents: The letter references past instances where similar designations were made, arguing for consistency in policy application. Examine the validity of these precedents and how they support or weaken the argument.

   c. Political and Economic Pressures: Highlight the political and economic pressures that Conaway faces from his constituents and the agricultural sector, and how these pressures influence his advocacy.

4. Overall Discussion Points:
   a. Understanding Policy Advocacy: Emphasize the role of policy advocacy and the interactions between lawmakers and executive branch officials in shaping agricultural policy.
   b. Balancing Domestic and International Considerations: Discuss the need to balance domestic agricultural support with compliance with international trade agreements and the potential consequences of failing to do so.
   c. Impact on Stakeholders: Examine how these policy decisions and legislative changes impact various stakeholders, including cotton producers, other agricultural sectors, and international trade partners.

5. Missing Information and Potential Risks:
   a. Missing Information: None of the letters explicitly mention the WTO case with Brazil, which is a critical context for understanding the potential international trade implications of designating cottonseed as an "other oilseed."
   b. Potential Risks: Potential risks include violating WTO agreements, which could lead to further trade disputes and sanctions. It might also create market distortions and set a precedent for similar requests from other commodities, complicating U.S. agricultural policy.

6.7 Discussion of Reintroduction of Cotton as a Title I Commodity

- **Objective 2:** Identify the key legislative changes in U.S. cotton policy, including the 2014 Farm Bill and the BBA.
- **Objective 4:** Apply knowledge of agricultural policy and international trade dynamics to analyze the implications of U.S. cotton subsidies on global markets.
- **Objective 6:** Evaluate the impact of the WTO ruling on U.S. agricultural policy and its compliance with international trade agreements.

While the 2016 letters reflect an effort to secure more support for cottonseed under existing authority, the actual legislative action occurred later, after a change in administration and sustained advocacy efforts. Students should recognize that policy changes often emerge from the cumulative impact of lobbying, shifting market conditions, changes in leadership (Tom Vilsack's tenure ended in January 2017 and was followed by new USDA leadership under the incoming administration), and ongoing negotiations rather than a single exchange of letters. This understanding provides realism about how policy evolves.

Reintroducing cotton as a Title I commodity through the BBA aimed to address the economic challenges faced by U.S. cotton farmers by reinstating traditional support mechanisms such as PLC and ARC payments. However, this policy change entails potential risks and trade-offs that need to be considered:

Potential Risks:

1. **International Trade Disputes:** By reintroducing cotton as a Title I commodity, the U.S. risks reigniting trade disputes, particularly with countries that have previously challenged U.S. agricultural subsidies at the WTO. Ensuring compliance with international trade agreements is crucial to avoid further disputes and potential sanctions.
2. **Market Distortions:** The reintroduction of subsidies could lead to market distortions by artificially inflating domestic cotton prices, potentially affecting global cotton markets. This may disadvantage cotton producers in other countries who do not receive similar subsidies.
3. **Fiscal Effect:** Increased spending on agricultural subsidies can have significant fiscal implications, potentially straining the federal budget. Balancing the need for farmer support with fiscal responsibility is an ongoing challenge.
4. **Policy Precedents:** Setting a precedent by reintroducing cotton as a Title I commodity may encourage other agricultural sectors to seek similar support, complicating efforts to reform and modernize agricultural policy.

Trade-Offs:

1. **Domestic vs. International Interests:** Policymakers must balance the interests of domestic cotton producers with the need to comply with international trade rules. This trade-off highlights the tension between providing adequate support to U.S. farmers and maintaining fair trade practices.
2. **Short-Term Relief vs. Long-Term Sustainability:** While reintroducing cotton as a Title I commodity provides immediate financial relief to farmers, it may not address long-term sustainability issues within the agricultural sector. Developing policies that promote resilience and sustainability is essential for future agricultural policy.
3. **Economic Stability vs. Market Competition:** Supporting domestic cotton producers can stabilize the U.S. cotton market, but it may reduce the competitiveness of U.S. cotton on the global stage. Policymakers must consider how subsidies affect the overall competitiveness of U.S. agricultural products.

Instructors can guide students to reflect on the persistence and strategic negotiation required to achieve policy changes. Encourage students to consider the broader implications of reintroducing cotton as a Title I commodity, including the balancing act between providing domestic support and adhering to international trade agreements. By linking these discussions back to the letters and the fictional letter writing assignment, students will gain a deeper understanding of the continuous interplay between politics and policymaking in the agricultural sector.

Discussion Questions for Students Might Include:

1. How did the political advocacy and correspondence influence the reintroduction of cotton as a Title I commodity?
2. What were the key arguments presented by Conaway that resonated with policymakers to cause this change?
3. How does the reintroduction of cotton under the BBA address the shortcomings of the STAX program?
4. What are the potential long-term impacts of this legislative change on U.S. cotton producers and international trade relationships?

6.8 Optional Homework or Class Discussion

- **Objective 3:** Explain the role of government subsidies in the agricultural sector and their impact on both domestic and international markets.
- **Objective 4:** Apply knowledge of agricultural policy and international trade dynamics to analyze the implications of U.S. cotton subsidies on global markets.

Assign the article "U.S. Oilseeds: Production and Policy Comparison" (Paulson and Schnitkey 2017) as reading to drive home the importance of understanding cotton policy. Highlight how the article makes links to PLC/ARC payments and cotton. Discuss how the price of cottonseed is much lower than other oilseeds and the implications for large payments under PLC/ARC programs.[4] This discussion helps students understand the practical applications of these policies for cotton producers and the potential international trade implications of designating cottonseed as an "other oilseed."

6.9 Discuss the Connection of Organizations and Politics to Policy

- **Objective 2:** Identify the key legislative changes in U.S. cotton policy, including the 2014 Farm Bill and the BBA.
- **Objective 3:** Explain the role of government subsidies in the agricultural sector and their impact on both domestic and international markets.
- **Objective 6:** Evaluate the impact of the WTO ruling on U.S. agricultural policy and its compliance with international trade agreements.

1. WTO Case of Brazil vs. United States:
    a. Policy Link: The case highlights the global impact of domestic agricultural subsidies and the role of international trade agreements in shaping national policies. The WTO ruling pressured the United States to reconsider and modify its cotton subsidy programs.

2. 2014 Farm Bill:
    a. Policy Link: The removal of cotton from Title I and the introduction of STAX reflect legislative attempts to comply with international trade agreements and address domestic economic concerns. This change was partly influenced by the WTO ruling and ongoing negotiations with Brazil.

3. BBA:
    a. Policy Link: The reintroduction of cotton as a Title I commodity illustrates how political dynamics and economic conditions can lead to policy reversals. This change aimed to provide more robust support to cotton farmers, addressing the shortcomings of STAX and responding to political pressures from agricultural stakeholders.

4. Optional Real-World Article Applications:
    a. Link to Policy: Paulson and Schnitkey (2017) make several connections to PLC and ARC payments, illustrating the practical applications of these policies for cotton producers. The article highlights that the price of cottonseed is much lower than the prices of oilseeds currently eligible for ARC and PLC payments.[5] This significant price difference potentially means large payments per base acre of cottonseed if it is included as an "other oilseed." Such large payments could raise questions under the WTO settlement of the Brazil cotton

[4] PLC payment exercises are located in Optional Follow-Up Activities.
[5] See PLC exercises in Optional Follow-up Activities.

case, reflecting the complexities and potential international trade implications of designating cottonseed as an "other oilseed." These discussions help students understand how policy decisions impact real-world agricultural economics, trade relations, and farm-level financial planning.

b. Zulauf et al. (2023) notes that higher statutory reference prices, such as those for cotton, are more likely to trigger large and dependable payments, influencing financial planning and cash rents for cotton producers, which underscores the importance of grasping these policy details in the classroom setting.

7 Letter Writing Assignment: At-Home Assignment: Writing a Reply Letter

Instructions for Students:

Learning Objectives for the Assignment:

- **Objective 5:** Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments presented in the letters between Conaway and Vilsack.
- **Objective 7:** Compose a well-structured and persuasive reply letter from the perspective of Secretary Vilsack, addressing Chairman Conaway's arguments and providing policy recommendations.

Task: Students write a reply letter in the role of the Secretary of Agriculture. Instead of signing the letter as "Thomas J. Vilsack," students can close with "Sincerely, The Office of the Secretary of Agriculture" or "Sincerely, (Student Name), Acting as the Secretary of Agriculture." This maintains professional integrity while encouraging perspective-taking.

Purpose: The letter-writing assignment is designed to consolidate your understanding by requiring you to articulate and defend policy positions, thereby mirroring the real-world responsibilities of policymakers.

Format:

- **Letter format:** Similar to the three letters in this series (date, letterhead, etc.).
- **Length:** 2–3 pages, 1.5 spacing, Arial, 12-point font, 1-inch margins.

Content:

- Clearly establish your position on the issue.

- Directly address Chairman Conaway's arguments using information learned in class.

- Find two resources to support your argument, cite all sources in-text using APA format.

- Ensure the letter is in your own words, with minimal direct quotes.

- **Note**: You are not permitted to use AI tools to generate the content of your letter. While AI can be used for initial research or brainstorming, the final submission must be your original work. Violations of this policy will be subject to academic integrity procedures.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Clarity and coherence of argument.
- Use of class material and additional resources.
- Proper citation and adherence to letter format.
- Grammar and spelling.
- Use the rubric[6] to assess each category.

Instructors may wonder about grading time. Based on experience, reviewing each 2–3 page letter for content, clarity, and proper citation typically takes about 5–10 minutes per student, depending on class size and instructor familiarity with the subject matter.

Two student examples are located in the appendix.

Instructor Note on AI Usage for the Letter Writing Assignment:

Instructors may have concerns about students using AI tools such as ChatGPT to generate content. Here are some specific strategies to guide students and ease instructors' minds:

1. The instructions clearly state that while AI tools can assist with initial research or brainstorming, the final submission must be the student's original work. Emphasize the importance of personalizing the letter and critically engaging with the class material.
2. The assignment requires students to incorporate specific course content, class discussions, and their own critical analysis. Students relying solely on ChatGPT will be limited because ChatGPT will not be aware of the nuanced discussions and analyses conducted in class.
3. The in-class discussions thoroughly cover the content of the letters. These discussions should decrease the incentive to use AI to write the letter entirely, as students will become comfortable with the arguments made and the policy details.
4. Consider having students write the letter in class to prevent AI usage. This ensures that the work is completed independently and reflects the student's understanding.

8 Optional Follow-up Activities

- **Objective 3:** Explain the role of government subsidies in the agricultural sector and their impact on both domestic and international markets.
- **Objective 4:** Apply knowledge of agricultural policy and international trade dynamics to analyze the implications of U.S. cotton subsidies on global markets.
- **Objective 6:** Evaluate the impact of the WTO ruling on U.S. agricultural policy and its compliance with international trade agreements.
- **Objective 7:** Compose a well-structured and persuasive reply letter from the perspective of Secretary Vilsack, addressing Chairman Conaway's arguments and providing policy recommendations.
    1. Advanced Exercises
        a. Have students create a graph showing the effects of an export subsidy on the U.S. cotton market. They should illustrate the changes in producer surplus, consumer surplus, and government expenditure.

[6] The rubric is located in the appendix.

i. Have students graph the welfare effects of removing export subsidies, as mandated by the WTO ruling. They should illustrate the effects on domestic welfare, including changes in consumer surplus, producer surplus, and overall economic efficiency.

b. Discuss the political economy of U.S. cotton policy. How do various stakeholders, including farmers, policymakers, and international trading partners, influence the formation and implementation of cotton policy?

c. What are the long-term implications of export subsidies on the competitiveness of U.S. cotton in the global market? Discuss the potential for retaliatory measures from other countries.

i. Students should consider how export subsidies might lead to overproduction, decreased global prices, and potential trade disputes or retaliatory tariffs from other countries.

2. PLC Payment Exercises

a. If the reference price is $0.367 per pound and the market year average (MYA) price is $0.30 per pound, determine if a PLC payment is triggered. Calculate the payment if you have 100 base acres and 800 pounds/acre.

i. Since the MYA price is below the reference price, a PLC payment is triggered.

ii. Payment Rate = $0.367 - $0.30 = $0.067 per pound

PLC Payment = $0.067 × 800 pounds/acre × 100 acres

PLC Payment = $5,360

b. If the reference price is $0.367 per pound and the MYA price is $0.40 per pound, determine if a PLC payment is triggered. Calculate the payment if you have 100 base acres and 800 pounds/acre.

i. Since the MYA price is above the reference price, no PLC payment is triggered and no payment is made.

c. If the reference price is changed to $0.40 per pound, what will happen to the amount of PLC payments made, all else equal? Assume MYA price remains at $0.30 per pound.

i. They will go up since more payments will be triggered (the difference between the reference price and MYA price will be larger).

d. If the reference price is revised upward, what do you think will happen to the amount of cotton planted, all else equal?

i. The possibility of receiving PLC payments may encourage farmers to plant more cotton, knowing they have a safety net if prices fall.

e. The reference price for seed cotton is $0.367 per pound, and the MYA price is $0.30 per pound. A farm has a payment yield of 800 pounds per acre and 100 base acres. The sequestration rate[7] of 5.7 percent is applied to the PLC payments. Calculate the PLC payment before and after sequestration.

i. Before: Payment Rate = $0.367 - $0.30 = $0.067 per pound

[7] The mandatory budget reduction to payments is called sequestration. Sequestration involves automatic, across-the-board reductions in federal spending to achieve budgetary goals set by legislation. In the context of agricultural programs, this means that payments to farmers, including those under the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program, can be reduced by a specified percentage to comply with budgetary constraints.

PLC Payment = $0.067 × 800 pounds/acre × 100 acres = $5,360

ii. After: Sequestration Rate = 5.7%

Reduction Amount = $5,360 × 5.7% = $305.52

PLC Payment After Sequestration = $5,360 - $305.52 = $5,054.48

3. Debate on Agricultural Subsidies: Organize a class debate on the merits and drawbacks of agricultural subsidies, using the case of U.S. cotton policy as a central example. Divide the class into groups representing different stakeholders (e.g., U.S. cotton farmers, Brazilian cotton farmers, policymakers, international trade organizations) to explore various perspectives.
4. Policy Brief Assignment: Have students write a policy brief that proposes solutions for balancing domestic agricultural support with international trade obligations. Encourage them to use the letters between Conaway and Vilsack, as well as other class materials, to support their recommendations.

9 Student Perception Survey on Cotton Policy Assignment and Discussion

To assess the effectiveness and reception of the cotton policy assignment, an Institutional Review Board (IRB)-approved survey[8] was administered to students over four semesters: Spring 2022, Spring 2023, Fall 2023, and Spring 2024. A total of 389 students participated in the survey. Figure 6 summarizes the responses to these questions. The survey provides valuable insights into student perceptions of the assignments/discussions and their contribution to their understanding of cotton policy.[9]

Student feedback on the cotton policy assignment was overwhelmingly positive. A significant majority reported high levels of satisfaction and learning outcomes, with 85 percent expressing satisfaction. Nearly 90 percent agreed that the assignment enhanced their understanding of U.S. cotton policy complexities. The podcast and related discussions were effective, with over 80 percent rating them positively.

Understanding of international trade disputes was significantly improved, with 90 percent agreeing on the effectiveness of analyzing the WTO case. The writing exercise, which required drafting a reply letter, was well-received, with 87 percent finding it useful for understanding policy arguments and decision-making. Additionally, 85 percent of students reported improved critical thinking skills related to agricultural policy. Most impressively, 92 percent of students would recommend this assignment to their peers in agricultural economics courses.

The survey results indicate that the cotton policy assignment is highly regarded for its educational value and effectiveness in enhancing understanding of U.S. cotton policy and international trade disputes by students. The majority found it to be a valuable learning experience that improved their critical thinking skills and provided deeper insights into policymaking processes.

10 Conclusion

By integrating a podcast and real-world policymaker letters, instructors guide students toward a nuanced understanding of how politics, advocacy, and international factors shape agricultural policy. While the letter exchange offers valuable insight, it is only one influence among many—international rulings, foreign producers' actions, and evolving market conditions all play a role. The podcast's engaging narrative naturally prompts students to question events and see the letters as part of broader advocacy efforts that eventually helped restore cotton's Title I status. Together, these resources connect

[8] The survey questions are in the Appendix.
[9] General student feedback from the survey is in the Appendix.

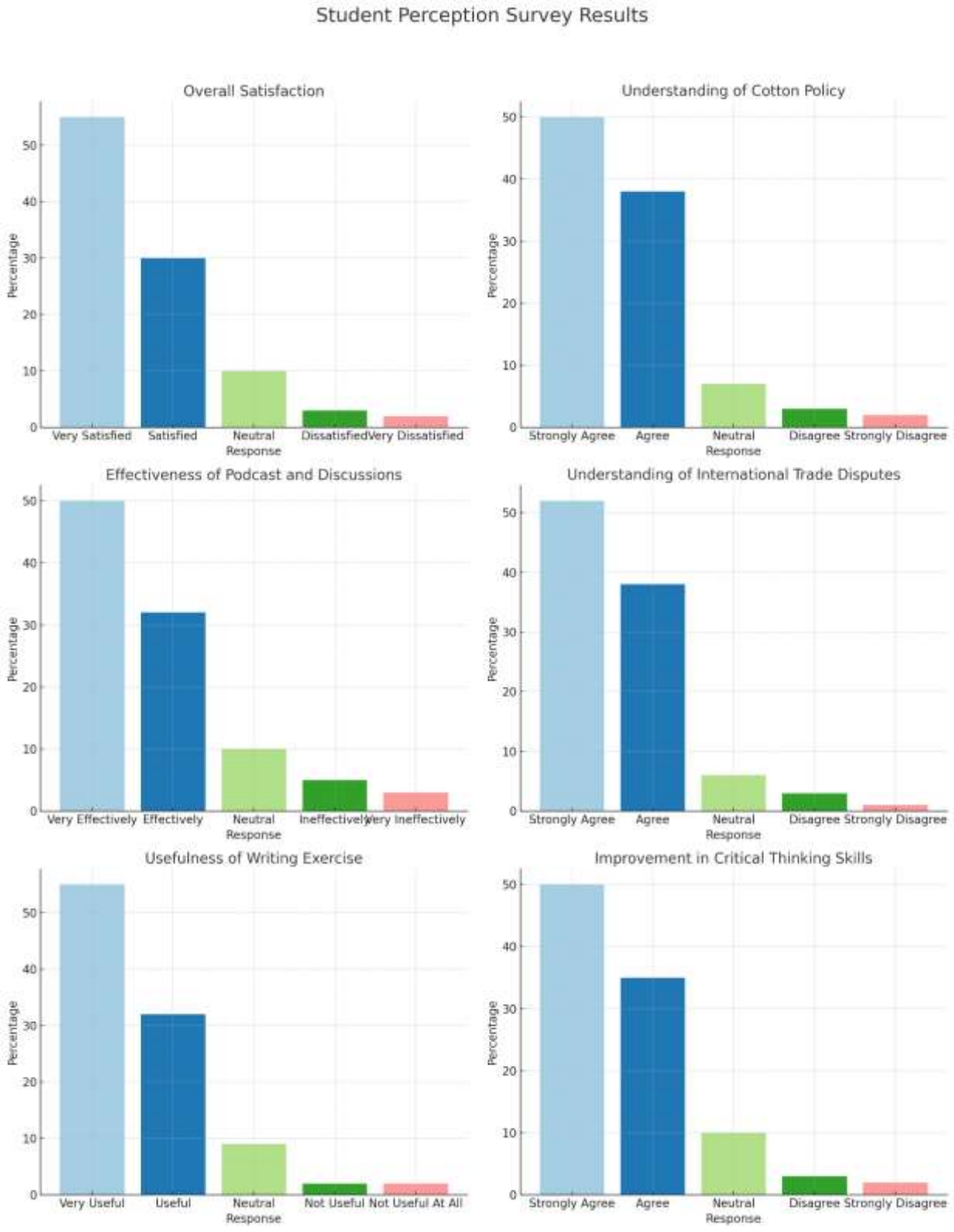

Figure 6: Student Perception Survey Results

WTO dispute mechanisms, policy evolution, and conflict resolution, encouraging critical thinking about policy decisions, advocacy, and global trade. This approach boosts student engagement, analytical skills, and overall comprehension of complex policy issues.

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Appendix 1. Survey Questions, Student Feedback, Rubric for Letter Writing, and Student Examples

10a Survey Questions:

1. How would you rate your overall satisfaction with the cotton policy assignment?

- Very Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral
- Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

2. To what extent do you agree that the assignment helped you understand the complexities of U.S. cotton policy?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

3. How effectively did the podcast and related discussions enhance your learning experience?

- Very Effectively
- Effectively
- Neutral
- Ineffectively
- Very Ineffectively

4. Did the analysis of the WTO case of Brazil vs. United States improve your understanding of international trade disputes?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

5. How useful did you find the exercise of writing a reply letter from Secretary Vilsack's perspective in understanding policy arguments and decision-making?

- Very Useful
- Useful
- Neutral
- Not Useful
- Not Useful At All

6. To what extent do you agree that the assignment improved your critical thinking skills related to agricultural policy?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

7. Would you recommend this assignment to other students in agricultural economics courses?

- Definitely
- Probably
- Not Sure
- Probably Not
- Definitely Not

Student Feedback:

Positive Feedback Letter Assignment:

Many learners appreciated the use of real-world examples and primary source documents, such as the letters between Conaway and Vilsack. This approach helped them connect theoretical concepts with practical applications.

Sample Feedback: "*The letters provided a fascinating look into the policy process and made the lessons feel more relevant and engaging*."

Requests for More Interactive Elements:

Some learners suggested incorporating more interactive elements, such as debates or role-playing activities, to enhance engagement and deepen understanding.

Sample Feedback: "*I would love to see more interactive activities, like debates or mock negotiations, to help us understand different perspectives on agricultural policy*."

Adjustments Based on Feedback:

Enhanced Interactive Elements:

In response to requests for more interactive activities, the module now includes a class debate on a different topic and the possibility to expand on this in a policy brief assignment. These additions aim to foster active participation and critical thinking.

10b Podcast Questions and Answers: Bloom's Taxonomy Level: Recall

1. Which country is the United States having a dispute with in the podcast?
   a) Canada
   b) China
   c) Brazil
   d) Canada and Brazil

2. Which governing body is responsible for resolving international trade disputes?
   a) EU
   b) USDA
   c) FTC
   d) WTO

3. Which country was the world's largest cotton exporter in the podcast?
   a) Brazil
   b) United States
   c) China
   d) India

4. Brazil accused the United States of the following in the podcast (select all that apply):
   a) Creating artificially low wheat prices
   b) Subsidizing U.S. cotton producers
   c) Subsidizing U.S. corn producers
   d) Unfair trade practices

5. How large were the subsidies to cotton farmers in a given year, according to the podcast?
   a) $100–$200 million
   b) $2.4 trillion
   c) $0
   d) $1.5–$4.0 billion

6. As of the release of the podcast, how long has the trade war been going on?
   a) 2 years
   b) 5 years
   c) 1 year
   d) 8 years
   e) 11 years

7. How does the U.S. government subsidize cotton production as of the time of the podcast?
   a) The U.S. government gives cotton farmers a fixed amount of money every year.
   b) The U.S. government buys all surplus cotton.
   c) The U.S. government essentially guarantees a minimum price to cotton farmers.
   d) The U.S. government gives cotton farmers an interest-free loan on equipment.

8. The WTO ruled in favor of the United States.
   a) True
   b) False

9. The WTO can force a country to stop subsidizing an export good.
   a) True
   b) False

10. How does Brazil retaliate in the podcast?
   a) The Brazilian government makes it illegal to import U.S. cotton into Brazil.
   b) The Brazilian government makes it illegal to export sugar cane to the United States.
   c) The Brazilian government taxes other U.S. imports such as luxury cars, cosmetics, medicine, and software.
   d) The Brazilian government drops out of the WTO.

11. According to the podcast, which U.S. organization steps in and lobbies the U.S. government in an attempt to resolve the dispute?
   a) The U.S. Department of Agriculture
   b) The Brazil–U.S. Business Council
   c) The U.S. Cotton Growers Association
   d) The U.S. Embassy in Brazil

12. How is the trade dispute resolved at the time of the podcast?
   a) The U.S. government continues subsidizing cotton producers and agrees to pay Brazilian farmers $150 million per year.
   b) The Brazilian government begins subsidizing Brazilian cotton producers.
   c) The United States appeals the WTO ruling, and it is overturned.
   d) The United States stops subsidizing cotton.

Suggested Answers for Podcast Quiz Questions:

1. Brazil
2. WTO
3. United States
4. Unfair trade practices, subsidizing U.S. cotton producers
5. $1.5–$4 billion
6. 8 years
7. The U.S. government essentially guarantees a minimum price to cotton farmers.
8. False
9. False
10. The Brazilian government taxes other U.S. imports such as luxury cars, cosmetics, medicine, and software.
11. The Brazil-U.S. Business Council
12. The U.S. government continues subsidizing cotton producers and agrees to pay Brazilian farmers $150 million per year.

Rubric for Letter-Writing Assignment

Criteria	9–10	7–8	5–6	3–4	0–2
Clarity and Coherence	Clear, well-structured, and logically organized. Each paragraph flows smoothly into the next, and the argument is easy to follow.	Mostly clear and well-structured, with minor issues in organization or flow.	Some clarity and coherence issues, making the argument somewhat difficult to follow.	Poorly organized, unclear argument.	Lacks coherence and clarity, making it difficult to understand.
Use of Class Material	Effectively references specific arguments from the letters, the WTO ruling, the 2014 Farm Bill, and other class materials.	References class materials effectively but may lack some specificity.	References class materials but lacks depth or specificity.	Minimal reference to class materials, lacking depth and detail.	Does not reference class materials effectively.
Addressing Arguments	Directly addresses Chairman Conaway's arguments with well-supported counterarguments.	Addresses most of Chairman Conaway's arguments with some supporting details.	Addresses some of Chairman Conaway's arguments but lacks detail or support.	Barely addresses Chairman Conaway's arguments.	Does not address Chairman Conaway's arguments.
Use of Additional Resources	Incorporates two additional resources effectively, cited in APA format.	Incorporates one additional resource effectively, or two resources with minor citation issues.	Incorporates additional resources but with major citation issues or minimal integration.	Incorporates additional resources poorly or with significant citation issues.	Does not incorporate additional resources.
Grammar and Spelling	Free of grammatical and spelling errors.	Contains minor grammatical or spelling errors that do not affect readability.	Contains several grammatical or spelling errors that affect readability.	Contains numerous grammatical or spelling errors that significantly affect readability.	Contains pervasive grammatical and spelling errors.

10c Student Example 1:
Grade: A
Clarity and Coherence: The letter is clear and well-structured, providing a detailed response to Chairman Conaway's requests.
Use of Class Material: The letter effectively references the 2014 Farm Bill, WTO ruling, and the creation of the Brazil Cotton Fund, demonstrating a good understanding of the policy context.
Addressing Arguments: It addresses Chairman Conaway's arguments directly, explaining the limitations of the Secretary of Agriculture's powers and the necessity of the STAX program.
Correct Information: The letter provides accurate details about the WTO case and the legislative constraints.

10d Student Example 2:
Grade: B
Clarity and Coherence: The letter is clear and follows a logical structure, but it is somewhat less detailed than the first letter.
Use of Class Material: The letter references the STAX program and the impact of the WTO ruling but lacks specific references to the legislative text or detailed arguments.
Addressing Arguments: It addresses Chairman Conaway's arguments but does not provide as thorough an analysis as the first letter.
Correct Information: The letter provides mostly accurate information but lacks depth in its discussion of the WTO ruling and legislative constraints.

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