The Pet Food Processing class will be adding a distance offering (GRSC 645 ZB) this coming fall (2014). The course has been offered as a lecture and laboratory in the fall of odd years starting as a problems class in Fall of 2011 and again this past year. We saw an increase in enrollment with this second offering and are anticipating that other students might have an interest in taking the class, but are having trouble fitting it into their schedules given the limited frequency. In addition, there are designs to offer the Pet Food Science Minor as a “Stand Alone” minor in the very near future as classes can be converted over to distance offerings. Pet Food Processing is one of the first classes to go through this transition. Calls and inquiries from prospective employers are coming in weekly, so there is a demand for students with a background in this field. We hope offering the class will allow more students to gain from this program.

The distance class itself has been uncoupled from the laboratory. Due to the industrial nature of the equipment and processes being discussed it was hard to find a way to make the laboratory a part of the course. So, the lecture material has become the focus. The course will provide an overview of the pet food industry and processes involved with the production of food for companion animals. Subjects will range from industry statistics and segmentation to raw material identification, handling, and processing. The science and technology behind pet food extrusion, baking, canning, and injection molding will be discussed, along with an overview of plant design, packaging, regulations, pet food business management, and animal evaluation techniques, project management and formulation will also be covered. In other words, this course will offer a peek inside this segment of our economy and provide a comprehensive picture to those interested in this growing industry.

This class is team taught by noted experts from industry and academia with a strong emphasis on practical real-world examples from the trade. Lecturers include Grain Science faculty members Dr. Greg Aldrich, Dr. Sajid Alavi, Dr. Cassie Jones, Dr. Charles Stark, Dr. Subramanyam Bhadriraju, and Professor Fred Fairchild in addition to Mr. Brian Plattner with Wenger Manufacturing, Mr. Craig Cowley with Hills Pet Nutrition, Mr. Brian Strouts from American Institute of Baking, and Mr. Brian Hale from Bemis Packaging, and others. People new to the pet food industry, those working in retail feed or pet food sales, students with an interest in animals and nutrition, or packaged and processed foods, or those interested in understanding how this industry works will want to sign-up for the course.