



Agricultural True Crime

Introduction: When Agriculture Becomes a Crime Scene

Welcome to **Agricultural True Crime**, a documentary investigation into real agricultural crises affecting Texas. Each case has victims, suspects, evidence, conflicts, and consequences involving food security, family farms, markets, and natural resources.

Choose one case, investigate the evidence, and present a compelling True Crime documentary over three class periods. Use dramatic storytelling, but remain accurate, fair, and respectful of the real people involved.

First: Choose Your Investigation:

Select one of the issues presented in the **Ag Issues & Current Event Briefs** and come up with a catchy title for your investigation! Here are some examples:

CASE #1: "OPERATION LEAFHOPPER: THE INVASION"

CASE #2: "THE SCREWWORM SHUTDOWN: BORDER LOCKDOWN"

CASE #3: "THE WATER HEIST: DATA CENTER TAKEOVER"

CASE #4: "AGRICULTURAL LAWFARE: THE LAND DEFENDERS"

Second: Create a hook for your case! Present the central mystery or crisis in one dramatic minute. Also, decide how you want to present this information. This could be a video, a presentation, or a flyer.

Third: Determine the following for the issue you selected:

THE CRIME

THE VICTIMS

THE SUSPECTS/ACCUSED

THE EVIDENCE (include at least one graph, chart, map, or infographic.)

DRAMATIC MOMENTS

THE VERDICT

THE CONSEQUENCES

TIMELINE

Fourth: Present the Case! Present a 15–20 minute containing:

- Dramatic title slide and tagline.
- Opening hook.
- Explanation of the crime or crisis.
- Victims and personal or community impacts.
- Investigation, evidence, and timeline.
- Suspects or accused parties and their defenses.
- Verdict or current status.
- Economic and long-term consequences.
- Closing statement.

Use clear visuals, direct quotes, suspense, varied delivery, and accurate source information. After each presentation, classmates discuss the strongest evidence, most compelling perspective, and remaining questions.

Here are some case-specific discussion questions to guide your research:

Case 1: Leafhopper

Were the quarantine and destruction orders necessary?

Who should pay for containment?

Could earlier action have prevented the emergency?

Case 2: Screwworm

Was closing the border the correct decision?

Was Tyson's timing suspicious or ordinary business?

How should animal health be balanced with market needs?

Case 3: Data Centers

Should towns trade resources for tax revenue?

How can Texas protect farmland while supporting technology?

Are reclaimed-water agreements a fair compromise?

Case 4: Lawfare

When is eminent domain justified?

How can environmental rules protect both land and farmers?

Does the Freedom Framework create accountability or shield bad actors?

Presentation Requirements Checklist

- ☐ Clear explanation of the crime or crisis
- ☐ Victims and losses identified
- ☐ At least five specific facts or statistics
- ☐ Multiple perspectives presented
- ☐ Economic impacts analyzed
- ☐ Current status explained
- ☐ Long-term consequences discussed
- ☐ Connection to broader agricultural issues
- ☐ Dramatic title, tagline, and opening hook
- ☐ Suspenseful narrative with clear characters
- ☐ Direct quotes and cited sources
- ☐ Strong closing statement
- ☐ 15–20 minute presentation
- ☐ Effective visual aids
- ☐ Clear, professional delivery
- ☐ Critical thinking about solutions

Assessment Rubric

Criteria	Points	What to Include
Content Accuracy & Depth	30	Accurate facts, strong understanding, economic impacts, broader connections
True Crime Narrative Style	25	Dramatic hook, suspense, characters, evidence-based storytelling, memorable closing
Use of Evidence	15	At least five specific facts or statistics, quotes, and clearly identified sources
Presentation Delivery	20	Clear voice, eye contact, pacing, transitions, professional engagement
Visual Aids & Creativity	10	Readable visuals that clarify evidence and strengthen the narrative
Total	100	

Additional Resources & Extensions

- Write a two-page investigative report or policy proposal.
- Record a 10-minute true crime podcast episode.
- Create a documentary storyboard or data infographic.
- Conduct an approved interview with a farmer, official, expert, or community member.