
To: White & Gold Consulting Employees
From: Mitchel T. Keller
Re: Cat L. Rancher inquiry
Date: 11 November 2009

Our firm has just received the enclosed letter from Mr. Cat L. Rancher regarding the potential sale of his ranchland in Florida. I am assigning each color-rank group (Gold Aces, White Kings, etc.) to prepare a letter to Mr. Rancher that provides him with a recommendation regarding the matter discussed in his letter. Each color-rank group will submit a single report in final form to me by **0810 on Friday, 4 December 2009**. All report components must be uploaded to a folder called “Group Project Final Version” in your color-rank group’s folder on T-Square by that time. Each report must consist of the following items:

1. A typed letter to Mr. Rancher providing a recommendation and supporting reasons for that recommendation. Supporting reasons must include a comparison between the amount of money he can make by selling his land now and projection(s) of the amount of money he can make by continuing to ranch for 10 years. Mr. Rancher has not studied mathematics for many years, so your letter should not include technical computations. However, it should provide general information about the method(s) you used to arrive at your recommendation. There are no formal requirements on the length of your letter, so long as it provides Mr. Rancher with all necessary information. (The letter must be supplied as a **PDF document**.)
2. Details of the mathematical work and computations you performed to formulate your recommendation to Mr. Rancher. This work may be hand-written, but must be neat and organized. These details must be prepared in such a manner that another group at White & Gold Consulting could review them for correctness. Complete sentences should be used where appropriate to explain what a particular calculation means. Hand-written work must be scanned to a **single PDF document**. (You may wish to use a spreadsheet to track some of your computations. If you do so, you must provide a **PDF document** of the spreadsheet as well as **the actual spreadsheet**. Acceptable formats for the spreadsheet are **Microsoft Excel (.xls and .xlsx)** and **Apple Numbers.app (.numbers)**.)

Group members are to complete this assignment as a team. However, the only individuals outside of your color-rank group with whom you may discuss the assignment are Kelly Robinson, Anwasha Roy Palahdi, and me. Since you are writing a letter, a standard bibliography would be out of place. However, if you use resources other than the textbook for the class or the items supplied as part of the project assignment, you must mention them in your work. (This can be by incorporating mention of the resource or a footnote.) All standard rules regarding plagiarism apply here! (For instance, direct quotations must be contained in quotation marks.) Behavior contrary to these expectations will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity. If you are unsure if you should reference something or use quotation marks **ask before the project due date**.

To receive full credit for the project, each group must submit a draft of the letter to Mr. Rancher. This draft must be uploaded as a **PDF document** to your color-rank group’s folder on T-Square by **1200 on Wednesday, 25 November 2009**. With your draft, you may submit drafts of your mathematical work and computations (as **PDF documents**), but this is not a requirement. I also invite you to submit specific questions about aspects of your draft on which you would like feedback. All materials related to your draft submission must be placed in a folder called “Group Project Draft for Feedback” in your color-rank’s group folder on T-Square. You will receive feedback on your draft letter no later than 30 November 2009.

In addition to the map Mr. Rancher referenced in his letter (note that the map is **not** drawn to scale), I am provid-

ing historical cattle price data for livestock sales in Florida over the past 20 years. This data is from the National Agricultural Statistics Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. Cattle prices are quoted in dollars per **hundredweight**, which is denoted cwt. One hundredweight is equal to 100 pounds. Thus, a 625 pound cow weighs 6.25 cwt.

You should review the enclosed grading rubric for this project to understand how it will be evaluated. Notice that the rubric includes reference to stating assumptions that you make in formulating your recommendation. This is very important! I welcome questions about the reasonableness of assumptions and will be watching for this when giving feedback. In your recommendation to Mr. Rancher, be sure to state assumptions you make based on things he states in his letter as well. I will make a couple of suggestions regarding assumptions:

1. Historical cattle prices should be updated for 2008 dollars to account for inflation. You should use the website <http://www.westegg.com/inflation/> to translate the prices into 2008 dollars.
2. Fortunately, there's been basically no inflation in the past year, so working in 2008 dollars is a good strategy. Note Mr. Rancher's remark about his investments, so you may formulate your recommendation without assuming any interest income or future inflation. (That is, your entire recommendation will be working based on 2008 dollars.)
3. You may assume that if he sold his ranchland, Mr. Rancher's sale would close on 1 January 2010 and that if he continued ranching, the ten years for which he would raise and sell cattle in are 2010–2019. He will begin collecting Social Security payments on 1 January 2020.

Another part of the grade I would like to point out is the 10 points (out of 100) that are awarded for “overall impression.” This is described below the table on the rubric. This is a place for your group to stand out through creativity, cleverness, etc. I am happy to answer any questions you have in the preparation of this project. I look forward to reading your recommendations to Mr. Rancher.

Enclosures: Letter from Mr. Rancher, Map, Historical Cattle Prices, Evaluation Rubric