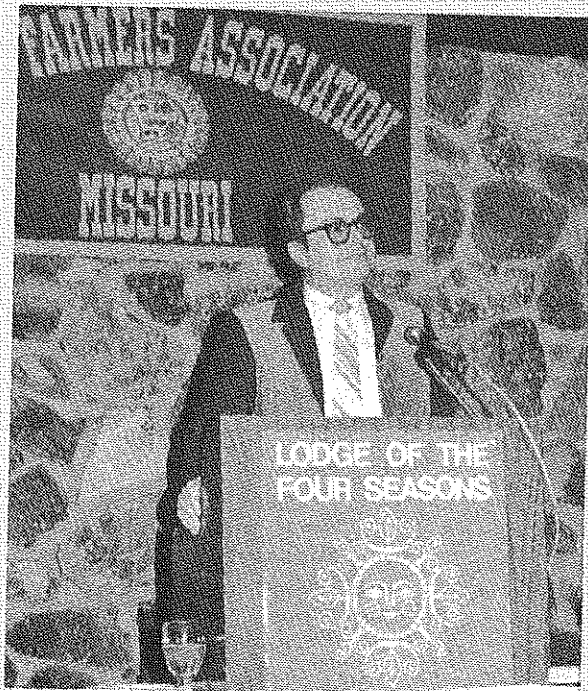


## Stories in Pictures

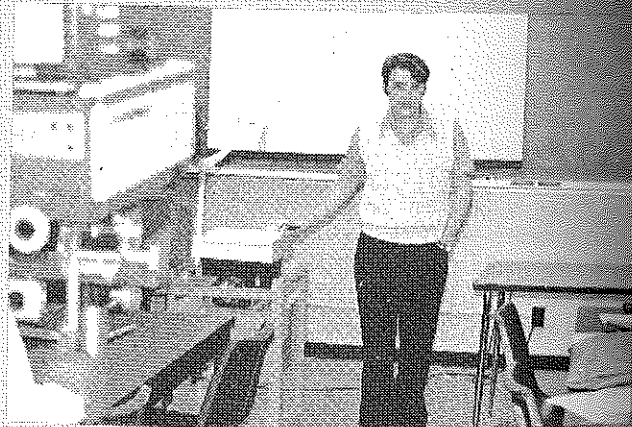


Don Claycomb of the University of Missouri is shown speaking to the Missouri Young Farmer and Young Farm Wives President's Conference. All members of the vo-ag family have responsibilities in improving and expanding adult/young adult education. (Photograph courtesy of Don Claycomb, University of Missouri.)

Individual instruction is important when adults are learning new skills. (Photograph courtesy of Jan Henderson, Piqua, Ohio.)



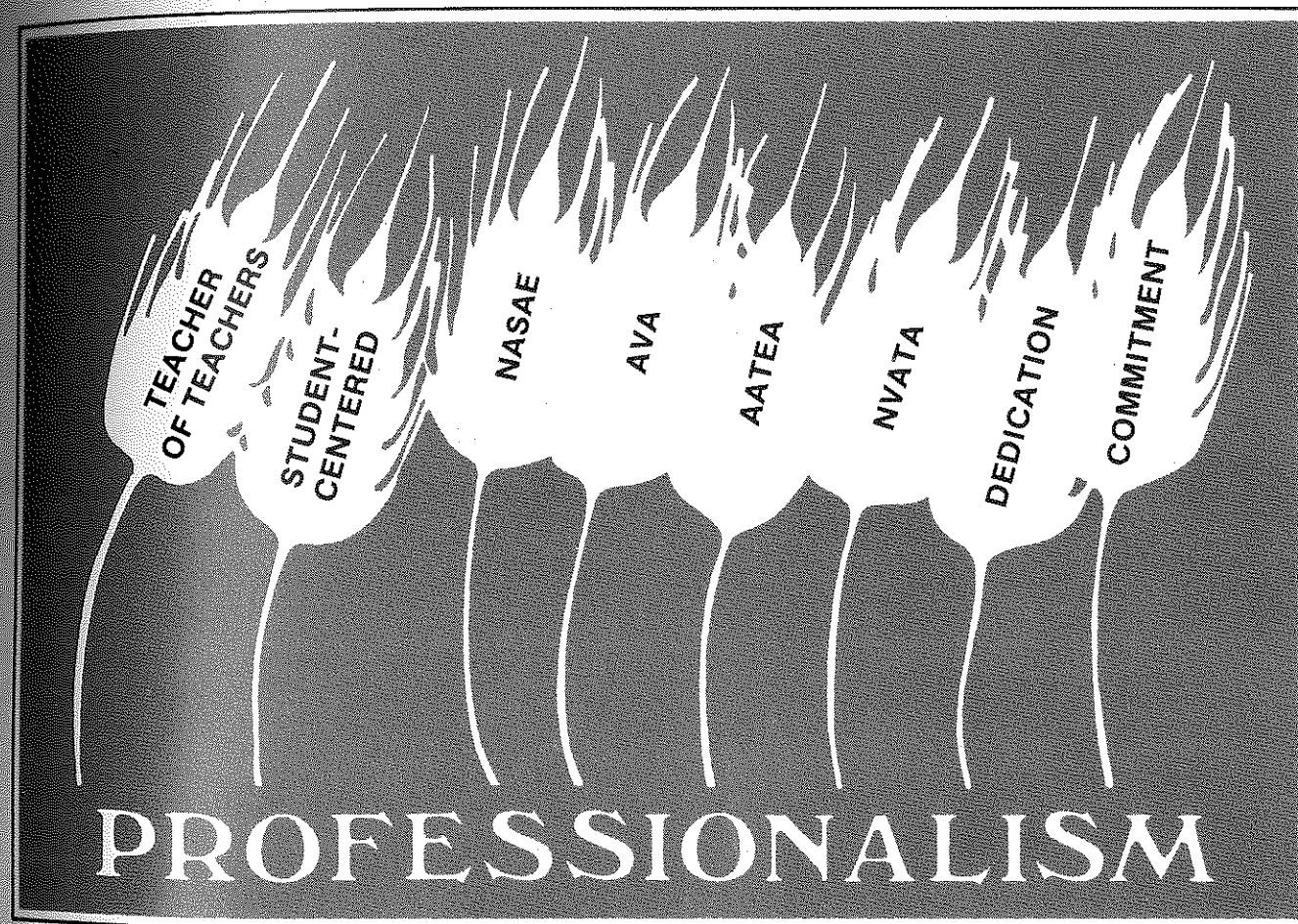
Bob Stewart of the University of Missouri is shown reporting to an advisory committee on farm management. Such committees are very important in the conduct of relevant instructional programs. (Photograph courtesy of Don Claycomb, University of Missouri.)



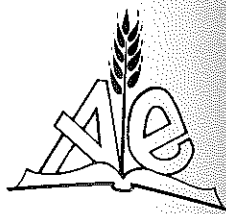
Prospective teachers should have the opportunity to practice the methodology they are taught, as this University of Missouri student is doing. (Photograph courtesy of Don Claycomb, University of Missouri.)

# The Agricultural Education Magazine

July, 1981  
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ARTICLE SUBMISSION

Articles and photographs should be submitted to the Editor, Regional Editors, or Special Editors. Items to be considered for publication should be submitted at least 90 days prior to the date of issue intended for the article or photograph. All submissions will be acknowledged by the Editor. No items are returned unless accompanied by a written request. Articles should be typed, double-spaced, and include information about the author(s). Two copies of articles should be submitted. A recent photograph should accompany an article unless one is on file with the Editor.

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Professionalism

Is teaching a profession or a craft? We frequently refer to the "profession" when speaking about vocational education in agriculture. We speak about professionalism in broad generalities without taking time to consider what we mean. What is professionalism? How is it manifested by teachers, supervisors, and teacher educators? Consider these criteria:

- A profession is an occupation involving lengthy and specialized preparation in higher education.
- A profession has a code of ethics.
- A professional is an individual who has completed the needed education for a profession.
- A professional conforms to the code of ethics of a profession.

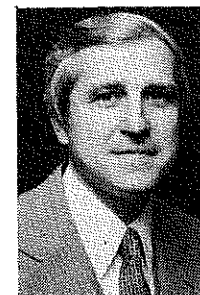
Professionalism, on the basis of these criteria, refers to how individuals or groups of individuals conform to the characteristics expected of them by virtue of their occupation. Professionalism is a composite of many things — the qualities of the individuals involved. And there are many qualities which vocational agricultural educators need to have if they are to exhibit professionalism!

The Need For Agricultural Teacher Education Accreditation

One of the ways of improving professionalism is through improving the preparation individuals receive prior to entering the profession. There appears to be considerable variation in the quality of agricultural teacher education programs. The time has arrived when some type of procedure is needed to accredit programs specifically involved in agricultural teacher education. Perhaps the American Association of Teacher Educators in Agriculture (AATEA) could be instrumental in this effort.

There are a number of reasons for accrediting agricultural teacher education programs. Other accrediting agencies are gnawing away at those things which make agricultural teacher education unique. State teacher certification agencies add new general requirements with little consideration to the effect they have on agricultural teacher education. Standards of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) tend to weaken agricultural teacher education. In recent years state certification agencies and NCATE have set forth standards which have reduced the capacity of agricultural teacher education to prepare quality professional agricultural teachers.

Another trend of the past decade has been the emergence of new agricultural teacher preparation programs in institutions of questionable capability. Some of these have been in colleges where the capability in technical agriculture is very low. Others have been in colleges with one faculty member (and sometimes less than one full-time individual) in the agricultural teacher education program.



JASPER S. LEE, EDITOR  
(The Editor also serves as Professor and Head, Department of Agricultural and Extension Education, Mississippi State University.)

There is no way substandard colleges can prepare competent agriculture teachers.

We need to insure that agriculture teachers are "agricultural". Some agricultural teacher education programs have gone to a general vocational teacher education approach to such an extent that any agricultural identity is about lost.

A major step toward an accreditation effort has been made through the program standards which have been developed in recent years. In 1977, a project was funded by the U.S. Office of Education and conducted by the Department of Agricultural Education at Iowa State University to identify standards for quality vocational programs in agricultural/agribusiness education, including teacher education. In 1980, the Division of Agricultural Education at the University of Illinois produced a document entitled "Standards for Teacher Education in Agriculture." With these and other efforts to identify standards completed, it is now time to move toward agricultural teacher education accreditation.

July, 1981

The theme for this issue of the Magazine is Professionalism. Dr. John Hillison has served as Theme Editor. Appreciation is expressed for his efforts in obtaining articles and the cover designs.

This Issue:  
An Expanded Edition

The Editing-Managing Board of THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MAGAZINE approved the publication of an expanded edition of the MAGAZINE on an experimental basis in 1981. It was decided that the July issue on the theme of Professionalism would be most appropriate.

- The major changes include:
- Expansion to 28 pages
  - Use of a quality paper for the cover
  - Use of line art on the cover

Your reaction to this edition would be welcomed. Send your comments to the Editor, Regional Editor, or any member of the Editing-Managing Board.

## Professionalism: The Thread That Runs Through

One of the interesting features of professionalism is that it has many parts. It takes the integration of these many parts to make one person truly recognizable as a professional. A close examination of these parts proves rather interesting. All members of the agricultural education profession — teachers, teacher educators and supervisors — should possess these important parts.

### Dedication

One vital part of the professional agricultural educator is dedication. A dedicated individual is willing to work beyond the minimum number of hours required. A dedicated individual will generally be the first to arrive at work and the last to leave. The dedicated educator will always be ready and available when needed.

### Commitment

The committed educator is committed to many things. One of the strongest commitments is to his or her profession. Occasionally, a committed individual will find it necessary to defend and explain activities of the profession to others. The truly committed individual will have no difficulty doing so. He or she will find the crucial facts necessary for such an undertaking. The committed educator will work for positive change within the profession in a positive way.

### Student Centered

The professional educator always keeps in mind the reason why we have public education. The main goal of public education is to prepare the young people of today to be tomorrow's adult citizens. There are a lot of things that can be eliminated from public education that would greatly compromise it. Things such as equipment and textbooks when eliminated would greatly weaken public education. However, a lack of students would completely eliminate the need for public education. The emphasis on students must be made at the college level as well as the secondary level. Professional educators keep the student uppermost in their mind.

### Teacher of Teachers

If a plant or animal species is to exist for any length of time it must find a way to perpetuate itself. The same is also true of a profession. If the current members of the profession do not encourage new people to enter it, then certainly it will eventually die. True professionals will always encourage their more talented students to continue their education and eventually enter the profession. This encouragement can take many forms. It occurs more by example than any other way.



By JOHN HILLISON, THEME EDITOR

*Editor's Note: Dr. Hillison is Associate Professor of Agricultural Education at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061.*

### Professional Organizations

Obviously, the professional educator should be a member of the organizations that represent his or her interests. It is difficult to think of any other way to obtain unified support for the profession and the fellowship that goes with group membership. Agricultural education is fortunate to have three national organizations specifically for its professional members. These are: National Association of Supervisors of Agricultural Education (NASAE), National Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association (NVATA), and American Association of Teacher Educators in Agriculture (AATEA). We are also most fortunate to have another national organization, American Vocational Association (AVA), where agricultural education can join with other educators in the common cause of furthering vocational education.

### The Common Thread

The many parts that make up a true professional are almost always found in the same individual. Very seldom is dedication found without commitment. The student centered educator is also usually a teacher of teachers. All parts tend to be combined together in professional organization activities. A public school educator represents many things to many people. The most important of which is putting together all the essential parts to make that person a professional.

### The Cover

The cover and Stories in Pictures feature were designed by the staff of the Learning Resource Center at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. The intent is to graphically portray various aspects of professionalism. (Courtesy of John Hillison, Virginia.)

## The Professional Organizations for Vocational Agricultural Educators

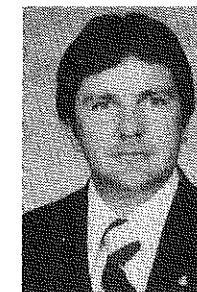
Professional associations afford agricultural educators the opportunity to maintain and demonstrate many of the values and characteristics that are associated with professionalism. Most agricultural educators hold membership in one or more professional organizations. These may include the American Association of Teacher Educators in Agriculture (AATEA), American Vocational Association (AVA), National Association of Supervisors of Agricultural Education (NASAE), and the National Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association (NVATA). The following is a brief review of the history and objectives of each organization.

### American Vocational Association

The formation of the AVA was the result of a merger between the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education and the Vocational Association of the Middle West in 1926. Since then, AVA has evolved as the only professional organization with a fulltime commitment to assisting educators and institutions in providing effective vocational programs in the United States. This commitment is illustrated through the mission of the AVA as established by its Board of Directors which is "to develop and promote comprehensive programs of vocational education through which individuals are developed to a level of occupational performance commensurate with their innate potential and the needs of society."<sup>1</sup>

The strength of AVA lies in the fact that it has a broad base of membership. This base includes vocational teachers, administrators, teacher educators, researchers, guidance counselors, and many other individuals that are associated with planning and carrying out vocational programs. AVA policies are determined by officers elected by the membership. These officers are elected from 57 affiliated state and territorial associations with a membership of over 56,000 for 1980. The activities of the association are guided by goals and objectives which are outlined in Article II of the association By-Laws as amended December, 1979. These objectives include:

- To establish and maintain active national leadership in all types of vocational and practical arts education, including industrial arts and guidance services.
- To render service to state and local communities in promoting and stabilizing vocational education.
- To provide a national open forum for the study and discussion of all questions involved in vocational education.
- To unify all the vocational education interests of the nation through representative membership.
- To cooperate with other nations in the further development of vocational education and to welcome international memberships.



By H.M. SNODGRASS

*Editor's Note: Mr. Snodgrass is a graduate student at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061.*

- To encourage the further development and improvement of all programs of education related to vocational and practical arts education, including industrial arts and guidance services.
- To emphasize and encourage the promotion, improvement, and expansion of programs of vocational part-time and vocational adult education.
- To encourage the development and maintenance of active affiliated state and territorial vocational associations.
- To have and possess all the rights, powers, and privileges given to corporations by common law, to sue and be sued, to borrow money and secure the payment of the same by notes, bonds, and mortgages upon personal and real property, and to rent, lease, purchase, hold, sell, and convey such personal and real property as may be necessary and proper for the purpose of erecting buildings, and for other proper objects of such corporation to receive dues and donations for carrying out the objects aforesaid.<sup>2</sup>

### National Association Supervisors of Agricultural Education

The groundwork was laid for the formation of the NASAE during the AVA Convention in 1962. The first constitution was adopted on December 11, 1963. The motivation for organizing a national association for state supervisors was a result of a need on the part of supervisors of agricultural education to have a concerted input into the operation of the Agriculture Division of the AVA. There were 167 members of NASAE in 1980. Article II of the Constitution and By-Laws, as adopted in 1963 and amended in 1966, 1969, 1973, and 1974, specifies the general objectives of the association, as follows:

- To provide for a better understanding of vocational education in agriculture.

(Continued on Page 6)

## The Professional Organizations For Vocational Agricultural Educators

(Continued from Page 5)

- b. To foster fellowship and understanding among members and to serve as a medium of exchange of ideas, philosophy, and professional materials.
- c. To provide a medium for assisting in the determination of program direction, needed research, and encouragement of professional advancement of its members.
- d. To provide opportunity for discussing plans and policies of the U.S. Office of Education with the Director and other staff members of the Agriculture Education Branch.
- e. To keep members informed as to trends, plans, and policies of the American Vocational Association and their implications for the development of vocational education in agriculture.
- f. To promote professional relationships with other agencies, organizations, and institutions concerned with agriculture and agricultural education.
- g. To represent the profession of vocational education in agriculture whenever necessary or desirable.<sup>3</sup>

### American Association of Teacher Educators in Agriculture

The formation of a national association for agriculture teacher educators resulted from a desire on the part of teacher educators to play a larger role in the leadership of the AVA. This enlarged role was to take place through more involvement at the Agriculture Division level and ultimately in AVA itself. The original organizational meeting was held at the AVA Convention in Chicago on December 7-11, 1959. Article II of the AATEA Constitution and By-Laws outlines the primary objectives of the Association as they have evolved between 1959 to 1981; they include:

- a. To foster acquaintance, fellowship, and understanding among members and to serve as a medium of exchange of ideas, philosophy, and professional materials toward the further development of agricultural education as a profession.
- b. To maintain and improve communication and liaison with those responsible for other aspects of teacher education in agriculture.
- c. To cooperate with other organizations and groups . . .
- d. To represent the profession of agricultural education wherever and whenever it is necessary or desirable.<sup>4</sup>

Membership in AATEA was 258 in 1980, including student memberships.

### National Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association

The first attempt to develop a national association for vocational agriculture teachers began during the 1928 meeting of the American Vocational Association in Philadelphia. It was during this meeting that a group of dele-

gates composed of representatives from several state organizations of vocational agriculture teachers appointed a committee to develop a constitution which would be voted on at the AVA convention in 1929. It was during the 1929 AVA convention that the first meeting of the new organization was officially held. The official title at that time was the National Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers. The Agriculture Division of AVA favored the inclusion of a representative of the new organization in the 1930 AVA program. The new national organization (NAVAT) continued only one more year following the 1930 AVA convention.

It was eighteen years later before another movement arose to organize teachers of vocational agriculture on a national level. In 1948, an organizational study committee prepared the ground work for the formation of the National Vocational Agricultural Teacher's Association, Inc. During the 1948 AVA Convention, a motion was passed which marked the beginning of the NVATA as we know it today.<sup>5</sup>

The original objectives of the NVATA remain the bases for the Association's activities today with one exception. Article II of the 1948 constitution included an objective which stated: "To investigate and arrange for special discounts, purchasing advantages, or other business arrangements which may be of interest to teachers or associations." This objective has since been deleted. The present day objectives of NVATA as outlined in Article II of the Association's constitution are as follows:

- a. To assume and maintain an active national leadership in the promotion and furtherance of agricultural education.
- b. To bring together all vocational agricultural teachers through membership in a national organization devoted exclusively to their interest.
- c. To provide an opportunity for agricultural teachers to discuss all problems affecting agricultural education on a national level.
- d. To serve state or local organizations of agricultural teachers in the solution of any problems which may arise.
- e. To have and possess all the rights, powers, and privileges given to corporations by common law.
- f. To cooperate with the American Vocational Association in furthering the cause of all vocational education.<sup>6</sup>

Membership in the NVATA has grown from approximately 100 teachers present at the organizational meeting in 1948 to 8,453 in 1981.

#### References

- <sup>4</sup>American Association of Teacher Educators in Agriculture, Constitution and By-Laws. Article II.
- <sup>1</sup>American Vocational Association, Facts, Arlington, Virginia, 1979.
- <sup>2</sup>American Vocational Association, Constitution and By-Laws, Article II.
- <sup>3</sup>National Association, Supervisors of Agricultural Education, Constitution and By-Laws. Article II.
- <sup>5</sup>Stenzel, Sam and James Wall, Professional Leadership and Service. National Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association, Inc. Alexandria, Virginia, 1973.
- <sup>6</sup>National Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association, Constitution and By-Laws, Article II.

## THEME

# The Tie That Binds

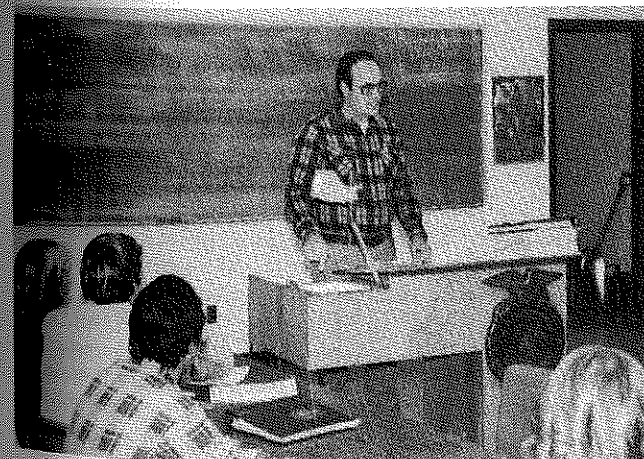
I can no longer procrastinate. The deadline for submitting this article draws near and so I must move to the task. Fate, or dumb luck, has provided me with a title, making half the battle won.

The title, "The Tie That Binds", is a part of the lyrics to a country song played this afternoon on KCUB radio in Tucson. For several years, and especially the last four, as I have been privileged to serve as an NVATA officer, I have wondered about the type of message which would appeal to all in our profession regarding professionalism and their professional obligations. I'm not sure that this article will prove to be the right message. Each reader will decide that for themselves just as the decision to demonstrate professionalism is ultimately a personal one that each agricultural educator must make.

Those whom I know that have lasted in our profession are as diverse as the philosophies and programs in agricultural education. However, these "survivors" do share a common trait — they are "true" professionals who understand the meaning of those words, "The Tie That Binds".

### What Others Have Said

As much as any subject in education, professionalism has been written about, discussed, preached on, lectured to, philosophized and, yes, underestimated in its importance to the success of the teacher and the program. Nearly every state agricultural teachers association newsletter has at least one article defining or encouraging professionalism. Less than three years ago, this magazine had as its theme "Professionalism — That's The Name of the Game". A basic reason for the creation and continued existence of the National Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association is the need to promote the profession and foster professionalism. So I ask myself what can I possibly add to what others have said on this subject?



The author is instructing a high school class in vocational agriculture.



BY TOM JONES

Editor's Note: Mr. Jones is currently President of the National Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association. He is Vocational Agriculture Teacher in Marana, Arizona 85238.

Dave Perey, vocational agriculture teacher in Sells, Arizona, described his feelings. "Professionalism has been defined in a great many different terms. Thinking back to my days at the university, I don't think there was ever a consensus between students as to what a professional was or is. The more I ponder the concept of the professional and professionalism in my mind I come up with what may be two different concepts."

Perey further described the meaning of professional. "The professional may be the person who has received extended education for a specific purpose, such as doctors, lawyers, and teachers. It has also been defined as the person who belongs to an organization which has guidelines with which to police itself. The concept of professionalism, I believe, may be somewhat different and may be more difficult to measure. Professionalism is an attitude. An attitude which expresses itself as a commitment. A commitment, in our case, to education, agriculture, and to a unique way of life, a life of service."

"A professional is a person who has pride in what he does", adds Robert McBride, past NVATA officer from Ohio. "It's that pride that helps him complete the job that must be done and make sure it's done right. And making sure it's done right is a big part of being a professional."

James Key, teacher educator from Oklahoma talks about caring. ". . . professional agriculture teachers care — care for their students in the most meaningful way. They not only care for the agricultural knowledge taught . . . they care about each student as an INDIVIDUAL. This is the kind of caring taught by the World's Greatest Teacher. It goes beyond the interest shown through home visits, the demand for the best achievement from each student, the long hours spent helping students with projects, FFA activities or all those other activities. It is concern for each individual student; to try to help them set the goals for their lives and then develop the attitudes, skills, and knowledge to achieve those goals. This, then, is the heart of professionalism for the ag teacher . . ."

"A professional educator will take advantage of every means available to improve personally and professionally", says Guy Finstad, vo-ag teacher at Cal Farley's Boys Ranch in Texas. "A professional must never be satisfied with mediocracy."

(Continued on Page 8)

## The Tie That Binds

(Continued from Page 7)

W.A. McLeod, Jr., a North Carolina teacher says, "Naturally being an active part of your professional organization is one part of being a professional. But it's more than just belonging. It's taking an active part and working for the betterment and improvement of all teachers."

"Part of being a professional is actively sharing ideas and experiences which will help fellow educators," says Quentin Christman, former NVATA Vice President and a teacher in Rugby, North Dakota.

Ken Harris, Executive Director of the California Agricultural Teachers Association says, "Certainly teachers practice professionalism. That professionalism has to do with belonging to a professional organization and choosing that profession, as the NVATA says, 'By choice not by chance.'"

"Professionalism means that as a teacher I'm going to give everything I have everyday in the classroom," says Albert Timmerman, Jr., NVATA Past President. "As a professional I set an example within the community that I feel my students should follow."

Doug Holmberg, a past president of the Florida association, adds that a professional is accountable. "As teachers we are accountable to our students. Certainly if we can't provide them with the basic competencies we have set for our programs, we can't consider ourselves professional."

Dr. Floyd McCormick, teacher educator from Arizona, nails it down. "Possessing the characteristics of a professional is one thing; putting into practice those characteristics is quite another thing. Doing what we say we will do; being honest with ourselves and to our profession; practicing our acquired skill with an intensity of conviction — maybe these are as important to a profession as the mere fact that the individuals making up the profession possess certain qualifications." He goes on, "... to live the good life professionally, one must not only possess the characteristics of a professional; but must also practice the integrity of that profession."

### The Profession and the Professional

Any profession consists of a limited group of individuals who have acquired some special skill, by training and experience, and are better able to perform that skill in society than the average person. Certainly, as Ken Harris said, teaching at all levels qualifies as a profession.

The word "profession" is used over and over at gatherings of agricultural educators. In a moment of frustration during the July, 1980, National FFA Board of Directors meetings, one of the national student officers asked, "Who is the profession?" No one answered. "They" didn't have to. The "profession" is not something intangible. It exists only as the people who practice it exist. The profession is you and me and all those in agricultural education who won't read this magazine. Our profession caters to a very special mission — the success of the agricultural industry and the education of those students, youth and adults, who are its future. The continued existence of the profession will require that we meet the needs of our clientele and

solicit the dedicated efforts of professionals at the local, state and national levels.

My dictionary points out that the root word of "professional" is "profess," to declare in public, to claim. I can't think of a better description of a professional than a person who does the job well and openly declares support for the profession. As agricultural educators it is our right, indeed it is our responsibility, to act as professionals. The key word is act, for professionalism only results from one's actions. Mere participation in the profession does not bring the individual to the status of a professional.

Professionals understand what their chosen career as an agricultural educator can contribute to the needs of the Nation and its people. They know that not everyone can do what they do. Professionals possess a sound, working philosophy of vocational education in agriculture. The professional is dedicated to promoting a quality program at the local, state and national levels. They can see beyond the front door of their agriculture department and have an appreciation for the total picture and their ability to influence it. The professional knows that the teacher who believes his/her program can stand alone will probably have an opportunity to prove it someday. For the professional, all that they can be and hope to be is summarized in the Vocational Agriculture Teachers Creed. Professionals are devoted to conducting programs of excellence.

For a long time, agricultural educators have been recognized for their professionalism. It is the responsibility of state supervision, teacher education, teachers, and teachers organizations, the "profession" if you will, to see that the "esprit de corps" of the past and present will be passed to those who will take our place.

### The Professional Organization

Professionals have always been called on to provide leadership to the profession. Never before has the need for leadership from the ranks of the profession been so critical. The mood of the federal government, because it is seen as the will of the people, is to get out of the leadership role for many programs, such as education. The responsibility for funding and administering education will most likely be born entirely by states in the immediate future. States in turn will relinquish control to the local educational agency. Much of this de-centralization will be good. Some will not. When education, and specific programs such as vocational education in agriculture, become everybody's business they become nobody's business.

In the future, where will our programs get their focus of mission? What mechanisms will we have to address regional and national concerns? What forum will be available for sharing ideas and stimulating professional improvement? If the before mentioned events come about, there will be only one avenue for professionals to come together and for the profession to maintain its identity — the professional organization. There is no higher justification for the existence of the NVATA and other professional organizations in agricultural education than to provide leadership and service to teachers and the program. Professional organizations, and the NVATA must be a leader among them, will be the guardians of the profession.

### A Personal Commitment

Transferring thought into action requires a personal commitment. Few can deny the importance of professionalism in our profession. Many have made the decision to commit themselves as professionals, some have not.

In as few and simple words as possible here is how I would ask for that personal commitment:

Vocational agricultural education and the agricultural educator are both unique. No other program or teacher can do what we do. Because I believe this program is important to agriculture and to my students, young and old, I have chosen to commit a part of myself to it. As a professional, I have accepted the obligation to carry on a local program that will be all it is capable of being to my stu-

## THEME

# Professionalism: A Worthy Goal

By JOHN MUNDT

Editor's Note: Mr. Mundt is State Supervisor, Agricultural Education, Idaho State Board for Vocational Education, Boise, Idaho 83720.

Professionalism can be defined many different ways. In vocational agriculture, there are several important specific areas of professionalism. This article describes the following: specialized knowledge and skills, self improvement, self direction, dedication, ethical standards, wisdom and personal achievement.

### Specialized Knowledge and Skill

Being skillful and proficient in one's work is essential. As a teacher, we need to know "what to teach" and "how to teach." What we teach relates to our special area of work, and how to teach requires interpersonal skills. We know the importance of being skillful in our technical work. We need to emphasize the importance of interpersonal skills. The following list is the result of a study which was made to determine why people fail in their work.

#### Thirteen Reasons Why Most People Fail

1. Unwillingness to cooperate with or help others.
2. Unreliability or if you prefer, lack of dependability.
3. Discourteous, rudeness, indifference to the other individual's interests, wants, desires, and point of view.
4. Careless, indifference, the "so what?" attitude or "I'll get by."
5. Sarcasm, cutting the other people down to size, too free with the stinging rebuke and the humiliating remark, making fun of others.
6. Desire to dominate, wanting to boss others, acting superior.
7. Trouble-making, agitating, always dissatisfied, the "world owes me a living" attitude.
8. Laziness, loafing on the job, habitual lateness.
9. Disagreeableness, lack of respect for others, the "I'm right but the world's all wrong" attitude.
10. Misconduct, violation of rules, unwillingness to conform to prescribed standards recognized as essential, for the well being of all.

dents. In addition, I realize a sense of responsibility to the total profession and my fellow professionals. The best insurance I can provide the profession is to conduct a quality program in my community and actively participate in my state and national professional organizations. By doing these things, my professional future is safeguarded. For me, acting as a professional is "the tie that binds" me to the profession and to my fellow professionals.

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11. Drinking to excess.
12. Dishonesty.
13. Absenteeism, found wanting in the sense of responsibility.

People do not generally fail because they lack the required technical knowledge, but rather because they lack the ability to understand and work with people. They do not fail because of a deficiency in ag mechanics or animal science skills, they fail because of a deficiency in interpersonal skills. The successful results of one's work is with and through people. This takes some special skills such as being able to accept and trust people; being able to motivate — not manipulate; being able to collaborate — not compete; being able to empathize — not judge; and being long on praise and short on criticism. A true professional is able to work with people.

### Self Improvement

Along with knowledge and skill comes self improvement or continued learning. Professionals must be committed to upgrading themselves and adaptable to change. The words of Thomas Jefferson are indelibly inscribed in the memorial dedicated to him in Washington, D.C., as follows:

*I am not an advocate for frequent changes in laws and constitution, but laws and institutions must go hand and hand with the progress of the human mind.*

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## Professionalism: A Worthy Goal

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*As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths discovered and manners and opinions change, with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also to keep pace with the times. We might as well require a man to wear the coat which fitted him when a boy as civilized society to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors.*

These words reflect a basic philosophy of progress in our nation. We as a profession of agricultural educators have made significant changes. A professional is a "continuing learner" in a "never-ending quest for knowledge." Achieving professional status is one thing, while maintaining it is another. A professional recognizes the need for continued growth and also recognizes that being a good worker today does not insure greatness tomorrow. The rapidly changing technology of today demands constant changing and upgrading in our specialty area. Dr. Herb True stated, "A teacher who is teaching in 1981 like they taught in 1980 should not be teaching in 1982."

### Self Direction

Another criterion for professionalism is self direction. A true professional is basically self-directed and self-motivated. He or she can make leadership decisions and is willing to accept full responsibility for them. The professional is willing to be accountable to superiors and the public. A professional is a self starter and enthusiastic. Albert Schweitzer said, "The sad part of life is not that a man dies, but rather what dies inside the man while he still lives." One cannot merely want to be a good teacher, a professional must have a burning desire to be a good teacher. Or put another way, one cannot merely want to lose weight. If, however, one has a burning desire to lose weight, he/she will in fact lose those unwanted pounds. So it is with teaching we must have a burning desire.

"The hardest thing about milking cows," observed a farmer, "is that they never stay milked." That's true of a lot of things in life — you may even feel that way about your job. No matter how much you get done, there's always an unfinished pile. No matter how many problems you take care of, more always seem to crop up. Problems are what give people a chance to succeed. If you never had any, how would anyone know how capable you are? Intelligent people welcome problems as a chance to show what they can do. They take as a personal challenge every deadline or delivery date they have to meet, every difficult or unpleasant person they have to work with, every hard or demanding job they have to do.

Like milking cows, one of the hardest things about coping with the problems of any job is simply that a person must keep on coping with them day after day. But is that really bad? If it weren't for those problems, what would we do for a living? By being alert to the concept of what our programs should be and the direction they should be heading, we will be demanding strong leadership from ourselves as well as others. There is no substitute for strong leadership. The blind cannot lead the blind, neither can the blind lead those who have vision.

### Dedication

Professionals are dedicated. They are dedicated to their profession. Some feel dedication is measured by the amount of time one spends on their work. This is a degree of measurement, but not the only one. Working twelve hours per day on the job might mean inefficiency. A professional doesn't downgrade their profession. Professionals do not hesitate to reflect, both to colleagues and to those outside the profession, pride and satisfaction in their work. They speak about the positive aspects of their employment.

"If the position will not reflect glory on me, I will reflect glory on the work," stated a Greek General named Epaminondas, many centuries ago. During the great age of Greece, Epaminondas' brilliant military victories had brought him much fame and fortune. It had also brought him many jealous enemies within his own country. These men, fearing his fame, conspired to destroy him. It would not be easy — the general was a popular figure. The scheme they devised, however, was ingenious. They convinced the rulers of Greece that a man of Epaminondas' talents should be in government, not the military. And they had just the job for him: garbage collector! Scavenging, as it was called in those days, was a thankless job. The cities were filthy. Epaminondas was just what the country needed, said his enemies. He was called home, his glorious military career now at an end. Even though he knew his appointment to the job was done out of spite and meant to humiliate him, he accepted his new job by saying, "If the position will not reflect glory on me, I will reflect glory on the work." Needless to say, the plan backfired. Epaminondas threw his heart and soul into the job. Before long, all Greece was acclaiming his brilliant work. Most of us recognize the truth in the observation that the job often makes the man. Epaminondas was a man who proved the reverse can also be true: a good and dedicated person often makes the job.

### Ethical Standards

Another criterion is ethical standards. A professional is willing to work within acceptable prescribed standards. A professional is concerned about and works toward the improvement of his/her colleagues welfare. A professional:

- is loyal to fellow workers and is respectful of them.
- is willing to share new ideas, plans and materials with colleagues.
- avoids lowering himself to rumor and hearsay.
- holds membership in and supports the professional organization with personal time and talent.
- places service to others above personal gain.
- adjusts grievances through proper channels, not in the coffee room.
- receives advancements through worthy performance and not at the expense of others.
- takes pride in themselves and what they stand for, and they exemplify this pride in their dress, conduct, and attitude.

You will recall that one of the reasons people fail is their willingness to conform to prescribed standards recognized as essential for the well being of all. We must be willing to impose these standards upon ourselves.

### Personal Achievement

A professional is committed to personal achievement. Social scientists tell us that we are all born with an urge to learn to grow, and to achieve. It is up to us to foster that urge. They also tell us that the fundamentals of personal achievement are desire, courage, ability, wisdom, and strength.

The desire to move from the mediocre to the extra-ordinary is important. Extra-ordinary things can be done by ordinary people. We must have enough burning desire to improve.

Courage to think independently is essential. Observation is that we have fewer courageous people in today's society. We must be independent thinkers — not to the point of being uncompromising and uncooperative.

Individuals must have the ability to define the job. We must be able to define what we want to accomplish or achieve in the classroom. We must define and set our goals. Everyone needs long term goals, if for no other reason than to keep from being frustrated by short term failures.

Knowledge and wisdom are not the same. Increased knowledge is not increased wisdom. Wisdom is knowledge tempered with good common sense.

Strength of purpose to complete a task is a must. We must be both mentally and physically strong. We must

have the ability to stay with it.

The line between failure and success is so fine that we are often on the line and do not know it. Many people throw up their hands at a time when a little effort and a little more patience would have achieved success. As the tide goes all the way out, so too, does it come all the way in. In teaching as in business, opportunities may seem the darkest when really they are on the turn. A little more persistence, a little more effort, and what seemed like a hopeless failure may turn into a glorious success. There is no failure except in no longer trying. There is no defeat except from within. No really insurmountable barrier save our own inherent weakness of purpose. If we achieve, our students will achieve.

### The Criteria: Not Easy

Professionalism requires specialized knowledge and skill in our specialty area; it requires a commitment to self improvement and continued learning; it requires self direction; it requires dedication; it requires adherence to ethical standards, and it requires a commitment to personal achievement. Being a professional is not easy. But then, no one ever said it would be. Professionalism is what has made vocational education, the AVA, the NVATA, and State associations great. The qualities of professionalism insure our individual and collective greatness.

## THEME

# Are You a Professional Teacher?

BY MACK STRICKLAND

Editor's Note: Dr. Strickland is Assistant Professor of Agricultural Engineering at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana 47907.

As all knowledge has some relationship to performance, our major problem in planning instruction is to select and teach those things that are most practical in terms of our objectives. Careful planning sets the stage for teacher efficiency. Only when a class is properly and adequately organized, can teachers truly be effective and provide optimum learning experiences for their students.

By definition, learning is the modification of behavior. It takes place through the reaction of students to their environments. It results from experience. In schools, the learning environment is controlled. The student is subjected to a series of purposeful learning experiences. These are designed to accomplish the instructional objectives, and to conform to an educational philosophy.

In all practical instruction, our goal is to increase student competence in a predetermined area or subject. Good instructors know exactly what they are trying to accomplish. They have established definite objectives about what students are to know and be able to do in each phase of in-

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## Are You A Professional Teacher?

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struction. Generally, students have a better attitude toward an education when they know what they are going to learn and what they can expect to accomplish.

Much of the trouble with students today comes from the conflict between what the students want to learn and what the teachers want to teach or perhaps what the school system requires. No instructor can be successful in the long run if they are unable to set the stage or stimulate their students to want to learn what they should learn. As most courses of instruction can at best provide only a beginning toward the ultimate goal of subject mastery, students need to be motivated in such a way that they continue to learn and develop their abilities after school is over.

No one ever does anything except as a result of motivation. In all effective learning the need or desire to know comes first. When we find that what we know and can do is not adequate to satisfy a conscious or felt need, we have a desire to learn. For instruction to be effective and meaningful to students, we must start at the level the student has achieved.

Success of a program depends heavily on the enthusiasm of students toward their work. Developing and maintaining an interest in a course is an integral phase of instruction. To maintain interest and motivation, the teacher must be prepared to discuss the importance of each lesson, what the student will learn and why. Real motivation cannot be a separate and distinct step in the teaching process. Everything that happens in teaching has an effect on motivation.

It should not be assumed, however, that an enthusiastic student is motivated by appropriate goals. The learner in any course should understand the reason for the instruction, the relationships that exist between the specific course and the total curriculum, and what the course prepares him or her to do or to elect later.

Successful teaching requires the highest level of ability and professional training. Teachers, therefore, need to be ever critical of the teaching techniques they employ with their methods, teaching aids, and subject content to insure an up-to-date and progressive instructional program. The instruction must take into consideration all of the events which may have a direct effect on learning, not just those set in motion by an individual who is a teacher.

The instructor must possess a thorough understanding of each topic they are to teach. An instructor who does not have a clear understanding of the subject should never attempt to cover up their lack of knowledge by progressing rapidly through the material attempting to bluff the students. That is a good way to lose the confidence of the student. If a student loses confidence in their instructor, they become disinterested, antagonistic and learn little during the remainder of the course. If a student does ask a question which the instructor is unprepared to answer, they

should in no way attempt to bluff but should promise to obtain the answer or solution before the next class meeting.

The instructor has several responsibilities that are often overlooked. Many teachers feel that the classroom is their private castle and that it is a blow to their ego for the department head or principal to observe their classes and make suggestions for improvement. There are practically no other situations in the modern business world where a person's work is not subject to scrutiny by their superiors. The fact that in a lot of instances they are not subject to supervision encourages persons who have a tendency to neglect their work to neglect it even more. The instructor is responsible to the students, the school, and the community in which they teach whether they are actively supervised or not.

### Things a Teacher Can Do

Teaching, like other professions, requires an individual's undivided time, attention, and energy. To be a truly successful teacher the individual needs to do more than just meet their classes, maintain a shop or laboratory, and teach as they were taught. For continuous growth, the teacher must work hard and participate actively in various professional capacities. Some of the things a teacher can do are:

1. Maintain a positive attitude toward teaching.
2. Emphasize education of the student as opposed to training.
3. Make instruction more "reason" and less "solution" oriented.
4. Design a stimulating and thought provoking curriculum.
5. Place the maximum responsibility for learning on the student.
6. Variety and change of pace are preplanned and worked into the design and scheduling of courses.
7. Instruction emphasizes practical and realistic application.
8. Instruction is flexible and shows initiative in both preparation and presentation.
9. Become a participating member of professional organizations.
10. Subscribe to and read professional journals.
11. Maintain an up-to-date personal library.
12. Continue to set goals to do something that will contribute to professional growth.
13. Make an effort to work in agribusiness or other areas of agricultural industry to keep abreast of changes.
14. Work for self improvement, take refresher courses, attend workshops, conferences, etc., whether or not it is for credit.

To be a truly professional teacher an individual must remember that all teaching can be improved by proper guidance and training. Under normal circumstances the training must be obtained by the teacher through their own efforts. Are you a professional teacher?

## THEME

# A Return To Professionalism: Is It Too Late?



BY MELTON WRIGHT  
Editor's Note: Mr. Wright is Division School Superintendent of Frederick County Public Schools, Winchester, Virginia 22601.

In the field of education, professionalism, which classifies teaching with the professions of medicine, law, ministry, and engineering, has yielded to unionization. Thousands of educators have strayed from the historic professional fold into what they believe to be the "green pastures" of contemporary laborism. Is it too late to return to educational professionalism in American education? Have we sold out to the "golden calves" of higher salaries, more lucrative fringe benefits, better working conditions, and more spacious learning environments? Does the only way to obtain and maintain these obviously desirable tangible assets involve turning away from historic educational professionalism and toward a new era of unionization of the education profession?

Surely it is not too late! There are tens of thousands of educators who still believe in and practice educational professionalism. They consider themselves to be as much a professional as the physician who gives them their annual physical examination, as the lawyer who writes their will, and as the minister who baptizes their child. The thousands of public school teachers, college and university professors, and instructional supervisors and administrators who still believe in and practice professionalism must be the nucleus around which a revival of educational professionalism revolves.

The time has arrived in American education for professionals to unite and give leadership to a resurgence of professionalism. Those who believe in the high standards and characteristics of a profession should stand tall and speak out with evangelical fervor. Unless we can convince educators, politicians, and the general citizenry that professionalism provides protection for children, parents, and society and is the strongest antidote to anti-professionalism, we are going to be forever overwhelmed by unionization, legislative and political interference in curriculum, and a variety of alternatives to professional education.

Those who are professionals and who would influence others to become professionals must not only proclaim professionalism but practice it in their daily decisions and relationships with other professionals, support personnel, boards, students, patrons, and the general public. In these days of stress and pressures, this is not an easy goal to attain. However, it always must stand before us as a professional ideal.

Some of the practices that do serious injury to professionalism are mentioned here.

Breaking professional contracts at the convenience of the employee. In recent years this practice has become widespread. School superintendents discuss the ramifications of this form of irresponsibility whenever they get together in professional meetings. A professional contract of

200 days cannot be broken with a notice of two weeks unless agreed to by the school board and a certified replacement is available. This writer has experienced at least five contractual violations among agriculture teachers in recent years. In the case of several teachers certified replacements were available, even if not as experienced. In other cases, teachers departed with a substitute in the class until a certified teacher could be employed. The major professional question in these and similar cases is: Shall I honor a legal professional agreement and remain with my students until a replacement can be located? A secondary professional question is: Is my own new career and increase in salary important enough to me and my future to break a legal contract and act unprofessionally? Unfortunately, far too many so-called professional educators are opting for an affirmative answer to the second question.

*Threatening school boards with sick-ins, work to the contract, and other labor-type behavior.* These are the antitheses of professionalism and are unworthy of professional educators on any level.

*Failure to perform each day at a high level of preparation and teaching in meeting the needs of students.* Laziness, shoddiness, and a lack of enthusiasm for the job and the welfare of students is unprofessional. Failure in performance is easily observable by students and downgrades the entire profession along with the individual teacher.

*De-emphasis in departments of agricultural teacher education on professionalism and moral responsibility in the teaching profession.* Apparently many of the younger university professors feel that too much emphasis on professionalism and the traits of a top-flight professional educator are old-fashioned and out-moded. Professionalism is never old-fashioned. It is as contemporary as shuttle flights to the moon. Failure to help young teachers learn the importance of professional practices is to contribute to the movement toward anti-professionalism or unionism.

*The unwillingness of school boards and top school executives to communicate more forthrightly with teachers and*

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## A Return to Professionalism: Is It Too Late?

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the failure of these leaders to provide adequate facilities, salaries, fringe benefits, and so forth for their employees. Teachers are still among the poorest paid professionals in America. Continued neglect of their welfare will hasten the day when educational professionalism will be as extinct as Flintstone's dinosaur. The best way to defeat unionism is to make professional rewards so attractive the teacher will not be allured by the trappings of laborites.

### A Time of Transition

Unquestionably, we live in a period of educational transition in American education. Thousands of teachers are re-evaluating their place in the profession. Will they be served best and be able to serve best by affiliating with a union and following the practices of labor? Or will they remain professionals and live on the high plateau of educational professionalism? The answer will be found in the quality of leadership and influence rendered by those professional educators who are dedicated to a revival of pro-

fessionalism as we move rapidly toward the Twenty-first Century. The quality of professionalism taught and practiced by university professors, classroom teachers, supervisors, and administrators will be a strong factor in favor of preserving education as a profession.

Dwight D. Eisenhower once stated, "In order to be a leader a man must have followers. And to have followers a man must have their confidence. Hence, the supreme quality for a leader is unquestionably integrity. Without it, no real success is possible, no matter whether it is on a section gang, a football field, in an army, or in an office. If a man's associates find him guilty of phoniness, if they find that he lacks forthright integrity, he will fail. His teachings and actions must square with each other."

American education needs statesmanlike leadership that will guide educators to a return to professionalism. If we fail to assume this challenging leadership role, education as a profession will be lost to this future generations of educators.

Despite the thrust toward unionism this writer is convinced that it is not too late to return the greatest profession in the world to the highest status of professionalism it has ever experienced. Agricultural educators should be in the forefront of this movement.

## LETTERS

"Letters to the Editor" is a feature to encourage dialogue among readers of the Magazine. Selected letters will be printed without comment or editing. Your letter will be welcomed! (Send letter to: Editor, The Agricultural Education Magazine, P.O. Drawer AV, Mississippi State, MS 39762.)

Editor:

Since this is my last year (I'm retiring), I'm going to unload a bit on the Ag Ed Magazine.

1. You are printing more articles by vo-ag teachers — but not enough.
2. Too many articles sound like Phipps and Cook from the 1940's.
3. Why isn't there more teaching tips in the magazine?
4. Why do you have to have a Ph.D. and be a college professor to get something entered?

Two years ago I submitted two different ideas that were to be printed and pass on the idea (or tip) to others. I was informed by two different people it would be printed — but I haven't seen them yet.

The point is not that they were so great, but what's so great about the welding stand (March 1981), and/or the welding booth (April 1981)? If college profs, or supervisors, or program directors want to get some really good tips in the magazine, why don't they help the guys in the field with the ideas that work? And make sure they work?

April, 1981, page 14 is just what I'm referring to. This is something for the new teacher and old to take hold of and go — especially if he wants to up-date and make a change.

I have subscribed to this magazine for 27 years because I always thought it was "our" magazine and that it would get better "next year." Your subscription numbers are not what they should be and the reasons are that too much garbage to help someone obtain tenure is printed.

Perhaps I should not mail this letter, because it too could very well be classed as garbage. Still, I've been around for awhile both actively involved in State and National levels, and I think I know what the fellows (women, too) want to read — and are passing over subscribing because it is not there.

August 31 is the last day of my 27 years (25 here at Eastmont High School). They have been most rewarding. The Eastmont FFA Chapter and I have had more than our share of awards over the years — and they were without the help of the pencil.

I trust Ag Ed Magazine will not come after me over this, but make a stronger effort to print more articles that really will help those teaching vocational agriculture, agribusiness, co-ops, or even production type programs. I certainly hope we don't lose sight of production programs. Yes, I know what urbanization does to a good, strong production program, because it happened here, too.

A couple of other things, Ag Ed Magazine could work more toward assuring ideas and ways to keep the 12-month programs — and get short ones to 12.

(1) How to make school farms really work for a community (regardless of size) and

(2) How and why to check projects. Yes, I call them projects — SOE is just a glorified example to cover tracks. The young ones coming out can't seem to understand why "project check" is an important part of the job and programs.

Your magazine can help.

Yours truly,  
Art Heideman  
Vo-Ag Instructor  
Eastmont High School  
East Wenatchee, WA 98801

## Officers of Professional Organizations for Vocational Agriculture Educators

1981

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President Eugene Lehrman, Wisconsin  
Vice President, Agriculture Paul M. Day, Minnesota  
Executive Director Gene Bottoms  
Headquarter's Address 2020 N. 14th Street  
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Headquarter's Telephone (703) 522-6121

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Montana State University  
Bozeman, Montana 59715  
President's Telephone (406) 994-3201

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Western Region Paul Peterson, Utah  
President's Address Vocational Agriculture Education  
7510 Armstrong Street,  
S.W., MS FG11  
Tumwater, Washington  
98504  
President's Telephone (206) 753-5663



## Alibi Analysis

By LAYLE D. LAWRENCE

*Editor's Note: Dr. Lawrence is Associate Professor in Agricultural Education at West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia 26506.*



It's been said before. Good vocational agriculture programs don't just happen, they are created by dedicated, enthusiastic, hard working teachers who happen to be very lucky. Although few programs could be considered ideal, teachers can generally accomplish what they want to accomplish, and students will generally achieve what teachers expect them to achieve. Anyone who works closely with vo-ag teachers has heard the common alibis and excuses of those who operate less-than-desirable programs. Some are legitimate. Each is designed to evoke sympathy and condolence. Listen for the violins, then check (x) those listed below that you rely on.

( ) 1. **My administrator doesn't support vo-ag.**

There are two possible reasons for this. Either (a) you haven't communicated, or (b) your program doesn't deserve support. In case of (a), insist that your principal or director accompany you on an occasional supervisory visit, sit in periodically on vo-ag and adult/young farmer classes, and attend some of your advisory council meetings. Submit a course of study based on student and community needs and an annual report listing student experience programs, incomes and achievements. In case of (b), seek promotion, find another profession, or get on the ball.

( ) 2. **The counselor uses vo-ag as a dumping ground.**

Again, you haven't communicated. Does your counselor have a statement of vo-ag objectives and your course of study? Has the counselor made supervisory visits with you? Have you established criteria (policy) for student admittance into vo-ag? If these things have been done and you still have problems, see a doctor. Your backbone is missing.

( ) 3. **My students just don't want to learn.**

Your lack of enthusiasm is showing. Students resist learning that which they

feel is useless. Check your course of study — is it designed merely to teach about agriculture or does it involve students in agriculture? Tape record a few class sessions. When you listen to yourself, do you immediately fall asleep? Enthusiasm is contagious. Sell agriculture as though your job depended on it. It does.

( ) 4. **I can't offer a decent program with these facilities.**

Lack of facilities may indeed limit offerings, but we all know of outstanding programs that exist in spite of poor facilities. How? By the teacher making use of the many resources available in the community. Given time, good programs will generate needed facilities. An enterprising teacher on one end of a log . . . will start the log rolling.

( ) 5. **Athletics get all the attention in my school.**

So what else is new? Don't let envy cloud your thinking. In most schools, less than 20 percent of the students are involved in organized athletics. What of the others? Students who get involved in vo-ag and FFA and who develop profitable and challenging occupational experience programs can satisfy their needs (and most teachers' needs) for recognition and success. For consolation, reflect on the fate of the losing coach. Who wants to be a principal?

( ) 6. **My students don't have opportunities for occupational experience programs.**

Hogwash! This is still the land of op-

portunity! If students can't have vast farming programs, how about intensive small fruit, vegetable or ornamentals enterprises? If agribusiness work opportunities are limited, why not stress self-employment in small engine repair, bedding plant production, yard care, pet grooming, or cutting firewood? With a little thought, you'll find that hundreds of opportunities are knocking. Open the door.

( ) 7. **I don't have time to . . .**

You have the same 24 hours a day that everyone else gets. It's how you use them that counts. Make a list of all the things you do and the things you'd like to do. Without mercy, scratch those items that contribute nothing to student entry and success in occupations requiring agricultural knowledge and skills. See? You have plenty of time to do the job for which you were hired. Do it.

( ) 8. **I have too many students.**

It's true that administrators are caught up in the numbers game. That's part of their job. It's your job to develop policies (with the help and backing of your advisory council) which establish student admission criteria and maximum class and program enrollments. Policies, to be official, must be approved by the board of education. Be prepared to explain vo-ag philosophy and objectives and sell the need for enrollment limitations to the board. If student load is excessive but voluntary, press for another teacher rather than fewer students. You, too, can play the numbers game.

It's only human to offer excuses or point the finger at someone else when faced with criticism. It works often enough to be worth a try. But if you checked any of the items listed above, you alone have responsibility for confronting the problem and solving it. What's that? You don't have time to . . . ?

## Professionalism: Spouse and House

By ELMER L. COOPER AND CLIFFORD L. NELSON

*Editor's Note: Both authors are in the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education at the University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20742. Dr. Cooper is Assistant Professor and Dr. Nelson is Professor and Chairman.*



In a recent year in Maryland, 5% of the vocational agriculture teachers changed teaching positions in the wake of home and family separation. Some highly qualified graduates of agricultural teacher education do not seek teaching positions in view of their perceptions of job requirements that are too demanding. Other factors seem to indicate that spouse and family factors contribute in a substantial way to teacher turnover, teacher shortage, morale problems, and to the level of program quality in some schools.

Studies of why vo-ag teachers leave the profession most often conclude that salary, lack of a career advancement ladder, and working conditions are the most important factors. Teacher educators have demonstrated interest in the first two, but can do little about them, except to honestly relay the facts to prospective teachers and to administrators interested in keeping their current vo-ag teachers. Similarly, individual administrators are limited in their power to change salary scales and career opportunities for individuals.

Working conditions are influenced by a broad range of factors such as facilities, school administration practices, financial support of the program, personal relations with co-workers, and community aspirations regarding the program. Such factors as hours of work per week, night obligations, community support, and spouse reaction to job obligations, also contribute to the sum total of working conditions under which the teacher functions. Studies over the years have shown that the typical vo-ag teacher works approximately 55 hours per week. It is conventional wisdom in the agricultural education profession that the effective teacher is active in community affairs, works after normal school hours with FFA groups, often participates in one or more service clubs, provides leadership in church and is actively involved in other matters. For some teachers, this is too much and for some spouses it is construed as abandonment or being forced to act as a "single parent."

### What Are The Implications?

Vocational agriculture programs have been closed or severely weakened by the teacher shortage. Able young teachers are recruited by agricultural businesses and Cooperative Extension, and lured by production agriculture and other business opportunities. The teacher shortage is two-fold. Early career teachers must be retained and more graduates in agricultural teacher education must be available and encouraged to enter the profession. Much effort has been made in developing and implementing recruiting strategies. However, little has been done to improve the degree of teacher retention.

### What Caused the Situation to Develop?

"Our undergraduates are different from those of past years." "Women graduates, if married, or about to be married, are not available to move to where job openings exist." "Our students do not have the same work ethic we did." "The lack of a rural background and farm experience means that our new teachers come from a much different society than we did."

The authors have heard these and other comments by teacher educators as attempts to explain the teacher shortage. None are totally true, but they do point to some areas that should be examined.

Sociologists and psychologists confirm the observation that both family structure and society have changed in the U.S. The employment status of the male in a marriage does not necessarily

dictate where a family will live and work as it did in years past. More and more families have two income-earning individuals. Where professional decisions in a marriage are of the historically male-dominated nature, the female agricultural education graduate is severely limited in choices as to where to teach, what kind of position to accept, how far to commute and, quite possibly, whether or not to teach at all. Having to compromise the opportunity to try out the profession for which one is prepared creates some real pressures on marriage.

A higher percentage of high school graduates now attend college. Assuming no major change in the proportion of "white collar" to "blue collar" parents, it seems likely that a higher proportion of those students who attend college are from families whose bread winners worked at an hourly wage as opposed to salary or business income. If this is the case with prospective teachers, we should expect more persons in the field to gauge progress on the job in terms of hours and days as opposed to when the job is done.

Further, it would follow that more teachers and spouses can be expected to be compensated when overtime occurs. The effectiveness, influence and spread of collective bargaining in education have also been factors related to this change. Most teachers are more likely to question evening meetings, after school activities and uncompensated overtime beyond the limits of the contracted work day.

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## Professionalism: Spouse and House

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### What Should Teacher Educators Do?

Few if any studies have dealt with the broad question of expectations of teacher educators, supervisors, and leaders of vocational agriculture teachers groups as opposed to those of teachers. Research should be conducted regarding the effects of spouse and family obligations as they are related to continuation or level of activity in vo-ag teaching. A dialog concerning these issues should be systematically begun within and among the professional groups in agricultural education. The profession should look to other fields to see how they have coped with similar changes in their professional ranks. Changes in preservice and inservice education content should be made to help prospective teachers, established teachers and their spouses understand problems of the vo-ag teacher concerning home and

family. Knowledge of this should appropriately impact upon standards for local programs, so supervisors and administrators should become involved.

### Some Possible Activities

Seminars for both student and spouse for those in preservice programs should be a regular feature of teacher education. Further, sessions at annual teacher conferences should focus on issues regarding "spouse and house" and spouses should be actively courted to attend. Much that a vo-ag teacher does can be a family affair. One of the authors, a rare second generation vo-ag teacher, can attest to the efficacy of this effort.

Family and individual counseling skills must be acquired and utilized by teacher educators. Historically not an area of expertise of the teacher educator, family and marriage counseling preparations must be considered for the future. Units of instruction in this area should be a part of preservice courses or courses available in graduate programs in agricultural education.

Efficiencies in vocational agriculture service delivery must be sought and developed so the teacher will have additional time for home and family. More definitive decisions on program parameters and realistic expectations by teacher educators must be prepared to help teachers develop time and activity priorities so as to assure time for sufficient family participation.

### Consequences if Problem is Ignored

Program closings, reduced FFA activities, community disillusionment, continued teacher shortage, morale problems, divorce, and worse are some of the consequences to be expected if the problem is ignored. The realities of vocational agriculture teacher reactions to stress and excessive responsibilities must be reckoned with. Teacher education may not be able to solve or eliminate the problems, but they might be able to reduce their impact on graduates and ultimately on the youth enrolled in vocational agriculture programs. We must try!

## ARTICLE

# To Teach Or Not Teach Vo-Ag — How University Students Feel About Teaching

There is a critical need for qualified teachers of vocational agriculture. Recruiting undergraduate students into agricultural teacher education is a never ending struggle at most universities. No matter how much counseling, personal contact, or encouragement a student receives, the final decision remains up to the student. Even though teacher educators like to believe that they are able to take any student and produce a finely polished teacher, unless the student has the desire and determination to become a teacher, the efforts of the teacher educator are fruitless. Teacher educators concerned with recruitment into the field of agricultural education must ultimately ask themselves why some students are interested in becoming teachers while

BY JERRY L. PETERS  
Editor's Note: Dr. Peters  
is Assistant Professor in  
Vocational Education at  
Purdue University,  
West Lafayette, Indiana  
47907.



others are not.

### Where the Decisions Begin

Where does the teacher-making process start? When do students really decide if they want to become teachers, or better yet, why do some students want to teach while others do not? These are questions which concern per-

sons in agricultural teacher education, and it would appear that the answers to these questions involve the experiences students have at the university, as well as all their previous school experience.

Students enrolled in the introductory agricultural education course at The Ohio State University and at Purdue University are asked at the end of the course to write a paper dealing with why they do or do not want to become teachers of vocational agriculture. The paper is due the last week of class. This gives students the advantage of learning during the course and the opportunity to look at themselves as prospective teachers. Many times freshmen and sophomores are undecided about their goals and are not prepared to

make definite career choices. It is important for them to begin serious consideration about their future career goals at this stage in their college years. Delaying a decision past the sophomore year may just add to frustrations.

By the beginning of the junior year it is frequently awkward to change majors being costly in both time and money. This is particularly true of education majors due to the necessity of scheduling teaching courses and student teaching experiences in the proper sequence. Another unfortunate situation also arises when education graduates take jobs in fields unrelated to teaching. Having the students evaluate themselves in terms of whether they do or do not want to become teachers gives students the opportunity to really think about their goals and career expectations in a manner they might otherwise not take the time or effort to do until job searching really begins.

### Why Students Do Not Want to Teach

Being aware of some of the comments students make concerning the decision to become teachers may give teacher educators a clue for use in teacher recruitment and instruction. Many and varied are the reasons students suggest about why they do not want to teach, but some reasons keep recurring time after time. Time and money are cited as reasons for not entering the profession:

*For how much time and work vocational agriculture teachers spend in and out of the class for vo-ag and FFA, they don't get nearly enough recognition or pay.*

*I value my private life highly and appreciate having time to myself without interruptions. I am not willing to sacrifice myself to the occupation of a teacher.*

*I think I can earn more and have just as much fun and fulfillment in something else.*

*One of my main reasons is that it takes too much preparation time.*

*Students frequently feel they do not possess the qualities necessary to become good teachers:*

*I don't feel I have the leadership or personal qualities that teachers seem to need.*

*I don't have enough patience to be a good teacher.*

*I don't have enough motivation to teach high school students.*

*A point that I have considered is that being a woman would be a hindrance to the students. I find it hard to believe that a woman teaching vo-ag could gain the same amount of respect that a male would conceivably have.*

*I don't really want to be a vocational agriculture teacher because of the responsibility involved.*

Discipline problems seem to worry many of the students considering teaching:

*Students' values have changed along with their attitudes towards education, discipline and respect for others. These are just a few of my personal observations which have made me decide not to further my background in Agricultural Education.*

*Discipline problems put unneeded pressures on the teacher and consequently make the teacher's job much more unpleasant.*

The urge to return to the family farm also claims its toll among students considering agricultural education as a career:

*I think that after graduation I am going back to the farm.*

These comments may be typical reactions from students who have considered going into any area of teaching and have decided against it. Nevertheless, some of these comments bring to light issues that are critical to agricultural education. It would be well to take heed of what these students are saying and try to deal with the issues. There is probably little one can do or should do to change the minds of those individuals who have negative opinions concerning teaching as a career. But there are perhaps means which could be used to encourage those individuals who are interested in teaching but for various reasons have been discouraged from wanting to teach agriculture.

### Why Students Want to Teach

Along a more positive line, it is encouraging to consider the comments of those students who say they want to become vocational agriculture teachers. A considerable number of these responses are alike, many are quite idealistic and there are those which show evidence of some real soul-searching. Perhaps it is those students

whose expectations are too idealistic who eventually enter non-teaching professions following their experience student teaching.

One of the major reasons cited by students for wanting to become teachers is the opportunity to help others and the rewards and satisfaction therein:

*I feel I can share my experiences and knowledge with the students and yet, at the same time learn something from them.*

*A big reason I would like to teach is because I believe that I could do a better job than the teachers did when I was in high school.*

*I would like to be a vo-ag teacher because it is challenging and rewarding. These two things would make life worthwhile because I am helping someone else succeed and reach their goals in life just like my vo-ag instructor did for me.*

*I want to do more for society than to see that their cars don't fall apart and I want to make something of somebody.*

*The rewards you get from being a teacher are very limited but to me, seeing a young student grow into his own business and be successful is a great feeling.*

*One of the reasons I want to be a teacher is because I enjoy people — especially younger people.*

*If I am able to influence even a small number of students in their choices of a career then my vocation as a teacher will be both satisfying and rewarding.*

*I have always wanted to teach, it seems there is a feeling of sharing yourself with someone to help that person to form a better understanding of himself and his surroundings.*

Students also indicate that they are considering teaching as a profession because it satisfies a variety of their personal needs:

*The thing I like about it is that it is a year round job and you're not always in the classroom.*

*I want to teach because it gives me a chance to get involved in the local community, it gives me a chance to teach students in a subject that I really love and it gives me an opportunity to be my own boss to a certain extent.*

*I want a job that is closely related to farming yet not actually involved in*

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## To Teach or Not Teach Vo-Ag — How University Students Feel About Teaching

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the full time process.

I am using this as a stepping stone to higher positions. Such higher positions require people who can deal effectively with others and becoming an ag teacher is perfect training for these jobs.

I like a job where you are not doing the same thing all the time.

I feel it is an occupation that will satisfy my needs for competition, helpfulness, and farm life.

Finally, there are those realistic students who are looking for fields with readily available jobs:

Ag teachers are in great demand and there are many more jobs than people to fill them.

Making the decision to become an agriculture teacher, or any other career choice for that matter, should be a well thought-out process. Individuals outside the field of education are confronted with the disadvantages of teaching as a profession through teacher strikes for higher pay, more preparation time, fewer responsibilities, and a variety of other issues. Those individuals concerned with re-

cruiting students into agricultural education need to wage their own publicity campaign to inform potential teachers of the advantages and rewards that teaching affords.

In agricultural education, many advantages and disadvantages are easily observable but there are many which are hidden. Often these advantages and disadvantages are not brought to the attention of students. They are often aware only of the sides of teaching which they are told about and those they are able to observe for themselves. It is for this reason that individuals highly involved in agricultural education should take a careful look at the picture they are painting of agricultural education for their students. This need not concern only those instructors at the college level but should also involve teachers at the high school level as well.

We need to take a clear look at ourselves as representatives of agricultural education to see if we are actually telling it like it is. We need to let students become aware of both the advantages and the disadvantages of this field, as well as any efforts which are being made to improve any fundamental

faults it possesses.

There are numerous ways of getting across the positive aspects of teaching agriculture to prospective teachers. Both The Ohio State University Agricultural Education Department and the Vocational Education Section at Purdue University have made a considerable effort to make this message more public. They have made use of the media through news stories about the scarcity of agriculture teachers. Exploratory meetings for college freshmen have been conducted by the agricultural education faculties to explain the agricultural education programs and to encourage students to consider teaching as a career choice.

A recruitment task force was developed at The Ohio State University to consider possible alternatives in the recruitment of both high school and college students into the field of agricultural education. Teacher educators in agriculture need to go out looking for students rather than to sit back and wait for students to come looking for them.

### Note

All quotations used within this article are responses of students enrolled in the Introductory Agricultural Education courses at The Ohio State University and at Purdue University.

## BOOK REVIEW

COMPUTER MODELLING IN AGRICULTURE by N.R. Brockington, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979, 156 pages, \$35.00.

COMPUTER MODELLING IN AGRICULTURE is designed for advanced college students and technical agriculture researchers wishing to use the computer in solving farm-related problems. Examples and models used by the author are specific to technical agriculture: domestic water supplies, growth rates of animals, carbon metabolism in green plants, and management of slaughter animal populations.

Six chapters are included in the book: 1) Introduction, 2) Constructing Diagrams for Dynamic Systems Models, 3) Computer Programming for Dynamic Systems Models (I): Sample Examples, 4) Computer Programming for Dynamic Systems Models (II): Further Concepts and Techniques, 5)

Computer Programming for Dynamic Systems Models (III): Event-Oriented Models, and 6) Testing and Using Models. Appendix I lists solutions to example exercises presented in Chapters 2 and 3, while Appendix II shows complete FORTRAN programs for model examples that were presented in the third chapter.

Individuals planning to use the book as a guide when constructing and testing models to solve agricultural-related problems should have a working acquaintance with FORTRAN programming.

Prior knowledge of canned computer packages such as SPSS and SAS would be helpful when attempting to solve the problems in the book. Professors who teach technical agriculture courses requiring interaction with the computer should be especially interested in COMPUTER MODELLING IN

AGRICULTURE because its examples are programmed mostly for batch processing with either card, tape, or disk and with modification, the microcomputers so common today.

The author has been the Head of the Systems Synthesis Department at the Grassland Research Institute and has experience as a teacher of computer usage in research and development. Agricultural education professionals who may not be interested in constructing models, but in solutions provided by the computer may find this book has limited utility. Agricultural education researchers, however, may wish to purchase the book and use it as a reference to supplement their collection of computer materials.

Blannie E. Bowen  
Mississippi State University  
Mississippi State, Mississippi

## ARTICLE

# A Competency-Based Instructional System For Postsecondary Teachers

By OSCAR H. INGRAM AND RALPH G. FIELD

Editor's Note: Dr. Ingram is Associate Professor of Agriculture at Southwest Missouri State University, Springfield, Missouri 65801. Dr. Field is Professor and Head, Department of Adult and Occupational Education, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas 66502.

The expansion of program offerings in agricultural education has and is creating an influx of teachers not specifically prepared to teach, or to teach at the level of competency required in today's schools. No where is this more evident than at the postsecondary level.

Postsecondary teachers are generally technically competent, but their certification requirements are often minimal, especially with regard to pedagogical requirements.

A wide range of teaching competence is displayed by those individuals, due in part to the varied backgrounds they bring to the teaching setting. Particularly noticeable is the lack of preparation for planning and conducting educational programs.

Research completed at Kansas State University indicates the importance of professional education teacher competencies and the need for additional experience or information about these competencies.

### Two Questions Asked

Postsecondary teachers of agricultural technology in Kansas (N = 71), selected state supervisors of agricultural education (N = 21), selected teacher educators of agricultural education (N = 41), and vocational coordinators/directors of area vocational technical schools and community junior colleges in Kansas (N = 18), were asked two questions:

1. What are the teaching competencies that teachers of postsecondary agriculture technology feel are important to their job?

2. What, if any, additional experience or information about these teaching competencies do teachers of postsecondary agriculture technology need?

An instrument was designed to draw from each respondent his or her opinion of the importance of each of 100 competencies. A rating scale was used that ranged from "very little value to teach-

relations plan for your vocational program

2. Evaluating your instructional effectiveness

3. Providing instruction for slower and more capable learners

4. Directing programmed instruction

5. Coordinating on-the-job instruction

6. Preparing displays to promote your vocational program

7. Projecting instructional resource needs

8. Conducting an occupational analysis

9. Arranging for television and radio presentations concerning your vocational program

10. Employing simulation techniques

With the rapid expansion of postsecondary programs and a variety of approaches to teacher preparation being examined, teacher educators in agriculture must look closely at the different approaches and be prepared to justify their programs.

It is anticipated that this information will assist teacher educators in designing and implementing preservice and inservice educational programs for postsecondary teachers of agricultural technology. These findings can also serve as a basis for the selection of those teaching competencies that should be required for meeting professional education certification requirements.

It should be noted that secondary teachers of agriculture have traditionally been certified upon graduation from college with a Bachelor's degree. However, it is not inconceivable that teachers of agriculture technology might in the future be certified on a competency basis rather than degree completion.

The merit of such a certification approach prompts those in the business of teacher preparation to be prepared to implement such a program if by chance it should be mandated by other groups through legislation.

ers of agriculture technology" = 1, to very important to teachers of agriculture technology" = 5.

A similar rating scale was provided to assist the respondents in assessing the amount of additional experience or information relative to each competency that was deemed desirable. This scale ranged from "very little additional experience or information needed" = 1, to "a great deal of additional experience or information needed" = 5.

### Importance To The Job

The ten professional education teacher competencies rated as most important to the job by all responding groups were:

1. Developing a course of study  
2. Keeping up to date professionally  
3. Evaluating your instructional effectiveness

4. Developing program goals and objectives

5. Providing for student safety

6. Planning a unit of instruction

7. Developing a lesson plan

8. Selecting student instructional materials

9. Determining needs and interests of students

10. Coordinating on-the-job instruction

### Additional Experience Or Information Needed

The ten professional education teacher competencies rated highest on additional information or experience needed, when rated by teachers of postsecondary agricultural technology were:

1. Developing a school community

# Agricultural Education in Nigeria

While each developing country is unique, there are often many striking similarities and common problems. One of the most common problems is the political divisions and most important of all, is the attainment of self-government. Nigeria is 20 years old as an independent nation. The diversity of ethnic groups and religious affiliations are other outstanding problems in the country. While the percentage of illiteracy is very high among the Muslims, it has been reduced to a minimum among the Christians. The population of the Muslims is about 54%, while that of Christians comprises the remaining 46%. The total average of illiteracy in the country is approximately 65% with a majority of these illiterates being farmers.

An additional problem is the movement of the youth from the rural areas to the urban cities. Although, most of these youth cannot continue their education beyond elementary or high school level, they don't choose to remain in rural areas and work with their fathers as farmers unless they have adequate farm training and more modern equipment.

Before the attainment of independence in 1960, there was only one university in Nigeria. The number of high school age youth that attended school was limited to the elite families. The differences became great between the north and south areas and among the Christian and Muslim communities.

Immediately after independence, four additional universities were opened, and the number of high and elementary schools also increased greatly. As of 1976, all our elementary schools are operated under "Free University Primary Education." This policy outlined that every school age child should attend school. The number of universities has risen to 13 in the country with four additional university campuses. Nigeria has undertaken this drastic change in education policy in order to meet new challenges and needs of all societal levels. This article will deal with the extension services and inservice education for adult and young

BY JULIUS S.  
AWOTUNDUN

Editor's Note: Mr. Awotundun is a graduate student at Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas 66502.



farmers in Nigeria.

## Agricultural Education at the Elementary and High Schools

Agricultural courses in the elementary school curriculum are known as "Rural Science." The courses are divided into two parts: the practical and the theoretical. These are the only courses being taught by specialist instructors in the elementary schools, and they are known as "Rural Science" teachers. They received their agricultural education through a two-year vocational agricultural program and at the end of their courses they are assigned to various elementary and high schools which do not have any specialized teachers on their current staffs. The practical courses involve actual farming and gardening. Each elementary school has a manageable size school farm and a garden near by. These practical courses are only taken by boys.

During the practical period, girls in the same classes will attend "Domestic Science" courses. These girls are taught cookery and needlework by a female teacher who has taken the courses during her teachers' training. The second part of "Rural Science" courses, which is theoretical part, is normally called "Nature Study." The course is offered for both boys and girls. The curriculum includes general sciences and the natural environment around the children's community, such as simple study of plants and animals.

At the high school level agricultural education includes a total spectrum of offerings. Here the courses include practical agriculture, such as farming and gardening, and some high schools

are keeping poultry. A schedule is made by the teacher so that each student knows when it is his turn to feed the poultry. This is possible because most of the high schools are on a boarding school arrangement. Their location has made it possible to acquire enough land for their agricultural requirements.

The classwork includes soil science, crop husbandry, and animal husbandry. At this level the courses for boys and girls are totally separated. Girls begin to take advanced courses in Home Economics. Their courses include cookery, sewing, sex-education, elementary nutrition, and home management. The teachers for both home economics and agriculture are specialized for these courses. They are either post-high school graduates or university graduates with a B. Sc. in Agriculture or Home Economics.

## Agriculture Extension Service

Instructional programs for farmers in agriculture exist to provide a supply of competent manpower for the nation's agriculture industry. These farmers require instruction which will keep them current with recent developments in the industry. This includes preparing entrepreneurs as well as hired employees and serving the agribusiness sector as well as farming. Thus, the objective of the extension service is to reach the clientele and help the farmers to improve their methods of farming by using new agricultural innovations and to identify farmers' problems and assist them in reaching a profitable solution. To disseminate agricultural ideas, the extension service is able to reach more farmers than in the past through training of more agricultural agents. Farmers have shown more interest in the extension service by taking their problems to the agents and seeking their advice.

The Ministry of Agriculture is established in every state with divisions at the local government level. The chief agricultural officers and their supporting staffs carry out the administration at the headquarters in each

At the local level, the agricultural agents work directly with the farmers to carry out demonstrations on the farms with the local farmers. As an example, these agents advise the farmers on how to apply fertilizers, insecticides, and herbicides. If there is any farm problem that these agricultural agents cannot solve for the farmers, the assistance of an agricultural officer at the state level is obtained.

From the state, the problem is sent to the Agricultural Extension and Research Liason Services, which are responsible for interpreting the research findings in a better, understandable language for the local farmers. When the research work is completed, the results are sent back to the farmers through the state assistant agricultural officers. The Agricultural Extension and Research Liason Services is a branch of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. These Agricultural Extension and Research Services provide publications for extension guides, posters, and other information bulletins available to farmers throughout the states.

## Inservice Education

There are three contributors which assist agribusiness to become more relevant. These three concepts are modern agriculture curricula, a fully developed program, and competent personnel. Modern curricula are based upon the employment needs and opportunities in agricultural industry. The farm productivity cannot be greater than the capability of the agricultural supplies and service area to make available the inputs needed to produce plants and animals. Likewise, the ability to market or sell farm products depends upon producing the desired commodity. If this type of inservice education does not prepare individuals for employment in all areas of agricultural industry, the program is contributing to a weak link in the system of food production.

Modern instructional program curricula includes the area of agribusiness as well as production agriculture. Of course, each local curriculum is designed to serve the most pressing needs of the citizens in each district. In some cases, this may include an all-production curriculum while in other areas, it may be all agribusiness or a combination of agribusiness and production agriculture.

Competent instructors are needed to

implement all programs. Instructors must have a broad base of preparation, with one or more areas of specialization. Thus, the staff of the Agricultural Extension and Research Services travel into each state to provide workshops for the extension agents. Each of these instructors has a personal professional commitment to keep up-to-date in both the technical and professional aspect of agricultural education. They coordinate effort of all governmental agencies concerned with agricultural education.

As competent instructors, the staff members are tailoring their programs to comply with the regulations of federal and state governments for education programs. At the same time the programs do not lack relevancy because most of the regulations are related to social concerns and local needs of the community. The local agricultural agents who received training through such workshops return to their districts to instruct the local farmers.

## Vocational Agricultural Education

There are two types of vocational agriculture schools in the country. There are four vocational agriculture schools that train teachers for elementary and high schools. The higher elementary school teachers who have taught for at least four years after their teachers' training apply for admission to the courses if they are interested. Their entry into these schools depends upon interest and experience.

The successful candidates are usually trained for two years in agricultural courses and methods of how to teach elementary sciences in either elementary or high schools. At the end of the program they receive a Senior Teachers' Certificate of Education. The other vocational agriculture school is a branch of Ahmadu Bello University. Here, the local agricultural agents are trained. The candidates are high school leavers and their training varies.

The agricultural assistants undergo two-years of training after high school with courses being offered in agronomy, farm mechanization, farm management, and science courses, such as biology and chemistry. At the end of the course the students receive diplomas. They usually are employed as agricultural assistants in the districts.

After working for two or three years they may take a qualifying test to enter into the higher vocational agricultural school. The successful candidates go for another two years of training. At this time they take advanced courses in agronomy, farm mechanization, farm management, and other science courses and are given diplomas at the end of the training. Thus, they become agricultural superintendents.

Agricultural superintendents are in charge of farms and farm training centers, where the field overseers are trained for one year. The entry level of these field overseers is an elementary school education. They are the officers that work directly with the farmers. This is the lowest level of agricultural officer in the country.

Nigeria, which was formally known as an agricultural country, has been importing about one-quarter to one-third of the needed food. This is due to the decreasing number of farmers from death and retirement without replacement. It was this problem that caused the government to embark on an extensive agricultural program. Now that some of the high school leavers have been encouraged to take farm training, young farmers are replacing the deceased and retired farmers. The amount of imported food is also being reduced. Both extension and inservice education are catering to these farmers in all aspects of full-scale production. The training of these young farmers has also reduced the movement of the youth from the rural to urban areas by providing employment for them locally.

The other major problem was a lack of teachers for the new elementary and high schools as well as universities.

It is hoped that the condition of the country will prosper in regard to its agricultural enterprise, as all these programs continue to function normally.

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# Utilizing Student Assistants In Teaching Vocational Agriculture

The persistent shortage of high school vocational agriculture teachers across the United States has prompted research and other efforts to determine ways to lessen this shortage. A summary of this research points toward two ways the shortage might be reduced — recruit more students into agricultural teacher education curricula and keep vocational agriculture instructors teaching for a longer period of time.

One of the most frequently stated reasons by teachers for leaving the profession is that the job takes too much time. Teachers often feel they do not have enough time to enjoy a satisfactory personal or family life. One way to lessen this problem would be the use of student assistants. Utilization of student assistants is not the total answer. Their use can eliminate many hours of work each week for the teacher. Another reason for using student assistants is to encourage them to become vocational agriculture teachers.

In an Arizona study by Nicholas, he found that students were better able to assess their suitability to an occupation after participation in a work experience program. Although a student assistantship would not actually be a work experience program, the concept is the same. By assisting the teacher in daily activities, the student would be in a position to understand the job of teaching vocational agriculture more completely. This experience could increase his/her likelihood to consider becoming a teacher of vocational agriculture. Regardless of the student's appreciation of vocational agriculture as a career, the experience would be useful to both the student and teacher.

## Selection of a Student Assistant

The importance of careful selection of student assistants should not be overlooked. The student will determine to a great degree what type of activities will be accomplished. Ideally, a

By LARRY GARTEN AND  
RICHARD WELTON

*Editor's Note: Mr. Garten is Graduate Research Assistant and Dr. Welton is Coordinator of Agricultural Education at Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas 66506.*

student assistant should possess good personal characteristics such as maturity, honesty, reliability, and the ability to get along with others. It is desirable that the assistant be an active FFA member with a high degree of interest in the local chapter. To be effective as a student assistant, it is important that the student should have previously taken the class in which he or she will be assisting.

As a minimum, they should have some competency in the subject matter being taught. The ability to type would also be a great asset. It should be realized that the ideal student may not always be available to assist. Often, students with no background in vocational agriculture but with secretarial skills such as typing and filing can be used effectively to lessen some of the work load.

The number of student assistants that a vocational agriculture teacher can use will vary. It may be possible to use one or more assistants for a class. Some factors to consider in determining the number of assistants might be:

- 1) the number of students enrolled in the vocational agriculture program;
- 2) the degree to which the FFA chapter is involved in various activities;
- 3) the methods of teaching used;
- 4) the competency of the teacher in administering the department;
- 5) school policy; and
- 6) the effectiveness of the assistants.

In this case, one could act as the office secretary taking care of correspondence, filing, and typing. The other assistant would be more involved as a class assistant taking attendance and assisting the teacher as needed.

## Possible Student Assistant Activities

The following is a list of activities that a student assistant could perform. The list is not all-inclusive nor could all student assistants perform those activities listed due to their ability or school regulations. The list is meant merely as a guide to be adjusted to individual programs and to stimulate other ideas for student assistant use. Many of these activities could be performed by FFA officers, class officers, or other students in addition to student assistants.

1. Assisting:
  - in assigning daily grades
  - in supervising students during laboratory assignments and shop time
  - in preparing lesson plans
  - in completing award applications
  - in coaching judging teams
  - substitute teachers
  - teacher in measuring for FFA jackets
2. Keeping:
  - attendance records
  - magazine rack organized
  - an organized file on publication articles for speech or class purposes
3. Developing:
  - specimens, samples, or models
  - a summer supervised occupational experience program visitation schedule
  - shop or classroom clean-up schedules
4. Maintaining:
  - department inventories
  - and repairing department equipment
5. Grading:
  - objective test questions
  - record books
6. Handing:
  - back assignments, quizzes, or tests
  - out teaching lessons or skills
7. Ordering:
  - FFA supplies
  - and returning audio visuals
8. Setting up:
  - classroom, laboratory, and shop demonstrations
  - and running audio visual equipment
9. Selling pencils to students
10. Recording grades
11. Receiving assignments, quizzes or tests
12. Collecting class dues and issuing receipts
13. Distributing teacher handout materials
14. Providing individual student instruction
15. Preparing transparencies and other visual aids.

- 16. Teaching lessons or skills
- 17. Duplicating needed materials
- 18. Answering phone calls and recording messages
- 19. Making phone calls as requested by teacher
- 20. Building needed equipment
- 21. Checking out materials to students
- 22. Running errands for the teacher
- 23. Driving vehicles for field trip (make sure the school rules allow for this, and the assistant is properly certified)
- 24. Organizing slide/tape presentations for class, FFA meetings, or banquets
- 25. Setting mail
- 26. Typing
- 27. Filing

By utilizing student assistants for these and other activities, the teacher should have no problem keeping them busy. In order to get more output from the assistants, the teacher may want to set a deadline for any activity which may take a period of time. By using

student assistants, the teacher will find he/she does not have as many little jobs to do. Care should be taken to make the assistantship enjoyable so that the student is able to see the positive aspects of teaching. The student will become better acquainted with a career in teaching vocational agriculture and be of great assistance to the teacher.

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## IDEAS UNLIMITED

# Portable Ground Fault Interrupter

By GLENN B. SIMS

*Editor's Note: Mr. Sims is Vocational Agriculture Teacher at Windsor High School in Windsor, Illinois 61957. This article is based on his entry in the Ideas Unlimited Contest sponsored by the National Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association.*

are commonly needed in construction. Long extension cords, even heavy-duty cords, commonly have capacitive losses between the conductors which are sensed by the GFI as a ground fault.

This problem is overcome by placing the GFI at the end of an extension cord. Full protection is now provided in the

Electrical shock is a very real problem in the agricultural mechanics laboratory. Even though most equipment used today is grounded or double insulated, there is still a real danger of electrical shock. The possibility of electrical shock is increased when classes work on concrete or outside. Fused circuits provide protection only in high current situations. It is generally agreed that current levels far below the trip level of circuit breakers are sufficient to cause injury or death.

The ground fault interrupter (GFI or GFCI) measures the difference between the current flowing in the hot and the neutral conductor. The GFI will trip at levels far below the level required to cause injury. It also accomplishes this task in a far shorter time which further reduces the risk.

The teaching of agricultural construction, is a situation which requires GFI protection. The ground fault is the most likely type of electrical danger in construction because of the excellent grounding conditions. The main difficulty with GFI protection in construction has been due to the extreme sensitivity of the GFI. Long extension cords

situations where it is most needed.

The GFI used for this portable unit is the type that is built into a duplex receptacle. The unit has been installed in a weatherproof box and cover. I have attached a six foot length of heavy (AWG#12) oil resistant and flexible (Type SO) electrical cord. A heavy duty three-prong grounding plug has been attached to the end of the cable. The six foot length was chosen to provide a short length that still allowed the GFI to be placed out of the way of the equipment.

The portable GFI is best used in any situation where a good ground is present. The most obvious example would be using a small portable concrete mixer to pour a concrete footing outdoors.

When this portable GFI is used, the circuit should still be protected by conventional fusing. This unit is not designed to protect against current overloads or line to line short circuits. The GFI unit has a test button which should be used once per month to insure that the unit is functioning properly. When making GFI installation, be sure to follow the manufacturer's wiring instructions.



# Why Not An Alumni?

Why not an Alumni? Teachers of vocational agriculture, take a few minutes and answer this question for yourself. I hope this will not be "a pitch" for the FFA Alumni, but instead an exchange that will trigger a reaction to help you and your students in vocational agriculture.

The reaction I receive from some teachers of vocational agriculture regarding the FFA Alumni is neutral or even negative. We need a positive reaction with all things concerning the FFA organization in order to be successful. The one reason that the State of Washington does not have a widespread functioning Alumni association is resistance among ag teachers. Some ag teachers say that they do not have enough time to organize and run an Alumni affiliate. Others say that they do not want a bunch of people dictating what they teach and what they do for FFA activities. Still others say that they do not see the need in their school or community for such a group. Some teachers simply do not know what the Alumni is or what it should do.

## Alumni Membership

The FFA Alumni Association was founded to be a "booster club" to the total vocational agriculture program which includes the leadership activities of the FFA. To be a member of the FFA Alumni, a person must be one of the following:

- 1) a former FFA member, or
- 2) a parent of a current or former FFA member, or
- 3) an honorary chapter farmer, or
- 4) a friend or supporter of the FFA organization who wants to help.

In every community, nearly everyone is a potential FFA alumni member. Just like the band boosters club helps the music department, the Alumni helps the vo-ag instructor with the active FFA's program of activities and supports the instructors total vo-ag program.

By JOHN A. GRIFFIN

*Editor's Note: Mr. Griffin is Vocational Agriculture Instructor at Zillah High School, Zillah, Washington 98953.*

## Stretching Time

Ag teachers often complain that if they had an Alumni group in their town they would be spending too much time away from home and family. In many cases the ag teacher is overworked, under paid, and never totally appreciated for the long hours and dedication to youth. Rather than spending time on dozens of different projects during the year, think about investing some time with an Alumni group and collecting some of the dividends. Think about the amount of time it would take to set up a livestock show, fair display, baby animal farm, or organize a fundraiser to send members to a state or national convention.

An organized booster club for agriculture made up of interested, motivated, and knowledgeable persons can save considerable teacher time. For an investment of time of one or two hours a month, the ag teacher could benefit by hundreds of hours donated by the Alumni group. In today's troubled times a good manager must look at investment vs return and then make a decision. The few hours spent to organize an Alumni group are well invested.

## Retaining Skills

In our programs we spend up to four years with students training them in a wide variety of agriculture and leadership skills areas. We push and encourage them to reach for goals that they felt they could never reach. With your help they did reach those goals. In our successful high school programs we have helped to build productive, responsible, knowledgeable, and energetic individuals. A great resource to ourselves and our future students is going out the door at graduation and most of them will not be heard from again as far as the FFA program is considered.

FFA has been a big part of their lives, and now that they are out of school, an organized Alumni association can bring these people back into the program as assistants. By use of the Alumni group, the local advisor can reinvest these former members. If we have a successful program, and if we are in a job by choice rather than by chance, and if we sincerely believe in the FFA in high school as the greatest leadership and motivational tool available, then why aren't we as instructors supporting the FFA Alumni? How many of us are members? How many of us now have this support group?

## Assisting with Events

Alumni groups can assist the local instructor with livestock shows, scholarships to seniors, field trips to agri-industries, seminars on special topics vital to agriculture, loans to high school students to establish SOE's, chaperoning conventions, transportation to contests, planning of recreational activities, and general fundraisers to aid the local program. The Alumni can get as active as you suggest. They will do what you ask of them when you ask it. Parents, the tax payers in the district, are a great asset to any program and of course to any alumni organization. As Alumni members they take a greater interest in the program. They become the first to see all the long hours that you put in on behalf of their children.

## Supporting Vo-Ag

The key to the FFA Alumni is that they will be an organized support group. You can always call on parents of officers or local merchants, but it seems like the same people are always asked to give of time or materials. With the Alumni the work is spread out. You'll have more man power to tackle those tough activities. Some people will always be ready to help, some never will, but without the Alumni, you may miss some that could really pitch in and help.

How can I organize an official FFA Alumni group? It is easy. A phone call to your state supervisor's office is all it takes to have the complete organizational kit at no cost to you. This kit explains in detail how to get an Alumni group started. Next make a few calls in the community to inform those supportive merchants and community people about your intent to organize. Get your active FFA chapter involved, too! In the national constitution it authorizes a standing committee to deal with Alumni Relations. Have

members of this committee contact former members in the community and invite them to the first organizational meeting. Don't forget those honorary chapter farmers and other supporters in the community. Have the students invite their parents also. You will find that this combination of support is an unbeatable team.

Once you have a set of officers elected and a minimum of 10 members with dues paid, you'll have a chartered Alumni group. Presto! Before you know it that small investment of time

will be replaced with a large return of interest, time, and enjoyment.

As an ag teacher today you shouldn't have to go it alone. You can't be all things to all people. Rather than limiting your activities because of your work load, shift some of that load to the Alumni. It will help you. The alumni can be the best tool to help you in producing a quality program for your students. If you do not have an alumni, ask yourself, "Why Not An Alumni?"

## Photographs for the Magazine

THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MAGAZINE needs quality photographs depicting the activities of agricultural educators, their students, and their programs. These photographs will be considered for use on the front cover, Stories in Pictures section, and to enrich articles.

Clear, well composed, 5x7 black and white photographs should be sent to the Editor. A complete statement of explanation should be attached to each photograph. (No photographs will be returned without a specific request.)

## Themes for 1982

### THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MAGAZINE

Computers in Agricultural Education	January
Image Building	February
Year-Round Programs	March
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Just for Teachers	May
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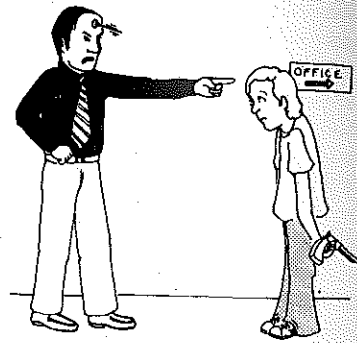
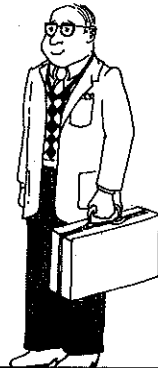
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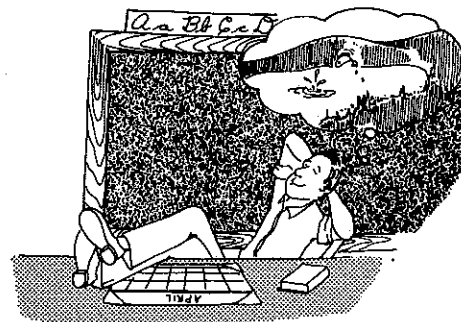
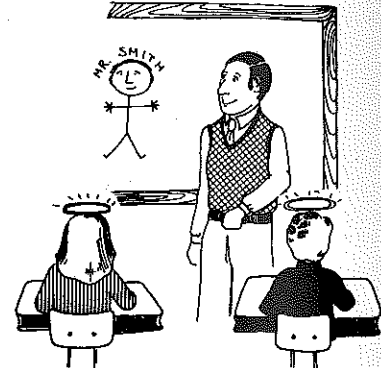
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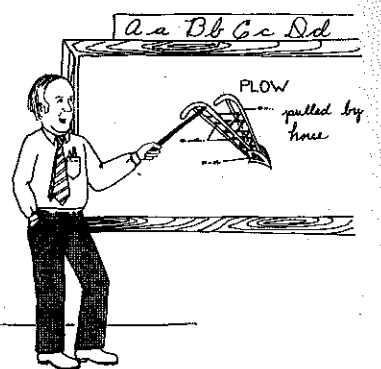


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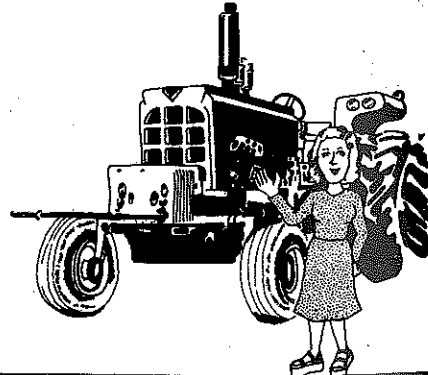


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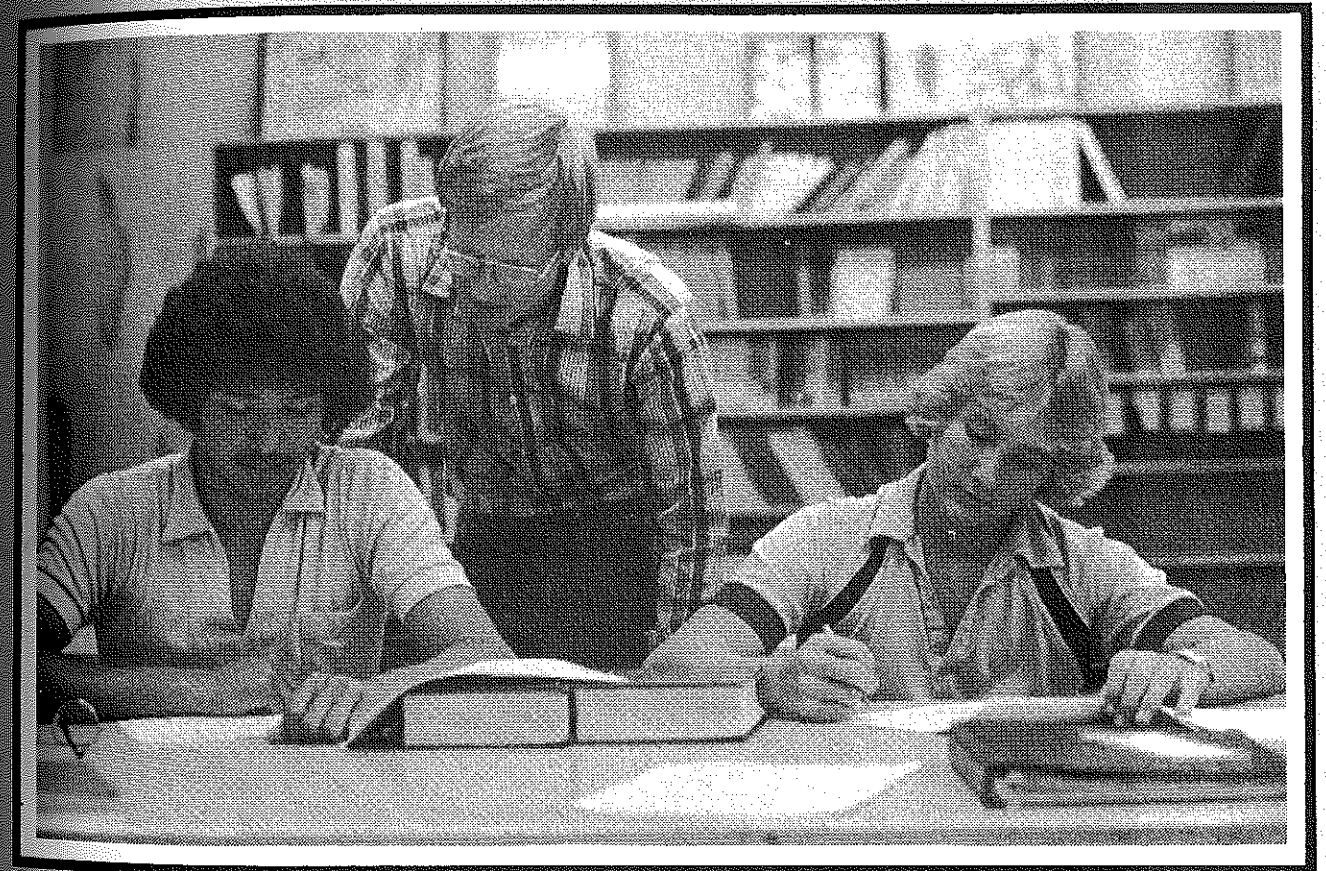


**KEEPING CURRENT**



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**THEME: The Beginning Teacher**