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THEME: Student Management

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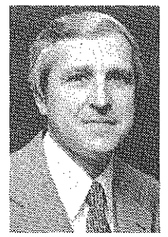
EDITOR'S PAGE

Student Management



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

Student Management is essential if a good learning environment is to be established. Teachers must recognize their roles in student management. Many of the criticisms of education today are rooted in the lack of initiative by teachers in "taking charge" and managing students for educational purposes. Observations of classrooms quickly reveal that student management problems occur first with teachers who have not planned their work and "taken charge" of the class.

Students should have some input in structuring the nature of a class, but it is the teacher who is responsible. Students must be assertively guided into meaningful learning activities. When students are idle, they look for activities to occupy their time. These activities often lead to discipline problems. Student control is necessary to accomplish the purpose of the school.

The best solution to discipline problems is prevention. Class should be conducted so that students know the teacher means "business." An atmosphere should be established so that students come to class expecting to learn and use every minute learning. Wasted time is fuel for discipline problems.

Krebs on Discipline

In the October, 1955, issue of THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MAGAZINE, Alfred H. Krebs authored an article entitled "Discipline: Problem and Opportunity." This article was well written and concisely offered assistance for vocational agricultural teachers. A part of it is reprinted here.

To Obtain Good Discipline

In general, the teaching profession has approached discipline problems from the standpoint of both prevention and control. Preventive measures have stressed those kinds of teaching procedures which help to create a school environment largely free of the causes of student misbehavior. Examples of such teaching procedures are:

1. Teach in such a way that both teacher and students always know what work is to be done, and the reasons for doing the work. Variety in teaching techniques is also very important.

2. Follow a definite routine for such daily matters as roll-taking and daily announcements. Begin and end classes promptly.

3. Make it a practice to check on the light and temperature conditions of the classrooms at the beginning of each class as well as on the seating arrangements.

4. Provide for definite instruction (as a part of the course of study) on such topics as the kind of behavior acceptable in school, how to get along with others, and how to get the most out of school. Too often we take for granted that someone else has taught our students how to behave.

5. Establish early the rules needed for orderly conduct of the class. The making of the rules for the class can be shared with the students. Above all, be certain that the rules are reasonable.

6. Treat all students fairly, consistently, and impartially. Teachers can ill afford to "lose their tempers" when dealing with trying situations.

7. Learn as much about each student as possible from all available sources of information. This should include a knowledge of the home situation.

8. Challenge constantly the best in each student by giving as much responsibility as he is ready for.

9. Use praise and reward to promote good conduct. This will also help develop good morale in the group.

10. Be alert to everything going on in the classroom. Nothing is more challenging to the mischievous student than a teacher who appears unable to see more than one thing at a time.

There are undoubtedly many more examples of good teaching procedures which would illustrate the point. Anything done which helps provide the student with an educational program fitting his interests and abilities will help prevent misbehavior.

To Correct Poor Discipline

Since preventive education and procedures are not always successful, additional plans in the way of control measures are needed. Use of the more severe control measures should be preceded by a careful study of the entire discipline situation, including a thorough case study of the student. Some of the more familiar control measures are:

1. Ignoring minor classroom misbehavior. This control measure is used to a greater or lesser extent by all good teachers. Many teachers however, hold it in disrepute because of the difficulty of knowing just what misbehavior may be safely ignored and what misbehavior must not be ignored.

2. Using simple classroom control measures early through being alert to everything going on in the room and by using a warning look, a shake of the head, or an immediate question to call attention to the teacher's disapproval. Many teachers recommend this kind of control as the first step rather than ignoring misbehavior. It is with-

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out doubt, one of the best ways of keeping the classroom situation under control.

3. Loss of privilege. This is slightly more severe than the first two control measures but well within the understanding of the student. It is one of the most common control measures used outside of school.

4. Removal from the situation. The student may be removed from the classroom, or be moved to a new location within the classroom. In either case, he has lost a certain amount of control over his own movements.

5. Sending to the principal. There should be a definite understanding between teacher and principal regarding the kinds of misbehavior which should be referred to the principal. Such referrals should be as few as possible. Too many referrals weaken the control of both teacher and principal, and are definite signs of weakness on the part of the teacher.

6. Suspension and expulsion. These are severe forms of loss of privilege, since the student is being denied the privilege of attending class or school. Such action cannot be taken without consultation with the administrator.

Measures to Avoid

Control measures to be avoided include public reprimand, enforced apology, group punishment, threats and humiliation, corporal punishment, and punishments involving activities which students are supposed to do as a part of their school work. These include outlining pages of books, writing themes, and other "extra" schoolwork assignments. Such "punishments" tend to create strong dislikes for school and school work.

This Issue

Dr. J. David McCracken of The Ohio State University served as Theme Editor for "Student Management." His assistance in compiling articles and photographs is greatly appreciated.

THEME

Student Management:

Capitalize on Your Advantage

By J. David McCracken,
Theme Editor
Editor's Note: Dr. McCracken is Professor, Department of Agricultural Education, The Ohio State University, 2120 Fyffe Road, Columbus, Ohio 43210.

The management of the classroom and laboratory is not a unique concern of agricultural educators. Public opinion polls have consistently indicated dissatisfaction with the level of discipline in schools. Agricultural educators, however, are in a singular position to be more effective managers of student behavior than most teachers.

Goals of effective classroom management include the development of self-control, self-direction, and self-discipline in students. Vocational agriculture teacher can better accomplish these goals by developing an effective partnership with the parents, and in some cases, an employer. Home or occupational experience visits and parent-teacher conferences can be helpful in at least two ways. They can assist the teacher in understanding a student. They can assist the parent in reinforcing the teacher's standards.

Most vocational agriculture teachers maintain a relationship with their students over more years and for a longer period of time each week than other teachers. This enables a closer student-teacher working alliance. This provides an advantage to the vocational agriculture teacher in observing and reinforcing desirable behavior over time.

The teacher should begin by discussing expectations with incoming students and parents in the summer months. A firm but fair atmosphere at the beginning of the school year is essential. The climate of the teacher assisting the students in achieving their goals should be maintained. Enthusiasm for students and for agriculture and a business-like approach to learning are also needed in effective classroom management.

Capitalize on your advantage! Use home visits to develop a partnership with parents. Use your knowledge of each student to help him or her achieve his or her potential. Use supervised occupational experience programs to assist students in learning responsibility and self-discipline. Use the FFA organization to provide goals and direction for achievement and personal development. Use the summer months effectively to become a community agricultural leader and thus gain the respect of students, parents and employers. Your opportunity in developing desirable student behavior provides you with an "upper hand." Use it effectively.

THEME

Student Management:

Schools Should Solve Discipline Problems Not Cause Them

By William W. Wayson
Editor's Note: Dr. Wayson is a Professor on the Academic Faculty of Educational Foundations and Research at The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio 43210. He has been active in helping schools with student behavior and desegregation problems.

Both discipline and the lack of discipline are **learned.** Daily life within the school teaches one or the other. In those schools that seem to have the best discipline, staff members — or a significant number of them — consciously strive to create school practices that teach students to think for themselves, to accept responsibility for themselves and for life within the school, and to behave appropriately even when no adults are present and no rule tells what to do.

At least four out of every five disruptions are the result of some disfunction in the school or the classroom. Most of us can remember school practices that made us angry and resentful, unfair treatment that still hurts many years after graduation, adults who could be "played off" against one another, adults with "hang-ups" who could be frightened or manipulated, or classes so boring that "you have to do something to liven them up." Such things cause discipline problems.

School personnel should not be "blamed" for poor discipline. The cook isn't to blame if a cake falls flat because the oven is defective. Like the oven, the school should be repaired if it is causing problems. Changing eight features of the school will do much to teach good discipline:

1. getting the staff to work together to solve problems or to make decisions to improve the school;
2. broadening the way authority and status are distributed in the school;
3. showing that students belong in the school;
4. improving the way rules are stated, understood and enforced;
5. developing closer relationships with parents and the community;
6. helping the staff and students with their personal problems;
7. making curriculum and instruction more interesting and effective; and
8. improving the appearance and utilization of the building and the grounds.

Changing the disfunctions is the way to solve discipline problems. Both discipline and academic achievement are closely related to those features. They make up a "living curriculum" that teaches students and school personnel "how we behave around here." All school staff members must take responsibility for improving discipline by examining those parts of school life and by improving them.

Such improvements are not easy, but they are the best way to create a school that teaches self-discipline rather than causing disruption.

The Cover

Parent-teacher conferences are an effective method for encouraging appropriate student behavior. In the cover picture, Dr. and Mrs. Roger Roediger play the role of parents and Rosemarie Cundiff the role of the vocational agriculture teacher. Dr. Roediger is a consultant with the Ohio Agricultural Education Curriculum Materials Service. Evelyn Roediger is a secretary with the Ohio Cooperative Extension Service. Ms. Cundiff is a former teacher of vocational horticulture and is currently a graduate student at the Ohio State University. (Photograph courtesy of J. David McCracken, The Ohio State University.)

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Student Management:

The Why and How of Discipline

In recent years school discipline has become the number one concern of the general public according to the annual Gallup poll and research by Phi Delta Kappa. In addition to the general belief that schools have more discipline problems than in the past, is the growing concern of professionals in education that the public's view is accurate. Nearly every professional journal in education, as well as many popular publications, have addressed this issue during recent months and years. Because of the intense interest in school discipline, books have been and are being written to help the school systems as well as individual practitioners to deal appropriately with all forms of student behavior. The research and literature on student management offer practical strategies for the prevention of disruptive student behavior.

Why Do Students Behave the Way They Do?

It is important to know as much as possible about some of the basic elements that influence students to behave in certain ways. Schools have often spent time dealing with the symptoms of discipline problems rather than causes; and, as a result, many of the commonly accepted disciplinary procedures that have been used have not worked. One widely accepted idea suggests that the perceptions students have of themselves account to a large extent for their behavior.

In research conducted by Robert Rosenthal, a social psychologist at Harvard University, it was found that by influencing how teachers perceive the students, the actual performance of students was changed. Rosenthal and his associates went into a series of elementary classrooms where they administered a test which they indicated would predict those students who were about to experience a sudden burst in intellectual development. The teachers were told that the development would come not as a result of any special efforts on their part, but would come because the student was about to "blossom" intellectually. After the test was administered, Rosenthal simply selected one-fifth of the students at random and indicated to the teachers that those identified were the students who were about to "blossom." At the end of the experiment it was found that those students had indeed blossomed. Somehow the positive expectations held for the students by the teachers came through verbal and non-verbal actions as well as in the general way that they were treated.

Arthur Combs, who has worked heavily in the area of development of self image indicates that the perceptions students have of themselves influences their behavior. As students see themselves as being productive, able, and capable, indeed they become more productive, more able, and more capable.

By James A. Knight

Editor's Note: Dr. Knight is Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural Education, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio 43210.

It should be clear that teachers' perceptions and student self image are closely related and, in fact, are not separate, but interact to influence student behavior to a great extent.

The concept of reinforcement is also closely aligned with teacher and student perceptions. This concept suggests that if a behavior is desired to be repeated, it should be reinforced when it occurs. The way the schools are organized, the way they treat people personally, the way rules are made and enforced, etc., influence student behavior either appropriately or inappropriately by using reinforcement techniques.

Preventative Strategies

In working with discipline it is clear that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Some strategies that can be utilized by teachers are described here.

Make students feel important. All students have a basic need to feel important. This can be made possible by giving students responsibilities and by involving them in activities. One of the great teaching tools that vocational agriculture instructors have available in this area is the FFA. If the FFA is used correctly, it puts students in a position where they can become involved and experience success in serving on committees, holding offices, participating in contests, and competing for awards. Further, as instruction is centered around the problem-solving approach, student involvement is much more likely to occur and, as a result, the students will feel more important.

Make the students feel invited. As the students feel and believe they are wanted within the classroom environment, they will respond accordingly. The teacher can make specific efforts to acknowledge each student on a daily basis, to be warm and friendly.

Deal with needed improvement of student behavior from a positive basis. Research indicates that criticism is negatively correlated to learning. Generally the more criticism that is given the less students learn. Research also indicates that positive reinforcement is positively correlated to learning. A simple activity to demonstrate this principle would be to grade papers by checking those items that are correct, not the items that are wrong. Add points, as opposed to subtracting points. As people view things from the positive point of view, they tend to focus on the things that are going right as opposed to the things that are going wrong. If criticism is necessary, it must be specific and precise such that it is clear to the student what is being criticized. This allows students to separate their actions from themselves.

Make nonverbal cues. Most of what students learn is learned through their eyes. Often teachers don't realize the impact of a smile, a nod, a wink, or a pat on the back. Those are simple, nonverbal gestures which, when done appropriately, can go a long way to making students feel good about themselves and influence their behavior in a positive way.

Know each student personally. The home visit is clearly one of the major strategies which will allow a teacher to get to know the student on a personal basis. As the teacher learns to know who each student is, to learn of their needs, desires and home backgrounds, clearly a better perspective from which to deal is developed. As a result, the behavior of students is influenced in a very positive way.

Empathize. A simple rule of thumb in determining how students ought to be treated is to simply ask ourselves how would we want to be treated if we were in their shoes. If that question is answered honestly, then a pretty good idea can be obtained about what should be done in terms of offering disciplinary action or in terms of general treatment of the students.

Establish parameters. Parameters must be set that are clear and precise and that the students can understand. As it is made clear what is expected of each student, and as each student learns where they can and cannot go, what they may and may not do, their behavior is adjusted appropriately. A good strategy to assist in this effort is to involve students themselves in establishing such parameters.

Use student-centered instruction. It is clear that more growth on the part of students can be accomplished if students are "inquiring into" as opposed to "being instructed in" subject matter. As student involvement is increased, discipline problems tend to decrease. The average high school student's attention span is generally somewhere between 10 and 12 minutes. It should be clear that a 55 minute lecture is probably not a very good idea when it comes to instructing students, particularly at the high school level. It should also be pointed out that teachers are not teachers of vocational agriculture, but of students studying vocational agriculture. Problem-solving, as an approach to teaching, has major impact upon student behavior because of the attention given to real problems which encourage student involvement.

Be enthusiastic about teaching. Research done by Rosenshine and Furst and by Duncan and Biddle indicates that enthusiasm of the teacher is correlated to student learning. Generally teachers tend to be most enthusiastic about those topics which they know best. Therefore, to be enthusiastic about teaching a particular subject, the teacher must have good knowledge of that subject.

Coping Strategies

The next question that comes is, "what if"? This is a very difficult question to answer because each discipline problem brings with it its own unique environment. This is the reason no major recipe book can really be written about discipline. However, there are some very specific strategies that can provide general direction in thinking as real-live discipline situations are faced.

Several simple strategies that will help in dealing with discipline situations should be kept in mind.

Leave it alone. Over and over again it appears that many different discipline situations are created and escalated because the teacher is the one who is really upset and not the student. It is important for the teacher to know when it is appropriate to see and hear, and also to know when it is not appropriate to see and hear. There are some circumstances where student behavior should essentially be ignored.

End the action. In many cases, discipline situations have a tendency to escalate as the teacher gets more involved. It is appropriate, in some cases, for the teacher to simply end the discipline situation by calling a halt to whatever the argument, discussion, or the difficulty is. This halting of the situation can provide a "cooling off" period, and allows both parties time to see the situation more objectively.

Give attention to the cause not the symptom. It is important for the teacher to identify the causes of the discipline situation as opposed to dealing with the symptoms. Students are often disruptive in class to express frustration or some other feeling which is deeper than the actual behavior expressed.

Defuse the discipline situation. Rather than the teacher raising his/her voice when a student is upset, it is often appropriate to lower the voice and to become more calm. This defuses student emotion. Many discipline situations have a tendency to escalate as a teacher's own emotions get wrapped up in the discipline situation.

Isolate the situation. It is clear that the most powerful persons in the life of most teenage students are their peers. By isolating and dealing with the student on an individual basis when discipline situations arise, the individual student can be dealt with more precisely and with much less chance of escalation occurring.

Be clear in directions and expectations. Student frustration and disruptive behavior often occur when they feel confused or treated unfairly. Make sure that the student understands exactly what is expected and that the guidelines for behavior are clearly outlined so that each student knows clearly what can be expected.

The Best Advice

Perhaps the best advice that can be given regarding discipline is to be as open and as responsive to the needs of students as possible. It is important to recognize that perhaps the single most productive strategy in preventing and/or improving discipline in the schools is good preparation, planning and teaching of lessons. In addition,

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The Why and How of Discipline

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by understanding the psychological needs of students and utilizing some good common sense, teachers can minimize discipline problems.

However, as discipline situations arise, and they will, it is necessary to remain calm, keep a sense of humor, avoid escalating problems beyond what is necessary, isolate and deal with the problems on a one-to-one basis, and provide as much clarity as possible in the resolution of the situation.

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THEME

Student Management:

Policies on Discipline

BY KEITH WELLS

Editor's Note: Mr. Wells is Vocational Agriculture Teacher at Fairfield High School, Fairfield, Iowa 52556.

Teaching vocational agriculture is a rewarding occupation. We have a variety of activities, some independence, and the opportunity to try our own ideas. However, we will enjoy our relationships with students only if they are cooperative and willing to learn.

Far too many vocational agricultural teachers leave the profession because of the age-old problem called "discipline." "I didn't go into teaching to spend most of the day yelling at students, ducking flying objects, or dreading each day, because students are more than I can handle." Why shouldn't we have cooperative students that are willing to learn in an elective class? We know the students quite well. We can take the students home and discuss school activities anytime. We ought to be better able to teach young people whom we know than can those teachers who know their students less well.

I feel that every individual student has a **right** to learn in the classroom, agricultural mechanics laboratory, or during a field trip. The instructor has an equal right to teach without a hassle each day. The teacher has needs, wants, and feelings and should expect students to listen, respond, follow directions, cooperate, and show respect for instruction. The school should likewise expect the instructor to maintain a class structure that provides optimal learning. Individual students should be expected to be cooperative in our classes regardless of problems at home, problems in other classrooms, low learning ability, dislike for the teacher, hyperactivity, and other reasons.

I believe that students should be informed the first day of school as to what is expected of them during the year. The policies should have been discussed with students and parents. Each student should also sign an agreement to follow these rules.

The vocational agricultural advisory council can be helpful in reacting to and approving policies relating to student behavior. The principal must also be involved and agree with them. Policies need to be changed and up-dated each year. At the Fairfield High School we have developed and used written procedures in student management in vocational agriculture.

Rules For Success in Vocational Agriculture

Fairfield High School
Fairfield, Iowa

The following rules are necessary to insure the safety of students in vocational agriculture and to maintain a desirable atmosphere for learning. All students must adhere to these rules and agree to willingly follow them.

1. I agree to go directly to the vocational building after arriving at the high school.
2. I agree to remain quiet on the school bus during field trips. There will be no shouting to others outside of the bus.
3. I will stay in a group assigned by the instructor when on a field trip.
4. I agree to stay in the assigned seat and remain quiet on the school bus between the Senior High and Junior High School.
5. I agree to dress safely and wear shop clothes in the agricultural mechanics lab.
6. I agree to refrain from general visiting or communicating during class instruction.
7. I agree that written assignments must be completed in order to receive a passing grade in vocational agriculture.
8. I will have a livestock FFA project. In addition, I will have crops when possible.
9. I agree to complete and turn in a FFA project record book by assigned dates.
10. I agree to properly care for all vo-ag facilities and follow all safety rules.
11. I understand that if an individual "breaks" the rules and interferes with the desirable atmosphere for learning, he/she must "pay."
12. I agree to work at all times during the agricultural mechanics laboratory, even if the assigned work may be a little "undesirable."
13. I agree to respect and obey the vocational agriculture instructor, student teachers and substitute teachers in vocational agriculture.
14. I understand that the instructor is not always right, but he is **always boss.** I will carry out the above rules.

_____ Date

_____ Student Signature

A student unable or unwilling to follow the above rules will hinder the learning opportunities for others and will gain little from the vocational agriculture and FFA program.

In Addition to Rules

Positive remarks by the instructor often work better than negative ones. Field trips sometimes offer temptation for students. Remarks by the instructor might be helpful, including:

Thank you for keeping your shoes off the seats in the bus.

Thank you for keeping your conversation within the bus.

Thank you for sitting in the front seats.

Thank you for staying with the group and following me.

Students want a teacher who is fair. They need to know the grading policy.

I use a large poster which reads as follows: Vocational agriculture grades are based on:

Quantity of work
Quality of work
Staying on assigned work
Helping put away instructional material or tools
Helping clean up
Asking instructor for help when needing work

Students need to understand that a part of the total educational experience is to learn self-discipline. A well-disciplined individual helps form the basis of a productive society.

THEME

Student Management:

Assertive Discipline

BY WILLIAM C. WATT AND KAREN PRICER

Editor's Note: Mr. Watt is Supervisor of Agriculture Programs and Mrs. Pricer is Horticulture Instructor at the Montgomery County Joint Vocational School, Clayton, Ohio 45315.

Assertive discipline was initiated at the Montgomery County Joint Vocational School in the fall of 1980. With 113 vocational teachers, 21 academic teachers and 2,376 junior and senior students, discipline has always been a top priority. Students at the school come from five counties and 27 high schools in southwest Ohio.

What It Is

What is assertive discipline? It is a take charge approach for today's teacher. Lee Canter first published his ideas on assertive discipline in 1976. He now has two easy-to-read booklets titled *Assertive Discipline, How's the Discipline in Your Classroom,* and *Assertive Discipline, Competency Based Resource Materials and Guidelines.* The latter includes sample charts and letters.

The assertive approach to discipline in the school is based on the concept of "I care about you." There are three basic premises for students: Making clear what students are expected to do, explaining exactly what the consequences will be if they don't do what is expected, and an overall program of positive reinforcement — accentuating the positive.

What We Have Found

The result has been an increase in the effectiveness of communication between teachers and students. Teachers waste few words making the point that they will not tolerate any student causing an interruption in class. At the same time, students and parents know what the penalties will be if a student chooses to disrupt class.

The overall climate at our school is much improved. Increased communication and a more efficient system of education appears to be the biggest advantage of using the assertive discipline approach.

The junior author, a beginning horticulture instructor, found assertive discipline to be a real asset. It helped handle situations without creating scenes and made the classroom have a pleasant atmosphere. It helped provide positive reinforcement to students.

THEME

Student Management:

Hope for the Misbehaving Student and Discouraged Teacher

By Leverne A. Barrett and Himanshu Pandya

Editor's Note: Dr. Barrett is Assistant Professor of Agricultural Education, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska 68583. Dr. Pandya is Vocational Agriculture Teacher at Admiral Perry Vocational-Technical School, Ebensburg, Pennsylvania 15931.

Sometimes teachers wonder if there is any possibility for a return to the "good ole' days" when most of the students were attentive and eager to learn. Of course the good ole' days are gone forever, but there is hope for the teacher who will take time to learn some new coping strategies. Vo-ag teachers frequently have the notion that we know all there is to know about teaching and the misbehaving student. We sometimes fail to recognize that new information has been discovered that could be helpful to us.

Some of this information is so simple that it could pass us by. We all know how important it is for teenagers to be accepted by their peer group. To some extent, the behavior of students indicates the ways and means by which they wish to be recognized among their peers. Students who use anti-social or disrupting means of getting attention have obviously not learned acceptable ways to find their place in society. Can teachers help students learn acceptable behavior? We think there is a chance, but before we can help students understand why they are misbehaving, it is essential for us to understand several possible causes of misbehavior.

Diagnosis Critical to Successful Treatment

How students look at life, at others, themselves, and their behavior, depends upon how they view themselves as persons. Most of the time students are not aware of the reasons for their actions. A teacher can help students understand their acts and the motives behind those acts. In other words the teacher must help the student to understand why he/she is misbehaving. Sometimes a one-on-one conference (possibly an SOEP visit) with the student and a trusted teacher can bring these causes to the surface.

Vocational agriculture teachers have an edge on this kind of diagnosis because the very nature of vocational agriculture is in providing experiences for real life. Through "hands-on" experiences in the classroom and shop, as well as FFA activities that build personal value and achievement, students with a low value of themselves can be helped to see that they really can be someone.

Dreikurs (1971) suggests that individuals can be placed in four groups on the basis of causes of misbehavior. We all are aware of the first one — the **attention getter.** there is usually one in every classroom. It is one of the easy behaviors to recognize, but a behavior that requires careful thought and response. To ignore the behavior guarantees further misbehavior. For the teacher to over-react with punishment may give the student just the attention he/she needs, and the misbehavior continues.

Giving personal attention is **one** solution. Provide the student with attention as soon as he/she enters your room in a positive rather than negative manner. This can be done with "chit-chat" such as "gee, I like that skirt you have on today, Sally," or "Bill, did your sow have pigs yet?" This kind of individual attention can be easily continued in the mechanics laboratory through individualized instruction. By being friends and building rapport with the attention seeking student, his/her need to gain attention in the classroom can be reduced.

The second behavior is that of the **power seeker.** Power is a strong force in many peer groups. Recognition of this is very important to correctly diagnose misbehavior. If we place ourselves in a power struggle with a student we may lose, except in a few short-lived episodes where the teacher succeeds in "beating the student down." The "beating down" may convince the student even more, that power is all that counts in life. Vo-ag teachers that act as autocrats, always telling and ordering, tend to have more power-seeking students. On the other hand, teachers that demonstrate a democratic style of teaching and advisorship tend to have less power-seeking students. Part of the reason for this is that democratic teachers allow their students to have some "say" in daily classroom sessions and through member-led FFA activities. If we do not recognize the problem of the power seeker, the relationships between students and teacher can further deteriorate, causing the student to move to the third cause of misbehavior — **revenge.**

When the state of affairs in our schools has reached the revenge stage, we are in deep trouble. Students who feel totally rejected, who have lost faith in their teachers, society, and in themselves, when the problem of gaining status cannot be solved through getting attention or demonstrating power, the only option the student believes can be used in this situation is to **get even** with those who have hurt him/her. Many times these feelings are vented against teachers and/or school property. Fortunately, most vocational agriculture teachers have been able to stop this problem early and do not experience as much revenge seeking as do some other subject teachers. However, increasing incidents are being reported.

Assuming disability is another cause of misbehavior. After repeated failure in "getting even," students often experience a feeling of inferiority. Students behaving in this way often became **passive** and **withdrawn** in order to get special attention. Psychologically this is a most serious state for a student to be in, and many times teachers do not recognize this condition until it is too late. Students who are passive and withdrawn need psychological help before lifetime damage occurs.

Several Strategies

Recent research conducted with the same students over a long period of time suggests that there is hope for teachers and students. These findings are very basic to our human nature and the way we view ourselves and our students. deCharms (1976) says that there are two ways of looking at students and how they are motivated, either as **"pawns"** or **"origins."**

An "origin" is a person who feels that he/she is in control of his/her fate; he/she feels that the cause for his/her behavior is within himself/herself. A "pawn" feels pushed around and that someone else pulls the strings much like a puppet. The "origin" is positively motivated, optimistic, confident, and accepting of challenges. Research has found that students who are treated as "origins" learn more than those treated as "pawns."

We must be cautious not to conclude that the "origin classroom" is a place where there is complete freedom. In fact, teachers with fewer student misbehavior problems, often have a **warm accepting feeling** for their students, along with **firm, consistent** rules and **high expectations.** External controls may be used when clearly needed for the good of the students. The goal is to convert external control from within. Research merely indicates what successful vocational agriculture teachers have always known: students treated as human beings will show kindness in return.

What Is Left?

Where does all of this leave the vocational agriculture teacher? First of all, it takes the emphasis of control away from punishment. The problem is that giving out punishment is easier than problem diagnosis. The only hope for teachers to maintain their faith and happiness in teaching is to take time from their daily routines to learn how to diagnose student problems. This can be done through reading or attending classes on human behavior. The alternative may be more of the same, student misbehavior, day after day, and discipline problems will continue to be one of the major reasons why teachers leave teaching.

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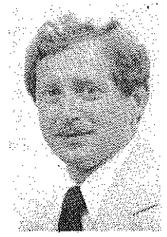
THEME

Student Management:

What Is a Discipline Problem?

By William G. Camp

Editor's Note: Dr. Camp is Assistant Professor of Agricultural Education, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA 24061.



Situation: You are in the laboratory working with a student who has been having difficulty with a project. Suddenly, and with no warning, another student sails a bolt through the air. It bounces off the wall, ricochets from a bench, careens off a pipe, slides across the floor and comes to rest beside your foot. What is your reaction?

You might reflect back on your undergraduate educational psychology course on learning theory and decide to extinguish the response by non-reinforcement i.e., ignoring it. (You might — but it isn't very likely!)

In most vo-ag laboratories, throwing anything, particularly pieces of metal, is against the rules. Learning theory is all well and good, but in this case you had better deal with the problem quickly and aggressively. Clearly, this example is a discipline problem which deserves your immediate attention.

Situation: On the second day of the class you hand out FFA manuals and direct students to read the history of the organization. Most of the students open the manuals and start reading quietly. One boy opens the manual but stares out the window. You tell him to start reading. A few minutes later he is resting his chin on his hands and is gazing blankly across the room. What do you do? Is this an example of a discipline problem too?

What Teachers Say

In a recent survey of Indiana vocational agriculture teachers, 93 percent agreed that throwing objects is a discipline problem. That is not surprising except that one might have expected the percentage to have been higher.

In the same survey, 48 percent of the teachers responding felt that inattentiveness or daydreaming, was also a

(Continued on Page 12)

What Is a Discipline Problem?

(Continued from Page 11)

discipline problem. Sixty-four percent felt that sleeping in class is a discipline problem, but only 24 percent perceived racial disturbances between individuals to be disciplinary in nature (Camp, 1979). Those were rather surprising findings. They imply at least one interesting conclusion: There is much disagreement among agriculture teachers as to whether any given student misbehavior should be classified as a discipline problem or as some other kind of problem. In other words, it would appear that we are not in agreement as to what constitutes the "student discipline problem" about which we so frequently hear complaints from teachers, school administrators, news media, and the general public.

That implies another difficulty. Many teachers tend to view any deviation from teacher expectancies on the part of the student to be a discipline problem when obviously that is not always the case. The result of such misinterpretation can only aggravate the problem.

The second situation described earlier, where the student was daydreaming, is an example of a potential misinterpretation.

Forty-eight percent of the teachers responding to the survey said they considered daydreaming to be a discipline problem. If it is in fact a discipline problem, it should be dealt with accordingly. But, if it is a problem of a different nature, then it should be handled differently.

What are some explanations for that specific example?

The student might be upset with the teacher and rebelling by refusing to work. That might justifiably be considered a discipline problem.

On the other hand, the student could be tired, sleepy, hungry, or sick. He might be unable to read the manual because the size of the print is so small in that section (if you don't believe it, get out the manual and see for yourself). He might be unable to understand that section because the reading level is too high. He could be worried about a personal or family problem. Regardless of the cause, there is probably some sort of problem here and you might need to look into it. But, if you make the assumption that the student is disobeying and is, therefore, a discipline problem, you are overlooking many alternative explanations.

Further, if you incorrectly assume that the problem is one of student discipline, and treat it accordingly, you may be merely complicating the situation. A student who is treated like a discipline problem when he or she really isn't, may well respond by becoming one.

If your car won't start and you take it to the garage, you expect the mechanic to diagnose the nature of the problem. If he or she just indiscriminately replaces parts until the problem is solved, you might become upset with the bill. By the same token, when you have a student who exhibits a behavior problem, you should diagnose the nature of the problem before attempting to deal with it. In other words, you should determine if a student behavior is a discipline problem before treating it as one.

Real Versus Perceived Problems

There are two kinds of discipline problems: real and perceived (Thompson, 1976).

A REAL discipline problem can be defined as:

> Any intentional behavior by one or more students, which infringes upon the legitimate educational rights of other students, teachers, or school employees or results in damage to school property AND which is normally the responsibility of school officials to handle.

In terms of that definition, was the bolt thrower's act a real discipline problem? Yes! It was intentional. It was dangerous to others and to property. It is normally the teacher's job to deal with such infractions.

Was the daydreamer a real discipline problem? The answer is not clearly "yes" or "no", if he was intentionally not working, that action did not infringe upon any students' rights except his own. He was not disturbing anyone else. He was not damaging any property. He was simply not performing. The only way that could be interpreted as a "real" discipline problem is to the extent that the teacher has an inherent and legitimate right to be obeyed. Rather than a discipline problem, it may well have been a motivational problem or teaching problem or some other kind of problem.

A **perceived** discipline problem is defined as:

> Any student behavior that the teacher thinks is a discipline problem at a given point in time.

The difficulty arises when a behavior is perceived to be a discipline problem when it really is something else.

A vocational agriculture teacher in Indiana tells a story that is a good example. One day he had a young student who got out of study hall to help clean-up the shop — all with the ag teacher's advance permission. He directed the student to take a cart loaded with scraps across the shop and to the dumpster outside, at this point the teacher went into the classroom. A minute later he glanced out the door and there was Johnny pushing the cart full of scraps — not out of the shop but down the hallway. Of course he proceeded to severely chastise Johnny for goofing off and playing when he was supposed to be working. Then he sent Johnny, head hung low, back to study hall. Angrily, the teacher took the cart back into the shop and headed toward the outside door until he ran into a pile of lumber completely blocking the exit. The teacher then pushed the cart down the hallway to the nearest exit and outside to the dumpster!

Think about it. How often have you spoken harshly to or even punished a student for a discipline problem that existed only in your mind?

Some things are obvious discipline problems — throwing a bolt in a shop or greenhouse for instance. You don't even have to stop and think about it. Other problems are not so obvious. When one of those not-so-obvious things happens, before you automatically put on your disciplinarian's hat, stop and think: "What kind of problem is it?" Don't be like the parts changer, be like the mechanic. If the behavior is really a discipline problem, approach it that way. If it is something else, you would be wise to find another way to handle it. This certainly does not imply permissiveness nor laxness on discipline. It in no way means that you should relax your student discipline standards. It only means that you should be aware of what a "real" discipline problem is and make at least an effort to adjust your perceptions to fit reality as closely as possible.

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THEME

Student Management:

How To Measure Disruptive Behavior

By Ann E. Ries

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How much time do teachers spend correcting inappropriate behavior in high school vocational agriculture classrooms? What are the typical discipline problems confronting a teacher? An instrument was developed to measure both the severity and types of disruptions which occur in vo-ag classrooms. This instrument was originally designed to collect data on the efficacy of various teaching styles in resolving discipline problems. The effectiveness of an authoritarian teacher could be compared to a more humanitarian teacher as measured by the amount and severity of disruptive behavior in their respective classrooms. The instrument provides quantifiable data that is both accurate and specific.

The instrument lists four categories of disruptions: verbalizations, distractions, unproductive behavior and aggressive behavior. Each category includes several specific types of disruptions as sub-headings. A trained observer would simply circle the letter below the sub-heading best describing the behavior exhibited. There is also an opportunity for the observer to indicate the number of students involved and the severity of the disruption. When the instrument was field tested, classes were observed for three five-minute time segments spread throughout a one-hour period for a total of 15 minutes observation time.

Teachers could benefit from the use of this instrument in analyzing their "problem students." If a teacher knew exactly what type of disruption was occurring and how frequently, this information could be referred to in conferences with the student, his or her parents, and administrators. Often this sort of "evidence" is needed before any progress can be made in resolving problem behavior.

Further, the instrument is valuable to teacher educators and vo-ag teachers who may want to critique the performance of student teachers. An observer may often find it difficult to describe a disruptive situation in accurate terms. The student teacher may simply be told that "discipline problems" exist. More constructive help is provided when the observer can cite specific examples of inappropriate classroom behavior.

Many other practical applications have yet to be found for this instrument. Precise observation tools are needed for more scientific and conclusive educational research. If additional directions are needed for the use of the instrument, feel free to contact the author.

Disruptive Behavior Instrument

DATE_____ TIME INTERVAL_____

	TYPE OF DISRUPTION																					SEVERITY					
	OCCURRENCE																				NUMBER OF STUDENTS INVOLVED						
	VERBALIZATIONS																										
	Talking out loud																										
	Swearing, cursing																										
	Whispering with peers																										
	Smart Remarks																										
	DISTRACTIVE																										
	Throwing objects																										
	Making noises																										
	Doing other work																										
	Playing																										
	Non-verbal distractions																										
	UNPRODUCTIVE																										
	Sleeping																										
	Daydreaming																										
	Leaving seat/room																										
	External interruption																										
	AGGRESSIVE																										
	Inflicting physical harm																										
	Threatening physical harm																										
	Stealing																										
	OTHER																										
1	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q					1	2	3	4	5	
2	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q					1	2	3	4	5	
3	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q					1	2	3	4	5	
4	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q					1	2	3	4	5	
5	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q					1	2	3	4	5	
6	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q					1	2	3	4	5	
7	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q					1	2	3	4	5	
8	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q					1	2	3	4	5	
9	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q					1	2	3	4	5	
10	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q					1	2	3	4	5	
11	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q					1	2	3	4	5	
12	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q					1	2	3	4	5	
13	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q					1	2	3	4	5	
14	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q					1	2	3	4	5	
15	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q					1	2	3	4	5	

	Almost no disruption
	Slight disruption
	Some disruption
	Considerable disruption
	Total disruption

COMMENTS:

ARTICLE

The A to Z of Student Management

By Richard F. Welton
and John D. Parmley

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The first period bell rings. It is barely audible above the noise of the classroom. "O.K., everyone, let's settle down," says the soft spoken teacher. Eighteen or so students gathered around the classroom tables pay little attention to the call to order. The teacher switches on an overhead projector by the desk and a well organized outline of the day's lesson flashes on the screen. There is a short pause as the disorder continues. "Have you all copied this down?" the teacher asks, pointing to the topical outline. A few heads bob an affirmative response while others shake their heads from side-to-side carrying on with their private conversation. One overly boisterous student challenges the teacher with a biting, "I can't see the importance of this lesson."

The situation just described may sound like a typical class in a large inner city high school — lack of order, inattention, low interest level, and disrespect for the teacher. This scene could be typical of a number of classrooms; however, it is also occurring in a growing number of vocational agriculture classrooms. Regardless, discipline is a major concern of educators.

There is ample evidence to support this contention. The Gallup Polls of "Attitudes Toward Education, 1969-1978", reports discipline as a serious problem. Throughout the decade covered by these surveys, discipline was seen by the public as the number one problem of schools. In all but one of the ten surveys, discipline was cited more often than any other problem in schools. By discipline, reference was made to such things as disregard for authority, lack of respect for teachers, improper classroom behavior, and scorn for rules and regulations.

Classroom teachers do not need evidence cited from national polls and research to know student management is a problem. Many of these problems can be handled with a back-to-basics approach. These basics can be found by re-examining the A, B, C's.

Attitude of the teacher toward working with students is crucial to the development of a class climate that is conducive to learning.

Before the school year begins, the teacher should develop guidelines and procedures that are to be followed during the year. These should be developed regarding such things as: student attendance, the teacher's expectations for student behavior, use of the laboratory, requirements for student occupational experience, and student participation in leadership and personal development activities.

Continuity of learning atmosphere is enhanced by the teacher who has a set of standards that are fairly and consistently maintained.

Develop good working relationships with parents and administrators. The extra time taken by a teacher to inform parents and administrators about the vocational agriculture program will pay big dividends in terms of support for teacher efforts.

Enthusiasm tends to be contagious! If a teacher exhibits enthusiasm for the vocational agriculture program, the students will exhibit additional interest in learning.

First day procedures set the tone for the year. The first day of school is one of the most important days of the year. This day should be utilized to give students an overview of the program and an explanation of the teacher's expectations. A business-like approach will help to establish a healthy climate for learning.

Gossip is unfortunate. Teachers seem invariably to involve themselves in discussions about student conduct. The perceptive teacher will listen to such discussions and realize that students respond differently for various teachers. Thus, a student may be a problem in one class but not in another.

Home visits continue to be crucial in vocational agriculture programs. As vocational agriculture teachers become better acquainted with the home environment of students, the effectiveness of teachers in helping a student learn generally increases.

Include parents in making home visits. Admittedly, this is often difficult. This is especially true as the number of parents who work outside the home or farm increases. Parents are potential sources of support for the development of appropriate student occupational experience programs, leadership development activities, relevant agricultural science and mechanics instruction and for appropriate student conduct. It is the teacher's responsibility to convert this potential into reality.

Judgement of teachers must be based on clear thinking and not clouded by anger or rage. Teachers routinely face situations which call for immediate action to be taken. When these actions are based on emotions, the possibility of complication is often greater than if decisions were based on rational thought.

Kick off out-of-school activities with a review of student responsibilities and teacher expectations.

Leadership requires planning. The teacher must be the instructional leader. In addition to planning the instructional program, the teacher must plan the class climate (i.e. classroom laboratory and out-of-school learning atmospheres). The teacher should plan ahead and identify the desired range of student behavior and how these behaviors may be obtained.

Management skills are essential. The successful teacher must be an effective manager. As a manager, the teacher is asked to coordinate all aspects of a total vocational agriculture program and maintain a close working relationship with other teachers and administrators.

Noise may not always be noise. The challenge is to be able to distinguish between noise and productive student discussions. Once this distinction is made, the teacher can determine whether or not student discussions fit into the desired class climate.

Objectivity and the avoidance of favoritism would seem to speak well for a successful class management plan. There is a place for an equal rights movement in the vocational agriculture program.

Planning prevents poor performance.

Quality of a program, may require examination of the program from A to Z.

Rapport with others is important. The development of a working relationship marked with harmony and agreement is a notable accomplishment. This requires the continuing efforts of teachers, administrators, and students. Teachers and students should develop a friendly but professional working relationship.

School policy should be followed. Teachers should become thoroughly familiar with school policy and follow the approved procedures.

Tunnelvision can block our view. Successful class managers must be aware of and able to control the peripheral activities thus avoiding tunnelvision.

Ulcers may develop when teachers operate their classes as if they were fighting brush fires.

Vicious circles develop when there is a lack of thorough planning.

Withitness is a trait of successful class managers. They may tend to have "eyes in the backs of their heads."

EXtra effort is required in being a successful class manager.

Yearly vacation is desirable for teachers to periodically get away from the concerns of teaching.

Zone your classroom and laboratory for learning. Convey the message to students that the classroom and laboratory are a place for learning and that visiting and play are to be accomplished elsewhere.

There is a growing feeling that the recess is over in education. The American public is pushing toward a more business-like atmosphere in learning. Discipline is an ingredient present in an effective learning environment. Additional characteristics are rigor, hard work, and regular attendance. Vocational agriculture teachers can improve the quality of education in their classrooms and laboratories by going back to the basics in student management.

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IDEAS UNLIMITED

Energy Switch Saves Electricity

By Julee Rawlings

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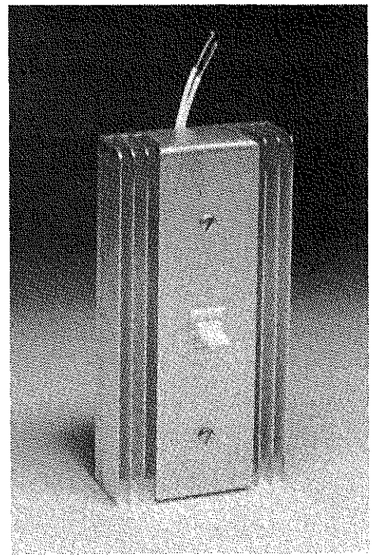
In the face of ever-rising energy costs, creative ways are being found to cut down on the use of electricity in schools, offices, and homes. Microtimer Controls, at the request of the University of California, has developed a space-age variation of the reset timer, called the Energy Switch.

This electronic switch installs in an ordinary wall switch box and automatically turns off a light or appliance after a pre-set period of time. One version of the switch is designed to be set in short intervals (5-30 minutes), while a second is made to leave lights on longer (1-4 hours). The Switch uses a regular toggle to turn the light or appliance on and off, and unlike the "clock dial" type reset timer, operation of the Energy Switch is completely silent. This makes it especially suitable for classroom or office situations, where a ticking reset timer would be distracting. Automatic shutting off of lights cuts down on energy waste and saves money.



ARTICLE

Getting the Message to Young-Adult Farmers

By William C. Harshman

Editor's Note: Mr. Harshman is Young-Adult Farmer Advisor at McGuffey High School in Claysville, Pennsylvania 15323

Every experienced teacher of agriculture knows that repetition can achieve results in skill areas, judging proficiency, and classroom study units. Exposure to education in the secondary school during the school year almost guarantees that at least the most stubborn of minds will learn something. Since adult farmer class members are not a captive group, ways must be found to reinforce the message (education) we have to offer. The purpose of this article is to offer several teaching tips which may prove useful to young-adult farmer teachers.

Several approaches must be used on a consistent basis to achieve results with adult farmer classes. Farmers attending organized instructional meetings must receive on-farm instruction. The instruction in new practices must be frequently reinforced including what they read on the farm page of the local newspaper or a monthly young farmer newsletter. Instruction takes on added meaning when it is reinforced by the media. The more often a message is heard, the more likely it is to be incorporated into farming situations.

Two of the methods this writer has used with much success have been local news coverage and a monthly newsletter to a rather large number of young farmers, prospective members, and community supporters. Part of the success of our program has been because of avid support from our local newspaper. Personal recognition of area farmers has also played a part. Consistent reporting of young farmer activities, including as many names as possible, helps fulfill this need. When local news media understand that your program is newsworthy, even more influence can be felt.

Use the Media

Feature-type articles may be presented in the local newspapers to further deliver your educational message. Timely, thought-provoking features on particular subjects can remind farmers of approved management practices. For example, an annual grass tetany "alert" has helped reduce the losses of livestock due to this early spring grazing problem. A timely news article with an appropriate photograph can remind many people of such standard practices as feeding magnesium oxide to prevent the problem. Another example was an article dealing with making silage from frosted corn. Numerous telephone conservations indicated widespread reading of the article and use of the information to care for the damaged crop. By being alert for good educational features to submit to the local media, the young farmer program can be spotlighted often and instruction reinforced in a variety of ways.

Ideally, public relations should be part of the young farmer program of work. Relying upon a chapter public relations director is a good idea, but is not always possible. A farmer's busy schedule may not permit him or her to do much more than report meeting dates, times, places, etc. The advisor must be willing to keep the program visible to the public by providing newsworthy materials to the newspaper prior to the deadline.

Use a Newsletter

Newsletters are effective means of education. Farmers are bombarded with newsletters and mailings from many sources besides the young farmer association. The newsletter must be one of the best they receive. It must gain their attention! News of other local farmers can do this. Be sure to clear the news release with these farmers first, however. Farmers want to hear what others are putting into practice as well as what ideas are being rejected. Having gained the readers attention, a few short education lessons may be worked into the text of the newsletter.

The newsletter must be concise. Long paragraphs covering the entire page will lose the reader. Catchy drawings (not fancy) will attract attention. Simple stick figures can be drawn by most teachers. Many times simple drawings will get the message across better than a thousand words. Use your wit to gain attention, then educate in brief, clear form. The results will be predictable!

If young-adult farmer advisors are to gain the confidence of their clientele, they must present their ideas and messages in creative and innovative ways. Accept the challenge to get the message across and make your young-adult farmer program the best it can be.

ARTICLE

Agronomic Education and The Two-Year Technical College

By Ralph R. Smalley

Editor's Note: Dr. Smalley is Professor of Plant Science at the State University of New York Agricultural and Technical College, Cobleskill, New York 12043.

The agricultural and technical colleges at the two-year level have met the challenge of providing students with the needed training and knowledge to meet many of the challenges in food production. These colleges have heeded Goethe's words, "Nature knows no pause in progress and development, and attaches her curse on all inaction," and kept current with modern technology.

In New York State there are six two-year agricultural and technical colleges. At the State University Agricultural and Technical College at Cobleskill, about 900 students are enrolled in various agricultural curriculums. These curriculums include agricultural business, agricultural engineering, agronomy, animal husbandry, fisheries and wildlife, floriculture, nursery production, landscape development and recreational land management. Many curriculums have specialized options. One example is agronomy which includes options in forage crop and seed production, soil conservation, and vegetable crops and small fruit growing.

With the change from the subsistence type of farming of the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries to the semi-commercial farm of the nineteen fifties, the importance and need of the two-year agricultural college increased. Today, the large specialized commercial farm with the high cost of land, livestock and equipment has replaced the smaller farms of the 1950's. However, there is still need for "hands on" experience and "how to do it" types of education, as found at most two-year colleges. Each student must have adequate basic and technical training so there will be no stagnation in the changing world of agriculture.

Present Day Agronomy

The plow, once the universal tool for soil turning and seedbed preparation, is today only a part of the tillage system. The present day agronomy student should understand the use of herbicides which selectively destroy weeds but allow the desired food crops to grow strong and healthy. However, there should be concern for the effects of pesticide residues, excess use of fertilizer which contaminates water supplies, and air pollutants that damage the environment. Twenty years ago these problems did not concern either the farmer or the public.

Present students of agronomy should learn of crops which ripen uniformly, provide high yields of quality food, are either somewhat or completely disease and insect resistant, and can be harvested mechanically. The genetic "make-up" of the seed source and the procedures required to develop new varieties of crops are understood. New crop varieties are constantly needed which successfully compete with the changing pressures of new diseases, insects, and weeds. Students should be made aware that this knowledge is necessary for an increasing world population to have food.

Modern transportation by land, air, and sea has transported plant diseases, insects, and weeds to all parts of the earth. The modern agronomist should know the exact pesticide for any given disease, insect, and weed. In addition, knowledge of the proper time of application and amount to apply is essential. Modern technology provides sensitive and accurate equipment to evaluate pesticide residues and it is essential that no residues on a crop are harmful to the consuming public. The agronomy student in a two-year college should have competencies in the use of pesticides, understand the necessity for the proper protection equipment for people, and follow methods which protect and preserve the environment.

In years past, fertilizer and growing procedures for crops were quite standard. In some areas, a given crop would do better than in other areas. Today, fertilizer and other culture procedures are being followed for crop varieties adapted to specific areas. The two-year college student in agronomy should know this and continually evaluate methods to plant, fertilize, grow, harvest, and store a given crop. Efficient and high production is of great importance but of greater importance is the quality and nutrition of food for the consumer. Quality of food products is important to prevent waste as world population increases.

Agronomic subjects at the two-year agricultural college should provide awareness of the problems of world food production. This interest developed in the undergraduate must be continued by the graduate whether or not studies are continued at a four-year academic institution or entry is made into the field of agriculture business. During academic studies, the importance of keeping technically up to date should be stressed. This training should be useful for a lifetime but a factor often forgotten in human relations, even in college, is that each day something can be learned and every individual is worth listening to in a careful manner.

Challenges in Agronomy for the Two-Year College

There are many problems facing those providing food for a hungry world and for which the agronomist has responsibilties.

The genetic likeness of crop varieties may result in a catastrophic epidemic of either plant disease or insect damage. The present monoculture type of agriculture throughout much of the

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Agronomic Education and The Two-Year Technical College

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world, which is the extensive planting of one crop primarily of the same genetic makeup, provides few natural resistance barriers to new diseases and insect problems. Thus, the sudden development and spread of a mutant pest could be disastrous to world food supply. The continuing preservation of genetic material by a world seed bank is essential to prevent such a catastrophe.

The use of fertilizer by kind and amount must be carefully monitored because of energy costs, ground water contamination, and crop response.

New crops are needed which better use light energy and are more efficient in the use of water. Although present attempts to breed plants which better use light energy have not been successful, research needs to continue in this area. With the decrease in the supply of quality irrigation water, there is a need for the breeding and husbandry of plants to conserve water resources.

Crop varieties are needed which survive in an air-polluted environment and are able to filter the air for high quality food crops and human needs.

Better uses of sludge, effluent and other waste products need to be found to protect our land and food quality. The major problem with sludges, especially those from commercial communities, is the high content of heavy metals such as chromium, arsenic, zinc, and lead. At present, this material is primarily used on soils growing non-food plants such as trees and ornamentals. Additional uses need to be explored to reduce dumping of sludge into water resources and landfills. The effluent is often used to supplement irrigation on non-food producing areas such as golf courses, lawns and ornamental plantings. Research is needed to conserve the above waste products to better use and to protect the environment from present methods of random disposal.

The search for new genetic plant material must be constant which will reduce the need for pesticides, widen the climatic adaptation of crops, and produce high quality food.

Methods of farming tropical land need to improve in order to prevent erosion, forming of laterites, and general soil productivity depletion. Laterites (oxisols) are formed mostly in tropical climates where there are two climatic periods — a season of high rainfall followed by a long dry period. Under these climatic conditions, long periods of clean cultivation and exposure of the soil to high sunlight intensity, there is a loss of soil structure, hardening of the soil, and decrease of soil productivity capabilties.

The agronomist must advertise the expertise which can be offered in local community planning in terms of land development for use by future generations.

The role of the agricultural and technical college in agronomy is to provide awareness of the problems of world hunger as related to the proper use of all factors of crop production: soil, water, fertilizer, tillage, seed selection, pesticide use, harvesting, storage, and sales. Last, but not least, the agronomic student must be convinced that agronomy is an honorable profession as "husbandry of the world's fields" and supplier of food for a hungry world.

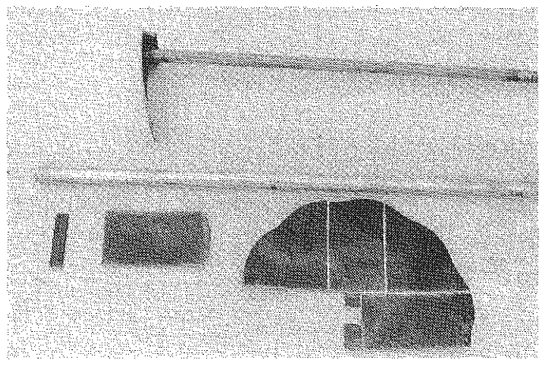
IDEAS UNLIMITED

Constructing a Thistle Hoe

By Robert M. Pollok

Editor's Note: Mr. Pollok is Vocational Agriculture Teacher at Dan River High School, Route 2, Ringgold, Virginia 24586. This article is based on his entry in the Ideas Unlimited Contest sponsored by the National Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association.

A simple mechanics activity for vocational agriculture students is the construction of a thistle hoe. The project can develop and reinforce fundamental agricultural mechanics skills.



The materials needed are:

1. One old disk (for blade)
2. 1" thin wall conduit, 60" long (for handle)
3. Flat metal 5/16" x 1" x 4" (brace for back)
4. Two electrodes, 3/32", E 7018

The procedure to follow is:

1. Draw blade on old disk as shown in accompanying picture. Note: Several blades can be made from one disk.
2. Cut out with a metal shear (Shear should be of 1/4" capacity.)
3. Weld together as shown in the accompanying picture.

ARTICLE

In Nontraditional Areas:

Meeting the Need for Laboratory Instructional Materials

By Dennis C. Scanlon

Editor's Note: Dr. Scanlon is Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural and Extension Education, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida 32611.

Of all the problems which have appeared in recent years, none has persisted more doggedly or proven to be more difficult to solve than the question of laboratory management in non-traditional areas of vocational agriculture. To define the problem more clearly, the question might be: Given a non-traditional area of vocational agriculture (examples include agricultural sales and service and agricultural processing) and a large block of time designated for laboratory instruction, what instructional alternatives and curriculum materials are available which permit the teacher to optimize each student's learning in the laboratory?

In the past, instructional strategies for the laboratory have been based on the notion that students are capable of self-directed inquiry and learning. Unfortunately, this is the ideal, not reality. Rarely are all students able to provide their own "structure" in an unstructured laboratory situation. One solution to the problem is an increased emphasis on the development of curriculum materials designed specifically for use in the laboratory. Tanner (1978) has suggested that improved laboratory instruction will result when instructional materials are developed which add structure and organization to the laboratory. However, while we acknowledge the need for the development of additional curriculum materials for use in the laboratory, the fact remains that very little is being done to increase the quantity or the quality of instructional materials available for use in the laboratory.

Teacher education programs have traditionally taught teachers that the best and most appropriate curriculum materials are those which they develop themselves for their own particular situations. Ideally, this may be true, but in reality few teachers have adequate time, training or resources to develop quality curriculum materials for laboratory instruction.

Another factor contributing to the problem of an inadequate supply of instructional materials for the laboratory has been the lack of emphasis by teacher education programs on the development of both lesson planning and instructional materials for the laboratory. While lesson planning is generally taught in most methods courses, the instructional strategies which are emphasized are those most appropriate for classroom instruction. Consequently, very little is done to stimulate students to develop instructional strategies or curriculum materials appropriate for the laboratory. Often the major differences between laboratory and classroom instruction are not distinctly called to the attention of the potential teacher.

A Start

If we accept the rationale that there is a need to emphasize the development of curriculum materials for the laboratory, then the following suggestions might be considered as first steps in solving the problem.

The development of state adopted courses of study for the nontraditional areas of vocational agriculture. Through a joint effort by agricultural education staff members and teachers from within specialty areas appropriate course content and organizational procedures for nontraditional areas of agriculture could be identified. The development of a common course of study would provide a standard reference point to which laboratory curriculum materials could be keyed. This would allow those curriculum materials which are developed to achieve maximum efficiency and benefit for the greatest number of people statewide.

The establishment and funding of instructional materials laboratories charged with selecting, procuring, producing, evaluating, and disseminating curriculum materials to agriculture teachers in the state. The instructional materials laboratory, if staffed by professional educators with considerable experience in the field, could develop a variety of laboratory instructional packages which support the state adopted course of study. These instructional packages could be designed so that they employ a variety of instructional strategies appropriate for the laboratory. Teachers could then conveniently modify or adapt these instructional packages to their own situations.

A Question of Commitment

The question to be resolved is not one of effectiveness. Research has shown that teachers are more effective, and that students achieve more when adequate curriculum materials are available for laboratory instruction. The major question to be dealt with is one of commitment. Are we as a profession willing to commit the time and resources to the long range goal of producing quality curriculum materials which will enhance and optimize the learning experience of the laboratory for every student?

Summary

"Learning by doing" is fundamental in vocational education. It has set vo-

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Meeting the Need for Laboratory Instructional Material

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cational education apart from traditional education. As educators, we should be careful not to believe that "doing" is always synonymous with learning. Many students are not capable of self-directing their own learning. In an unstructured laboratory situation they might learn very little even though they may be "doing" much. Unfortunately, teachers are often unable or unwilling to take on the task of developing the needed materials for the laboratory. The solution lies in identifying, developing, and adopting statewide courses of study for the nontraditional areas of vocational agriculture. These accepted courses of study would then become the basis upon which curriculum materials could be developed by a team of professional educators given responsibility for developing these materials.

The question is one of priorities and commitments. If we subscribe to the philosophy of "learning by doing," we need to make a strong commitment of both time and resources to develop the curriculum materials which will optimize the learning experiences of the laboratory for every student.

ARTICLE

Domestic Rabbits: The Living Lesson

By Stephen Roush

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

The animal science facet of agricultural education is often a difficult instructional area to teach nonfarm students, especially in urban areas. Reproductive physiology, genetics and nutrition are areas which seem to be "stumbling blocks" in the teaching of agriculture. A solution to the "stumbling block" in agriculture is the living example which can be kept at nearly any school, has a very low initial startup cost, and shows a return on the investment. This is the domestic rabbit.

For years, rabbits have been thought of as cuddly, white, and for use strictly as pets. Their reproductive prowess is legendary and often misunderstood. Once the agriculture teacher has dispelled the "pet" idea from students' minds, they may be able to see the educational advantage of such an animal. A short gestation, 31 days, and the fact that they are litter-bearing makes the study of genetics and reproductive physiology very easy. In addition, growing the litters out using different diets can help students with nutrition studies.

What Is Needed?

The difficulties involved with a comprehension of basic animal science concepts often center around the fact that the opportunity for actual observation and application of the principles is lacking. Alleviating this problem can be easily accomplished. The following list illustrates the estimated needs for a beginning program of study with domestic rabbits, assuming a beginning herd of one male and two female rabbits.

5 cages, approximately 36" x 30" x 18"

2 doe rabbits — (5 months of age)
1 buck rabbit — (6 months of age)
2 nest boxes — 8" x 10" x 16"
5 crocks of water
5 crocks of feed
100 pounds of pelleted rabbit feed

The total cost, depending upon actual materials and stock should be about $100.

Actual application could be started on the day the stock arrives. A local American Rabbit Breeders Association member may be a source of quality stock. Names can be obtained from A.R.B.A., 1925 S. Main, Bloomington, Illinois 61701.

How Are They Managed?

Breeding the rabbits is accomplished by taking the doe to the bucks' cage. If all things are in order, less than a minute later copulation will have been accomplished and the wait begins when the doe is returned to her cage. On the 28th day after breeding, a nest box filled with straw is put in with the doe. In 3 days she will make a nest. The doe pulls her own fur, lines the nest, and "kindles" the litter in a few hours after pulling fur.

During the 31 day gestation period, a unit can be taught on reproductive physiology including hormones, ovarian cycles, male and female anatomy, gestation cycles and finally parturation. As the young are born, a unit can begin on management practices used with all the newborn animals (lambs, pigs, calves, etc.). The other livestock units provide a good opportunity to repeat management practices. Living young are of great interest in the classroom. It is easy for the student to feel a part of being a manager while working with rabbits.

Ten days after birth a rabbit's eyes open. At 2 weeks, young rabbits begin to leave the nest. Weaning can be completed at 4 or 5 weeks. The doe can be rebred 3 weeks after parturation. When the young are weaned, they can be separated into two groups. Remember, if you bred both does the same day you'll have 10-16 young to divide, but if only one was bred, you'll have been able to stagger litters and get rabbits rotating through cages more efficiently.

Domestic rabbits should weigh approximately 4 pounds at eight weeks of age. If you separate animals into two groups, you can feed one group pellets and the other a balanced grain ration and demonstrate how feed efficiencies vary. Another alternative may be to feed both groups grain rations of different components. More advanced students can use the 1977 National Research Council Feed Requirements for Domestic Rabbits and calculate alternative rations and actually see the results of their calculations. An adult rabbit should receive 5 ounces of pellet feed each day as well as all the water it will drink.

If genetics is being studied, work can be done with purebred white rabbits and purebred black rabbits. Some basic color studies can be shown over a 6-7 month period as a complete generation can be turned over in that time. If population genetics is being studied, work can be done by comparing **purebred A** (X) **purebred A** crosses (purebreds) with **purebred A** (X) **purebred B** crosses (crossbreds). Heretosis impact can be studied quite easily in this manner.

How Are Funds Obtained?

The question to be asked next is, "where do we get funding for such a project and how do we continue the projects?" Marketing the domestic rabbits may provide the answer. Domestic rabbits, though not generally accepted in America as a meat source, have been a source of low cost protein for years in Europe. The meat is all white and is higher in protein than beef (beef 16.3%, rabbit 20.8%). Domestic rabbit has only about half the calories (790 per lb.) as beef (1440 per lb.). Domestic rabbits have never had a verified case of tularemia (rabbit fever) and generally an eight-week-old, four-pound rabbit will dress out two pounds or better. Producers can find outlets for their product in any state. The markets vary among meat, fur, laboratories, pets, or breeding stock outlets.

A possible outlet for 8-10 week old young is to begin a "rabbit chain," similar to the "pig chains" so long a part of vocational agriculture. For the student in any other than traditional production agriculture situations, the domestic rabbit might prove to be a partial solution for a supervised occupational experience project. It could provide year long continuity and will give opportunity for keeping records, earning an income, and developing supplementary skills.

The vocational agriculture instructor may have a concern about care of stock when the school year is over. This rabbit project can be easily liquidated and restarted in the fall. Perhaps a student needing a project will take over summer care for the subsequent young raised during that period.

How Are Rabbits Related To Agriculture?

A comment should be made for the agricultural production purist who has a difficult time equating domestic rabbits, even in laboratory role, to production agriculture. Interestingly, the United States is the only western country which does not have domestic rabbit meat as a staple in the diet. All South American countries as well as China have relied on rabbit meat as a low cost protein source for centuries.

America is beginning to recognize the nutritional value of rabbits. As recently as November, 1979, the American Society of Animal Science formed a World Association of Rabbit Science to begin research on the rabbit as a meat source. In 1978, Oregon State University formed the first Rabbit Research Station at a land grant university. The U.S. Congress voted $2.5 million in late 1979 for a Small Animal Research Station to be located in Arkansas. The main thrust of that research will emphasize domestic rabbits and dairy goats.

With these findings and other indicators, such as an annual membership in the American Rabbit Breeders Association of 12,000, it seems that domestic rabbits are beginning to be seriously considered as a possible meat alternative. With this in mind, it may be easier for many agricultural instructors to accept using domestic rabbits in their instructional programs. Domestic rabbits can indeed be a source of renewed or continued interest for students, as well as providing an effective teaching aid in a variety of vocational agriculture units.

BOOK REVIEW

Careers in Agribusiness and Industry, by Archie A. Stone, Marcella L. Stone and Harold E. Stone, Danville, Illinois: The Interstate, 1980, 3rd Edition, 365 pages, $9.50 (less educational discount).

In looking for texts and references for agribusiness and exploratory classes, high school vocational agriculture teachers may want to consider Careers in Agribusiness and Industry. This book includes excellent descriptions of the nature and scope of agribusiness and the many careers associated with the production, processing and marketing of food and fiber.

Beginning with the Introduction and Chapter One, the authors give a clear definition of agribusiness and include relevant facts that emphasize the important role of agribusiness and the growing need for qualified people to enter careers in the various fields. Chapter Two includes detailed information on the types of careers and the many agricultural firms and governmental agencies looking for people with expertise in agriculture. Chapter Three provides information for additional understanding of the scope, importance, and interdependence between farming and industry. Chapter Four provides requirements to prepare for college degrees that lead to careers in agribusiness.

For the student looking for information about various agribusiness industries, food and fiber products, supplies and services and farm production, Chapters Five through Twelve provide excellent descriptions of these aspects. Careers in ornamental horticulture are described in Chapter Thirteen. Governmental service careers, financial services, farm cooperatives and rural electrification services are described in Chapters Thirteen through Eighteen. A chapter is included on the opportunities for women in agribusiness careers.

Teachers of high school vocational agriculture programs should find this book an excellent reference for students in exploratory and agribusiness classes. Community college students should find the text useful, as it will assist them in the career planning process. Sufficient statistics are included to make this reference an excellent resource for speech materials as well. The book is easily read, well organized, and one that deserves consideration for inclusion in the high school and community college agriculture department libraries.

Carl L. Reynolds
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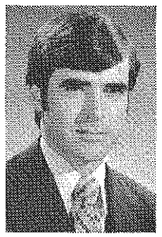
ARTICLE

Developing Good Work and Attendance Patterns



By Duane Knisely
and Kirby Barrick

Editor's Note: Mr. Knisely is Vocational Agriculture Instructor at Four County Joint Vocational School, Archbold, Ohio 43502. Dr. Barrick is Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural Education, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio 43210.

Vocational educators know the importance of helping students develop technical skills that are required for employment. Employers continually stress the value of good work habits and attendance for technically competent employees.

At the Four County Joint Vocational School, in Archbold, Ohio, there is a two-year Agricultural-Industrial Equipment and Service program involving six instructors and 125 students. The instructors' past work experiences in industry have brought attention to the importance of regular, prompt attendance and good working habits. In addition, current employers of graduates have emphasized how absenteeism causes a slow down in work, places more burden on other employees, and contributes to a loss in production. High absenteeism also tends to cause careless work habits and lower quality products.

It is the instructor's responsibility to educate students about the importance of regular attendance. At Four County, the instructor assumes the role of the employer of the lab and the students take on the role of employees. As a part of their record books, all students keep a record of the jobs performed, date and time spent on each job. An hourly wage is used to calculate daily earnings for lab work. At the end of each month the "wages" are summarized. The students who are present each day and spend the highest amount of lab time "on-the-job" end the month with the most "earnings".

The monthly earnings record enables the students to understand the importance of being on the job. Students learn that a day absent is a day lost, since time in the lab cannot be replaced. The system has cut down on absenteeism. Daily lab grades are also recorded, so the students' grades in the course reflect attendance.

Yearly financial statements are used at the beginning and closing of each school year to show student growth in earnings and investments. At the end of each year the students who have held employment related to agricultural mechanics during the summer or throughout the year show a financial gain over students who did not have a related job. The financial statements have made students more aware of their financial situations and how they relate to employment.

Since adopting this technique, the students have recognized the importance of attendance and work habits, their attitude toward work has improved and the learning situation has become more desirable for students, instructors and employers.

BOOK REVIEW

The Why and How of Home Horticulture, by Dr. Bienz, San Francisco, California; W.H. Freeman and Company Publishers, 1980, 513 pages, 393 illustrations, $16.95.

This is an excellent text for post-secondary use in the horticultural classes and as a reference for the high school vocational agriculture department. It would also be a very good reference book for the home gardening enthusiast.

A comprehensive text that starts out with the basic understanding of growth, soils, and soil fertility and watering. Other chapters included deal with the subjects of Regulating Plant Growth, Garden Pests, Indoor and Container Gardening, Ornamental, Vegetable, and Fruit Planting.

The last chapter of the book is a complete 160 page handbook with over 100 illustrations covering gardening techniques and information on regional climatic conditions of North America. The Handbook chapter contains information on Soil Preparation, Seed Testing, Planting Dates, Propagation, Mulching, Pruning, Storing of Products, Flower Arranging, Landscaping and other useful information. The information contained in the last chapter of this text is very informative making this an outstanding horticultural reference.

Darrel R. Bienz is Professor of Horticulture at Washington State University. He holds a B.S. in Biological Sciences and Horticulture from the University of Idaho and a doctorate in Plant Breeding from Cornell University.

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FFA PAGE

FFA versus Alumni: An Aggie Day Attraction

By Charles E. Hogan

Editor's Note: Mr. Hogan is Vocational Agriculture Teacher at Choudrant High School, Choudrant, Louisiana 71227. The article is based on his entry in the Ideas Unlimited Contest sponsored by the National Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association.

One activity which will produce a lot of interest is competition between the FFA chapter and the Alumni chapter in Aggie Day events. The goal of any activity such as this is to involve your community in your chapter's program of work. Involvement can best be achieved through activities that are enjoyable for everyone who participates.

The Aggie Day at Choudrant High School consists of nine events, described as follows:

Tug-of-War

This is a favorite. Usually there are enough students and alumni who wish to participate to have several teams, which allows elimination through tournament-style competition. A ten-person or 1500-pound limit is put on each team.

Crosscut Sawing

The alumni and students enjoy this equally. Poles of equal diameter are selected for this competition. The event is timed with a stopwatch.

Hay Hauling

Thirty bales of hay are arranged in a field. This event is timed. (For safety, the speed of the tractor should be set and any team that moves it should be disqualified.) A team of three competes. Points are deducted for any bales that fall or are broken.

Three-Legged Racing

Two partners tie one of their legs together. The contestants are lined up and on signal head for the finish line.

Egg Tossing

Each contestant has a partner with the egg toss. Partners face each other and toss an egg. Each time a partner catches an egg, they take one step further apart. The last team with an unbroken egg wins.

Tractor Driving

A driving course is set up and scoring is similar to the FFA tractor driving contests held in many states.

Feed Toting

Contestants are required to move one stack of eight 50-pound sacks of feed 30 yards and restack them. The event is timed and is much harder than it sounds.

Post-Hole Digging

Contestants are given thirty seconds to dig a hole as deep as they can. The winner is the one who digs the deepest hole.

Wild Chicken Chasing

This is an alternative to the typical greased pig contest. The advantage is that it requires no arena. Seven chickens are used. Each is banded with a colored ribbon. Six contestants draw for color. Each must catch the chicken with the appropriate color ribbon. The event is timed for an overall winner.

After all the fun events are over, a fish fry or hamburger supper is held for the two chapters. This is followed by a short program in which the FFA officers explain the program of activities and discuss other events.

Everyone — student and adults alike — enjoys this activity. Community involvement increases not only in this particular set of activities, but also in other FFA functions the chapter organizes. The goals of informing the community, community involvement, and other aspects of public relations are met through the FFA versus Alumni Aggie Day.

FFA Membership Increases

The Future Farmers of America Organization is growing! FFA membership reached 482,611 for 1980-81, an increase of 935 members from last year. This increase reverses three years of declining membership.

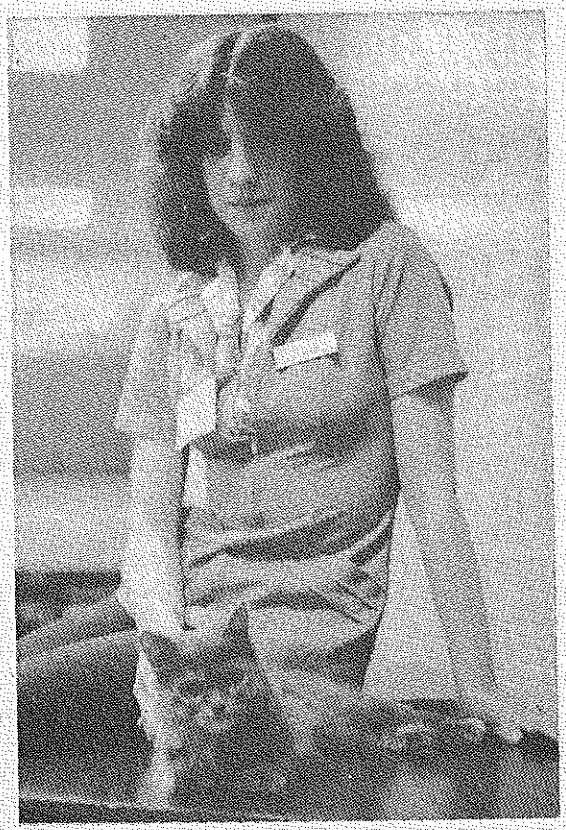
"The increase in FFA membership is probably in part thanks to the 10-PLUS program and 100 percent recognition that was started this year," said Mark Herndon, National FFA President. "High School enrollment has decreased over the past few years, but this program promotes the many benefits of being an FFA member so more vocational agriculture students join the organization. Through the 10-PLUS program, 1,585 chapters gained 10 or more members than last year. Nationwide, 2,600 chapters had an FFA membership equal to or greater than the number of vo-ag students, so they were named 100 percent chapters. Many graduate vo-ag students continue their FFA membership so their chapters achieve even more than 100 percent membership.

"FFA offers endless opportunities for every vocational agriculture student," Herndon said. "The programs prepare members for careers in agricultural and agribusiness by teaching technical skills as well as communication and leadership abilities. Every vo-ag student should have the extra advantage of FFA membership."

Stories in Pictures

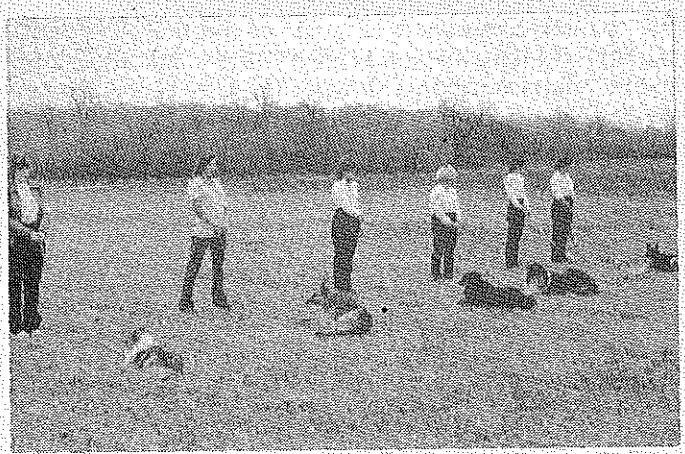
Small Animal Programs in Ohio

(Photographs courtesy of J. David McCracken, The Ohio State University)

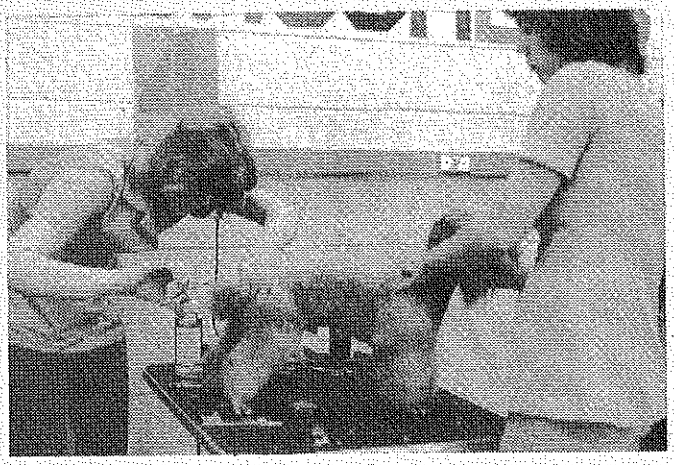


Laboratory animal handling is an area in the small animal skills contest in Ohio. Students must properly restrain animals, sex animals, answer questions of judges, and demonstrate other appropriate activities.

Pet shop operation requires creative and attractively decorated aquariums. Students compete in the Ohio animal care skills contests by setting up aquariums within a short time period. The contest involves both written tests and practical skills.



Dog obedience is a contest area for the small animal care instructional program in Ohio. Here participants are competing in this area which prepares them for work in kennels.



Dog grooming is taught in small animal care programs in Ohio. Here students compete in a state skills contests. Both speed and quality are considered in selecting the winning teams.