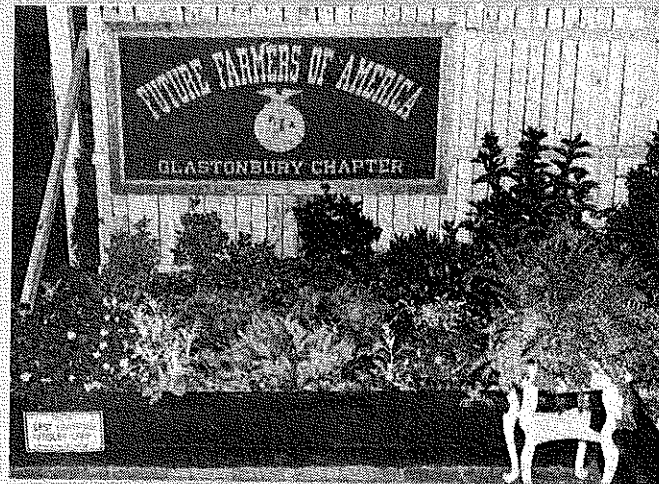
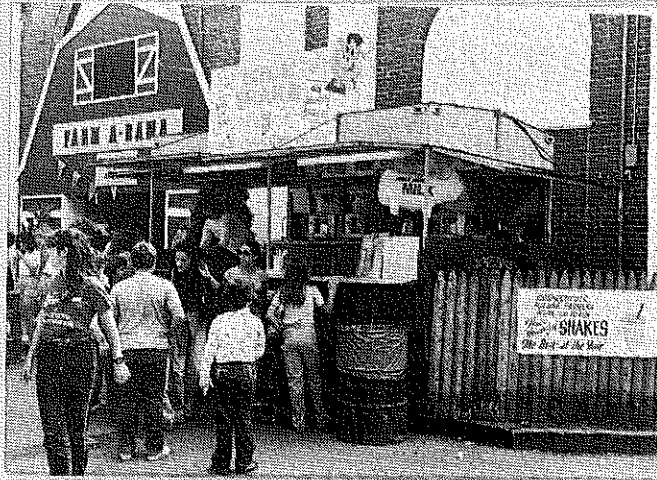


Stories in Pictures



Agribusiness relationships can include cooperatively sponsoring dairy bars, creating displays or providing demonstrators. (Photographs courtesy of M.S. Natusch, FFA Executive Secretary, Connecticut)

The Agricultural Education Magazine

March, 1983
Volume 55
Number 9

BRIDGING THE GAP WITH SOE PROGRAMS

Ownership Placement

Supervised Occupational Experience Programs

School

Work

Selecting
Planning
Conducting
Evaluating

THEME: Achieving Quality
Supervised Occupational Experience Programs

THE
AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION
 MAGAZINE



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

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EDITOR'S PAGE

Supervised Occupational Experience Programs



LARRY E. MILLER, EDITOR
 (The Editor is a Professor in the Department of Agricultural Education at The Ohio State University).

One of the most unique features of the program in vocational agriculture is that of supervised occupational experience (SOE) programs. This feature is one that sets our program apart from other educational programs since it provides for the real life component that makes the relevance of our program the envy of other educational efforts. The benefits to the student are axiomatic and those that accrue to employers, communities, schools, programs and teachers are discussed throughout the issue.

Given the magnitude of the contribution that SOE makes to our total educational effort and the purported diminished emphasis that this component of our program has been receiving, the reaction was to provide new direction through the national workshop described by David L. Williams. This need also helped provide the necessity for the theme of this issue. Dr. Williams was one of the leaders in this effort and rightly so since he has been one of the most prolific writers on and researchers of SOE programs.

An SOE program revival is needed. Given this need,

why did the workshop concept evolve from the National FFA Board of Directors and not directly from the profession? An evangelical spirit needs to emerge to provide a renaissance for SOE programs. The profession should not allow the minimum standards for SOE programs to go unmet; otherwise, we no longer have this unique feature of our program and we become diminished as a result.

Magazine Subscriptions By State

Percentage of Single Subscriptions Mailed by State

State	Single Copies Mailed	Total No. of Teachers	Percentage	State	Single Copies Mailed	Total No. of Teachers	Percentage
Alaska	8	7	114	Montana	25	83	30
Alabama	141	437	32	Nebraska	179	155	115
Arizona	18	79	23	Nevada	3	24	13
Arkansas	112	274	41	New Hampshire	7	35	20
California	139	651	21	New Jersey	17	70	24
Colorado	27	100	27	New Mexico	52	75	69
Connecticut	15	63	24	New York	78	387	20
Delaware	3	54	6	North Carolina	85	439	19
Florida	102	535	19	North Dakota	3	123	2
Georgia	28	365	77	Ohio	191	748	26
Hawaii	5	25	20	Oklahoma	541	446	121
Idaho	19	83	23	Oregon	45	142	32
Illinois	131	436	30	Pennsylvania	120	365	33
Indiana	70	292	24	Rhode Island	10	17	59
Iowa	70	287	24	South Carolina	96	183	52
Kansas	87	176	49	Tennessee	14	264	5
Kentucky	228	324	70	Texas	117	1576	7
Louisiana	119	298	40	Utah	52	70	74
Maine	2	52	4	Vermont	11	41	27
Maryland	50	101	50	Virginia	187	406	46
Massachusetts	13	96	14	Washington	102	260	39
Michigan	62	208	30	West Virginia	78	119	66
Minnesota	179	514	35	Wisconsin	81	350	23
Mississippi	187	269	70	Wyoming	5	52	10
Missouri	368	340	108				

How does your state rate? Are the teachers really professional people concerned with keeping up-to-date pedagogically as well as technically? The leadership — teacher's association officers, supervisors and teacher educators — that is concerned with the profession should take immediate steps to remediate this apparent lack of concern for professional improvement if we are to grow professionally and improve instead of simply growing stagnate. Otherwise, can we really lay claim to being a profession?

The number of subscriptions to THE MAGAZINE has been diminishing at an alarming rate. The voice of the profession cannot be heard by all. This editorial will be included in THE MAGAZINE to be read by those who do subscribe. Therefore, the readers need to be encouraged to review the data supplied and take appropriate action. The action to be taken should occur at the local, state and national level. Those that profess to be teachers of vocational agriculture should subscribe to the publication that is meant to provide them with the strategies for improving their programs and themselves.

Several years ago, many state associations in their wisdom moved away from a package dues system that included THE MAGAZINE as a part of that package. The wisdom of that decision can now be questioned since the number of dues paying members in the professional associations have also decreased, paralleling the decline in the subscriptions to THE MAGAZINE.

The data illustrates the number of single subscriptions mailed to each state in December 1982; the number of teachers in that state, according to David Craig's survey of supply and demand; and the percentage for each state. The number of single copies mailed is not an accurate count of those going to teachers since single copies are also mailed to supervisors, teacher educators, retired persons, libraries, etc. These data do, however, provide means of making a comparison.

The Cover

Quality supervised occupational experience programs bridge the gap between the school and the work place. (Drawing from the National Workshop materials).

THEME

Achieving Quality SOE Programs

Quality supervised occupational experience (SOE) programs for students is a prerequisite to a quality vocational agriculture program. A chain is no stronger than its weakest link. The three links in the vocational agriculture program chain are: (1) classroom/laboratory instruction, (2) SOE, and (3) FFA. During the decade of the 1970's, SOE was frequently identified as the weakest link, limiting accomplishments not only through SOE, but also through classroom/laboratory instruction and the FFA. Because of the weak SOE link, many students have not realized the potential vocational agriculture has to offer. The results have been erosion of quality in many local vocational agriculture programs.

National Workshop Conducted

Recognizing the need to re-establish SOE as a strong component of vocational agriculture, national agricultural education leaders took action. In 1980, the National FFA Board of Directors authorized the planning of a national SOE workshop and the development of related materials. A committee was named to plan the workshop, write a SOE Handbook, and advise in the development of SOE visual materials. The workshop was attended by over 200 vocational agriculture teachers, teacher educators, and state staff personnel from 45 states on July 25-30, 1982, in Washington, D.C.

The workshop was described by some as a "SOE revival." Others referred to it as a "return to the basics." The official theme of the workshop was "Bridging the Gap," recognizing SOE as a means of helping students make the transition from school to work. Regardless of the words used to describe it, the workshop was the kick-off for a SOE emphasis that undoubtedly will continue through the decade of the 1980's. Workshop participants were inspired and challenged to return to their home states and conduct activities that would help renew SOE as a strong link in the vocational chain.



By DAVID L. WILLIAMS, THEME EDITOR
(Editor's Note: Dr. Williams is a Professor in the Department of Agricultural Education at Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011).

Excellent materials are now available to help teachers, students, and others understand the importance of SOE in vocational agriculture. The newly developed SOE Handbook, SOE film, SOE slide sets, and other SOE related items can be ordered from the National FFA Supply Service. The SOE film, titled "Bridging the Gap," is also available on a loan basis from Venard Films, Box 130, Peoria, Illinois 61654.

The Challenge

Vocational agriculture instructors, teacher educators, and state staff personnel are challenged to join in the national movement in achieving quality SOE programs. Remember, if it is to be, it is up to me. Ask yourself, "Am I responsible for the weak SOE link in vocational agriculture?" Or even better, "Am I responsible for the strong SOE link in the vocational agriculture chain?"

The articles on the theme in this issue of THE MAGAZINE present a few examples of what has been done, what is being done, and what should be done to achieve quality SOE programs. Most of the theme article authors participated in the 1982 National SOE Workshop. The theme articles describe actions that can be taken at state and local levels to achieve quality SOE programs.

THEME

Planning is Essential For Quality SOE Programs



By O.S. GILBERTSON
(Editor's Note: Dr. Gilbertson is Professor and Head of Agricultural Education at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska 68583)

Imagine yourself being asked to go on vacation. You have committed yourself to one week, but it may be extended to four weeks. Your only road map consists of main roads, detours, or tariffs. You are not going to do much planning or preparation because of the uncertainties. After all, if you decide to extend the trip to two, three, or even four weeks, you will "cross that bridge when you come to it."

Does this sound crazy to you? You say, "no one in their right mind would do this unless they had no commitments and were totally carefree!" As crazy as it may seem, there are vocational agriculture teachers who utilize a similar approach when it comes to the supervised occupational experience (SOE) component of their program. How many times have you heard, "You must have a project if you are in agriculture," or worse yet, "if you are going to be in FFA you must have a project."

First of all, if we are going to use the term "project," let us put it in its proper context. A project is generally considered to be an undertaking for a specific duration of time with a known or projected termination date. Too many SOE programs are limited to production projects that terminate with a "fair or show" activity, and that is the total extent of the student's SOE program. There are other youth organizations that provide students with this type of experience. These duplicated efforts are unnecessary!

Perhaps some teachers, supervisors, and/or teacher educators have a weak philosophical base regard to the purpose of SOE in vocational agriculture. Why is it included in the program? Is it to separate the wheat from the chaff, a means of validating extended contracts, a prerequisite to aid in being more selective in enrollment, because it has always been a requirement? None of these are valid purposes!

The National Standards Workshop of 1976 established as the objective of supervised occupational experience that students are to be engaged in supervised occupational experience programs that are related to their occupational objective and are appropriate in light of their ability and place of residence.

A Program of SOE

A program of occupational experience should be our goal, whenever possible. How does one distinguish the difference between project and program? The author defines a program of SOE to be, "a planned series of related learning experiences which is an integral part of the instructional program of a student enrolled in vocational agriculture, designed to develop knowledge and skills in agriculture." Certainly, a program may include individual projects as an integral part of the series of experiences.

Many students complete four years of vocational agriculture having had four years of occupational ex-

perience while others have one year of experience four times; they basically have duplicated their "project" each successive year. This is not the kind of experience we should be promoting with vocational agriculture students!

How does our "vacationer" analogy in the first paragraph relate to this discussion of SOE programs? Our "vacationer" is a student who is interested in agriculture and enrolled in a vocational agriculture class. The student's continued enrollment depends on the degree to which his/her needs are fulfilled. An interest in agriculture carried the student into the program, but he/she was unaware of what to expect; the program requirements, the options available, or the opportunities.

The production agriculture student knows that livestock, crops, and mechanics (the freeways) are part of the program and that students wear blue jackets and show livestock at the fair, but that is about the extent of the student's knowledge of the program. The student is not aware of budgets, breeding schedules, planting schedules, projected time requirements, and the like. Further, the student believes that the livestock are raised for the purposes of showing at the fair. Perhaps this example is somewhat absurd, however, it may be more real than we want to admit.

How much planning goes into the SOE programs? Do we look upon SOE as the foundation of our program and the vehicle through which students can become established in the vocation of their choice, or at the very least, enhance their agricultural interest and confirm their desire to pursue an agricultural career?

Planning SOE Programs

How should the vocational agriculture teacher help students plan a series of related learning experiences which will accomplish these objectives? The author suggests following basic program planning principles. Identify the present situation as compared to a future desired situation. The difference, then, becomes the needs which must be met in order to achieve the desired situation.

Follow a five step procedure in planning experience programs for students:

1. Identify the future occupational goal.

(Cont. on page 6)

Planning Is Essential For Quality SOE Programs

(Cont. from page 5)

2. Identify the degree of involvement desired upon graduation.
3. Assess the current knowledge and experience of the student.
4. Develop a sequential program of experience to advance from the current status to the desired status.
5. Schedule the supporting courses and FFA activities which will enhance their vocational establishment.

Let us take a more detailed look at these five steps to clarify the process:

1. Identify an occupational objective, as realistically as possible. Determine what the student hopes to do upon graduation. Have students project themselves ten years from now, identifying what they would like to do in the future. This may include college or technical school preparation.

Many say that students in high school, especially freshmen, are not capable of identifying a career goal. To some degree, this may be true, however, the fact that they enrolled in a vocational agriculture class means that they have an interest in a "career in agriculture." A decision had to be made between vocational agriculture and other courses! Basically what you are asking them to do is refine their career choice, if they can.

2. In the same manner, establish a goal as to the degree of occupational establishment desired upon completion of vocational agriculture. This goal should be realistic as well as challenging. Goals regarding advanced degrees, proficiency awards and/or leadership roles may be included but they should be attained as the student advances toward the declared occupational objective and should not become the overriding objective of the experience program.

3. Inventory the experiences of the student. This includes production agriculture experiences, agribusiness experiences, agriculture knowledge and skills acquired, and demonstrable leadership abilities. Even if the student is new to the program, the chances are good that there have been some 4-H or other practical experiences in agriculture.

4. Now comes the difficult part. Develop a plan that will take students from where they are to where they hope to be. Here is where you pull out all stops! Students must be aware of the demands that will be placed on them and their parents if they are to meet their objective. It is not only prudent to involve the parents, but almost a necessity.

Develop a yearly occupational experience program which will provide the necessary background, knowledge and skill appropriate for the goal that has been established.

Whether the student is interested in becoming established in production agriculture, agribusiness, or a professional career in agriculture; there should be an opportunity for observations with appropriate entrepreneurs or employees. This is a logical inclusion in a unit on agriculture careers. Student involvement in these exploratory activities put practical application into teaching vocational agriculture.

Next, one needs to schedule involvement in production enterprises and/or work experience in agriculture. Perhaps a combination of both might be the most appropriate, as all students can gain valuable experience and insight into production agriculture through personally raising production enterprises (projects) so can students benefit from work experiences, including laboratory-type occupational experiences. Keep in mind that experience which enhances student establishment in a chosen career should be the underlying criterion. Non-traditional programs should be encouraged especially for students with limited opportunities.

There are some essential characteristics which should be basic to every plan. A good agricultural experience program should: (a) be of sufficient scope to be educationally worthwhile, practical and challenging; (b) command respect of the school and community; (c) continue and expand over a period of years, leading to establishment in an agricultural occupation; (d) be economically sound and offer an opportunity for earning money and/or providing the student with a saleable skill; and (e) be within the limits of finances and credit available.

5. By this time you should be acutely aware of the importance of planning. Cash flow, space, and location of enterprises, transportations for work, budgets, etc., need to be addressed. Additionally, the plan will identify the supporting courses and leadership activities which compliment the occupational preparation of the student.

An Implementation Plan

We have identified "WHAT" we want to accomplish, now we must determine "HOW" it will be accomplished. This becomes the implementation plan. The entire long-range plan is one that must be addressed in a methodical manner; similar to using a cheese slicer on a brick of cheese. Each slice brings us closer to the end.

The annual work plan will be considerably more detailed than what is developed on the master plan. Additionally, planning of improvement practices and supplementary skills can be done as the student progresses, year-by-year.

The previously described five step planning process can be of tremendous benefit to students. Realizing that students may change their vocational objectives during high school, the plan should not be so "set in concrete" that it cannot be changed. Time should be provided for updating the plan periodically.

The implementation of this process can be a tremendous asset to a vocational agriculture program. It will put reality into the supervised occupational experience program through the close correlation between SOE and agricultural career establishment. Increasing support for your program will be provided due to your exhibited organizational ability and dedication to SOE. Additionally, it will provide validation for year-round contracts and strengthen FFA degree and award applications, just to name a few advantages.

Planning makes a difference! Do not keep students in the dark! Put the white canes away! Perform cataract surgery! Develop a process! Help students with their vocational preparation! You will find that the time and effort will be repaid.

THEME

An Interview with Clarence E. Bundy

Sound Principles For SOE: Past, Present, And Future



By Keith W. Rheault and W. Wade Miller

(Editor's Note: Mr. Rheault is a Research Assistant and Dr. Miller is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Agricultural Education at Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011).

Note: Professor Bundy began his career in agricultural education in 1929 when he became the vocational agriculture instructor at Iowa Falls, Iowa. He remained in that position until the summer of 1947 at which time he joined the agricultural education staff at Iowa State University. Later, he served as Chairman of the Department of Agricultural Education. Professor Bundy established himself as a leader in the field of agricultural education, both at the secondary and post-secondary levels. His research and publications have earned him international acclaim as a writer and author. He served on numerous state and national committees within the agricultural education profession. He is a dynamic teacher who demonstrates what he professes. In retirement, Professor Bundy continues to work on his series of agricultural textbooks. This interview was conducted by Keith W. Rheault at Mr. Bundy's home in Ames, Iowa and edited by W. Wade Miller. In this interview Mr. Bundy shares his thoughts concerning SOE.

RHEAULT: Mr. Bundy, over the years, what is it that has made SOE work for us?

BUNDY: Well, I would say in the past it has been the philosophy of teachers concerning the value of the occupational experience program. The vocational agriculture program and supervised occupational experience were synonymous. Thirty or forty years ago many vocational agriculture programs had seven or more periods per week. This schedule allowed more than one class period each day. That type of schedule made it possible to take the students on many more field trips and to devote much more time to SOE in class.

RHEAULT: Maybe that is one of our bigger problems today. We generally have only 45-55 minute classes. We can not take many field trips with this type of schedule.

BUNDY: I should make one other point. The developments in the last twenty years toward mini-courses, nine-week courses, and semester courses have caused the vocational agriculture program and SOE to lose some of its continuity. Students are encouraged to take whatever they wish instead of committing themselves for four years. Also, with the increase in the number of periods each day it is not unusual to have them enroll in five or six courses per semester. The student is spread thin and is not devoting very much time to any one subject.

RHEAULT: What standard do you advocate for SOE programs?

BUNDY: I did not have a certain standard that all students had to meet. My attitude is that one must build standards around the opportunities and goals of each student. Some students may have almost no opportunities for

production type SOE programs while others have all kinds of opportunities. Lack of money may also be a problem. As a teacher, I tried to encourage each student to have a broad based program involving three types of activities. In the beginning, these were production projects, supplementary practices, and improvement projects. The latter involved real estate or enterprise improvement projects. In later years, farm employment experiences were added, but it was not until 1963 that nonfarm agribusiness experience became legal as a result of changes in federal law.

My goal was to work with every student and their parents to develop a personalized SOE program. I tried to encourage each student to have at least two production projects, conduct five to eight supplementary practices, and two or three improvement projects.

RHEAULT: You mentioned that you have had a few students with limited opportunities. What are some of the things that you did to help these students with their SOE programs?

BUNDY: One thing that I did was to promote a partnership project between farm students and town students. Another way was to have town students rent land for production projects. A third idea was to promote cooperative programs. This would involve a group of four to six students. One group, I remember, purchased feeder pigs and fed them out. They took turns going out in pairs to take care of them. Another group rented a piece of land and grew garden crops. There were not any students with absolutely no opportunity because they all had a home and there was always something they could do in the area of home improvement for an improvement project.

RHEAULT: How did you do about obtaining parental support for the SOE program?

(Cont. on page 8)

Sound Principles For SOE Past, Present, And Future

(Cont. from page 7)

BUNDY: I am a great believer in using the FFA and subsidiary organizations. We always had a meeting in the fall with the new students and their parents where the older FFA members would explain the value of their projects and share the philosophy behind the work. We would also have field trips where the parents were invited so that they could see some of the FFA member's projects. It was a common practice to take parents along on any of our field trips or when we were going somewhere to buy seed stock. But the best way to get parents involved was through home visits. Most of the time, when a teacher is conducting a home visit to supervise a student, the student's parents want to show the teacher what they have and what they are doing at the time. Many of our best programs involved partnership projects between students and their parents. This was especially true during the students' last two years in vocational agriculture.

RHEAULT: What do you think are some of the keys to a successful SOE program?

BUNDY: First, the teacher must have the philosophy that SOE is the root of their instructional program. They must put emphasis on it not as a requirement to be met, but upon the gains that can be had by having an SOE program. Second, I think that the teacher has to feel that his/her program is more than 8:30 'til 4:30. One cannot possibly have a good SOE program without getting out to supervise students after 4:30 and on some Saturdays. I also think that school administrators must see the value of this type of program. Teachers should be reimbursed for their expenses to supervise students and to take classes on field trips. I think we must relate the classroom instruction to what is going on in agriculture at that time. Third, we must help students to set goals. One way I did this was through the SOE record book. The record book I used had a place in it to develop a three year program. At the end of each year, an additional year was added so that the student always had a three year plan.

RHEAULT: Some teachers say they do not have the time or the money needed to supervise students' SOE programs.

BUNDY: I know there is a budget problem today. When I taught, we often took the principal out with us. Part of the job was selling the administration. The board never

hesitated to provide me with funds to do the visits and take field trips. And the other side of the problem is teachers only have 45 to 55 minute periods now and can not get out and do very much in that amount of time.

RHEAULT: How did you go about evaluating student SOE programs and their record books?

BUNDY: Well, in the first place, I evaluated it by the beginning. When they started as freshmen they began with classroom instruction which aided them with improvement practices at home. Then, as soon as we started on a production project, they would work out a plan to do it. That plan went into their record book. Then we took up the subject matter in class. If the main thing was going to have swine projects, or corn projects, those were the enterprises we studied first. So the thing I evaluated was their plan which included a budget agreement and productive procedures to be completed. They would add to their plans as they learned new subject matter during the year. As they got their projects underway, I would periodically evaluate their records to make sure they were up-to-date. Then, at the close of the year, I would evaluate their projects according to how good they had done in terms of the goal they had set. I also evaluated their improvement projects. This was how I determined the grades for their occupational experience program. I did not consider limited opportunities to be a handicap. If I thought a student was making good use of his/her opportunities, he/she would get an A or B just as someone would with all kinds of opportunities.

RHEAULT: What do you think that your students gain from their SOE programs?

BUNDY: In the first place, they developed a lot of competencies. Some of the skills they learned were managerial and some were manipulative. Secondly, they learned to make decisions, in other words, they learned to think and to plan. Many of them learned to appreciate and capitalize on opportunities.

RHEAULT: Do you have any closing comments concerning the value of SOE?

BUNDY: I think the most satisfying phase of my years teaching in the secondary level were my experiences working not only with students, but also with the families in the occupational experience program. And I think that the instructor who develops the kind of philosophy which takes satisfaction in the development of the student through the SOE program is really going to find teaching rewarding.

THEME

SOE Is A Dynamic Instructional Tool



BY COLEEN T. KACZOR

(Editor's Note: Ms. Kaczor is a Graduate Assistant in the Division of Agricultural Education at the University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois 68101).

Although supervised occupational experience (SOE) programs are no longer mandated by federal legislation, they are a necessary instructional tool for vocational agriculture. SOE programs are the instructional component that makes vocational agriculture different from the non-vocational school courses offered. They make agricultural instruction meaningful and practical, by substituting through experience. A supervised occupational experience program is one that the students may call their own, and whether they succeed or fail in this endeavor depends predominately upon their and the instructor's efforts.

The benefits of SOE programs are numerous, yet there are vocational agriculture instructors who do not use this instructional tool effectively or even at all. Many instructors believe the programs are too time consuming to develop and continually supervise, so SOE programs are usually the component of vocational agriculture instruction to receive less emphasis or be completely omitted. Instructors must fully understand the values and benefits that SOE programs provide to effectively utilize them in their instruction.

Purpose of SOE

The primary purpose of supervised occupational experience programs is to enable a student to develop entry level agribusiness skills within real life situations. SOE programs should also assist students in securing positions and making satisfactory progress in an agricultural occupation of their choice, whether on or off the farm. If an instructor considers relaxing or omitting the SOE program component of instruction, the following principles should be remembered. A good SOE program:

1. enhances classroom instruction,
2. provides students with a wide variety of experiences,
3. serves as a guidance function for students in an exploratory phase,
4. allows easier transition from school to work,
5. develops desirable habits, responsibilities, understandings, ideals, and abilities within true-to-life situations, and
6. contributes to a desirable relationship among home, school, and community

A productive and educational program should be agricultural, applicable, individual, and supervised. To be productive and educational, the individual program should incorporate current approved practices, continually progress in a positive manner, be challenging yet stimulating and create a true interest within the student to continually learn more. If one of these parts is omitted, then the quality and successfulness of the SOE program will not be fully achieved.

Teacher Responsibility

The responsibility of successful supervised occupational experience programs relies initially upon the instructor. It

is very easy to blame the students, parents, administration or employers (when applicable) for unsuccessful experiences, but instructors should blame themselves. Vocational agriculture instructors must educate, rather than inform students, parents, administration, and employers about the purpose, principles, values and benefits of SOE programs.

Informing people is not sufficient in reference to achieving quality SOE programs. A thorough education about the program allows students, parents, administrators and employers to develop a more concise understanding of SOE programs. Instructors must also establish cooperative relationships with these four groups to further enhance program successfulness.

There are several strategies to obtain the support of the local school's administration and surrounding employers. The instructor might:

1. utilize the advisory council as a public relations group between the program and administration,
2. take the administration on a tour of successful SOE programs,
3. invite administrators and employers to the FFA banquet to see individuals receive awards for outstanding SOE programs,
4. publicize the SOE programs regularly in the local paper, and
5. prepare a monthly report of SOE program activities and visits for the school board and administration

Parental understanding and support may be accomplished by carefully explaining the requirements, objectives, and benefits of their child's program to them individually. A SOE program with samples of all agreements and a sample record book has been found to be very effective by some agriculture instructors. Touring successful SOE programs with parents and involving parent in their child's supervised occupational experience program are also effective in gaining parental support. Involvement may occur in many ways. The parents may be the student's partner or landlord in the written agreement, they might loan the student money or equipment, and/or they can help the student maintain up-to-date records. Parents must understand they are facilitators and not the proprietor.

Convincing students of the opportunities a SOE program has to offer may take more time and effort on the in-

(Cont. on page 10)

SOE Is A Dynamic Instructional Tool

(Cont. from page 9)

structor's part than anticipated. Discussion of SOE programs and record keeping should be held early in the first vocational agriculture class. A thorough explanation of why SOE programs are necessary, how to begin a program, and who is involved in a student's program may be given by senior FFA members with successful programs. Often this idea is more effective than a teacher-oriented lecture because the students will relate better to their peers. A field trip to outstanding programs and then a visit to student's home to discuss their program has personally proven to be successful. Once a student has established a SOE program, an instructor should base classroom instruction upon individual problems that might arise in a student's program, so instruction and experience may compliment each other.

Instructors of vocational agriculture must make a personal commitment to the SOE component of instruction. Supervising programs is a time consuming portion of that personal commitment but also a very rewarding experience for both the instructor and the student. Teachers should be the catalyst that initiates a reaction within students towards their individual programs by remaining supportive yet not overbearing. They should personally develop goals for each individual student to strive for in their program and keep their expectations realistic. Unrealistic goals may lead to teacher dissatisfaction and possibly even abandonment of the SOE program by the student.

Individualized SOE Programs

When assisting a student in developing a SOE program, several factors should be considered by the instructor. The scope of the project depends upon parental permission, the student's interest, the student's capabilities (both physical and cognitive), and the resources (including money) available. Instructors should remember that the planned growth and maturation of the student if it is to be meaningful and challenging. The program collectively planned by the student, instructor, parents, and employer must be large enough in scope to apply efficient and desirable practices, be realistic and not just paper-planned, and possess an opportunity for profit. This last factor, though, should not be overemphasized by the instructor.

A SOE program should primarily be developed for learning, not earning! In addition to planning the project on paper, two very important documents should accompany this written plan. One is a proposed budget to help students anticipate upcoming expenditures and learn how to properly manage their costs. The second is a business management agreement which promotes understanding, divides responsibility accordingly, develops a financial agreement fair to all, is legal in case one party dies, and helps to insure a successful program.

Realistic planning and accurate records are major to be emphasized when the SOE program is based on a sound foundation base in both areas will facilitate the student in developing a worthwhile individualized program. Instruction in both areas must continue throughout the entire SOE program to be effective and beneficial.

After the initial paper-planning has been accomplished, the instructor's work is not finished. Continual supervision and instruction must follow to help the student maintain and further develop a worthwhile program. Every activity should be recorded and discussed with students and parents. Recommendations from previous visits should continue all year (justification for a 12-month contract) and be planned seasonally or when the student could not give some objective advice. A minimum of three to four visits per year is recommended for every student. Visits by other parents or FFA members may also be very beneficial to the student.

Students with SOE programs should also be encouraged by FFA members because both components work hand-in-hand to supplement the classroom and each other. The FFA allows students to demonstrate their "hands-on" experience in a variety of settings such as contests, community projects, chapter projects, and individual awards which provide chapter, state and national recognition. The chapter also help the students by establishing a loan fund, assisting members in locating productive animals, purchasing certified seed, locating jobs, encouraging members to use improved practices and increase the number of improvement projects, sponsor program tours to outstanding agricultural facilities, and develop chapter awards for individual SOE programs. Previously written practices have been utilized by the author or contributed by experienced instructors, and have proven very successful for both FFA and SOE programs.

Achieving Quality SOE Programs

High quality programs may be very heterogeneous (farm, agribusiness placement, and laboratory), but the characteristics necessary to achieving quality programs remains the same regardless of the program type. Every instructor must be familiar with the primary purpose and principles of SOE programs before establishing a program. When developing a program, the instructor should review a mental checklist:

1. Is the program worthwhile to the student?
2. Does the program offer the student a good opportunity?
3. Are accurate records being maintained?
4. Do you fully believe in SOE programs and their benefits?

SOE programs provide dynamic techniques for educating through experience. There is no better way to learn everyday practical knowledge than to experience it, and the agriculture students achieving high quality SOE programs are receiving this opportunity.

THEME

Alternative Approaches To SOE



By ROBERT D. HERR

Editor's Note: Dr. Herr is Instructor and Head of the Vocational Agriculture Program in the Eastern Lancaster County School District, New Holland, Pennsylvania 17557.

The needs of students and industries are constantly changing. Increased technology, changing demands of consumers, and different economic and social patterns are forces behind these needs. Educational institutions must adjust their programs to meet these changing needs.

Changing Situations

Many students completing high school today are continuing their education by moving into programs that will provide training and skills for the more technical demands of the job market. While the long-revered high school diploma will get its holder a job, it no longer assures a job holder of security or progress. It is only a foot in the door. It is universally recognized that more training and/or schooling is necessary if "desired success" is to be achieved.

Another important factor in many areas is the current depressed economic situation. Many industries and businesses that have long been supportive of vocational agriculture programs are not in a position to offer students the kinds of opportunities they provided in the past. In fact, agriculturally related businesses are among those most affected by the current recession and many foresee at least several years of recovery. What does this mean to the vocational agriculture teacher wishing to provide his/her students with a meaningful supervised occupational experience program?

The demand for technically trained people and the depressed economic situation mean that vocational agriculture teachers may have to rethink portions of student's SOE programs. Programs must be developed so that hardpressed businesses and industries will be willing to participate. The programs must also be developed with the realization that more and more vocational students are not going directly from high school into the job market.

Potential Changes

Components that have long been an integral part of SOE programs will probably have to be changed. Among the most important are the amount of time spent in a job location, the payment factor, and the purpose of the SOE program. It may be necessary to have shorter periods of time at no pay for the purpose of exploring various kinds of job opportunities in agribusiness.

SOE programs that include agribusiness employment are becoming increasingly limited because high school students lack the technical skills to do more than observe. It is unlikely that such observation can justify the payment of even a minimum wage. In addition, it is difficult for personnel employed in such areas as engineering, purchasing, sales, marketing, communications, or quality assurance to have large blocks of time to spend with students.

Another problem often arises because it is difficult for an agribusiness corporation to envision the type of program that may be helpful to students. In this case, it becomes the

responsibility of the teacher to come up with a program and "sell" it to the various departmental managers that may be involved, as well as the personnel department which usually handles student placement.

There has long been an argument for pay, that a student in the workplace must be paid because of insurance demands. If a student is not involved with the actual production processes, this could be overcome.

There are several creative approaches that can be taken to set up exploratory agribusiness SOE programs. Three approaches are presented here.

Experience in a Single Occupational Area

This approach would provide the student two or three hours of experience per week over a period of several months in a single occupational area. This does not place a burden on the workplace personnel and will give the student a look at a variety of activities. Some experiences that may fit into this category include placement in a veterinarian clinic, Cooperative Extension Office, Production Credit Office, farm newspaper office, farm real estate office, and other community opportunities.

Experience in Multiple Occupational Areas

This is an approach that may be especially suitable for an SOE program in a large agribusiness. A variety of short experiences would be planned for a student in one department, then the student would be rotated to another department. For example, one week in accounting, one week in purchasing, one week in sales, etc. The following is a sample plan involving nine weeks of occupational experience in a food processing corporation employing 1500 employees: (Four days per week the student would report to the assigned business and one day a week to the school during the designated hours.)

Week 1 — Broiler Grower Operations

- a. 2 days, broiler flock service person
- b. 1 day, company veterinarian
- c. 1 day, management level personnel

Week 2 — Fresh Processing

- a. 1 day with catching crew
- b. 3 days in eviscerating, cutting-up, chilling, fresh packing

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Alternative Approaches To SOE

(Cont. from page 11)

Week 3 — Production Planning/Methods/Inventory Control

- 1 day with production management personnel
- 1 day with production planning personnel
- 1 day with inventory control personnel
- 1 day with industrial engineering personnel

Week 4 — Maintenance/Engineering

- 1 day with maintenance management personnel
- 1 day with drafting and maintenance scheduling
- 1 day with process mechanics
- 1 day with other maintenance departments

Week 5 — Purchasing

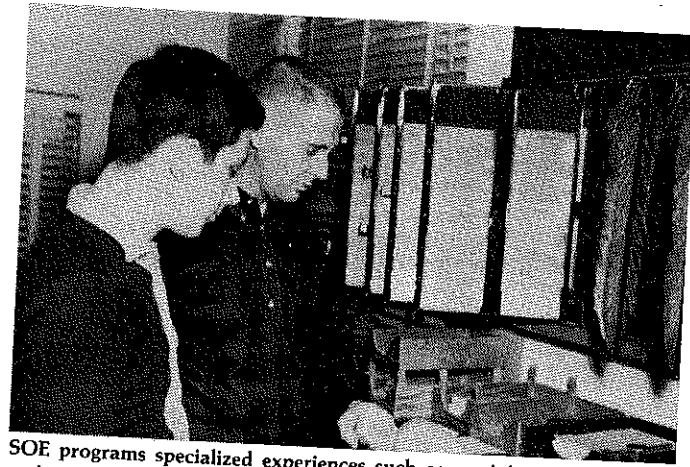
- 1 day with commodities purchasing
- 1 day with packaging purchasing
- 1 day with other purchasing
- 1 day with purchasing management/office personnel

Week 6 — Sales and Marketing

- 2 days with sales personnel (outside plant)
- 1 day with marketing personnel
- 1 day with sales and marketing management personnel

Week 7 — Transportation

- 1 day with transportation management personnel
- 1 day with transportation maintenance/scheduling



SOE programs specialized experiences such as receiving instruction on maintaining breeding records in an artificial breeding cooperative. (Photograph courtesy of Robert D. Herr.)

- 1 day with driver on a day trip
- 1 day with shipping and receiving areas

Week 8 — Communications Services

- 1 day with graphic arts department
- 1 day with telecommunications/reprographics
- 1 day with publications editor
- 1 day with consumer services/communications management

Week 9 — Training/Management/Personnel/Benefits

- 1 day with training manager
- 1 day with personnel department
- 1 day with wage and benefit manager
- 1 day with management trainee; meeting with each group vice president.

Experience in Multiple Agribusinesses

Another variation is to place students for a variety of short experiences in more than one workplace. For instance, they may spend one week at artificial breeding cooperative and another at a feed mill. Again, this reduces the burden on any one operator and gives the student opportunity to explore a wider number of career opportunities. Following is a nine week schedule involving a variety of small agribusinesses.

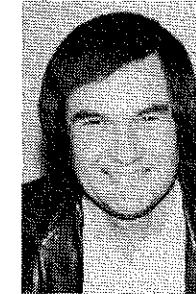
- One week at an artificial breeding cooperative
- One week at Agway or similar farm store
- One week at a local feed mill
- One week at local auction/stockyards
- One week at farm machinery dealer
- One week at Soil Conservation Service
- One week at Cooperative Extension Service
- One week at Production Credit/local bank/other credit institution
- One week at an exemplary farming operation

Supervised occupational experience is an important part of a viable vocational agriculture program especially during times of rapid change. The vocational agriculture teacher must use the resources in his/her community with imagination and innovativeness in planning SOE programs to meet the needs of students. Vocational agriculture has always been a program designed to meet the needs of students.

The approaches described here have been used in New Holland. Perhaps they can provide ideas others can use in developing SOE programs that will give new meaning and opportunity to a vocational agriculture program in changing and difficult economic times.

THEME

Standards Are Essential For Quality SOE



By RONALD CRAWFORD

(Editor's Note: Mr. Crawford is Program Supervisor for Vocational Agriculture and Renewable Natural Resources Education for the Department of Public Instruction, Tumwater, Washington 98504).

Supervised Occupational Experience (SOE) can be defined as a supervised occupational learning experience in vocational agriculture related to instruction which requires development beyond the normal school and class hours under the supervision of a teacher, parent, employer and/or other adults.

The SOE programs of students provide a foundation upon which vocational agriculture is built. It is the hands-on, practical application of classroom and laboratory instruction. SOE is not just trial and error learning, but planned application and development of agriculture competencies in an environment as closely related to industry conditions as possible.

A quality SOE program must have in-class and out-of-class components conducted on a year-round basis. In-class instruction should include:

1. Identifying types of SOE programs.
2. Selecting individual SOE programs.
3. Planning SOE programs.
4. Evaluating SOE programs.
5. Keeping records and other management tools as required by industry.

Far too many instructors teach only record keeping in the classroom with little or no instruction related to developing and maintaining solid SOE programs.

State Standards for SOE

There is no question that SOE bridges the gap between school and employment. However, for SOE to be revitalized and become a viable part of all vocational agriculture programs, we must have quality state standards. In Washington, there are two standards written in the Washington Administrative Code State Law for Vocational Education that support continuing SOE programs for vocational agriculture students:

1. Each student will carry out a supervised occupational experience program.
2. The vocational agriculture instructor is on an extended contract during the summer months to adequately cover the program and supervision on the occupational experience programs, FFA activities, and other specific duties. It is recommended that a full-time instructor be on a 12 (twelve) month contract.

Standards that recognize extended contracts as a paid for, budgetary item are also necessary for schools to maintain quality SOE programs. In Washington, the funding provision for extended contracts can be found in our financial certified personnel reports, allowing extended days to be a part of the contract salary paid for as part of the state

salary structure. This assures that extended days are not taken out of supplies and materials appropriations, or considered as a local effort such as coaching and other extra duties.

In summary, for SOE to be revitalized as an important component vocational agriculture programs, the following SOE standard must be established and implemented:

1. SOE standards must be part of the vocational education state law.
2. Teacher education and the professional organization must have SOE as part of their philosophy. If we do not believe it, we will not achieve it.
3. Specific program requirements must be part of the state evaluation system and followed-up when deficiencies occur.
4. A yearly SOE program report must be required by the state from all schools with appropriate action taken for those schools who have not submitted their report. In other words, schools failing to report SOE should be notified of their failure to turn in the report. Then after appropriate elapsed time, the school will be placed on probation; and finally without the appropriate report, the school would be dropped from federal and state support of the program.
5. SOE reports can be very positive informational tools for the school and the state. SOE summaries can be used to inform local and state leaders of the positive impact SOE has in our economy. For example, it is estimated that students in Washington made an estimated \$11 million net incomes through their SOE programs. Several schools had net incomes through SOE programs of over \$200,000.

SOE is a Strong Tool

SOE is the strongest tool placed in the hands of vocational agriculture teachers. No other program offers a teacher the opportunity to work closely with students and parents in mapping out and developing a student's occupational goals, develop skills and competencies related to student interests, and serve as a means for students to become involved in FFA activities and awards where further leadership and occupational abilities can be developed.

Developing Quality Placement Programs

In today's changing world, vocational agriculture teachers must do everything possible to see that students reach their maximum potential. Teachers must be alert to new and innovative ideas for improving their programs. This is especially true for the SOE component of vocational agriculture.

If vocational agriculture is to continue to be the outstanding program that it has been in the past, vocational agriculture teachers must insist that students develop high quality supervised occupational experience programs. In many cases, agribusiness or farm placement can be an important part of many students' SOE programs.

The Need for Placement SOE Programs

The author teaches in a strong production agriculture area of West Virginia, and is advocate of ownership (production agriculture) SOE programs. But, ownership programs are not possible for all students. Placement in agribusinesses and on farms provides a desirable alternative for some students at the Mason County Vocational Center. For some students both ownership and placement SOE programs are possible and appropriate. Several of the students at the Mason County Vocational Center conduct both types of programs.

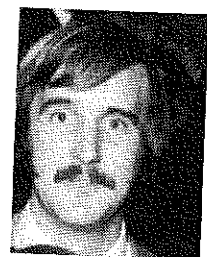
Before placement programs became an alternative, teachers had an excuse for allowing students to conduct substandard SOE programs, "This student does not have the opportunity of the resources to conduct a SOE," was a statement frequently heard. Placement programs certainly shot this excuse to pieces. With the increased enrollment in vocational agriculture of urban students and students from non-farm families, placement is probably the only possibility for many students to have SOE programs of high quality.

Many people, including the author, believed SOE placement programs were just another fad that would diminish the SOE component of vocational agriculture. With beliefs like these, it was impossible to see the benefit and importance of placement SOE programs.

Recognizing the SOE programs were here to stay and that they helped students reach their goals; the author, along with the other four vocational agriculture teachers at the Mason County Vocational Center, set to work to fully understand placement programs and how to use them to benefit our students. Getting placement started was slow, but several students at the Center have completed and others are participating in placement programs. Farm placement has been the most popular among our students, but agribusiness placement has been successful for some students. The type of placement will depend on the individual's interest and occupational goals.

Planning for Successful Placement Programs

Many principles must be followed in order to obtain successful placement programs in any vocational agriculture department. Students and parents must be informed as to



By RODNEY M. WALLBROWN
(Editor's Note: Mr. Wallbrown is Vocational Agriculture Instructor at the Mason County Vocational Center in Pt. Pleasant, West Virginia 25550).

what placement programs are and the benefits expected. Farmers and business people in the area must be educated as to what is expected of them if they are to become a cooperator in a placement program. School administrators must also be involved if the program is to be successful. Placement is like any other area of vocational agriculture; the more people involved the better.

Training Agreement and Plan

Before placement for employment can truly be a success, certain characteristics and goals must be achieved. A training agreement must be developed by the teacher, the cooperating employer, the student, and the parent(s). The training agreement must be in writing and should contain the objectives of the program, the wages to be paid, the responsibilities of the student, parents, employer, and the teacher. A training plan should be developed to identify learning areas, skills to be learned, and work schedules. The training agreement and plan should be clear and concise. The agreement should be signed by the student, the teacher, the parent(s), and the cooperating employer, with each receiving a copy.



Directing the experiences of students so that the necessary competencies are developed with placement students is essential to proper supervision. (Photograph courtesy of Rodney Wallbrown, Mason County Vocational Center, Pt. Pleasant, West Virginia.)

Records and Supervision are Important

Accurate records must be kept by the student for a successful placement program. A record of wages, hours worked, jobs performed, and skills learned must be recorded. Supervisory visits by the vocational agriculture teacher to the place of employment are very important. The teacher must assess student progress, check to see if any problems have arisen, compare needed areas. In summary, the success of placement programs depends upon the entire personnel of the vocational agriculture

department and cooperation from the local community. Placement programs should not be thought of as any less important than ownership programs. All persons involved must realize that employment placement provides an important way for students to learn in a real-life occupation setting. Placement programs can provide experiences and training to many students who would not otherwise meet their occupational goals. Teachers should evaluate their department to determine if the placement programs are appropriate for some students. If so, use them.

Developing Quality SOE



By RICHARD NORRIS
(Editor's Note: Mr. Norris is Vocational Agriculture Instructor at Northwestern R-1 Schools, P.O. Box 43, Mendon, Missouri 64660).

We, as vocational agriculture instructors, have many jobs which we are expected to do. Should we be expected to spend large amounts of already limited time to help new students find proper projects, or should we leave it up to the students and their parents? To me, the SOE program is one of the most basic elements of the vocational agriculture program. If we choose not to help our students find and develop quality SOE programs, we have cheated not only them, but also our program and ourselves.

Beginning the Search

Not all students will need your assistance in establishing SOE programs. In fact, many will walk into your classroom with one. But, what do we do with those students who really have no idea of what they would like as an SOE program?

My first step in helping any student establish an SOE program begins with sitting down and making a list of interest areas. Finding out if the student's interest is in crops, livestock, or something in the agribusiness field is of pri-

mary importance. Establishing a program for a student in an area in which he/she has no interest is doomed before it begins. Once the interest list is completed, we then turn our attention to the resources which are at the student's disposal.

Of course, it will be easier for you to find projects for those students living on farms than it will for those from town or small acreages. No matter what type of student you find yourself dealing with, a realistic assessment of resources is a must if you are to put the student on the right track to a successful learning experience. Finally, you and the student need to discuss your findings with the parents. Parents must be willing partners in the planning and implementation of a student's SOE program in order for it to be a success.

Developing the Plan

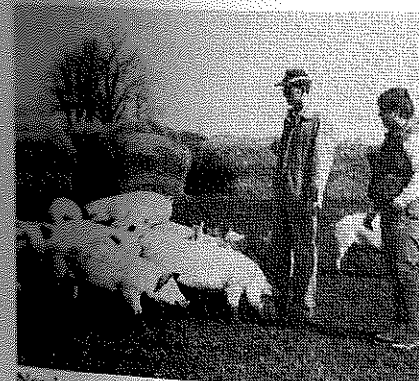
Once you, the student, and the parents have discussed and approved a proper program, it is time to act on your plan. If the student is lacking the resources needed to have a successful program (e.g., finances, buildings, land, equipment), then this should be your first area of concern. Many times you will find that alumni members,

young farmers, or other local individuals are more than willing to work with you to help a student with limited resources get a good start. A word of caution: when dealing with a student of limited means or experience it is best to start them slow, allowing them to gain confidence on a smaller scale; then expand their program when it appears practical.

Remember, you will often have this student for four years, so do not allow them to go too far too fast. Once the resources have been located, it is time to obtain the actual project or experience. Now is when the instructor takes a less active role. Do not misunderstand the intention, the instructor will still be there to advise the student if asked, and they will be more than willing to go with the student when selecting livestock or a training station. The instructor will not, however, make the final decision on which animal to buy or what crop to plant. That decision must rest squarely on the shoulders of the student. It is, after all, the student's project, and they are the ones who must live with the choices made.

How much Follow-up?

Once the project is in operation, the question now becomes, "How often should I check-up on my student?" With students who needed help in selecting a project, instructors usually make more visits than normal. This is especially true if their interest area is one in which they or their parents have had no previous experience. With the student beginning a new program, my motto is, "I go when I'm called." I realize this sometimes cuts into per-



Norris states that visitations to students are one of the most enjoyable aspects of being a teacher.

Developing Quality SOE

(cont. from page 15)

sonal time, but when you consider the time and effort that has gone into a student's project, an occasional weekend farrowing, or even trip to the feeder pig auction seems a small price to pay for quality SOE programs.

Rewards

Why go to all this trouble? As I stated before, the SOE program is basic to the vocational agriculture program. If we are to have successful programs, we must have strong, successful, student programs. Also, from a selfish viewpoint, instructors will enjoy establishing good programs for students be-

cause of the personal rewards of a student succeed, accepting the farmer degree, or doing well in efficiency award programs. Finding SOE programs for students is the job, and one that's very enjoy-

ARTICLE

Teaching Financial Responsibility Through SOE

Every vocational agriculture teacher recognizes the importance of record keeping to farming and agribusiness. Not every teacher, however, teaches students the importance and methods of good record keeping.

If we are to practice what we preach, we must systematically teach record keeping practices. We must require students to keep complete, accurate records of their supervised occupational experience programs. Before any attempt is made to teach the "how" of record keeping, the students must be convinced that the exercise has meaningful value. Only after goals have been established does it become logical to introduce record keeping as a necessary and useful means of reporting progress.

Essentials of Records

Why should students keep records? First, to learn financial responsibility. Students have the opportunity to earn money to reinvest, save, or expand. Records help students gauge progress, both in skill development and in profit or loss. An examination of the reasons for profit or loss is a learning experience and aids in future planning. Records help the students see specific weaknesses where they can plan improvements or ask for assistance. Parents and employers are kept informed of student progress by the records they kept. Records also help students organize and remember their achievements so it will be easy to present their best in seeking awards and degrees.

Many states have developed various vocational agriculture record keeping



BY ANITA C. STUEVER

(Editor's Note: Ms. Stuever has been FFA Projects Assistant at Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan 48824).

systems. Any record book or combination of record books is appropriate if the system meets the needs of the students and if they are used.

A good record keeping system for students with productive enterprises should include at least: inventory, income, expense, net labor income, and financial (net worth) statement. Other items, such as supplementary and improved practices, improvement projects, efficiency summary, and depreciation may also be included. Students on placement need to record work done, hours, wages, and an employment agreement. Both groups of students should also record future plans and goals, as well as accomplishments in FFA, school, and community activities.

What To Teach

A record keeping unit can be taught well in conjunction with introducing the value of SOEP. The unit should be taught early in the first year class and expanded each year, increasing student's level of understanding. Goals for the unit may include:

1. The student will understand the meaning and value of SOE program.

2. The student will understand records should be kept.

3. The student will understand employment agreements.

4. The student will be able to personal SOE program goals.

5. The student will have understanding of improvement projects and supplementary practices.

6. The student will be able to record inventory.

7. The student will be able to record income and expenses.

8. The student will be able to summarize farm or business records.

9. The student will be able to determine the efficiency of a production enterprise.

10. The student will be able to record placement experiences.

11. The student will be able to record achievements in FFA, school, and community activities.

Students should be able to master these goals with sample records before going on to record their own SOE program activities.

Evaluation

If records are to be of value, they must be neat and complete. It is necessary to set aside class time on a regular basis for students to make plans and record information with the teacher available for assistance. Additional time must be allotted for students to complete year-end summaries. The point is that time for recording information should be provided on a systematic basis. I suggest records be kept in pencil to allow for easy changes.

...that information must be recorded on a systematic basis, so must it be reviewed and evaluated systematically. Students making errors in recording information must be corrected early. Evaluating students' records systematically also allows the teacher to assist the student in improving the content of educational experiences received through the SOE program. The teacher may modify lesson plans or units based on evaluation of records.

Evaluation should be based on skills and competencies developed, progress made, and accuracy of records kept. If a grade is assigned, the individual student's starting point and opportunities available should be taken into consideration.

Carrying out an SOE program and the accompanying record keeping can be considered students' homework. Records may be evaluated often, but graded only once, at the end of each semester. The SOE program grade was used as a part of the final exam grade. This gave students ample time to complete their records and get any needed assistance.

A file should be maintained for each student, containing the record book(s),

all degree and award applications, visit reports, and other pertinent materials. The file must be well organized and easily accessible to students.

The Need For Quality

If teachers are serious about teaching valuable occupational skills, we must insist on quality. We must not accept "just any project" or allow students to have a project in name only. If "learning by doing" is the rationale for occupational experience programs, then programs must be comprehensive in scope and of sufficient depth for students to practice essential occupational skill. A pet dog project or mother and father's backyard garden hardly provides opportunity for students to practice the range of skills in the vocational agriculture curriculum.

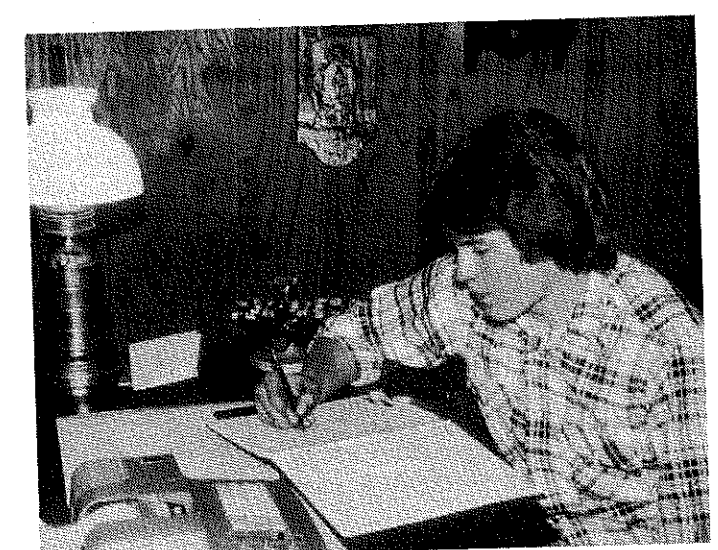
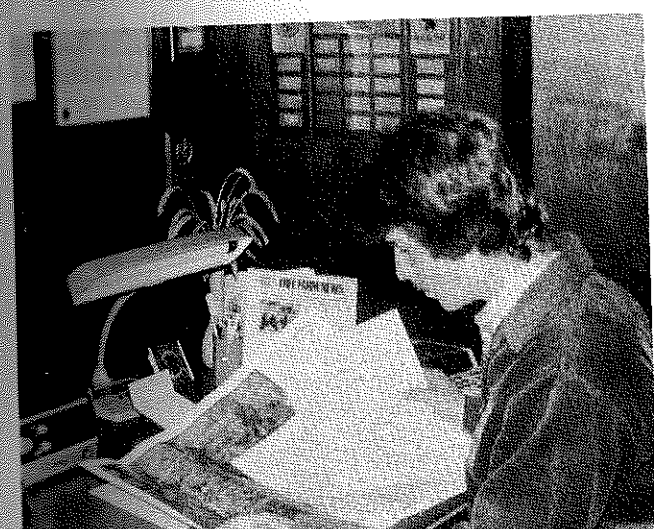
A quality SOE program enables students to practice essential occupational skills in a realistic situation. It should be of sufficient scope and difficulty to be challenging to the individual student. It should provide for growth each year, in terms of management responsibilities, scope and approved practices used.

Incentives

A wide scope of incentive awards are offered to FFA members with records of outstanding supervised occupational experience programs. The 22 proficiency awards, the degrees, and the Star Farmer and Agribusiness awards are all goals for which members may strive. Although a poor SOE program with good results will not receive an award, neither will an outstanding SOE program for which a student has kept a poor set of records. The key to success is making plans, carrying out these plans, and accurately recording the facts.

You may wish to consider initiating chapter or class awards for the best kept records. Another possibility is a \$1,000 Club for members who have earned \$1,000 or more through their SOE programs.

Once taught, record keeping skills can be continually reinforced in the classroom. Use examples of student experience programs where they relate to the course of study. Use Dave's market steer records to teach rate-of-gain or Sue's corn records to teach yield calculations. You will be making education truly vocational.



Students taught good record keeping practices in the vo-ag classroom will be able to continue to keep accurate, complete, and up-to-date records at home.

Making SOE Programs Work For You

At 3:35 the last school bell of the day rings. Lockers are quickly opened, then slammed shut. Enthusiastically the students crash out through the doors. Shortly, the halls are clear of students. Soon thereafter, with less vigor of course, the teachers bid farewell to each other as they methodically close up shop for the day.

Soon, only the janitor can be seen pushing a broom down the hall. But wait a minute! Are those voices that can be heard coming from out behind the school, by the vocational agriculture shop? But the school day is over. What can this teacher and these students be doing? Well, they must have just missed the bus, because they are getting into a pick-up and leaving.

No, these students didn't miss the bus, and neither did the vocational agriculture teacher, because he/she knows the value of good Supervised Occupational Experience Programs (SOEP) and planned, periodic home visitations. Actually, the vocational agriculture teacher knows that the most important part of the day has just begun.

For the next few hours this vocational agriculture teacher can accomplish more in the areas of hands-on, relevant instruction; one-on-one career counseling; interpersonal relationship development with students, parents, and community employers; public relations; taxpayer support; community resource development; and continual field updating in an agricultural area than most other teachers can accomplish in a month or longer.

For the teacher of vocational agriculture, if the program is to be successful, the school day does not end at the last bell, or the last day of school in the Spring. For this instructor, the really meaningful, interesting, and challenging part of the job has just begun.

Philosophical Basis

But how do we, as vocational agriculture teachers, make this part of our day more meaningful, more ex-



By CLIFFORD R. McCLAIN
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citig, more rewarding, and more successful? The first, and most important, step is by developing a sound philosophical basis for supervised occupational experience programs in the total vocational agriculture program.

The concept of SOE programs is based on the traditional thinking that students need hands-on, supervised experiences that are relevant to their occupational objectives, wherein students can apply knowledges and skills acquired in the classroom in a practical, realistic setting. The need for this applied learning can best be explained by the following Chinese proverb:

I hear -- and I forget,
I see -- and I remember,
I do -- and I understand.

Also, due to the general nature of agriculture activities, a year-round SOE program is essential for developing the great majority of agriculture skills and experiences required for successful farm and agriculturally related employment. A total vocational agriculture program combines these actual experiences with the in-school curriculum to develop students for successful agriculture careers.

Attitude Adjustment

The next step toward successful SOE programs require that the vocational agriculture teacher develop a positive attitude, or "mind set", toward SOE program visitations. Teachers must rid themselves of the multitude of excuses and distractions which make it easy to let visitations slide, and become concerned with the ultimate objective of the craft of preparing young men and women for successful careers in agriculture. Continual monitoring of

the SOE program is essential for it to happen. This takes some understanding by the instructor's family, as the development of some management skills by the instructor.

Time Management

Finally, as a part of a time management program, the instructor must develop and organize a visitation system which works. For those who do not have a system developed, this system may be adapted to their local situation. If an already existing system is used, it may be modified to fit and improve an already existing system.

Like any other program, if it is to be successful, some "homework" must be done before the actual system can be implemented. Prior to implementing the SOE program visitation system, three concerns must be considered:

1. Make sure when signing a teaching contract, especially with new teachers, that it is for at least 12 months (12 months is preferred). If a member, demand outstrips supply. Good teachers, and many schools, are trying to cut corners with present budgetary pressures. If an external contract cannot be negotiated, tell them "thanks but no thanks".

2. Visit with your administrators concerning the purposes and benefits of SOE programs. Make sure the administrators are included in at least two visitations each year, especially during the summer months.

3. Make sure the vocational agriculture class schedule includes an SOE period some time during the school day. This can be anytime convenient to the school schedule, though the last period of the day works best. This period should be used for planning and preparing for each visit, re-visit conferences with students, and in lieu of after school and weekend work with students.

If the actual visitation system can be preceded by these three requirements, the SOEP part of the vo-ag program will be much easier to manage and will be much more successful.

Having laid the foundation, the SOE program visitation can be separated into

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PINEDALE HIGH SCHOOL
PINEDALE, WY 82941



SOEP VISITATION FORM

PRE VISIT: _____

DATE OF VISIT: _____

STUDENT'S NAME: _____

TYPE OF PROGRAM: _____

OBSERVATIONS: (facilities, feed, management, etc.) _____

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS: (feeders, fences, sanitation, etc.) _____

IMPROVEMENTS MADE SINCE LAST VISIT: _____

STUDENT CONCERNS: _____

SHOP PROJECTS: (projects that could be made in ag shop to improve SOEP or items parents want completed) _____

STUDENT _____

ADVISOR _____

to three distinct phases. They are: pre-visit, visit, and post-visit.

PRE-VISIT

1. Develop visitation schedule on a month-to-month basis. A calendar on the classroom wall, available to the students, is a must. A weekly listing on the chalkboard helps as a reminder. Four visits per year to each student is an absolute minimum. I also like to schedule what I call "critical" visitations which fall into two categories:

- a. Critical for the SOE program (when students need extra or emergency help with their program); and

- b. Critical for the student (when students need individual attention or "stroking" to improve their attitude or output).

2. A day or two before each visit, have a scheduled meeting during the SOE period with the student to be visited. Discuss the program problem areas, concerns, upcoming events, etc. Have students bring their SOE record book, which should be reviewed and evaluated. Discuss the need for any special equipment and arrangements which need to be made in order to have a successful visit. Pull the student's file and discuss where the student is, at the present time, and where the student is going in relation to future goals.

3. Research any tough questions which may have arisen during the student conferences, prior to the actual visit. This may save time and possibly some embarrassment during the on-site visit.

VISITATION

1. Make regularly scheduled visits with groups of two or three students per evening. This helps cut travel cost and also exposes students to what others are doing. It also gives students a chance to show-off a little, while allowing for more group discussion. Of course, "critical" visits should be made without other students along.

2. Each visitation should be conducted informally, and in an unhurried, thorough manner. It does not take much hurried activity before the student realizes that the instructor is more interested in the Monday night football game than in the visit.

3. Make sure time is allowed for visiting the student's parents (or employer), while the student is present, unless circumstances require a private conference. Remember, the student will not get very far without involving the parents (or employer) in the planning process.

4. Take along a visitation form, as shown, which should be completed after each visit and put into a visitation notebook.

5. Use the travel time to get to know your students and for them to get to know you better. A pickup without a radio can force some very interesting conversations.

POST-VISIT

1. Develop a visitation notebook. This notebook should contain each visitation form, a transportation log, the instructor's time log, a summarization of times and dates of visits, and anything else which may be required. Share this notebook with the administration on an annual basis, and keep past years filed away.

2. Be sure to spend a minute or two of class time discussing, in a positive manner, each student's SOE program after the visitation. This is an excellent way to generate class discussion about some real-life situations.

Dedication Brings Benefits

To develop an outstanding vocational agriculture program, complete with meaningful SOE programs, which actually prepare students for successful entry into agriculture occupations, requires a great deal of work and planning. It takes the development of a supportive administration, a workable

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Making SOE Programs Work For You

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class schedule, and a practical, easy-to-use SOEP visitation system. It also requires a considerable amount of professional dedication from the vocational agriculture teacher.

But, in the final analysis, by using

the system presented here, along with the prerequisites to success that were discussed, the rewards far outweigh the amount of work required. I personally have not only been proud of my students' SOE programs, but have been shown the best fishing holes in Wyoming, met the best parents in Wyoming, eaten the best meals in Wyoming, and supervised the greatest young ranchers in Wyoming. What more would any vocational teacher want!

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Crownover, Jerry. "A System for SOE", THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MAGAZINE, Volume 54, Number 6, December 1981, pp. 10-11.
Jones, Tom. "The Key to Year-Round SOE", THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MAGAZINE, Volume 54, Number 9, March 1982, pp. 9-11.
Wyoming State Department of Educational Services. VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES HANDBOOK, Cheyenne, Wyoming, January 1982.

ARTICLE

The Status Of SOE In Mississippi

Vocational agriculture instructors through the years have found that one of the most practical and rewarding principles of learning is learning by doing. Application of this principle means involving students in hands-on experiences. Supervised occupational experience (SOE) as a component of vocational agriculture programs is based on this learning by doing philosophy, and is thought to be an essential part of the program.

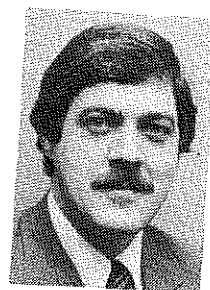
Although supervised experience programs have been required in legislation since the Smith-Hughes Act asked for six months of farm work, there are vocational agriculture programs which do not include SOE and students who do not get meaningful work experiences. Many questions have been recently raised in the professional concerning SOE programs and their role and status.

To determine the status of SOE programs in Mississippi, a survey was conducted of vocational agriculture students in 36 randomly selected public schools. A total of 1342 students were included and represented grades nine through twelve. About 82 percent were FFA members and 75 percent were involved in SOE programs of some type.

Areas of SOE

Production agriculture was the most popular SOE subject area, probably because this area provides more opportunities due to Mississippi being heavily production oriented. Sixty-seven percent of the students have production agriculture SOE programs.

The next most-popular area is



BY BILL MCGREW AND RONALD A. BROWN

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agriculture mechanics with about 15 percent of the students. Agribusiness (supplies and products) was next with eight percent, followed by forestry and horticulture. As is probably true in many other states, this distribution is not proportionate to the types of opportunities in the agriculture industry. A higher percentage of SOE programs should be in the non-farm agriculture areas.

Student Goals

The overwhelming purpose of SOE is to help prepare students for careers in the agriculture industry. So students with SOE programs should be planning a career in agriculture and about 60 percent of them are. Thirty-seven percent of the students indicated that they were planning farming/ranching careers; about 23 percent were planning careers in non-farm agricultural

occupations. Again, there is a consistency between what students plan to do and what they are preparing to do.

Students were asked several questions about their SOE programs. The most common question was why they participated in SOE. More than 50 percent answered that SOE was a required part of vocational agriculture. About one-third said they had an SOE program to gain extra credit, a few had SOE programs because their fathers did, and the remainder gave reasons ranging from needing a summer job to exploring a career.

Most of the students (61%) had SOE programs in which they shared ownership, with a lesser number (27%) working for someone with whom they did not share ownership. The remaining 12 percent were in laboratory or exploratory SOE programs.

One of the benefits of SOE programs is the opportunity to compete for proficiency awards. It seems, then, that most of the students with SOE programs would have applied for proficiency awards, but only 22 percent did so. Seventy-eight percent of the students with SOE programs have never completed a proficiency application form. Records, on which proficiency applications are based, are kept by a little more than three-fourths of the students with SOE programs.

Students were also asked about the use of training plans and training agreements. Slightly more than half of the students with SOE programs have written training plans and training agreements.

Student Opinions

Students were asked to give some opinions about the value of SOE programs. Almost 90 percent indicated that they believed that their SOE program would be of value to them in their chosen career. If given the opportunity to decide again, about half the students would select the same SOE program. Twenty-seven percent would select a different one, and six percent would choose not to have one.

Conclusion

Learning by doing, as a principle of learning, can be well demonstrated by high quality SOE programs. All vocational agriculture students should participate in some type of supervised occupational experience program.

To realize maximum benefit from SOE programs, students should participate in SOE programs which are consistent with their career objectives,

their SOE programs should be built on written training agreements and training plans, accurate records should be kept, and proficiency applications should be completed.

Teachers of vocational agriculture can improve programs of vocational agriculture and provide sound educational experiences for students by taking the time necessary to help students develop and implement high quality SOE programs.

ARTICLE

Northeast Region Cooperates On SOE Project



BY H. DEAN SUTPHIN AND ARTHUR L. BERKEY

(Editor's Note: Drs. Sutphin and Berkey are in Agricultural and Occupational Education at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York 14850).

tion and agribusiness, has necessitated a broadened concept of SOE programs.

Pedagogical textbooks in agricultural education include SOE programs as an integral component of vocational agriculture. In the past, reports to state departments of education included a high level of student SOE program accomplishments and teacher supervision of these programs.

From a philosophical context, experience in education was emphasized by John Dewey and others. In research, practice has been established by studies as the variable most highly correlated with student learning. Additionally, SOE programs are included in Prosser's 16 theorems on vocational education which contain the concept that training programs should be con-

ducted in an environment as similar as possible to the environment of the work place.

In summary, supervised occupational experience programs have been accepted as what makes vocational agriculture "vocational". Hence, there is a need to maintain this integral part of the agricultural instructional program.

Northeast Regional SOEP Efforts

The 1981 and 1982 joint NVATA Region VI and AATEA/NASAE eastern regional conferences both focused on SOE programs. The 1981 conference included presentations of referred papers by agriculture teachers, state supervisors and teacher educators concerning future needs and actions related to SOE programs. The need for a northeast regional SOE program project was identified at the 1981 Conference; and, in response, a regional project funded under Hatch was initiated in October 1981.

The first year regional project activities involved a review of the literature on SOE programs and visits to secondary schools in ten northeastern states with exemplary occupational experience programs. The product of these efforts was preliminary SOE program guidelines, implementation strategies for the guidelines, and supporting resource materials to help teachers incorporate the guidelines and

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Northeast Region Cooperates On SOE Project

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implementation strategies into the curriculum.

The May 1982 joint regional conference theme was "Implementation of Quality SOEP". Conference activities included a review of the preliminary guidelines, strategies and materials by agriculture teachers, teacher educators and state supervisors. The draft was then revised to reflect the regional conference review and materials presented during the July 1982 National Conference on SOE programs.

The second year (1982-83) of the regional project, which is currently in progress, consists of field testing the revised guidelines, implementation strategies and resource materials in the ten states in the northeast region. The final project report will be distributed to states in the region for their use. In New York, specific plans are being developed to implement the guidelines, strategies and resource materials. Hopefully, the product will be applicable to states both in and outside the region.

Prospectives for Quality SOE Programs

Through the literature review and visits to schools with exemplary SOE programs, the project team identified characteristics and other related information associated with quality SOE programs which have been incorporated into the change strategy for the regional project. Five of the more salient aspects which are emphasized in the project are discussed in this article.

The trend has been to continue to add responsibilities to the role of the vocational agriculture teacher without specifying what responsibilities should be deleted in order to provide a realistic work week. Examples of these additions are new FFA activities, and

working with mainstreamed special education students. At the same time, the societal trend has been for a shorter work week, and limited school budgets leading to larger class size and reduced teaching resources (e.g., mileage and released time for SOE program visits).

Quality SOE programs for vocational agriculture students will only occur in the context of a realistic teacher role with adequate time and expense reimbursement for SOE program activities. The agricultural education profession needs to take a definitive position on the number of hours that constitute a reasonable work week for teachers of vocational agriculture. At the same time, the number of hours that should be used for SOE program activities during the school year and summer should be defined.

Knowledge and support by administrators which result in resources for teachers to conduct SOE programs are critical for quality occupational experience programs. The administrative expectation that teachers are to conduct acceptable SOE programs is also important. In recognition of the critical role of administrators, a separate section on administrator role is included in the regional project.

Limited school budgets and fewer vocational agriculture students with opportunity for SOE programs in their family owned farm or agribusiness indicates that the use of school laboratories needs to be maximized. This out-of-class use of school laboratories is especially important for students who need to develop a level of maturity acceptable for placement and for students with limited opportunity for an SOE program.

Cooperative student projects (group projects), entrepreneurial SOE programs and individual student experience may occur in school laboratories. Sutphin (1981) found that school based SOE programs are not unanimously accepted as a legitimate form of SOE program by agricultural educators. However, it does offer a cost-efficient

alternative, under the teacher control, which may be a necessary if SOE programs are to be a vocational agriculture for all.

Entrepreneurial SOEP is an alternative emphasized in the project. This type is applicable where there are limited jobs available for students, but many goods and/or services are needed in the community. Teacher involvement in explaining and evaluating entrepreneurial options and assisting students to secure funding are important prerequisites for this SOE program.

It has long been recognized that the quality of a vocational agriculture program is largely determined by the teacher. Therefore, well prepared teachers of agriculture, both in philosophy and knowledge, are critical in maintaining quality SOE programs. The agricultural education curriculum, teacher education guidelines, implementation strategies on SOE programs at both the preservice and in-service levels are a component of the northeast regional effort.

Summary

Quality SOE programs for all students in vocational agricultural education are a national priority. Realistic teacher role, administrator support, school based SOE programs, entrepreneurial SOE programs, and teacher education responsibilities are key areas which need attention in order for SOE programs to be a quality component of agricultural education curriculum. These areas are a part of the northeast regional research project to improve occupational experience programs in agriculture. The Project staff welcomes cooperative efforts with other states and/or regions.

Reference

Sutphin, H.D. POSITIONS HELD BY TEACHER EDUCATORS AND STATE SUPERVISORS AND SELECTED NATIONAL ISSUES IN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Ohio State University, 1981.

Organizations Elect 1982-83 Officers

NVATA



Members of the Board of Directors are:
Seated (left to right): Sam Stenzel, Executive Director, Alexandria, Virginia; Dale Butcher, President, West Lafayette, Indiana; and Layton G. Peters, Past President, New Ulm, Minnesota.
Standing (left to right): Walter Schuh, Vice President NVATA Region I, Bow, Washington; Ralph L. Thomas, Vice President NVATA Region II, Woodward, Oklahoma; Myron Sonne, Vice President NVATA Region III, Letcher, South Dakota; E. Craig Wiget, Vice President NVATA Region IV, Mt. Blanchard, Ohio; Ross H. Smith, Vice President NVATA Region V, Athens, Alabama; and Arthur P. Ives, Vice President NVATA Region VI, Oxford, New York.
(Photograph Courtesy of Sam Stenzel, NVATA Executive Director, Alexandria, Virginia).

FFA

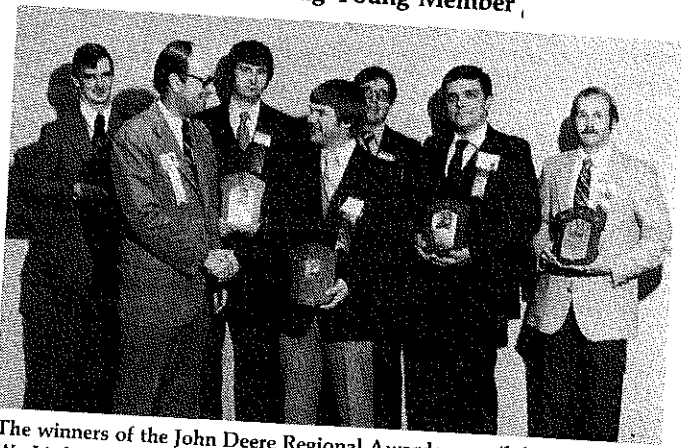


The FFA elected six new National Officers on November 13 in Kansas City, Missouri. The six were selected at the 55th National FFA Convention and will lead the organization for a year.
Seated (left to right): Jan Eberly, National President, Fallbrook, California; Marty Coates, National Secretary, Clarkton, North Carolina.
Standing (left to right): Wendell Jeffreys, National Vice President Western Region, Bokchito, Oklahoma; Bryan Stamps, National Vice President Southern Region, Edwards, Mississippi; Bruce Kettler, National Vice President Eastern Region, Anna, Ohio; and Cara Doyle, National Vice President Central Region, Green Bay, Wisconsin.
(Photograph courtesy of National FFA Center.)

Stories in Pictures

1982-83 NVATA Award Winners in St. Louis

Outstanding Young Member



The winners of the John Deere Regional Awards were (left to right): Ray W. Little, Delta, Utah; Chet Lasell, John Deere, Moline, Illinois (presenter); Gary L. Noakes, Oseola, Missouri; Tommy Creamer, Harrison, Arkansas; Reid Ledbetter, Union Grove, North Carolina; Joseph J. Dymek, Mt. Airy, Maryland; and Robert E. Dodds, Farmington, Iowa.

Agribusiness Career Exploration



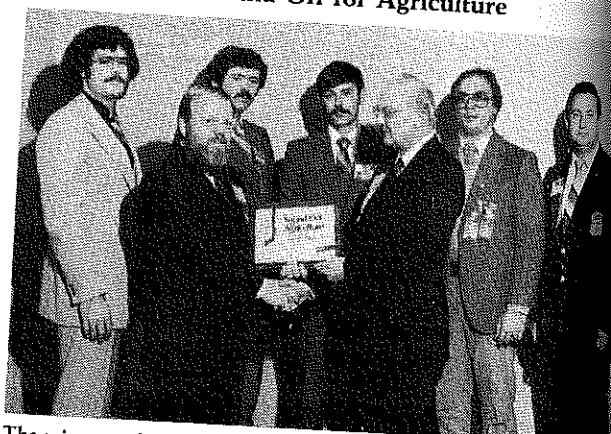
The winners of the Sperry New Holland awards were (left to right): Dwayne Eisfeld, Pipestone, Minnesota; Floyd Beneker, Marshall, Minnesota; Jimmy Vaculin, Tomball, Texas; Dave Hall, Wallowa, Oregon; Chuck Manners, Sperry New Holland, New Holland, Pennsylvania (presenter); and Art Mitchell, Keezletown, Virginia (seated).

Outstanding Service



Recipients were (left to right): Layton G. Peters, NVTA President, New Ulm, Minnesota (presenter); Carl K. Clayton, Director, Marketing Staff Services, A. O. Smith Harvestore Products, Inc., Arlington Heights, Illinois; Ted Ward, Nebraska Supervisor for Agricultural Education (accepted the award for B. E. Gingery, State Supervisor (Retired) Agricultural Education, Lincoln, Nebraska; Robert L. Mitchell, Assistant State Supervisor, Agricultural Education, Stillwater, Oklahoma; Max E. Riggin, Advisor, Agricultural Communications, Elanco Products, Indianapolis, Indiana; Paul E. Hemp, Agricultural Education, University of Illinois, Champaign, Illinois; and Larry Dutto, President the California VATA (accepted the award for Donald E. Wilson, State Supervisor, Agricultural Education, Sacramento, California).

Sound Off for Agriculture



The winners of the Elanco awards were (left to right): Nelvin L. Taylor, Marysville, Ohio; Carroll Shry, Woodsboro, Maryland; Butch Harland, Crosby, North Dakota; Tom Klein, Elko, Nevada; Max R. Elanco Products Company, Indianapolis, Indiana (presenter); Tom Strickland, Alex, Oklahoma; and J.D. Melton, Creswell, North Carolina.

(Photographs Courtesy of Sam Stenzel, NVATA Executive Director, Alexandria, Virginia).

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*Sweet are the uses of adversity;
Which like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.*

Shakespeare,
As You Like It,
Act II, Scene I, Line 2

THEME: Achieving Quality Programs With Decreasing Resources

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