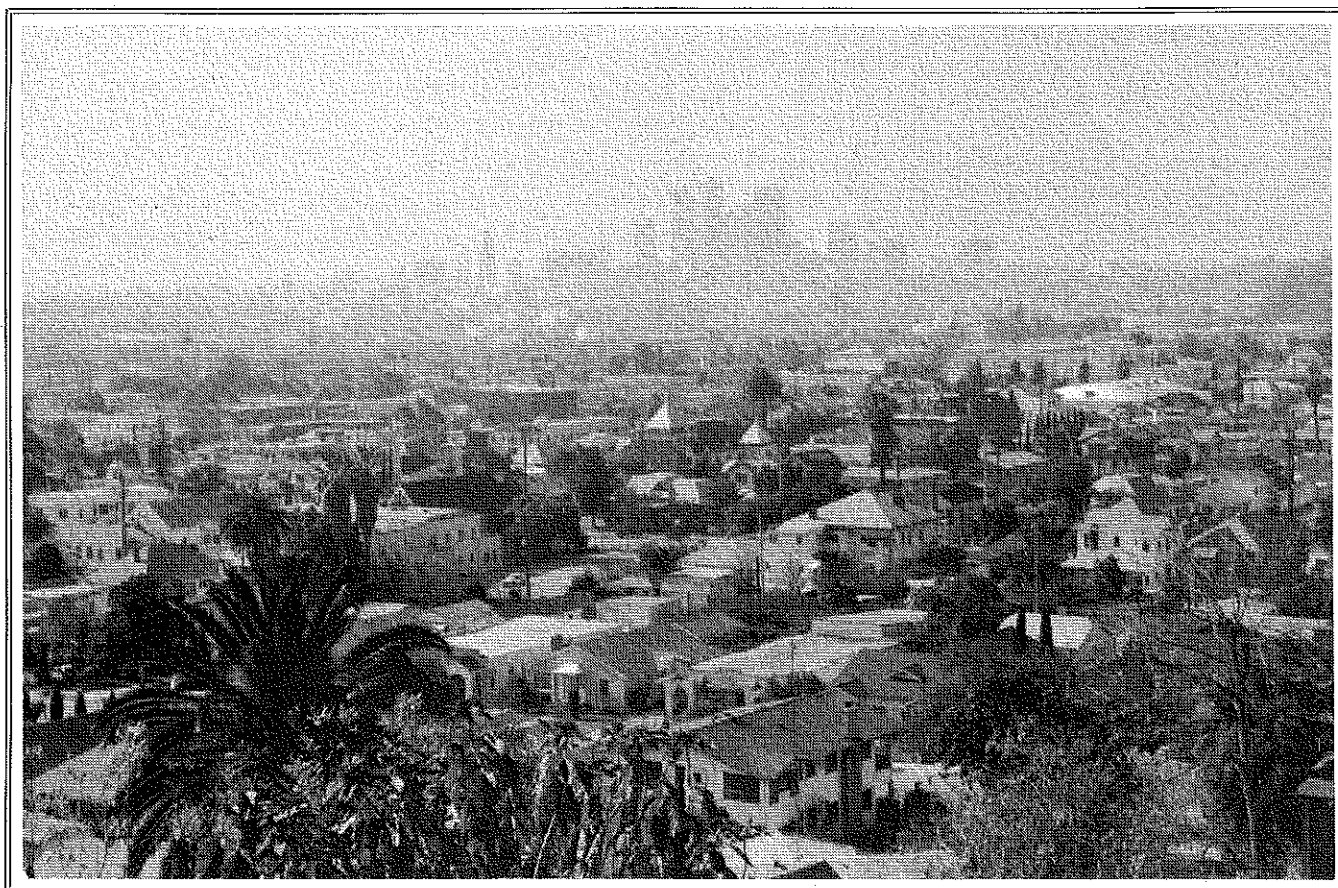


The

Agricultural Education

May 1984
Volume 56
Number 11

Magazine



THEME SOEP: URBAN PROGRAMS

007653 1284
DR. FLOYD G. MCCORMICK
UNIV. OF ARIZ.
6933 PASEO SAN ANDRES
TUCSON AZ 85710



MANAGING EDITORS

Editor
 LARRY E. MILLER, Ohio State University, 2120 Fyffe Road, 204 Ag. Adm. Bldg., Columbus, Ohio 43210

Business Manager
 GLENN A. ANDERSON, 1803 Rural Point Road, Mechanicsville, VA 23111

Consulting Editor
 JASPER S. LEE, P.O. Drawer AV, Mississippi State, MS 39762

REGIONAL EDITORS

North Atlantic Region
 ELMER COOPER, Department of Ag. & Ext. Education, 305 Rolfs Hall, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742

Southern Region
 LARRY R. ARRINGTON, Dept. of Ag. & Ext. Education, 305 Rolfs Hall, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32601

Central Region
 JOE D. TOWNSEND, Dept. of Ag., Illinois State University, Normal, IL 61761

Pacific Region
 JOHN MUNDT, State Supervisor, Agri. Educ., Len B. Jordan Bldg., Rm. 325, 650 West State Street, Boise, ID 83720

SPECIAL EDITORS

Book Review Editor
 LONELL MOELLER, Agri. Ed., Division of Educ., Box 2220, South Dakota State University, Brookings, SD 57007

Teaching Tips Editor
 LOWELL E. HEDGES, Dept. of Ag. Educ., 204 Ag. Adm. Bldg., 2120 Fyffe Road, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH 43210

Picture Editor
 ROGER D. ROEDIGER, Curriculum Materials Service, 254 Ag. Adm. Bldg., 2120 Fyffe Road, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH 43210

EDITING-MANAGING BOARD

Chairman
 Curtis Corbin, Jr., Georgia Department of Education

Vice Chairman
 Don McCreight, Teacher Education, Kingston, RI

Secretary
 Jasper S. Lee, Mississippi State University

Editor
 Larry E. Miller, The Ohio State University

Members
 Glenn A. Anderson, Virginia Department of Education
 Officer, U.S. Deptment of Education
 Sam Stenzel, NVATA, Alexandria, VA
 Dale Butcher, West Lafayette, IN
 Duane L. Watkins, NVATA, Thermopolis, WY
 E. Craig Wiget, Mt. Blanchard, OH
 Jim Cummins, Columbus, OH
 Douglas Pals, Moscow, ID

Table of Contents

Editor's Page	Page
Agricultural Education: A United Effort Larry E. Miller	3
Theme: SOEP: Urban Programs	
SOE — Urban Areas Richard M. Hylton	4
SOE: Alive and Well in Nassau County Victoria Woods	5
Urban Programs — A New Direction Robert J. Birkenholz	7
Urban SOE: A Vehicle for Growth Dale Perritt & Donald Spell	9
Bridging the Gap in Urban Areas Ledell D. Virdue	11
Urban SOE: Can It Survive? Mike Johnson	14
SOEP For Urban Vocational Agriculture Jerry Crownover, John McKenzie & David Fulton	15
Tropical Fish Don't Count Flint Freeman	16
SOE in Urban Programs — Teachers Can Make It Happen Ed Osborne & Carl Reed	17
Letter to the Editor	19
SOE: Its Importance In Urban Areas Kenneth Parker	20
Student Laboratory Behavior Jan Henderson	22
Resources	23
Stories in Pictures	24

ARTICLE SUBMISSION

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

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MAGAZINE (ISSN 0002-144x) is the monthly professional journal of agricultural education. The journal is published by THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MAGAZINE, INC., and is printed at M & D Printing Co., 616 Second Street, Henry, IL 61537.

Second-class postage paid at Henry, IL 61537.

POSTMASTERS: Send Form 3579 to Glenn A. Anderson, Business Manager, 1803 Rural Point Road, Mechanicsville, Virginia 23111.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscription prices for THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MAGAZINE are \$7 per year. Foreign subscriptions are \$10 (U.S. Currency) per year for surface mail, and \$20 (U.S. Currency) airmail (except Canada). Student subscriptions in groups (one address) are \$4 for eight issues. Single copies and back issues less than ten years old are available at \$1 each. All back issues are available on microfilm from Xerox University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. In submitting subscriptions, designate new or renewal and address including ZIP code. Send all subscriptions and requests for hardcopy back issues to the Business Manager: Glenn A. Anderson, Business Manager, 1803 Rural Point Road, Mechanicsville, VA 23111.

Agricultural Education: A United Effort

The Secretary of Agriculture, John Block, has focused attention upon the need for the populace to understand and appreciate agriculture. His efforts to bring agriculture into the classroom are commendable.

Basics in education are discussed in the confines of the academic community as essential, but what is more basic than agriculture? The interpretation of basic is, of course, different. However, there is much that can be said about each person developing a knowledge of and an appreciation for agriculture.



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

Current Effort

The present efforts focus upon the elementary level of education. The effort wisely focuses not upon a specific unit of instruction for elementary grades but upon integrating the instruction into existing curricula. The National Livestock and Meat Board is involved in developing some of the materials which will be utilized.

Teacher trainers in agricultural education learned quite some time ago that just to develop materials and disseminate them to teachers did not assure their utilization. Inservice education often accompanies the dissemination of materials to encourage teachers to correctly utilize the materials.

Elementary teachers should also receive inservice education on the utilization of new materials. Teacher educators and supervisors could act as consultants to enhance these efforts. They could help provide relevance and realistic examples to the efforts.

Vocational agriculture teachers and local agriculture supervisors could serve a similar role at the local level. They could provide local elementary teachers with assistance. Obviously, the FFA's Food for America program can be utilized. The approach, though, is to integrate the instruction into existing curricula and not just a one-shot unit on agriculture. This would necessitate a more persistent commitment to assistance on the part of those associated with agriculture. The resulting benefits would likely be greater than with intermittent one-shot units.

Expanding the Concept

The effort to encourage the development of greater knowledge of and appreciation for agriculture needs to be expanded beyond the elementary school. Agricultural content could be easily incorporated into education at all levels.

The college curricula is not exempt. The course of study pursued by college students typically contain numerous hours of basic educational requirements (BER's). The BER's typically include coursework in the humanities, social sciences, sciences, communications and mathematics. How many of these areas include courses in agriculture? How many students in education, engineering, psychology, sociology, etc. take courses in agriculture?

How many Colleges of Agriculture offer a survey course which would be appropriate for non-majors?

The Problem

Progressing from formal to informal education, many adults could benefit from informative avocational programs. Given the image agriculture has with many in the general public, much education is needed. Many see agriculture as being oversubsidized by the government. The dairy programs and programs to divert acres from production have not helped the overall image of agriculture. Agricultural educators have a lot to counteract but we must begin somewhere. Other agriculturalists will need to assist, since a united effort will be necessary in order to etch away at the problem. Education requires long term efforts to produce desirable results.

Synergism

Independence is often a commendable trait. At times, however, it only fragments. Agricultural businesses, agricultural educators, farmers, the Cooperative Extension Service and numerous governmental agencies are all concerned with the same problem. To begin to solve the problem, the idea of whose turf or responsibility it is to inform the public must be resolved.

The Secretary of Agriculture has initiated an excellent first step. He is in a unique position of being able to pull together the groups, agencies and resources to fully assault the problem. Representatives of these groups should be called together into a commission. The commission should form recommendations which synergistically utilizes the unique strengths of each group. The problem is too big for any one group alone; but, together, the process of education and ameliorating the misconceptions about agriculture can begin.

The Cover

Over 75 vocational agriculture programs are currently operating in the City of Los Angeles, California.

SOE — Urban Areas

Urban areas are noted for many things: heavy industry, high land costs, and diminishing open spaces. Consequently, agriculture, and particularly production agriculture, for the most part is not included among the occupations making up city life. Buildings, roadways, and high population densities make it difficult for many residents to grow even the smallest of agricultural enterprises. One local high school administrator from an urban area addressing an agriculture teacher conference noted, "Our agriculture department is surrounded by homes, apartments, and businesses — no open spaces, small pastures, or ranches."

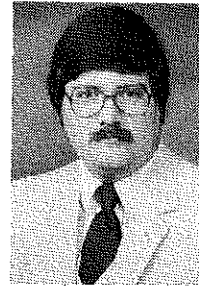
No one would disagree that there are urban students who desire careers in agriculture. For that reason, we need to readjust our focus from the need of agricultural programs in urban areas to the fulfillment of that need by providing sound instruction in agriculture to urban students. One of the important ingredients of instruction included in a successful vocational agriculture program is SOE projects which address in type and scope the hopes and aspirations of students needing vocational training in agriculture. Urban areas provide both opportunities and dilemmas for SOE projects. We should draw from examples of successful SOE projects in developing future SOE projects for urban students.

Case Study

The *SOE Handbook*, available from the National FFA Supply Service, provides us with a case study entitled: "Frank Carter: Can A City Boy Become A Rancher?" This case study provides many insights into how current SOE projects are successful in urban areas. The student begins his work with cattle on the school farm. His SOE project continues with placement on a ranch and, eventually, renting land for his cattle through the money he earned through his placement program. Similarly, a student with an interest in becoming an established florist in an urban area could start with a project using school facilities, seek employment (placement) with a local florist, and perhaps start a business with the skills and abilities learned through the SOE program.

What Does It Take?

In the case study mentioned above, Frank was very successful in his SOE program. What did it take for Frank to



BY RICHARD M. HYLTON, THEME EDITOR

(Editor's Note: Dr. Hylton is an Associate Professor and Graduate Coordinator in the Department of Agricultural Science/Vocational Agriculture at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, California 91768.)

have a successful SOE project? Certainly, commitment to his SOE and career goals was the key factor. Who helped Frank determine and establish his goals? His vocational agriculture teacher? Who took on the ultimate responsibility for the school farm making sure Frank and other students would have housing for their animals? Who provided the creative thinking to find placement centers for the urban students? Successful SOE projects for urban students are highly dependent on the abilities of teachers to help students determine occupational goals, assume the extra responsibilities for facilities such as school farms, and exercise the ability to select and maintain placement centers.

Missing Link?

Accepting the fact that teachers are an extremely important part of successful SOE programs, then are future teachers being trained to meet the demands that urban programs present regarding student projects? Are we training teachers to assume the role of the teacher in a traditional rural agriculture program, or have we effectively given future teachers the opportunity to interface with urban programs? Teacher educators must not only stress that rural and urban programs have many similarities, but that they also have many differences.

The Articles

Writers from many urban areas have addressed the subject of SOE in their agriculture programs. From these articles, teachers in urban areas will realize new opportunities for SOE projects. After reading some of the articles, urban teachers may want to evaluate their SOE projects to see if they are successful in giving students skills and abilities to enter occupations in agriculture.

Coming . . .

SOEP: Sales and Service

July Issue

SOE: Alive and Well in Nassau County

Agriculture is alive and well in the southern suburbs of New York State! Before I can even properly address the topic of SOE programs in the Long Island suburban region of New York State, I must dismiss some perspectives of New York itself. I was astounded, while attending the National FFA Convention in Kansas City, by the many misconceptions of New York state. At the FFA convention, many of the misconceptions were from students.

I was equally astonished with the further lack of understanding for agriculture in New York by adults in attendance at the 1983 AVA Convention in Anaheim, California. Contrary to popular belief, New York is not solely made of concrete. However, New York City can have so much notoriety that many cannot think beyond the city. True, it is pretty outstanding in its reputation — an area comprised only of 299.7 square miles and a population of over 7 million! Is there room for agriculture, you ask? You bet! Even in the middle of it all, it can boast many opportunities for vocational agriculture.

The Opportunities

When one thinks of a strictly suburban or urban area, agriculture is not one of the careers that comes instantly to mind. However, one must have a thorough understanding of agriculture and what it encompasses in order to truly comprehend its diversity in the suburban and urban setting. New York City has several schools teaching agriculture. The programs on Long Island are not the traditional agricultural programs that many may remember. No farm production and management classes or programs dealing specifically with agricultural mechanics. Why? There is very little employability in these areas for our students.

Our students strive and thrive in the many specialty areas of agriculture. Conservation, horticulture, floral design, horse handling and small animal care are the five



BY VICTORIA WOODS

(Editor's Note: Ms. Woods is an Instructor of Agricultural Education at Nassau Technological Center, Westbury, New York 11590; and is President-Elect of Teachers of Agriculture of New York, Inc.)

major areas of agriculture currently taught in Nassau Technological Center. Urban areas provide many opportunities for SOE projects. Urban residents often need the services of landscapers, lawn maintenance personnel, and florists. Many cities provide residents with recreational areas, including unique employment opportunities like horse stables and race tracks, providing opportunities for horse trainers, grooms, and veterinarians. Urban areas are noted for their parks and conservation areas which need foresters, landscapers, and wildlife specialists. The opportunities abound for those properly trained.

Facilities Are Important

At Nassau Technological Center, our facilities provide the first encounter for our students with their SOE projects. We have extensive facilities on a 20 acre plot of rolling fields and woodland. The main building of our complex is a horse stable, renovated from an old estate. It houses our floral shop in the front wing, and, as was originally intended, houses horse stalls and storage in rear wings. The upper floors of the complex are devoted to administrative and classroom space.

A separate barn complex has facilities for up to 20 horses. Students receive instruction in paddock, racetrack,



Laboratories for the Small Animal Care program at Nassau Technological Center are designed from actual working conditions of local businesses.



Laboratories provide students daily practical experience in the Small Animal Care program.



Students in the Floral Design program are prepared to fill any customer order.



Ornamental Horticulture students may begin their SOE program with a space allocation in the school greenhouse.

SOE: Alive and Well in Nassau County

(Continued from Page 5)

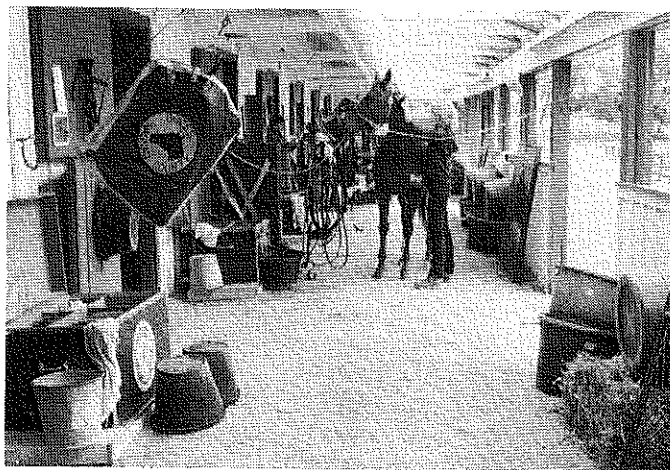
and pasture maintenance. The floral design program has a complete laboratory with three large walk-in refrigerators.

The conservation program utilizes the many acres of fields and woods for management and equipment use. The program is well-equipped, including two boats providing training in marine studies at a local marina. Our horticulture program has three greenhouses stocked with plants of many varieties from the most common to the exotic to provide a wide experience. The program utilizes a plot of land for landscaping experiences as well as landscaping the grounds of the entire agriculture complex as needs dictate.

The small animal care program has a facility complex which includes specialized rooms for housing, and includes a full grooming laboratory, animal health examining and clinical rooms. The numerous well-equipped facilities in all program areas allow students to maintain their SOE projects on-site.

Placement

The second phase for many SOE projects involves a



Preparation of students for future employment in one of New York's many fine horse stables is a goal of the Horse Handling and Care program.



With the growth of the Horse Breeding Industry in New York, students are prepared through SOE programs to enter this exciting field.

placement program. Specially trained placement counselors provide employability lessons to all students. These students are then encouraged to seek jobs in their respective fields in their communities.

The inclusion of special counselors are important since we serve 220 students from 56 school districts. The agriculture teachers are responsible for the on-site SOE programs. For offsite SOE's, placement counselors do visitations, as well as supply employers with employability assessment forms which are returned and reviewed quarterly as to student skills performance and work related attitudes.

Dedicated Teachers

One of the most necessary ingredients to successful urban SOE programs is dedicated teachers. Teachers are hired at Nassau Technological Center as experts in their respective areas of agriculture. They are dedicated to the importance of student SOE programs and strive for the best in their respective areas. Urban SOE programs are challenging and, as many areas become more urbanized, the need for teachers familiar with and trained for these programs becomes more than a necessity.

THEME

Urban Programs — A New Direction

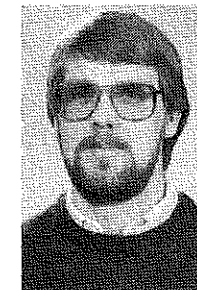
Agricultural education programs have traditionally been located in rural areas to serve the needs of students desiring to pursue careers in production agriculture or agribusiness. Such programs have extolled the importance of experience-based teaching which relates classroom instruction in agriculture to student experiences resulting from their supervised occupational experience programs.

Future agricultural education programs will undoubtedly continue to focus on developing specific skills and abilities in students which are necessary for their placement and advancement in agricultural career fields. However, agricultural educators should begin to examine whether career preparation is their sole mission.

The world in which we now live is characterized by an increasing degree of interdependence. The agricultural sector of our economy is no exception as its products, policies and politics influence the entire economic and social structure of the community, state, nation and world. Few would deny that the role of agriculture is becoming more interrelated with all other aspects of our society. However, many citizens, particularly in urban environments, fail to understand or acknowledge the important role which agriculture plays in each of our lives. The question which this situation poses for agricultural educators is then: "Should agricultural education programs expand their focus to provide educational opportunities to an audience other than agricultural career oriented populations?" and if so, how?

The question posed is not new to our profession and is one which has been characterized by heated debate as it appears to attack traditional agriculture education programs. However, as new problems emerge which affect our profession and programs, we must be willing to make the changes necessary to address those problems. Ignoring the problem has never been an acceptable solution.

Also, past experience has shown that inevitably other forces, most notably legislative mandates (e.g. Vocational



By ROBERT J. BIRKENHOLZ

(Editor's Note: Mr. Birkenholz is the Agribusiness Coordinator at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, Kansas 66210.)

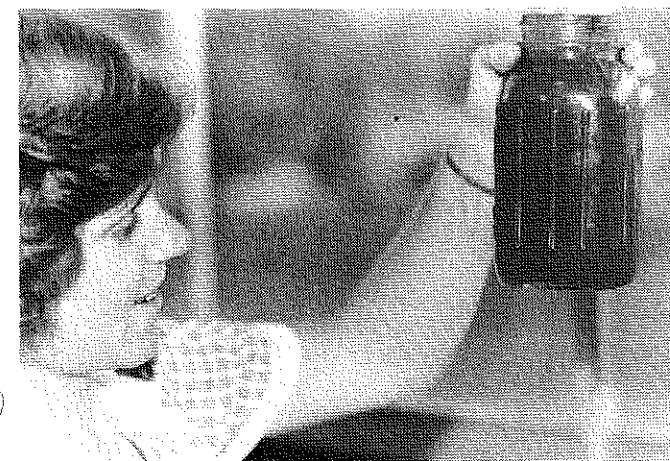
Education Act, 1963), may be brought to bear on our programs which require that changes be made. These forces often target a broad range of programs and may not address problems specific to agricultural education. Problems which we now face in our profession need to be addressed by our profession rather than by legislators who may not fully understand the implications of their solution.

New Program

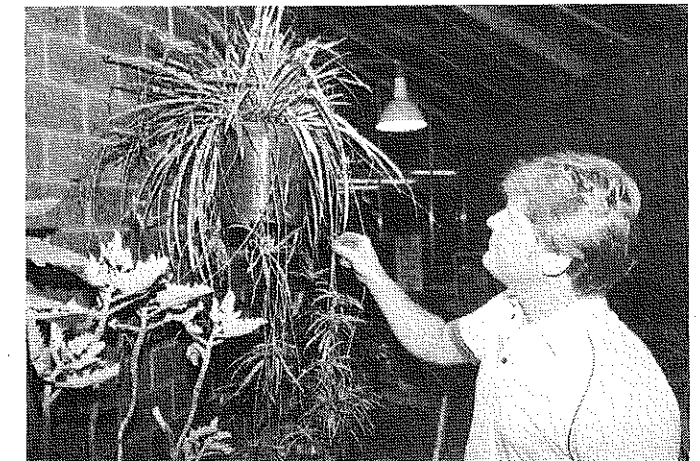
Johnson County Community College in suburban Kansas City (Overland Park, Kansas) initiated a two-year Agribusiness program during the 1982-83 school term. Being located in a relatively affluent suburb of a large metropolitan area mandated the need to develop a program to serve students with limited production agriculture and agribusiness experiences. Although the initial goal of the program was to prepare students for agricultural careers, many students have enrolled in various agribusiness courses for reasons other than career preparation.

Course evaluations have attempted to identify students' rationale for their enrollment in each of the agribusiness course offerings. Responses collected were categorized into three basic areas.

(Continued on Page 8)



Many students enroll to obtain the skills necessary to gain employment in agribusiness.



Some students enroll for avocational interests.

Urban Programs — A New Direction

(Continued from Page 7)

Many students revealed their interest in the agribusiness courses were based on the desire to secure a position in an agribusiness or to improve their skills and abilities if they were already employed. For these students, career preparation or advancement served as the motivating force underlying their enrollment.

A second category of students reported they were interested in developing their skills and abilities in a specific subject matter area. However, their goal was not to secure a position in that career field. Rather, their goal was to use the information acquired to improve their management of an avocational endeavor. For example, one student who was enrolled in a Fundamentals of Animal Nutrition course held a B.S. degree in computer science and was employed as a Systems Analyst in a local business unrelated to agriculture. He reported his reasoning for enrolling in the course was to improve his feeding program for a purebred Angus beef herd which he owned and cared for in the evenings and on weekends. When confronted, he indicated that his current and future salary potential precluded him from considering beef production as a primary career due to the high opportunity cost. However, his need for skills were quite similar to that of other beef producers in order to properly manage his enterprise.

The third category of enrollees indicated their interest was due to the desire to increase their knowledge of agriculture for platonic reasons. Many students simply wanted to broaden their understanding of the world in which they lived and realized that agriculture, food and food production played an important role. For these students their enrollment was a means to examine an industry which had previously been a mystery to them. Most students in the category reported they were amazed at the breadth of the agricultural industry and the varied opportunities it presented.

New Directions

Realizing that future students and society will be uniquely different than those of the past provides the impetus for developing agricultural education programs to meet different needs. Research at Iowa State University (1976) has suggested that future programs should serve three functions. Each of the functions identified recognizes the fact that students seeking instruction in agriculture may have different objectives.

Career oriented students must continue to be provided



The opportunity to improve one's awareness of the scope of agriculture motivates many to enroll.

with educational opportunities which will allow them to develop the skills necessary for employment in agricultural fields. As technology and demand for agricultural products increases, the need for competent agriculturalists will likewise increase. Agricultural education programs of the future must not diminish their efforts in this area in order to maintain a supply of agricultural workers who can continue to provide food and fiber products which are essential to our lives.

The second function of agricultural education programs is to provide educational opportunities for students desiring to acquire knowledge and skills in agriculture but do not intend to pursue a career in that field. In the past, many persons have assumed a position requiring students in our programs to have a career objective in agriculture. However, we should welcome the opportunity to provide instruction in agriculture wherever the demand exists.

The third function of agricultural education is that of providing instruction in the significance of agriculture, food and food production. This aspect of our educational programs has become more important as the agricultural sector of our economy experience increased scrutiny from an ill-informed public. Greater emphasis should be placed on educating the general population on the problems facing agriculture today in an attempt to gain support for agriculture in these troubled times.

Many agricultural education programs have addressed each of the functions identified. The Food For America project is one means that has been used to increase awareness of agriculture in elementary school children. Children's Barnyards and agricultural displays during FFA week are other examples. Test plot results are often published in newspapers with little or no mention of the per acre cost of production or profitability of the enterprise. These efforts are often directed toward improving public relations. However, the opportunity exists to increase the educational value of these activities without reducing their public relations potential.

Summary

Agricultural education programs of the future should expand their target audience to include all members of the community. Although each individual resident will not walk into the classroom for instruction, efforts should be made to address the different objectives of those who do not enter our programs. Additional efforts should be made to educate the essentially naive public on the problems facing agriculture today and how those problems affect each of us.

Population shifts from rural to urban environments places an even greater burden on agricultural educators with direct access to urban populations. New methods of delivery must be identified and utilized to accomplish that task. Urban agriculture education programs are uniquely situated to make an important contribution in that direction. The responsibility for initiating these actions rests with the agricultural education profession. Without efforts in these directions the gap which presently exists between agriculture and the consuming public will undoubtedly widen.

Reference

BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR AGRICULTURE AND AGRIBUSINESS EDUCATION, Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University, Agricultural Education Department, 1976.

THEME

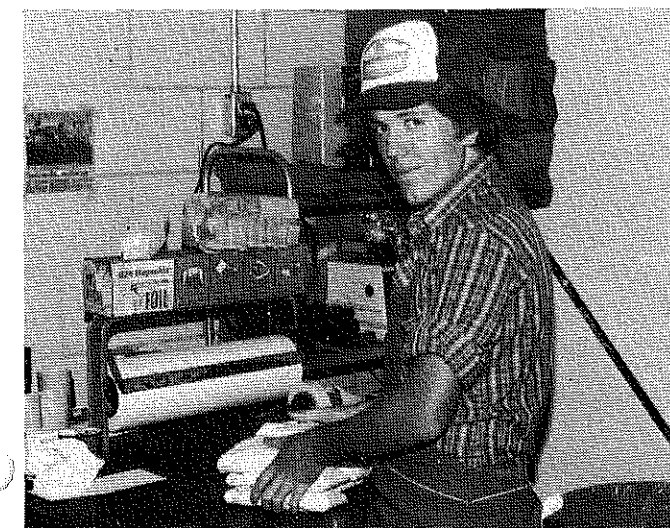
Urban SOE: A Vehicle For Growth

The urban school is often found to exist in a maze of difficulties associated with unresponsive students, negative public perceptions and a general lack of community support. Although the problems may not be unique to urban schools, research indicates that they are frequently more prevalent in the urban environment. In an era when accountability in vocational education is paramount, how can vocational agriculture education change these negative perceptions, motivate students and continue to justify an urban existence? A well planned and implemented Supervised Occupational Experience Program (SOEP) is a key element.

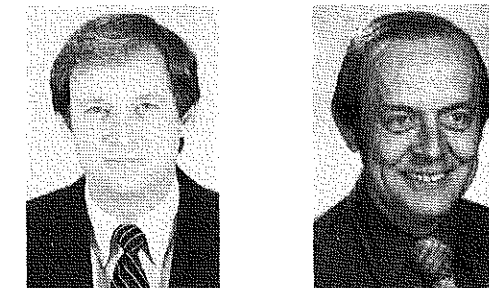
The urban school setting possesses its own set of assets and debits in regard to Supervised Occupational Experience Programs. Opportunities for placement in agricultural related occupations are often abundant. On the other hand, the scope and types of production-oriented Supervised Occupational Experiences may be limited by a lack of facilities, city zoning or disapproval of neighbors. Despite the problems associated with entrepreneurship, this type of SOEP is a vital part of any vocational agricultural program, regardless of location.

SOEP — A Community Project

A study of trends and issues for urban schools in the 1980's uncovered several factors common to highly successful school systems. One significant factor affecting success was the active participation of parents and citizens in the educational process. Supervised Occupational Experience Programs offer an excellent avenue for such involvement. In the urban setting; backyards become gardens, suburban lots become livestock facilities and local businesses become training centers for placement students. Without genuine citizen and parental support, SOE in the urban school may become an uphill battle.



SOE programs at Klein High School may include cooperative placement as shown by this student placed part-time in a meat processing business.



By DALE PERRITT AND DONALD SPELL

(Editor's Note: Dr. Perritt is an Assistant Professor of Agricultural Education and Agricultural Mechanics in the Department of Agriculture at Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacodoches, Texas 75962; and Mr. Spell is Instructor of Agricultural Education at Klein High School, Spring, Texas 77373.)

To the student, parental participation is a sign of personal interest. Students are much more likely to receive encouragement and praise from parents who are active in their children's education. It is also evident that parents receive a great amount of intrinsic value from seeing their child succeed and knowing they had a part in that success.

At Klein High School in Houston, Texas, a number of yearly activities are used to promote both vocational agriculture and SOEP. A community booster club is instrumental in locating and securing facilities for production enterprises. The club also sponsors a yearly project show which affords recognition to vocational agriculture students. Livestock and poultry enterprises are often transported to local day care centers where children discover the real sources of meat, eggs and milk.

The Klein Independent School District in 16 years has grown from basically a rural school to three large urban high schools. As new schools were built, new teachers

(Continued on Page 10)



As part of the Veterinary Assistant Program at Klein High School, students may be placed as assistants at local clinics.

Urban SOE: A Vehicle for Growth

(Continued from Page 9)

hired, and new developments formed; SOEP has been instrumental in developing and maintaining positive public perceptions concerning the value and need for vocational agriculture in the urban setting.

The Motivator

The principle of motivation may be better described as the principle of meaningfulness. Meaningful learning is created through the use of real life situations which is the backbone of SOE. Through SOE, many students learn for the first time the real meaning of economic principles and terms such as profit, collateral, and supply and demand. Students are motivated to excel, thus improving attitudes and productivity.

The results of the changes become evident in other areas such as improved class attendance and better grades. Urban students, which may have had only limited opportunity for personal achievement, may finally get a chance to stand out from the crowd and be a part of a success oriented group. Peer recognition and group identification become positive influences on the student.

Without a doubt, the success of any educated system to motivate students hinges on the ability of the teacher to manage the learning environment. SOEP is no exception to this theory. The experience program should include variety and be tuned to the ability level of each student. If the SOE is not challenging, the student may quickly lose interest. If the SOE is overwhelming, the student may give up and become a motivational problem. As in any curriculum, the SOE should be paced so that interest is maintained the entire year. This may be especially true in urban areas where numerous diversions are available to vie for the student's interest.

The teacher must set the standards for the SOEP. Research has indicated that highly effective teachers seldom come across as slave drivers but do maintain high standards. They do not seek excellence by being overly critical or punitive but by demanding that students do their best. Teachers may obtain maximal performance from students through praise, encouragement and attention to evidence of genuine progress.



SOE projects are carried to day-care centers where children become familiar with animals and learn the sources of food products.

The Work Ethic

Recent articles in the journal *Urban Education* described the complexities the urban student faces in the transition from youth to adulthood. Of significant importance is the inability of the student to understand the world of work. Likewise, finding suitable employment is one of the most important developmental tasks urban students face in an effort to assume adult roles in society. A suitable and meaningful SOE may serve as the catalyst to make the transition as smooth as possible.

The influx of people to the Houston area has brought with it a heterogeneous student population. Whereas students once learned work ethics from parents or relatives down-on-the-farm, urban students in some cases have had little opportunity for such instruction. The changing structure of our society has seemingly delegated more of the responsibility of conveying the ethical meaning of the old adage "a day's work for a day's pay" to the teacher. Through the development of a work ethic, students gain a sense of control over both themselves and their environment. Also, work ethic establishes an awareness in students that they have something of value to offer other people.

All students entering Klein High School must assume the responsibility for some type of SOE. Basic standards are established and students are made aware from the outset of the importance of SOE. Students with little background in agriculture are encouraged to assume an SOE of moderate scope until some basics are learned in the classroom and laboratory. As students progress, they are encouraged to expand to larger enterprises, pre-employment laboratory training or placement in agribusiness.

In 1982, the net income from the Klein Supervised Occupational Experience Program was \$52,700, of which \$39,000 came from placement in agribusiness. Obviously those dollars translate into positive educational experiences for the urban student.

The Future

U.S. News and World Report confirmed that there are approximately 2.4 million farmers and ranchers in the



Developing a work ethic is an important part of the SOE program.

United States. For each job on these farms and ranches, there are 5.2 jobs in agribusiness and related occupations. This ratio translates into 21 million agricultural related jobs, or approximately one-fifth of all civilian employment. Numbers may sometimes be misleading, but these figures leave little doubt about the importance of well trained young men and women to the future of agriculture. Vocational agriculture is not a luxury afforded to urban schools; it is a necessity which must be maintained through

the effective use of the FFA classroom/laboratory instruction and Supervised Occupational Experience Programs.

References

- Editorial Staff. 2.4 Million Farmers: Their Impact. *U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT*. May 30, 1983.
- Passow, Harry A. *Urban Education for the 1980's: Trends and Issues*. PHI DELTA KAPPAN. April 1982. p. 519.
- Schain, Robert L. *Motivating Students in Urban Schools*. *URBAN EDUCATION*. January 1981. V 81, p. 62.

THEME

Bridging the Gap in Urban Areas

According to the National Handbook on Supervised Occupational Experience Programs, supervised occupational programs of vocational agriculture students is a national priority to bridge the gap between where students are and where they want to be. "Supervised occupational experience consists of all the planned practical activities conducted outside the scheduled class time in which the student develops and applies agriculture knowledge and skills. Students in SOEP are supervised by teachers, parents, employers, or other adults who assist them in achieving their education objectives. The competencies should be determined cooperatively by the student, teacher, parents, and employer."

Objectives

What are some of the objectives of SOE programs in urban areas? The basic objective of urban supervised occupational experience programs is to help students bridge the gap between vocational education and employment. Other specific objectives may be listed as:

1. To provide an opportunity for students to develop specific occupational skills in agribusiness.
2. To provide an opportunity for students to develop abilities and skills necessary to successfully compete for gainful employment in horticulture.
3. To provide an opportunity for students to develop a



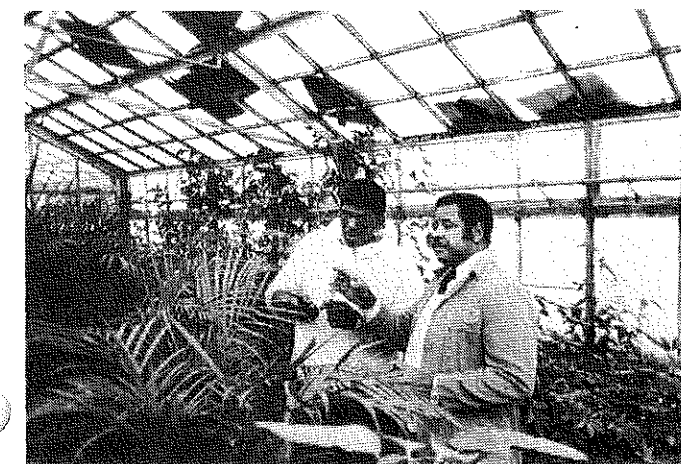
By LEDELL D. VIRDUE

(Editor's Note: Dr. Virdue is Director of the Division of Vocational Education and Professor of Agricultural Education at Southern University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70813.)

sense of personal worth as well as leadership, citizenship and to improve their decision-making skills.

4. To provide an opportunity for students to develop basic and correct concepts.
5. To provide an opportunity for students to develop proficiency in record keeping skills.
6. To provide an opportunity for students to experience on-the-job training in placement and ownership.
7. To provide an opportunity for urban students who have limited farm or no farm facilities to develop skills in nonfarm agriculture.
8. To provide an opportunity for students to develop responsibility and self-confidence to manage or own an agribusiness.

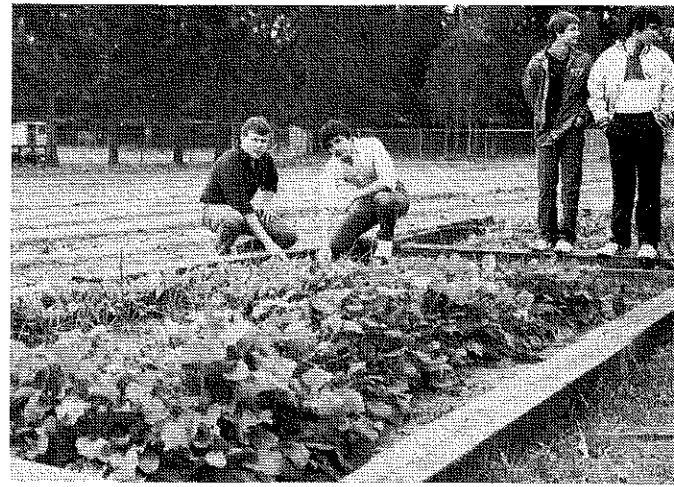
(Continued on Page 12)



A student receives hands-on experiences in the school laboratory at Booker T. Washington High School, New Orleans, Louisiana.



Students examining new variety of white poinsettia as an SOEP.



Students thinning vegetables from plot. SOEP, Broadmoor High School, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.



Students prepare a rubber plant for air layering.

Bridging The Gap in Urban Areas

(Continued from Page 11)

9. To provide an opportunity for students to earn and manage money.
 10. To provide an opportunity for students to receive on-the-job training in agribusiness in order to enter the world of work.
 11. To provide an opportunity for students to develop skills in the organization of business, principles of management, and legal aspects of business.
 12. To provide an opportunity for students, parents, teachers and employees to cooperatively set supervised occupational experience programs.
- These are but a few of the many objectives that SOE projects help accomplish for students in urban areas.

Bridging the Gap

With a strong reemphasis on work experiences, many urban vocational students are facing a dilemma. The problem with which they are confronted is having the facilities



Students check plots for insect damage in an area with limited growing space.



Nursery stock is sorted prior to plant sales which result in income for the students.

available to carry out a meaningful program of supervised occupational experience. Urban students come from widely varying backgrounds and may have had little or no previous agricultural experience.

Mr. James D. Richmond, Jr., teacher of vocational agriculture at Broadmoor High School in Baton Rouge, states: "There is a need to be creative in helping urban students select their SOE projects." The traditional or farm-oriented projects are usually not available to urban youngsters. The students' access to transportation plays a key role in the selection of their SOEP.

In order to bridge the gap between training and employment, Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver high schools in New Orleans have launched an agribusiness program concentrating on agribusiness training for the horticulture industry. SOE projects consist of horticulture crops, such as citrus fruits, vegetables, flowers, and nursery stock. The course of study in Vocational Agriculture/Agribusiness (I, II, III, and IV) for the City of New Orleans is designed to train students in the field of Ornamental Horticulture with specific training through SOE for the following careers:

1. Floriculture Industry
 - a. Greenhouse Production
 - (1) Greenhouse manager or owner
 - (2) Sales manager
 - b. Flower Shop or Plant Store
 - (1) Floral designer
 - c. Wholesale Florist/Broker
2. Landscape Designer
 - a. Interior and Exterior Designer
 - b. Landscape Contractor
 - c. Landscape Architect
3. Nursery Industry
 - a. Nursery Production
 - b. Plant Propagator
 - c. Garden Center Manager or Owner
4. Turf Grass Industry
 - a. Golf Course Manager
 - b. Golf Course Employee
 - c. Groundskeeper

Placement

In Baton Rouge, placement in agribusiness occupations is one avenue open to many urban students. Garden centers, hardware stores, meat and produce markets, nurseries and landscape contractors are but a few of the available employment centers. Placement in these businesses is an excellent opportunity for any enterprising student interested in learning the business of agriculture.

In most urban areas, there is an abundance of these agriculturally related businesses that need part-time help with a vested interest in something more than just a job. Younger students will have more difficulty in finding openings of this nature because of labor laws or hiring policies at many businesses, but the third and fourth year agriculture student should find no such barriers. Many school systems give credit for cooperative placement in agribusinesses providing added incentives to the student.

The doors are not completely closed to urban students having production projects as their SOE program. The numbers are fewer than for the rural resident, but there are a few areas on the fringes of urban development where enterprises such as horse farms or pick-your-own vegetable and fruit plots abound. Owners of unused land in Baton Rouge and New Orleans are glad to have their property used for projects in exchange for the maintenance the land receives. Plots like these are being used for growing crops by students interested in production projects.

For students who have no facilities at home or who have problems with transportation to a job, the school land laboratory or school farm can provide suitable facilities for SOE programs. Individual garden plots, greenhouse space,

or plots to grow nursery stock can be provided for those students who have no other alternatives. There must be a distinction between classroom or laboratory instruction and projects. The student must realize that the SOE program must be an individual project that requires out-of-school time even if it is located on campus.

Students enrolled in the inner city agriculture/agribusiness programs have been placed in occupational training stations around the city. Vocational agriculture/agribusiness plays a significant role in Baton Rouge and New Orleans communities. Community service is rendered to schools, churches, homes, organizations (both private and governmental) and individuals.

Ownership

Students enrolled in vocational agriculture/agribusiness programs in metropolitan Baton Rouge and New Orleans, Louisiana, are growing into ownership through their SOE programs. Some students have a combination of ownership, placement, improvement, and supplementary agricultural skills involved in their SOE programs. In some instances, students purchase their own lawn and garden tools and contract horticulture jobs throughout the city. Some students are now being launched into co-ownerships with agribusiness firms in the city. Here are a few examples: lawn/garden maintenance business, landscaping business, pest control business, fruit and ornamental horticulture plant production and vegetable production (on city and private property).

Summary

There are any number of possibilities open to urban vocational agriculture/agribusiness students with regards to SOE programs. The important thing to remember is that the vocational agriculture teacher, parents, and prospective employer should all be involved in planning and implementing the program. Accurate records should be kept and supervision should be comprehensive. The beneficiaries of a well-planned, well-organized and well-supervised SOE program will always be involved in the study of vocational agriculture/agribusiness, present and future.

The SOE programs in the City of New Orleans, Louisiana, are very unique in that the agriculture programs are housed in the middle of a booming metropolis. Students are low income city dwellers living in housing projects and crowded rental units with very little space, which would make it almost impossible to carry on an active SOE program. But, through creative inventions, ranging from rooftop projects to employment through governmental agencies, urban students are able to participate in the experiences shared by rural Americans.

Remaining 1984 Themes on SOEP

July Sales and Service
 August Horticulture
 September Mechanics

October Forestry, Conservation
 and Recreation
 November Adults
 December Post Secondary

Urban SOE: Can It Survive?

To become a success in vocational agriculture, a student must first decide on an SOE program. Just as rural agriculture students might choose projects from beef, dairy, swine or crops; so must an urban student choose a project, perhaps in nursery, landscaping, floriculture, vegetable crops, or many of the sales and management opportunities from within these and other areas. While the rural student can work on a program and goals for the home farm, the urban student must be totally dependent on the local school system and agriculture program to provide the experiences that cannot be achieved elsewhere. Programs chosen by urban students can vary from home gardens to school projects completed in the nursery or the greenhouse.

From 1975 to 1983, Pleasure Ridge Park Area Vocational Education Center Horticulture program has had eight State Championship teams in nursery or floral judging, three State Farmer Degree recipients, hundreds of blue ribbons in the State Fair FFA contests, and still this is not enough. Regardless of how successful individual students or teams perform, there are other considerations which ultimately decide a program's success and survival: student recruitment, employer support, and support from local and state administration.

Recruiting, Placement, and Support

Recruiting urban students into the program is a primary concern in establishing and maintaining the program. In most urban areas, horticulture programs are placed in vocational education centers, which limits the enrollment to juniors and seniors. Thus, every year the horticulture program must compete with other vocational areas for students. At the present time, Pleasure Ridge Park draws students from four high schools. Recruiting urban students, therefore, involves not only competing against other vocational areas, such as welding, auto mechanics, and drafting, but is also compounded by the limited views of family tradition and unfamiliarity with horticulture as a viable vocational area.

For any program to be successful in the urban area, it must have the support of the local industry. The program at Pleasure Ridge Park has been fortunate in this respect. Since 1974, the number of cooperative employers has



BY MIKE JOHNSON

(Editor's Note: Mr. Johnson is a Horticulture Instructor at Pleasure Ridge Park Area Vocational Education Center in Louisville, Kentucky 40258.)

grown from one to fifteen. Students view placement as a strong selling point when searching for a career. Some businesses take at least five students per year and place them at various jobs within their business.

Our horticulture students attend regular high school classes for the first three periods per day and then leave the home school to work in an assigned business for the remainder of the day. In order for such cooperative educational experience to work, the program must be well-coordinated by an agriculture teacher with the ability to work out any problems which may arise and employers who are supportive of such a program. One key element leading to support is having employers involved in the planning of the curriculum. At the present time, our Advisory Committee, consisting of five of the local employers, meets twice a year to plan for the future and review the past in order to realize needed changes and provide guidance for the ultimate success of the student. The cooperative program has averaged placing or finding jobs for ninety-five percent of the horticulture students since 1979.

Support from both local and state level agencies for the development of urban programs is also essential. "We're different" is a phrase I have used many times, but the difficulty arises with the ability of educational agencies to understand the difference. In all honesty, I had problems at first in understanding urban programs. This was due primarily to the fact that I grew up involved with rural agriculture programs, attended Eastern Kentucky University, and completed my student teaching through the University of Kentucky. It took a great deal of trial and error in order to accomplish an understanding of urban programs in agriculture. State vocational agriculture agencies who so successfully lead, guide and direct rural programs need to develop the same kind of positive attitude toward urban programs. To survive, urban programs are going to need the combined assistance of both the local community and state agencies.

Rural and urban programs could become great assets to each other if both are nurtured properly. Not only must agricultural crops be grown, but they must also be marketed. What better way to accomplish this than to train urban students to handle, sell and disperse crops grown in rural areas? Teaching urban students should never be left out of any state plan. The urban student may be one of the great resources we have left to develop, and I look forward to the day that urban programs are accepted and looked upon as being as important as rural programs.



One of the advantages of placement programs for SOE projects is the close contact afforded with agribusinesses.

SOEP For Urban Vocational Agriculture

Vocational agriculture has historically centered around the student's SOE programs. These real-life applications to the classroom experiences have taken on many new and varied forms. What started out as livestock and crops owned and cared for by the student are now agribusiness jobs, small business ownerships, exploratory career experiences and laboratory simulations. There are still students who own and care for livestock and crops, but as vocational agriculture found a place in urban settings, traditional SOEP's changed to fit the need.

Programs That Work

Two of these atypical programs can be found at Graff Area Vocational Technical School in Springfield, Missouri. Located in a city of 150,000 in Southwest Missouri, Graff AVTS offers two programs in vocational agriculture. Natural resources conservation offers a two-year, broad based program in soil, water, and resources conservation. Horticulture is also offered as a two-year program emphasizing floriculture, nursery production, and landscaping.

In horticulture, the laboratory is the SOEP for the students. While many students are employed part-time in local horticulture-related businesses, the greenhouse laboratory serves as the primary business employer of the students.

First-year students serve as the entry level workers for the business. Students learn plant and materials identification with the second-year students serving in managerial capacities for the business. A great deal of emphasis is given by the instructor to the human relations skills needed by workers. Customer relations are stressed at each area in the business so that students may be able to offer suggestive selling and plant management tips while being helpful and cooperative.

Students set production and sales goals for the business early in the school year. Production and business records have proven to be essential in analyzing the success of the students in achieving the predetermined goals. With the entire horticulture program run as commercially as possible, a great deal of responsibility is placed on the second-year students as managers. This responsibility has contributed to the high percentage of program graduates that enter horticulture related fields of work and/or attend college to major in horticulture.

This laboratory SOEP has also been a major factor in the success of FFA judging teams in floriculture and nursery/landscaping. Graff has always placed well in district, state, and national contests in these areas of competition.

The horticulture instructor believes that the laboratory SOEP is successful because the instructor is based on a survey of competencies collected from area florists, nurseries,



BY JERRY CROWNOVER, JOHN MCKENZIE AND DAVID FULTON
(Editor's Note: Dr. Crownover is an Assistant Professor of Agricultural Education and Mechanics at Southwest Missouri State University; and Mr. McKenzie and Mr. Fulton are Agriculture Instructors at Graff Area Vocational School in Springfield, Missouri 65802.)

and landscapers. These business people completed the survey to determine the skills they desire in workers hired during a typical year. Surprisingly, the businesses desired students with good work skills (responsible, dependable, cooperative, etc.) as much as those with good technical skills. This is still another reason the laboratory is run as a commercial business.

Approximately thirty students participate in the horticulture program each year. A large majority of the students are female with about 60 percent of them being from the city and the remaining 40 percent coming from outlying schools in more rural areas. While some students own greenhouses of their own or work in greenhouses or florist shops, the school laboratory serves as the major SOEP at Graff AVTS.

The natural resources conservation program has the same number of students, but their demographic make-up is different. The majority of students in this program are males with about half from the city and half coming from area schools. All entering students possess an interest in the outdoors. The SOEP in this program consists of both laboratory and exploratory experiences.

The laboratory SOEP consists of activities carried out on a local farm. Plant and tree identification collections are developed by each student, as well as competencies in surveying, measuring, map reading, pond design, terrace layout, and waterway construction. Records and notebooks are kept on many of these activities.

Graduates of the natural resources conservation program are placed with survey crews, parks departments, zoos, conservation departments, and forestry departments. Many of the program graduates go on to college to become landscape architects, foresters, agronomists, or wildlife management specialists.

(Continued on Page 16)

SOEP For Urban Vocational Agriculture

(Continued from Page 15)

The exploratory SOEP helps many of the students make a career choice by exposing the student to the responsibilities of a host of occupations. This SOEP operates by allowing students to spend time with people in different careers, documenting their day-to-day tasks and activities. Students spend several days with the people involved in conservation jobs. This allows them to make more intelligent choices in career selection before pursuing more advanced education or training.

FFA activities that correlate with the laboratory and exploratory SOEP in natural resources are the soils and land judging contests. Members also look forward to the begin-

ning of a new forestry contest next year. Graff has also been very successful in the soils and land judging contests on the district, state, and national levels.

Accomplishments

These two programs are indicative of the new and innovative supervised occupational experience programs that are proving to be extremely beneficial to vocational agriculture students are restricted in more typical SOEP's, laboratory and exploratory projects are stressing the same major points that SOEP's always have:

1. Establishment in an occupation.
2. A sense of responsibility on the part of the student.
3. A relationship between classroom instruction and real-life situations.
4. Supervision by teachers, parents, and employers.

THEME

Tropical Fish Don't Count

I have just returned from our university sheep unit, sorting Rambouillet yearling ewes with a freshman animal science student who wants to be a veterinarian. This student came from an urban high school with no agriculture background, and was asking such questions as: "What is a ewe lamb? How can you tell a sheep from a goat?" My immediate thought was that it is too bad this student did not have the advantage of taking vocational agriculture in high school. He would have so much less to learn at this point. But, I wonder if this is really true today, particularly in urban high school agriculture programs. It is in these programs where the mission of vocational education in agriculture and its relationship to SOE programs can most easily be misunderstood, thwarted and, in some cases, simply ignored.

Before you jump to the conclusion that this author probably believes that real agricultural education occurs only in rural areas or out in the wide open spaces where everyone wears boots, cowboy hats, and chews tobacco, I don't. Meaningful education in vocational agriculture occurs when we keep a clear eye on what our task is, both in an historical sense and in the present day.

The Task of Vocational Agriculture

Our task really has not changed much. It is to provide vocational instruction; that is, to learn how to do things, not just learn about things in agricultural subject areas so that students may obtain gainful employment in or pursue further study of agriculture. Supervised occupational education programs are, of course, ideally designed to augment classroom instruction in agriculture in order to provide the invaluable personal experience and involvement in agriculture which does not occur in the classroom setting.

SOE in Urban Areas

Agricultural supervised occupational experience programs may be easier to initiate and conduct in a rural set-

By FLINT FREEMAN

(Editor's Note: Mr. Freeman is Professor and Head of the Department of Agricultural Science/Vocational Agriculture at California State Polytechnic University in Pomona, California 91768.)

ting for obvious reasons. Students who live and attend school in highly urbanized settings have few opportunities for production projects unless the school can maintain and operate a school farm where these projects may be kept. Work experience may be limited to specialized agricultural industries (particularly ornamental horticulture) or may be practically nonexistent.

Compounding this problem is that many urban parents and their students have no accurate concept of the agriculture industry. They cannot distinguish between agriculture science and science. Animal science to them logically means a study of all types of animals. Students, parents, and very often administrators do not perceive a difference between raising parakeets and raising chickens. To many, caring for a sheep is similar to caring for a large, woolly dog, who happens to eat hay. It is, of course, the vocational agriculture instructor's job to correct these viewpoints, establish what is agriculture and what is not through classroom instruction, and determine what constitutes an acceptable supervised occupational experience project. Here is where a serious problem has developed.

Vocational and Agriculture Are Not Synonymous

Some vocational agriculture instructors either have never had a real concept of what agriculture is or have stretched their definition to the point that it is about to break. Perhaps an underlying problem is that too many of our urban teachers themselves have no genuine agricultural background, except that knowledge which they obtained as college students. This, of course, may also be true of their rural counterparts.

We find within many urban vocational agriculture programs excellent vocational SOE programs which involve the production of fish, birds, rats and other small laboratory animals, purebred dogs and cats, and, yes, even monkeys. I know this is to be so as I have seen them, discussed them with both students and teachers, and have witnessed their inclusion in vocational agriculture record books submitted as a part of the State Farmer Application process.

Some of these projects are very large in scope. Students are learning skills and have excellent records, are making good profit and many seemingly lead to employment opportunities for students. These supervised occupational ex-

perience programs are really vocational. They fit into a large part of the mission and purpose of vocational agriculture. They do good things for the students. One very important element is missing, however — the most important element — agriculture.

Vocational education and vocational education in agriculture are not synonymous. We in vocational agriculture must keep our mission and our identity clearly in mind. We teach vocational agriculture. The production of tropical fish, birds, dogs, cats, mice and monkeys is not agriculture by my definition. We should not be teaching in these areas nor should we accept them as SOE projects.

THEME

SOE in Urban Programs — Teachers Can Make It Happen

While the Vocational Education Act of 1963 provided support for expanded programs of vocational agriculture, it presented tremendous new challenges to agricultural educators as they sought to maintain the vitality and worth of SOE programs. As new programs in off-farm occupational areas became established, teachers soon realized that the traditional SOE ownership programs were not enough.

SOE Adolescence

Although twenty years have come and gone since SOE programs began to take on a new look, agricultural educators are still not fully satisfied with the quality of SOE programs in these expanded programs, many of which are located in urban areas. However, when one considers the fact that traditional SOE ownership programs have been in place over 50 years, SOE programs in off-farm programs are relatively new. In fact, SOE programs in urban programs now appear to be in their teenage years — unsure of where they are headed and needing clear direction from the parents of the profession. But, with a firm commitment to high quality SOE programs from teachers, SOE programs can serve as a viable component of urban programs today and in the future.

Problems and Opportunities

The very nature of urban programs; the program structure, subject matter parameters, physical environment, and student backgrounds; dictates an innovative approach to planning and developing SOE programs with students. Factors such as limited home visitation, little or no travel support, program duration (one or two years), and lack of student identification with the FFA and agriculture all affect the teacher's ability to make the SOE phase of their urban program successful. When SOE programs are modified to better suit the nature of the urban program, success can be achieved.

At first glance, there appear to be very limited opportunities for students to develop good SOE programs in urban programs. Certainly, ownership programs are not a



By ED OSBORNE AND CARL REED

(Editor's Note: Dr. Osborne is an Assistant Professor of Agricultural Education, University of Illinois, Champaign, Illinois 61820; and Mr. Reed is Horticulture Instructor at Barrington High School, Barrington, Illinois 60010.)

possibility, or are they? If the agriculture program is closely aligned with the agricultural focus and needs of the community, the opportunities for SOE programs in urban programs may exceed those in rural programs.

In the Barrington High School horticulture program, as well as other urban programs in the Chicago area; students are involved in a variety of SOE programs, including ownership programs. These urban entrepreneurs are producing horticulture crops or decorative arrangements, or they are initiating small business ventures in a great variety of horticulture production, sales, or service areas. Adapting school facilities in urban programs to provide SOE ownership opportunities is essential, since a clear and useful link to classroom instruction is then provided. The use of school facilities in this manner can parallel the home ownership projects in rural programs.

SOE placement opportunities are also numerous in urban programs. Over the years, students at Barrington High School have gained working experience in landscaping, greenhouse construction and management, fruit production, sales, and many other areas. In addition, cooperative

(Continued on Page 18)

SOE in Urban Programs — Teachers Can Make It Happen

(Continued from Page 17)

education programs can provide invaluable experience for students enrolled in urban programs.

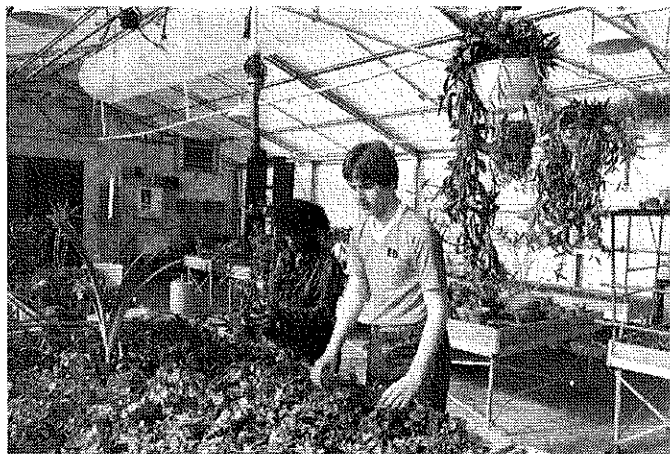
Improvement projects and supplementary skills are also significant elements of SOE programs in urban programs. In horticulture, practically all students can identify and carry out substantive improvement projects at their home or in their neighborhood. While these projects may sometimes lack long-term involvement, they provide excellent avenues for students to apply what they have learned in the classroom. Supplementary skills may be gained through school and community projects; such as landscaping, community garden club activities, or horticulture therapy sessions at the school for older citizens in the community.

The Teacher's Role

If such enormous opportunities for high quality SOE programs do exist in urban programs, then where lies the secret ingredient to their implementation? As in every other phase of the vocational agriculture program, rural or urban, the teacher is the key to effective SOE programs.

The teacher's role consists of five essential components: planner, facilitator, supporter, evaluator, and diagnostician. To be successful, teachers must believe that SOE programs will improve the overall success of their students. SOE programs will give their students increased enthusiasm for a specific area of agriculture, better skills for practical application, and new learning or insight into that area of study.

When the instructor is confident of the value of SOE programs and is willing and eager to communicate that confidence to the students, the SOE program as a whole will be a success. In order to accomplish this, the instructor should make the steps of an SOE program appear small and easy to accomplish. If the students perceive their work to be within their abilities, then they will do it quickly, especially if it is in an area of their own interest. The overall program should be planned with the idea of success woven into its fabric.



Pictures of the students at work can help the teacher evaluate the competencies gained by the student.

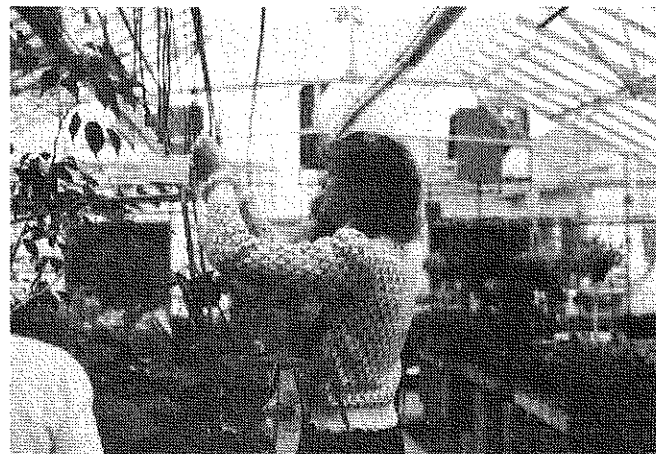
As a planner, the teacher decides many things about the SOE program that will play an important part in its overall success. The SOE program should be positive and as close as possible to fail-safe, especially for the beginning student. To accomplish this, the time frame on each segment of the program should be small, perhaps quarterly, rather than yearly.

Plans for the program may begin in the first weeks of instruction, and a proposal should be due in two or three weeks. Good planning is part of a good program. After planning, students should write a proposal that tells the instructor clearly what they would like to do, how they intend to do it, what it will cost, and who will pay the expenses. The instructor will have an opportunity to review these proposals before projects are begun to give students suggestions on how their project plans may be improved or how potential problems may be solved. SOE program records should also be planned at this time.

As a facilitator, the teacher helps students recognize what they would like to accomplish and how. If students are unable to identify a SOE project, particular projects should not be assigned. Instead, several ideas should be presented to students for their consideration. SOE projects are more likely to be successful if they are chosen by the students. Posters of past projects can illustrate good SOE programs conducted by previous students. Pictures, slides or taped interviews can give them some feel for how a project might be accomplished.

The teacher may also need to place students in contact with a person or business in order to plan their SOE programs. If students want to be involved in placement programs, then assistance in planning should come from the teacher and the work supervisor. All communities, especially in urban settings, have experts ready to lend a hand. Local businesses, groundskeepers for local hospitals, corporations, and country clubs; garden club leaders, local 4-H leaders, and other agricultural extension personnel are usually eager to assist in SOE program development. As a facilitator, the teacher's job is to place the right student in the right spot, with the right equipment and supplies, and with the skills and knowledge to do the job well.

Another responsibility of the teacher is to provide encouragement and support. When students encounter problems with their SOE programs, they need to feel free to



Teachers must be adept at discerning if a student's interest has waned in the SOE program.

share those with the teacher. Strategies that encourage this sharing include a brief weekly summary of progress on the project, informal discussions with students on a regular basis, or discussions of problems encountered by former students with their SOE programs and how they were resolved.

The teacher as an evaluator is also a familiar role. A thorough evaluation gives students some feedback for planning an expanded SOE program the following year. Involving students in the evaluation process should be a part of the total SOE experience. At Barrington High School, students in horticulture participate in their SOE program evaluation by citing their accomplishments, describing what they learned, explaining how they would approach the same projects differently a second time, and indicating their plans for SOE programs expansion in the coming year. If others played a part in the SOE program, then they, too, should be a part of the evaluation. Having parents not only approve the program but also participate in the evaluation process, is good for the overall school public relations program and for the student and his/her parents.

SOE program evaluation can be simple or complex. For example, in evaluating improvement projects perhaps only three questions should be asked: How did it go? What was good and/or bad? What would you do different next time and why? Pictures are easily used in the evaluation of projects that instructors could not see unless they were on the site at a specific time. Pictures of the site before the work was done, during the work (preferably with the student in them), and upon completion or at a time the work is visible can help in describing the project. But nothing is as good as on-the-site teacher evaluation. A library of good, completed SOE programs with evaluation comments can be very helpful to beginning students as they plan and iden-

tify their SOE programs.

The teacher as a diagnostician is a professional at work — analyzing the needs, strengths, and weaknesses of particular students. After the evaluation process is completed, several questions should be addressed for planning future SOE programs. Should the student complete another similar project to gain confidence or increase skill levels? Should this project be expanded to include a new area? Does the student have increased or changed interests? Should they be pursued? How do these future SOE program ideas and the past SOE program fit together? Has the student's interest waned? Might another area be better for the next SOE program? What are the student's career goals? What skills will be needed to meet these goals? Are there techniques in the field that should be understood and mastered through SOE programs?

Summary

Perhaps in no other phase of the vocational agriculture program do teacher expectations of student performance have such a significant impact as in SOE programs. Contrary to what some may believe, students enrolled in urban programs are just as motivated and eager to learn as their rural colleagues. However, in working with SOE programs, teachers must identify their program standards or expectations and make these clearly known to the students.

Teachers should interact with one another to obtain ideas and develop their SOE program expectations. The teacher that carries out the five functions of planning, facilitating, supporting, evaluating, and diagnosing will make SOE programs more than just a requirement. They will become a true extension of the classroom and entire learning effort and ensure the vocational nature of urban agriculture programs.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

Your editorial in the February 1984 issue of *THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MAGAZINE* must not go unchallenged by those of us in the profession. You suggested that the expectation of a supervised occupational experience program (SOEP) was unreasonable and unfair for many vocational agriculture students. You based this conclusion upon facts indicating a decline in the quantity and quality of SOEPs, and the enrollment of many students with career objectives in areas other than agriculture.

SOEP programs serve many purposes, only one of which is growth into an agricultural occupation. Supervised practice has been shown to be related to more learning (greater achievement) by students. Students develop personally in the areas of responsibility, financial independence, managerial ability, work habits, cooperation, self-concept, initiative, and commitment to goals. They develop occupations, participate in financial planning, gain work experience, and develop special areas of expertise. Teachers can improve instruction by using SOEP programs of students as interest approaches, as sources of problems for study, and as applications of classroom instruction. It is obvious that SOEP programs are needed in vocational agriculture for all students. The justification for SOEP programs include much more than whether or not the student intends to pursue an agricultural career.

The challenge to the profession is to assist teachers and students in developing meaningful SOEP programs especially for non-farm students. Perhaps SOEP programs will be different in many ways in the future, but supervised practice must remain an integral and important part of education in agriculture for all students.

Cordially,
J. David McCracken, Professor
Department of Agricultural Education
The Ohio State University

SOE: Its Importance In Urban Areas

Agricultural education in urban settings has been in existence for a long time, but only in the last twenty or so years has the concept of agricultural education in urban areas been gaining acceptance. Many agricultural educators felt that urban agricultural education was not feasible because of the lack of opportunity for students to carry out a legitimate supervised occupational experience program.

A conversation overheard at the National FFA Convention in 1969 involved two young ladies being questioned by several young men from a southwestern state as to the type of occupational experience programs being conducted by the young ladies. The young ladies pointed out that their experience in a florist shop was giving them skills in marketing, managing and production. These skills were similar to the ones the young men were learning in their feed lot operations. This encounter provided a good example of why urban agricultural education has continued to grow over the last two decades. Agricultural skills are needed in both rural and urban areas.

Agricultural educators have long held that a sound school experience will provide the competencies that will allow students to secure and keep jobs in agriculture production and/or related agricultural occupations. This equation for success does not need to be changed in order for urban youth to secure and keep jobs.

Agriculture In Urban Areas

Let us examine what agriculture exists in the urban area. The most readily identified agricultural component in the urban area is food. Urban areas consume large amounts of food every day. It is necessary to have knowledgeable persons who are able to cope with the process that takes that food from the producer and puts it into the hands of the ultimate consumer. Heavily urbanized states like Massachusetts import over eighty percent of the food consumed daily. This food, even though it is not produced in Massachusetts, must be marketed there and this takes people with an understanding of the marketing aspect of the agricultural industry.

The consumption of housing supplies is a second component of urban agriculture. Large amounts of lumber and other housing materials are consumed daily in urban areas.

A third component is that of clothing. Wherever there are large urban populations there are companies selling clothes, shoes and other agricultural products to the urban dweller.

A fourth segment of urban agriculture is the development and maintenance of parks and recreation areas. Cleveland, Ohio, has a park system called the Emerald Necklace that completely surrounds the metropolitan area. Thousands of urban dwellers use that facility on a year-round basis for picnics, ball games, golf, hiking, skiing as well as for countless other activities.

There are other areas of agriculture directly related to



By KENNETH PARKER

(Editor's Note: Dr. Parker is an Assistant Professor of Agricultural/Occupational Education and Director of Occupational Education at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts 01003.)

urban life that could be identified. Suffice it to say, however, that if agriculture is taken out of the urban areas then one could conjure up a vision of human beings standing around naked, surrounded by large amounts of concrete and blacktop starving to death. If one believes that there is no agriculture in urban areas then one is either closing his/her eyes, or is unable to accept the fact that agriculture is more than feedlots and thousands of acres of grain.

Urban vocational agriculture is here to stay. Our cities are not going to disappear. To the contrary, as our population grows, our cities will continue to expand and the need for agricultural products and services will continue to increase. Urban agricultural education will have to expand to meet the needs of a growing urban populace. Urban supervised occupational experience programs will become more and more important as these cities grow.

Ownership

Urban vocational agriculture programs can and do use supervised occupational experience programs as a means of developing agricultural competencies. There are many activities which are conducted outside the class time in supermarkets, wholesale houses, garden centers, nurseries, florist shops, hospitals and many other places. Other urban programs have in-school laboratories that duplicate activities that will be found in industries in the urban areas.

Ownership in urban supervised occupational experience programs is not used to a large extent. There are many reasons for this. One example discouraging ownership might be that one acre of prime land in the central part of an urban area could cost up to a quarter of a million dollars. There are, however, a few students who do own their own businesses, usually in the agricultural service areas. Many students graduate from high school with their own landscape maintenance business, tree business, floral business or small engine repair business. These students have been trained in the vocational agriculture classroom, gained experience through placement and started their own businesses. The more prevalent form of entry into agricultural industry is through placement with a larger employer in the urban area.

Placement

The Handbook On Supervised Occupational Experience

lists several examples of placement programs but tends to overlook those programs that would have direct application to urban areas. An examination of a few examples might be worthwhile.

In production agriculture, there are opportunities for students to gain occupational experiences in the production of and care of animals for use in research and/or medical instruction. One major city has one hospital where more than 50,000 square feet of animal care facilities housing many types of animals, from mice to horses, used in medical research are kept. Research facilities such as these need large numbers of mice, rats, rabbits, dogs and other animals for their work. People are needed to raise and care for the thousands of animals produced annually for research and medical instruction.

Other animal care facilities in urban areas are pet shops, zoos, and societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals. All these businesses can use people who have a good working knowledge of agricultural principles.

An additional area in production agriculture is greenhouse crops. Crops such as pot plants, cut flowers, tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce and watercress are often grown in urban areas. Since qualified help is always needed, these greenhouses often provide an excellent source for student placement.

In agricultural sales and services, students may find employment in wholesale markets selling items such as flowers and floral supplies, or fruits and vegetables. As many as fifteen million people may pass through the Quincy Market area of Boston in one year. Persons passing through this market have available for purchase an extremely wide variety of items from prime cuts of beef to salad to cut flowers to seafood. The above mentioned items are all agricultural in nature. Because of the highly competitive nature of this market, there is demand for persons knowledgeable in their subject matter.

In agricultural mechanics, there is a great demand for persons who can both sell and repair small engine equipment. Lawnmowers, chain saws, edgers, and sprayers, as well as many other pieces of equipment, are used by homeowners in beautifying their homes.

In agricultural processing, there are thousands of jobs. Many of the jobs involve the packaging of meats and produce and then attractively displaying these commodities.



Urban foresters are in great demand in many cities. (Photograph courtesy of Victoria Woods)

However, meat cutters, and others who might process the agricultural product prior to sale are also needed. One area not often thought of is the inspection of perishable crops. Every railroad car or truck load of perishable material shipped into an urban area for sale must be inspected to see that it is fit for human consumption.

In natural resources, there are many opportunities. Previously mentioned were parks and recreational sites. Other possible sites for student placement might be aboretums and municipal golf courses.

In horticulture, there are the areas of floral businesses, landscaping and nurseries. One should not overlook municipal and private display gardens. Many cities employ trained persons to establish and maintain horticulture displays around the city. Municipal and private cemeteries also require people with horticulture knowledge.

In forestry, many opportunities for placement are provided by parks. Power companies are concerned with trees which relate to power lines. Some cities have departments which employ trained persons to plant and care for the shade trees that line the urban streets.

Other agricultural areas that might be used for placement sites for urban students are environmental departments that deal with water or air quality. Many industries employ people to test the water put back into rivers after manufacturing. Industries also employ people to insure that clean air is being returned to the atmosphere after the manufacturing process is completed.

The previous lists are not exhaustive, but do include some suggestions where successful placement activities have been carried out. For teachers who use a little imagination, the opportunities for SOE placement in urban areas are endless.

Changing Attitudes

McCormick (1982), in his opening address delivered at the National SOE Workshop held in Washington, D.C., stated, "Today's students have many needs which influence their attitudes, drives, habits, and goals. Most students are concerned with making money, securing a job, doing something worthwhile, satisfying personal needs, seeking economic independence, developing self-con-

(Continued on Page 22)



Food processing skills can help gain employment in urban areas. (Photograph courtesy of Donald Spell)

SOE: Its Importance in Urban Areas

(Continued from Page 21)

confidence, obtaining job satisfaction, assuming responsibility and developing self esteem."

It is interesting to note that he did not say most rural students or most urban students but most students. Urban or rural, these students have the same concerns and needs. They all deserve the same chance to make a career in a chosen profession and many, many of them should and will want to make that career an agricultural one.

In order to make urban programs successful, the agricultural educator needs to be able to sell administrators on the year-round nature of the agricultural industry. Most rural school administrators know the importance of a year-round vocational agriculture program. Urban administrators, on the other hand, do not see the need for a year-round program because they do not understand that agricultural commodities are being produced and bought and sold in their city every day, year-round. Consequently, urban administrators need to be exposed to the year-round concept by teachers, parents and industry representatives. One of the best ways to do this is through the use of advisory committees who can speak for the agricultural industry.

Urban administrators should be able to rely on industry cooperators when important issues related to the program are being discussed. Industry people have been in the past and will be in the future strong spokespersons for the concept of extended service.

Supervised occupational experience programs in urban areas are a reality that must be expanded if the urban vocational agriculture programs are going to grow. It will take time to educate everyone involved to the importance of agriculture for all society.

Dr. Jean Mayer (1977), President of Tufts University, an urban university, believes that agriculture is the mother of all sciences even though it has been the traditional view of classical scholars that philosophy is the mother of all sciences. Mayer states, "There is a Latin saying which states that you first have to eat and then you can philosophize. One can readily say that there probably wasn't too much philosophizing going on when the crops were growing and being harvested."

Urban school administrators need to become more exposed to the value of urban agriculture so that year round supervised occupational experience programs can become a reality for urban youth just as they are a reality for most rural youth. The time for philosophizing is now past. It is once again time to feed the philosophy to those who have any doubts or questions about the value of urban SOEP.

References

- HANDBOOK-SUPERVISED OCCUPATIONAL EXPERIENCE. Washington, D.C.: The National FFA Foundation, 1982.
- McCormick, F.G. "Supervised Occupational Experience — The Challenge." Opening Address delivered at the National SOE Workshop, Washington, D.C., July 26, 1982.
- Pratson, Frederick John. "First You Have To Eat, Then You Can Philosophize." *YANKEE*, May 1977, pp. 68-118.

ARTICLE

Student Laboratory Behavior

One of the intended outcomes of vocational agriculture programs is the acquisition of competencies needed by individuals preparing for selected agricultural occupations. If students enrolled in specialized vocational agriculture classes, such as horticulture, are to acquire these occupational competencies, they must have an opportunity to actively engage in skill development tasks. The in-school vocational laboratory period is one of the ways in which time is provided for practicing and learning horticultural skills.

As teachers, we know that the rates and levels of skill learning vary considerably among our students. Differences in motivation, academic ability, and career goals may result in distinct variations in the amount of time students are willing to spend practicing a learning task. Although equal amounts of time may be allocated for the practice of a specific skill, equal amounts of



BY JAN HENDERSON
(Editor's Note: Dr. Henderson is in the Division of Agricultural Education, Department of Vocational and Technical Education at the University of Illinois, Champaign, Illinois 61820.)

learning do not necessarily occur. Are there certain variables that effect the amount of time students are actively engaged in learning tasks?

Mississippi Study

A study was recently conducted in Mississippi to answer this question. Five horticulture classes at four different vocational centers participated in the study. Each vocational center had at least one 1,320 square foot fiberglass greenhouse. Land laboratories at the

school ranged from one-tenth of an acre to 4 acres. One of the centers had a lath house.

Four male vocational instructors took part in the study. They ranged in age from 36 years to 53 years. The number of years in the teaching profession varied from one year to 25 years.

A total of 47 students were enrolled in the five horticulture classes. Thirty-one of the students were black and 16 were white; twenty-four were male and 23 were female. Seventy-five percent of the students had an "A" or "B" grade average in horticulture. Only one student, upon graduation from high school, planned for a career in the horticulture industry.

Four observational visits per horticulture class were conducted during the second semester of the 1983 school year. The observer stayed in the class during the entire time scheduled for horticulture, but only recorded obser-



Teachers need to be aware of the types of tasks students are practicing during laboratory time.



Keeping students on task is a challenging responsibility for teachers.

variations during laboratory instructional time. To obtain a representative sample of student behavior, the observer looked at each student just long enough to decide what he or she was doing, marked the appropriate symbol on an observation form, and repeated the process for each student enrolled in the horticulture class. What was learned from this systematic observation of student behavior during an in-school laboratory period?

Results

Students were found to be practicing horticultural learning tasks for an average of 71 percent of the total observational time. Thirty-one different learning tasks were performed during the visits including weeding hanging baskets, taking crop inventories, transplanting seedlings, and mixing growing media. Ninety-five percent of the tasks were classified as requiring low-level cognitive abilities and 84 percent of the tasks involved basic body movements.

Students were off task for an average of 29 percent of the observational time. Standing idle was the most frequent reason for coding student behavior as

off task, accounting for 13 percent of the observational time. Other off-task behavior included wandering around, leaving the laboratory area, and horse-play.

Male students were actively engaged in learning tasks more frequently than female pupils. The average on-task score was 81 percent for males and 60 percent for females. Scholastic achievement, attitude towards school, and career goal were not found to be related to student on-task behavior. What implications can we draw from this information?

Recommendations

Both male and female students need to be involved in all aspects of laboratory instruction. Learner objectives and skills to be practiced should not be planned according to the gender of students enrolled in the vocational class.

Planning a variety of laboratory activities may help to involve students in learning tasks that require both high- and low-level cognitive abilities. Waiting on customers and trouble shooting pest problems are two activities that would require evaluation and synthesis on part of the students.

RESOURCES

Building Basic Skills: Results from Vocational Education, a new product of the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, addresses the growing concern among vocational and technical educators for students' proficiencies in the basic skills.

Present perceptions indicate the need for improving the basic skills retention

of vocational students. The publication gears its examination of vocational students' current basic skill level and current vocational instruction to researchers, policymakers, and practitioners. Approaches and strategies for reinforcing basic skills are compared and policy implications that arise from those comparisons are presented.

Individual differences in academic ability, career goals, or attitude do not necessarily mean corresponding differences in the amount of time students are willing to spend practicing a task. Other variables need to be identified and investigated that can help explain some of the differences in student on-task behavior. Perhaps teacher supervision and laboratory management practices have a greater impact on student on-task behavior.

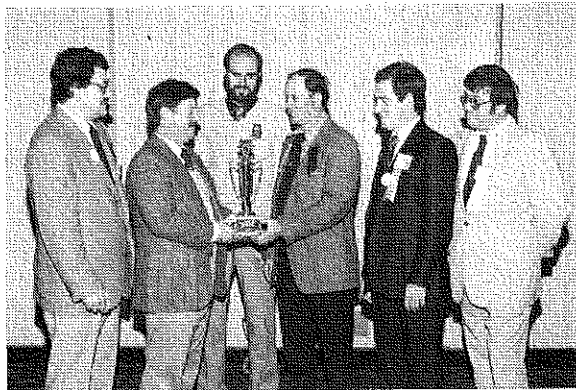
Although in this particular study, students were on task 71 percent of the time. Achieving high time-on-task levels is a hollow achievement if no attention is paid to what students are actually learning. Unless, as teachers, we have some knowledge about the type of skills being practiced during specific laboratory periods, time becomes an empty concept.

We need to be doing more than just keeping students busy during a specific class period. Providing students the opportunity to practice meaningful, job-related tasks during laboratory time is a major challenge and responsibility for all vocational agriculture instructors.

You may order *BUILDING BASIC SKILLS: RESULTS FROM VOCATIONAL EDUCATION*, (RD 237--\$4.95), 41 pp., from the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, Publications Office, Box N, 1960 Kenny Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43210; 614/486-3655 or toll-free outside Ohio at 800/848-4815.

Stories in Pictures

1983 NVATA Awards



The NVATA Agriculture Teacher Recognition Award is sponsored by the Pfizer Agricultural Division and presented to the vocational agriculture teachers who served as advisors to the winners of the National FFA Agricultural Proficiency Awards in Poultry, Beef, Diversified Livestock, Dairy, and Swine Production. (Left to Right) Brian Kosel, Owatonna, Minnesota (Dairy Production Award); Tom Beals, Territory Sales Representative, Pfizer Agricultural Division, Vista, California; Rex Mayfield, Tuscumbia, Alabama accepted the Poultry Production Award for Andrew McCay, Danville, Alabama; Bill J. Stewart, Douglas, Wyoming (Diversified Livestock Production Award); Jonathan Pierce, Athens, Tennessee accepted the Swine Production Award for Johnnie W. Meggs, Lexington, Tennessee; and Duane A. Van Sickle, Cardington, Ohio (Beef Production Award).



The NVATA sponsors an "Ideas Unlimited Contest" annually to give classroom teachers an opportunity to share ideas. Ruritan National sponsored the plaques. Pictured are the persons who accepted the awards on behalf of the state associations: (Left to Right) Ted Johnson, President-Elect, North Dakota Association, West Fargo, North Dakota; Lloyd Doster, President, California Association (National Winner), Little Rock, California; Mark E. Stunkard, Oklahoma Association, Fairland, Oklahoma; Cy Vernon, President, North Carolina Association, Yanceyville, North Carolina; Kenny Graham, President-Elect, Missouri Association, Farmington, Missouri; and F.H. Stillwagen, Pennsylvania Association, Allentown, Pennsylvania.



The NVATA Outstanding Service and Cooperation Award was presented to the American Association of Vocational Instructional Materials (AAVIM) Athens, Georgia. AAVIM has given strong, continuous support to vocational agriculture. Dale Butcher (right), NVATA National President, presented the award to Harold Parady (left), Executive Director, AAVIM, during the awards program.



Persons who have made outstanding contributions to the NVATA and the vocational program in agricultural education are awarded "Honorary Life Membership." Dale Butcher (right), NVATA National President, presented the award to Floyd McCormick (left), Professor, Agricultural Education, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona.