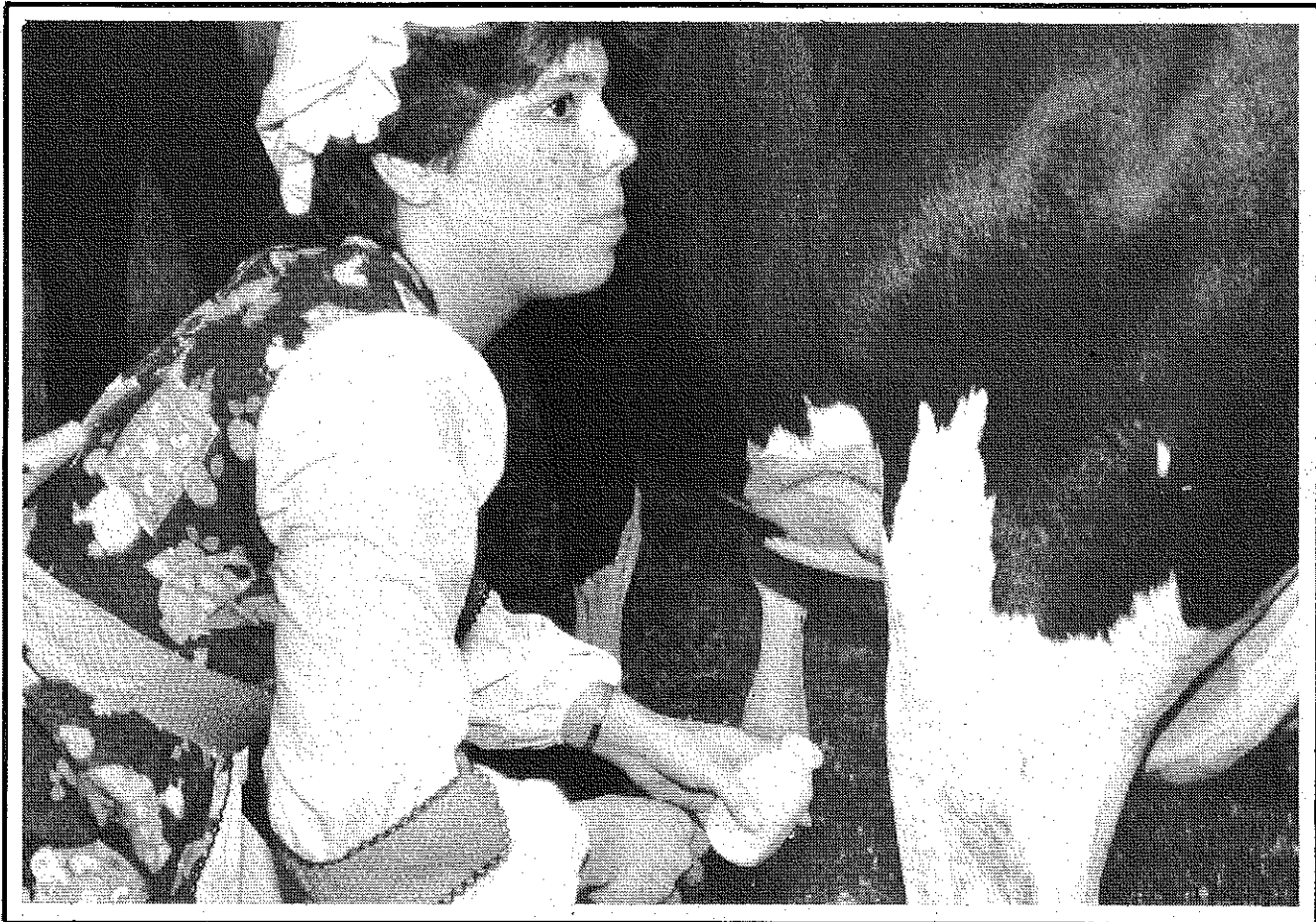


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**THEME: Achieving Quality
Student Organizations**

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Table of Contents

	Page
Editor's Page	
Seeing Rainbows Larry E. Miller	3
Theme: Achieving Quality Student Organizations	
Achieving Quality Student Organizations Richard I. Carter	4
Gaining Support for Member-Centered Organizations John Mundt	5
Yes, It Can Be Done Joe Townsend	7
Wanted: Students to Join the Future Farmers of America Chris Townsend	10
Developing Students in Member-Centered FFA Chapters Gary Leske	12
Member-Centered FFA Chapters Begin With the Teacher Tom Jones	15
Member-Centered Post Secondary Organizations Larry L. Statler	17
Food For America: More Than a Children's Program Barbara J. Malpiedi and Carol Elgin	19
Involving More Members in FFA . . . Richard F. Welton and Greg Schafer	21
Successful Forestry Field Day Bobby Walley	22
Stories in Pictures	24

ARTICLE SUBMISSION

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EDITOR'S PAGE

Seeing Rainbows

Student organizations are to vocational agriculture what baseball, apple pie, and motherhood appears to be to the typical American. These groups which are described as intracurricular or co-curricular have an almost spiritual fascination for the teachers and those that have been associated with them. The organizations have provided an outlet and a path for growth for numerous individuals.



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

The Individual

Articles in this issue focus upon the need for these organizations to be member-centered and also serve the non-traditional student. Outstanding individuals emerge each year to provide leadership to national, state and local groups. These leaders constitute only a very small proportion of the total membership. A member-centered organization can provide for the development of not only these leaders but a larger proportion of the total membership.

Special attention needs to be provided to those individuals that have perhaps less innate talent, less aptitude, less motivation, and less ability. Are such individuals, with less than average potential, provided the same opportunities for participation and growth as the potential leaders? Awards, degrees, contests and recognitions concentrate most frequently upon those most gifted. The gift may be in socioeconomic status, intelligence or aptitude.

There are, most assuredly, success stories of individuals that have literally emerged from the depths of detrimental circumstances to reach great personal heights. These stories are heartwarming. However, for each of these stories there are numerous individuals whose candle is never lit or whose rainbow is never seen.

As students organizations have matured, their reputations have become established. They can well afford to take any risks inherent with becoming member-centered in order to help each individual in the organization to grow. The growth may not be as significant as for some others, may not result in holding offices, and may not result in awards for individuals. However, it will help provide for the growth of all members. Involvement and attention does instill pride.

The Organization and The Teacher

An often heard criticism of student organizations is that they become the driving force of the program and not the intended teaching laboratory. Do teachers really teach vocational agriculture or do they teach for contests and competitive events? Is the tail wagging the dog?

The situation is paradoxical. Teachers, like all people, seek recognition. Recognition comes most rapidly through the student organizations. Administrators, communities,

school boards, state officials and national officials quickly heap plaudits upon the local student organization that garners attention. Outstanding local units of student organizations can be identified by numerous people, but can they likewise enumerate the outstanding teachers and instructional programs? Are the two synonymous? Some teachers truly warrant the title of FFA teacher. Others see this merely as a subset of the larger role of being a teacher of vocational agriculture.

As Tom Jones notes, the teacher determines how member-centered the organization becomes. The teacher sets the direction not only for the recognition that comes to the organization and its members, but also the degree to which the organization becomes a way for each individual to grow.

Synergism

Student organizations have attained great achievements. There is still room for growth. One way to continue to improve is to provide for the development of each individual. Organizations which are member-centered are not dominated by advisors or officers. The less talented and the non-traditional members have much to contribute and to learn. The organizations can accommodate the most and the least talented and help both. Achieving student organizations of high quality necessitates pulling together the talents of each individual in order that all can benefit.

The Cover

Improving the quality of student organizations can often be accomplished internally by diligent efforts to provide for the growth of all members. Member-centered activities can invigorate otherwise stagnate, complacent or lackadaisical organizations. (Photograph courtesy of Joe and Chris Townsend, Illinois State University.)

Achieving Quality Student Organizations

Historically, student organizations have been an intracurricular component of agricultural education programs at all levels. The belief of learning by doing has characterized these organizations and has enabled them to contribute toward realization of program goals and objectives. Although the intent of these organizations is clear, the question of whether these are indeed quality organizations at the local level remains to be answered.

Agricultural educators, as well as individuals outside the field, would generally agree that these student organizations have been effective. Educators at all levels cite events in which their groups have participated or the awards they have received as evidence of the organizations' accomplishments. While these are certainly partial indicators of quality programs, they are not exclusive or even the most important measure of quality.

What Is Quality?

What then comprises a quality student organization in agricultural education? According to the dictionary, quality refers to: (1) a degree of excellence; (2) superior in kind; and (3) a distinguished attribute. What separates the quality organization apart from the run of the mill group? What is the distinguished attribute of a quality student organization?

The answer lies in whether the organization operates as a member-centered group. Member-centered groups achieve excellence by encouraging maximum involvement and participation of their members. The importance of member involvement has been substantiated by research findings during the last 10-15 years. Typically, local organizations are faced with a handful of students being involved while the majority of students are just dues paying members with minimum involvement. A quality organization cannot be built on the exceptional achievement of a few.



Teacher educator, Home Economics Education, Idaho State University, Emma Gebo, demonstrates proper use of table setting to State VICA and FFA officers during a session on etiquette and table manners. (Photograph courtesy of John Mundt, Idaho.)



By RICHARD I. CARTER, THEME EDITOR
(Editor's Note: Dr. Carter is an Associate Professor in the Department of Agricultural Education at Iowa State University, 223 Curtiss Hall, Ames, Iowa 50011.)

Member Control

If the key to quality student organizations rests on the member-centeredness of the group, then educators and their students need a clear understanding of what comprises a member-centered group. The three basic characteristics of such a group are: (1) the organization is run of, for, and by its members; (2) development of members is a key goal of the group; and (3) leadership is provided by the membership of the group, not just the elected officers.

The importance of a member controlled organization is evident in a review of related literature. Students need to realize that the group is their organization and that they have the privilege and responsibility of determining the destiny of the group. This point is supported by recent findings of a research project conducted at Iowa State University. Delegates to the 1982 Iowa FFA Association Conference were surveyed to identify factors affecting participation in local FFA chapter activities. Results were conclusive in that those factors related to increasing member control were perceived as increasing member participation. In contrast, factors increasing leader control were perceived as decreasing member participation and involvement.



Pictured are Presidents of the Vocational Student Organizations in Idaho at the Annual Joint Vocational Student Officer Leadership Conference in Boise, Idaho. Highlights of the conference include: speaking, listening, etiquette and specific planning for each Vocational Student Organization. (Photograph courtesy of John Mundt, Idaho.)

The second characteristic of a member-centered group emphasizes that personal development of members must be a key goal of the group. In other words, accomplishing the task or activity is a means rather than an end in itself. Members need to have the opportunity to grow and develop from their experiences. How much growth and development can a member realize if he or she was the fund-raising chairperson for four years or competed on the same judging team year after year? Admittedly some growth would occur, but not as much as during the initial experience. At the same time, these students are robbing other members of opportunities to develop. Efficiency, although important, should not be sought at the expense of providing members with a chance to grow.

Leadership by all members is a requisite as identified in the last characteristic of member-centered groups.

Preposterous, you might say! All chiefs and no Indians! Rationale for this characteristic is based on the belief that each individual has something to offer to a group and should be provided an opportunity to use those talents for the good of the group and the individual involved.

The challenge facing agricultural educators is determining how to achieve member-centered organizations. Such an organization will not just materialize or emerge. Advisors, officers, and members have important roles in developing a truly member-centered organization.

The theme articles in this issue approach the topic of achieving a member-centered organization from different perspectives and educational levels. The authors, all involved with student organizations, describe ways to realize member-centered organizations and therefore to achieve quality student organizations.

Gaining Support For Member-Centered Organizations

Support for any successful organization must come from many areas, however two areas of support are essential. First, support internally from the current and potential membership of the organization itself. Secondly, support externally from the constituents with whom the organization comes in contact.

Internal Support

Before any FFA chapter can reach its full potential of success, it must have the support of the membership which the organization serves. How does a vocational agriculture instructor obtain that full measure of support from every member? Successful member-centered FFA chapters must have the following key elements:

- a) a student centered vocational agriculture instructor/FFA advisor;
- b) a philosophy which recognizes that every member has special and unique talents which can contribute to the success of the organization;
- c) a structure which provides every student the environment and opportunity to capitalize on his/her talents in a learning, work, or service situation in or out of school;
- d) a chapter structure and philosophy of leadership from the officers and advisor which actively seeks the involvement of each member in learning, service and recreational undertakings;
- e) a philosophy of leadership from the officers and advisor which motivates the membership to work to his/her potential in developing and utilizing their special and unique talents;
- f) a program which recognizes and praises the efforts of members' accomplishments, contributions and effort; and
- g) a public relations program which publicizes the individual and collective success of the chapter.



By JOHN MUNDT
(Editor's Note: Mr. Mundt is a former Vocational Agriculture Instructor in Idaho, a Past President of the NVATA and currently serves as State Supervisor for Vocational Agriculture, Boise, Idaho 83720.)

Successful FFA chapters have committed and dedicated vocational agriculture instructors/FFA advisors. The vocational agriculture instructor is in a key leadership role. The instructor must not only teach but must learn to bring out the best in students. The leadership of the advisor is the key element in recognizing the special abilities of members and then providing the opportunity for the member to further develop those special abilities.

The involvement and motivation of members is critical. Involvement builds commitment! Commitment insures success in worthy collective or individual undertakings. Successful member-centered FFA chapters also must have committed and dedicated student leadership. The vocational agriculture instructor/FFA advisor cannot do it all nor should the instructor be expected to do it all. Effective and mature student leadership is a culmination of the individual development of student officers and the chapter as a whole. Advisors must set an effective leadership example and then let the student leadership grow, develop, and mature. Then, and only then, will the organization be truly member-centered.

Young people are responsible, have leadership abilities and we adults must let that leadership be put to good use.

(Continued on Page 6)

Gaining Support For Member-Centered Organizations

(Continued from Page 5)

Never can an FFA chapter reach its full measure of success if the chapter is the advisor's organization and every activity hinges on the advisor's decision. We must recognize that the organization is for the students. The more the students are involved in planning, decision making, implementation, and follow through, the more member-centered the organization will become. Youth have the ability and capability to learn by doing. We must give them the opportunity.

External Support

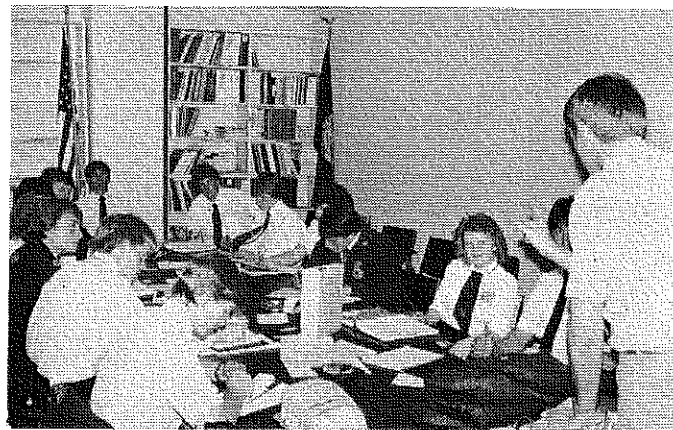
Once the internal structure and support are in place for the member-centered chapter, linkages of external support must be cultivated.

Meaningful external support can easily be cultivated when the following items are in place:

1. The vocational agriculture curriculum for the program is viable and tailored to industry, community and student needs.
2. The FFA chapter organization is member-centered and a concentrated effort is made to involve all students in the organization.
3. Students involved in the vocational agriculture/FFA program exhibit a visible and enthusiastic pride of belonging, participating and learning.

Sources of external support for member-centered FFA chapters include:

- a) Local advisory committees,
- b) School staff and administration,
- c) Local boards of education,
- d) FFA alumni organizations,
- e) Community and civic organizations,
- f) Local and state farm organizations,
- g) Agribusiness and industry contacts,
- h) State legislators and local elected officials,



Pictured are the Idaho FFA Board of Directors in an officer orientation session centered on the FFA Chapter Guide and Activity Handbook. Officers must be informed of their duties and responsibilities. They must have a good knowledge base from which to work effectively. (Photograph courtesy of John Mundt, Idaho.)

i) Governmental agencies, i.e., Department of Agriculture, Wheat Commissions, Dairy Commissions, etc.,

j) Post secondary educational institutions including vocational technical schools, community colleges and four-year degree granting institutions.

Support for vocational student organizations is vital at all of the aforementioned levels. Cultivating this external support is relatively easy and is limited only by our lack of vision at local and state levels.

We who are in the leadership role for the profession of agricultural education (which includes teachers, teacher educators and supervisors) must continually foster a visionary approach in gaining support for the vocational agriculture/FFA program. If we have strong support for our vocational agriculture programs and FFA chapters then we in the profession whether teachers, teacher educators or supervisors should be continually reminded of the importance of keeping informed of the changing technology of farming, ranching and agribusiness. If we do not keep our curriculums up-to-date then it becomes impossible to meet the needs of the students and the communities which are served. It is more difficult to gain external support for FFA chapters since vocational student organizations are an integral part of the curriculum.

Involvement is the key word again in gaining external support. Involvement builds commitment! Involve fellow high school staff members, guidance personnel, school administrators and members of the community in chapter activities; they can serve as judges for contests and/or assist with special events and activities. Involve boards of education and advisory committee members in field trips, judging activities, or as chaperones for FFA activities. Involve agribusiness persons and industry or government agencies as hosts for local field trips or as guest lecturers for classroom or FFA activities. Involve FFA members in presentations to civic groups such as Kiwanians, Optimists, Toastmasters, Chambers of Commerce, and farm organizations. Remember, a student crisply dressed in the blue jacket is one of the very best public relation tools that we have. Conversely, a student who is poorly dressed in the blue jacket presents a negative public image.



Rick Waitley, Executive Director of the Idaho FFA Foundation, explains to the Idaho FFA Board of Directors the support for Vocational Agriculture/FFA from the private sector generated through the Foundation. (Photograph courtesy of John Mundt, Idaho.)

At the state level, good will tours by state FFA officer teams build tremendous support for vocational agriculture and the FFA. State Good Will Tours include stops at business and industry, governmental agencies and leaders of state farm organizations. This type of activity not only builds support for the FFA, but also is educationally enriching for the officers involved.

There is a ripple effect as the state officers visit local chapters during their tenure of office. State legislative appreciation breakfasts are an excellent way to publicly thank legislative leaders and government officials for their service and also display the products of vocational education in agriculture, the member in the blue jacket.

At all levels, we in the profession must continually give credit to and recognize the efforts of others in our behalf. At the local chapter level, FFA chapters must recognize the contributions of local community members who assist the local chapter with activities. The traditional FFA parent and member banquet is an excellent way to recognize these individuals. Other methods include appreciation break-

fasts, award ceremonies at county fairs, and school student award assemblies.

At the state level, state associations must also recognize the efforts of those who help the vocational agriculture/FFA program as a whole. In many cases these are the leaders of state-wide associations which may include leaders of: state school administrator associations, state farm organizations, i.e., Farm Bureau Federation, Farmers Union, Grange, National Farmers Organization, Cattlemen's, etc., state legislators, leaders in agribusiness and industry.

If we in the profession; whether a teacher, teacher educator, or supervisor; will:

- work diligently to serve those with whom we work,
- involve those with whom we work,
- give credit to and recognize the efforts of others in our behalf,

then we shall continue to succeed in gaining support for vocational agriculture and the Future Farmers of America.

THEME

Yes, It Can Be Done

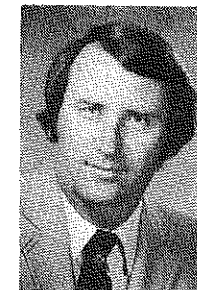
In order to adequately prepare agricultural education majors for the real world of teaching, a comprehensive preservice program must be offered by the agricultural education department. One facet of a comprehensive program is provided by agricultural education student organizations. Whether the organization is known as Collegiate FFA, Ag Ed Club or Alpha Tau Alpha the basic purposes are:

1. To conduct activities to foster leadership development of members;
2. To conduct activities that students can do today that will benefit them tomorrow;
3. To conduct activities which supplement coursework; and
4. To conduct activities which provide an avenue for social interaction among students.

These basic purposes sound fine until it comes to the part of getting the members involved. A consistent problem with any organization is: How do we get everyone involved? Too many times, five to 10 percent of the members end up doing 95 percent of the organization's work.

Can this problem every be resolved? The task of establishing a member-centered organization is a continuous problem; each year brings new students and new problems. The frustration of trying to provide involvement for all members often becomes so great that the teacher educator or instructor takes on the responsibility of all club activities. Then, we hear: "I can do it better anyway;" "the students won't do a good job;" "it is easier if I do it." In this situation everyone loses. The organization becomes the instructor's club rather than the member's organization. Can this problem ever be resolved? Yes, I think it can.

How can we build successful member-centered organizations and avoid the pitfall of a one-person operation? I be-



By JOE TOWNSEND

(Editor's Note: Dr. Townsend is an Assistant Professor of Agricultural Education at Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois 61761.)

lieve there are three essential building blocks for any organization, and they are:

1. Building the proper foundation.
2. Building membership.
3. Building for the future.

Building The Proper Foundation

Just as a carpenter has to build upon a solid foundation to insure the house will stand the test of time, the proper foundation for any organization must be established in order to insure success. The foundation must start with the agricultural education department, its policies and staff. The following are necessary to insure a proper foundation to start a successful member-centered organization.

1. Make the student organization part of the curriculum. It has to be an integral part of the total teacher education program.
2. Secure the support of total faculty.
3. Use the organization as a learning laboratory. Devise ways to teach the student skills and provide avenues for the practice of those skills.
4. Use the organization as a teaching tool and relate it to course work. Involve club activities as part of course work.

(Continued on Page 8)

Yes, It Can Be Done

(Continued from Page 7)

5. Select a faculty advisor who is interested, energetic, and creative. Provide time for club advisors to advise club activities.

6. Involve all faculty in committee work of the club. Assign a faculty member to each committee and expect them to add to committee activities.

Building Membership

After the foundation has been poured, the carpenter must start construction of the house. Organizations must build membership, for without members the club will not exist. There are four building blocks used to build membership — awareness, interest, trial and evaluation, and adoption. Each of these is an important component of our organization; the exclusion of one will cause our organization to crumble even with a strong foundation. An explanation of the building blocks includes:

1. Awareness: How will we publicize our organization so that potential members become aware that it exists?

a. Use mass publicity methods for widespread awareness. b. Write letters to all incoming students informing them of the organization.

c. Provide the departmental orientation person with literature describing the organization.

d. Develop a brochure to introduce the organization to new prospective members.

e. Have organization officers give an informational and promotional presentation during orientation class.

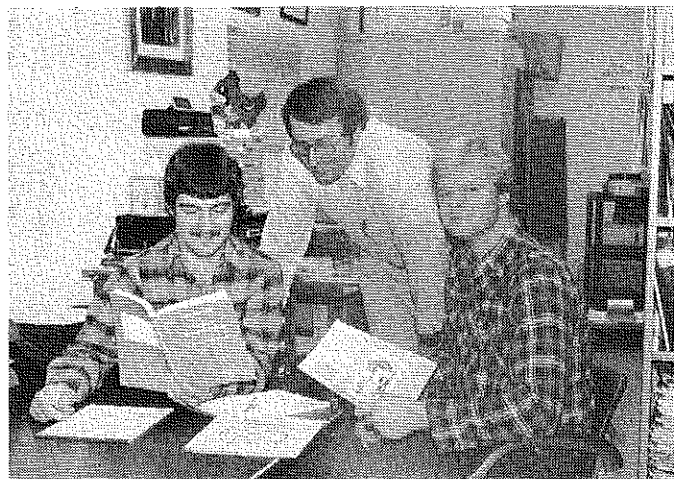
f. Develop bulletin boards to publicize the organization.

g. Inform academic advisors so they may interest students in organization. Have them explain the importance of getting involved.

h. Display club materials such as the historian's book, the club banner, reporter's scrapbook, and awards won.

2. Interest — What can we do to show potential members that our organization has some thing to offer them?

a. Develop an audio-visual presentation to emphasize the value of the organization to potential members.



Planning for club activities requires involvement of members and staff (Photograph courtesy of Joe & Chris Townsend, Illinois State University.)

b. Structure the first meeting of the year to attract new members. Have a picnic, pizza party, watermelon feed, volleyball game, etc., to attract new students.

c. Initiate a Big Sister/Big Brother system to assign present members to contact potential members.

d. Use more personal approaches. Have present members contact new students about the organization and let them be responsible for getting the potential members to the first meeting.

e. Use fliers to announce the time, date, and agenda for each meeting. Put an announcement in the daily school newspaper and call each student to invite them to the meeting.

f. Use younger current members to give reasons they value membership in the organization.

g. Explain how the experience the members gain from the organization can be used after college.

3. Trial and Evaluation — How can we get potential members to come to a meeting?

a. Plan and conduct educational, worthwhile, entertaining, and professional meetings.

b. Recognize new attendants at meetings. Make them feel welcome.

c. Use correct parliamentary procedure.

d. Keep meetings short. An hour should allow enough time for the organization to conduct all of its business. If not, wait until the next meeting. Do not drag it out.

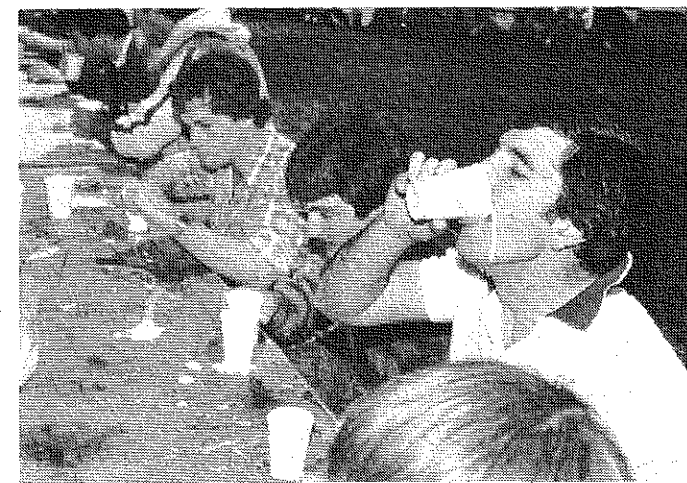
e. Let the members run the meeting. Faculty should not be conducting the meeting.

f. Use the Big Brother/Sister approach so new people will feel at ease. Have present members be responsible for introducing new members.

4. Adoption — How can we get potential members to join the organization? How can we keep them coming back? How can we get them to take an active part in the organization?

a. Involve all members in committee activities. Assign each member a committee responsibility and expect them to carry out their part.

b. Give responsibility to as many members as possible.



Club sponsored activities such as Dairy Day offer members needed social interaction. (Photograph courtesy of Joe & Chris Townsend, Illinois State University, Normal, IL)

c. Use competition, curiosity, gregariousness, and other basic human drives in programs for meetings. Have a parliamentary procedure contest, an agriculture mechanics contest, or a cow milking contest. Force students to get involved by assigning them to a team.

d. Recognize contributions of members and their achievements in and out of the organization.

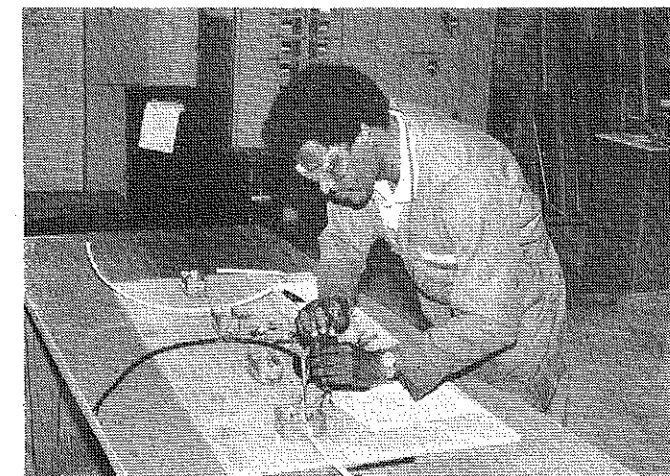
e. Follow recognized organizational procedures: solid construction, yearly revised program activities, active committees, etc. Have well organized executive meetings and perhaps give special credit for officers involvement in club activities.

f. Schedule meetings around competing activities such as final exams, sports events, etc.

g. Provide programs that are educational, informative and entertaining. Also have refreshments after the meetings to encourage members to interact with each other and the staff.

h. Work with the state teachers' professional association to achieve the goal of training teachers.

Using the suggestions listed above, the organization gains membership and becomes a viable asset for its members. Students become a part of the organization; therefore, benefiting the total agricultural education program. Then what happens? The leaders of the club graduate, leaving a void to be filled. Just as a college sports coach must recruit for the future, the organization must also build for the future. This will not happen automatically!



Competition creates interest for club members. Students also learn about individual contests through participation. (Photograph courtesy of Joe & Chris Townsend, Illinois State University.)

Building For The Future

To insure the continuation of a strong organization, the following steps must be accomplished:

1. All members must be trained as recruiters. Have students summarize benefits and responsibilities of the organization.

2. Make certain new leaders are recruited and trained.

3. Develop a rigorous procedure for the selection of new leaders — applications, interviews, nominations, elections. Members will attempt to achieve something which is more difficult to attain.

4. Use a summer retreat for leadership training and to plan the coming year's activities. Involve officers, committees, members, and staff.

5. Work with students and academic advisors to encourage prospective leaders to vie for leadership positions.

6. Reward and recognize leaders with intrinsic measures.

7. Involve members who might benefit most from leadership roles.

Quite a laundry list of ways to make our student organizations member-centered evolves. It is our responsibility as teacher educators to provide the necessary support for collegiate organizations in agriculture. The list provides teacher educators with the building blocks needed to build student clubs into member-centered learning organizations. We cannot give up or not try. The teacher educator who has the responsibility for the student organization must keep the following items in mind:

1. Must set a goal of a strong member-centered organization.

2. Must size up the current situation.

3. Must want to reach the goal.

4. Must believe it is possible.

5. Must focus attention on the goal.

6. Must take some risks to reach the goal.

7. Must work toward achieving it.

8. Must get feedback.

9. Must make adjustments.

10. Must risk and try again, and

11. Must celebrate achievements.

Yes, it can be done: build the proper foundation; build membership; and build for the future.

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Coming . . .

November: How Others Perceive Us

December: Assessing Student Performance

WANTED: STUDENTS TO JOIN THE FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA

How would you characterize respondents for this advertisement?

- **lives on farm or ranch
- **interested in livestock or crops
- **male
- **career goal to be a farmer

Traditionally, Future Farmers of America members could be described by all of these statements. Today, however, things are changing and members which fit these descriptions are declining in number. Not too astonishing, right? But it is surprising that many vocational agriculture teachers and FFA advisors are reluctant to recruit and accept nontraditional members in the FFA.

The Nontraditional

Perhaps we can define a "nontraditional" potential member as a person who does not fit the mold of the typical. This person is someone from a different background who has different work ethics, goals, and aspirations and has under or above average intelligence. He or she may be that student not involved in other student organizations and may come from an unstable family situation. These types are not the natural leaders all advisors like to see in their chapters; their potential may be so hidden that everyone else in the school has quit trying to develop it.

After that definition, we may ask, "do we really want nontraditional students in our FFA chapter?" The answer has to be YES! These students can help 1) develop the chapter into a broader organization with an unlimited number of goals, 2) provide other members contact with different types of people like those they may meet in the real world, and 3) increase chapter membership. The FFA chapter can reciprocate and provide these students an oasis where they can learn and practice leadership, cooperation, and citizenship. The organization can be a place to call home for these students and can supply the nutrients they need to develop their self-esteem.



Recreational activities can involve all members in enjoyable activities. (Photographs courtesy of Gary Leske, University of Minnesota.)



By CHRIS TOWNSEND

(Editor's Note: Dr. Townsend is a recent graduate of Iowa State University and is currently working as a free-lance agricultural education specialist in Illinois. She taught agricultural education at Illinois State University for 2 years.)

Recruitment

Foremost, FFA advisors need to develop a recruitment plan listing the types of activities, FFA members' responsibilities, and the target audience. The plan should identify various strategies for different types of student groups. Obviously, in this type of recruitment, the breadth of the FFA should be stressed and representative FFA members who are broadminded should be chosen to help. It will be easier to turn off potential members than to motivate them to try agriculture and the FFA. The recruitment plan for nontraditional members may include activities like those in the following list.

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET
slide presentation of BOAC project, trip to project site, organize class to help in part, recognize class at banquet	community service committee	urban eighth grade science class
livestock at school farm students are scheduled to care for the animals	cooperation committee	ninth graders in Ag. I class
help set up FFA week petting zoo	all FFA members pair up one member with one special education student	special education class
offer independent studies, research at school farm, research at school laboratory	leadership committee, officers, advisor	high school honors program
contest for artwork depicting "Youth in Agriculture" awards at FFA banquet	public relations committee	art classes in high school junior high, and/or elementary

Activities such as these should be offered concurrently with a regular recruitment program which is presented to eighth graders, guidance counselors, PTA groups, school board members, administrators, and any interested students or parents. During the recruitment show, the activities of the FFA are identified by slides or actual examples. The FFA students may develop a role-play to help answer

questions the potential members may have. (What is that blue jacket all about? How much are dues? What can urban kids do in FFA? What do the members do for fun?) It is also important to realize that the recruitment of new, non-traditional members will help the current members develop their leadership qualities.

Future Farmers

What will you, as an advisor, do with the students who are turned off with the word farmer? Can you adapt, adjust, and be flexible? Or will you stand fast, respect the tradition of the FFA? Individual chapters have deliberated this semantics problem and many have incorporated minor changes in the words, not the concepts, of the organization in order to overcome this initial hurdle for some nontraditional members. For example, the members' response during opening ceremonies might be, "To practice brotherhood and cooperation, honor our rural opportunities and responsibilities, and develop those qualities of leadership which an FFA member should possess." The treasurer's part may be worded, "I keep a record of receipts and expenses just as the father of our country, George Washington, kept his accounts — carefully and accurately. Washington was better able to serve his country because of his sound financial practices." As a final example, the secretary may respond, "I keep an accurate record of our meetings and correspond with other secretaries and friends of the FFA." It is a simple modification of phrases which may help eliminate a barrier to membership for some nonfarm students enrolled in vocational agriculture.

As an advisor, your job is to help these nontraditional members understand the principles of the FFA. After they have made their commitment to the organization, you can easily show them the foundations, history, and purposes of the FFA. The students will probably become your strongest supporters and may help other students over their problems with the semantics, words, and phrases which are foreign to their cultural background.

Getting Things Going

If the new, nontraditional members have a barrier with the words of the Future Farmers organization, the old members may have a much larger disparity about accepting these new members into the group. It may be wise to organize a get-acquainted activity in order to help all the members get to know each other better and understand how all can work together to form a great group. Develop an icebreaker to get all members to open up with each other. An example to use is Autographs.

Directions to the Advisor: Explain that this activity should be both useful and fun. Distribute an Autographs Work Sheet and a pencil to each member. Let the members work on the autographs for approximately 20 minutes, then help the total group debrief. As the leader, you should help the group understand the wide variety of interests in the group and how the variety can help the FFA become a better organization.

Instructions to the FFA members: During the next few minutes, you will be interviewing other FFA members to find one person who fits each of the categories below. You

will then obtain that person's autograph in the appropriate space. You must have a different autograph for each of the items!

1. Born in the same month as me _____
2. Enjoys gardening _____
3. Likes to eat liver _____
4. Reads poetry _____
5. Looks attractive to me _____
6. Believes in magic _____
7. Has a part-time job _____
8. Might be intimidating _____
9. Has a pet rabbit _____
10. Plays a musical instrument _____
11. Moved to our town this year _____
12. Appears to be friendly _____
13. Enjoys competition _____
14. Sleeps on a waterbed _____
15. Drives a 4-wheel-drive vehicle _____
16. Thinks the president of the U.S. is doing a good job _____
17. Has been 500 miles away from home _____
18. Has the same hobby as me _____
19. Likes to ride horses _____
20. Likes video games _____

Advisors and chapter officers are free to adapt such an activity to their locality. Members can have some fun with an opener such as Autographs, and it will help them get to know one another a bit faster.

Once the new, nontraditional members have been accepted into the group, it is important to place them in roles which will allow them to function as a part of the FFA. They must be a part of the program of activities formulation as they can add rejuvenating ideas to the traditional activities of the FFA. Be aware, however, that these students may have different values than the advisor or the members. Their work ethic may be weak or nonexistent and they may need guidance to help them understand the goals of the FFA. All the members should be aware of each others' motivations, goals, and values so that the decisions for the chapter can be better organized and all members can have constructive input.

Nontraditional students can be the untapped resource for the FFA. They can add a new dimension to a very stable organization and they can add numbers to a declining membership. Advisors and chapter officers will need to work hard to make these new members feel comfortable within an organization which may appear to be very foreign to them. They may need to work with current members to help them identify with the nontraditional members.

The success of any FFA chapter depends on the ability of the group to work together as a group. The recruitment, get-acquainted, and values activities suggested can help nontraditional members fit into the chapter and develop the FFA into a multicultural, super organization.

References

- FFA STUDENT HANDBOOK, National FFA Organization, Alexandria, Va.
- STRUCTURED EXPERIENCE KIT, University Associates, Inc., San Diego, Ca., 1980.

Developing Students in Member-Centered FFA Chapters

The instructional challenge set forth in the statement of aim for FFA— to develop leadership, cooperation, and citizenship — demands that vocational agriculture instructors think critically about how they function in their advisor roles.

While the vocational agriculture profession has declared, with great regularity, the integral role of FFA for at least 50 years; this has not meant that the FFA has been used as effectively and efficiently as possible. Development of a member-centered chapter is specified in the definition of FFA, "... an organization of, by, and for students of vocational agriculture." The advisor's part in the opening ceremony constantly reminds us of the concept of a member-centered chapter, "... I am asked to advise you from time to time as the need arises."

The critical element in developing students in a member-centered chapter is not simply having the students run the chapter. The guiding principle is that the chapter should provide interesting activities of value to all vocational agriculture students. An advisor needs to believe and to sell this concept to the chapter members. The goal of meeting the leadership and personal development needs of all chapter members must be primary. If advisors do not seek to operationalize this principle, they become mere talent scouts seeking potentially big winners and forget they are teacher-advisors. Consequently, they sell their students and themselves short of what they individually can be.

Important Roles

Three critical factors in meeting the challenge of developing students in a member-centered FFA chapter are (1) the teacher's style of advising, (2) a well planned and executed program of activities, and (3) a focus upon all vocational agriculture students.



Member-centered chapters result from the active involvement of all members in planning the activities. (Photograph courtesy of Gary Leske.)



By Gary Leske

(Editor's Note: Dr. Leske is Associate Professor of Agricultural Education at the University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota 55108.)

Advising an effective FFA chapter requires a great deal of teaching skill plus knowledge of FFA programs and activities. In addition, advising a member-centered chapter requires a unique style of operation. A comparison of advising to the process of parenting may take some liberties, but the consideration of parenting styles provides a useful frame of reference.

Permissive Style

Three styles of parenting have been defined: permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative. A permissive or laissez-faire parenting style is one of which the child is basically left alone, allowed to do as he/she wishes. The evidence does not show that this style is most appropriate in helping children become functional adults.

The permissive style of FFA advising appears to evolve in two primary ways. Some advisors, for lack of knowledge or personal commitment, elect to simply let the FFA chapter function on its own: the sink or swim approach. Other advisors oversubscribe to the statement, "... an organization of, by and for students of vocational agriculture." They rationalize that it is the students' organization, and if nothing productive happens it is the students' fault. It is inexcusable for a teacher, whose role is



Letting students receive the recognition they earn is an appropriate activity in successful FFA chapters. (Photograph courtesy of Gary Leske.)

to help students learn, to assume students will know how to manage their organization to facilitate their personal development in an effective manner, much less an efficient manner.

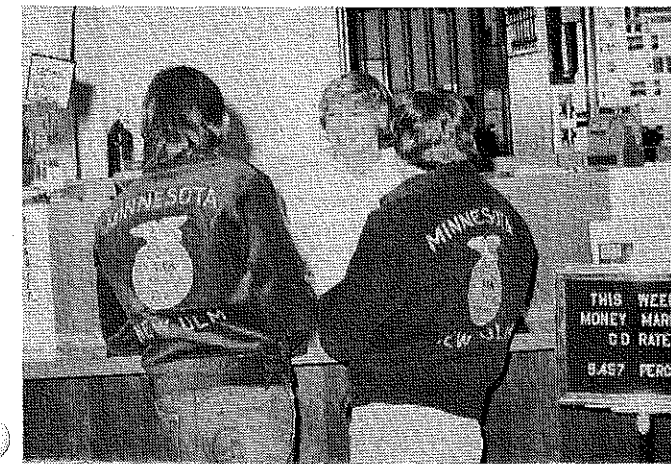
Certainly, it is possible for a chapter to be effective if a group of exceptional students happen to be members at the same time, but this fact does not suggest that the majority of the chapters will be composed of members who are able to run their own organization without assistance and instruction from their advisors. There is a better way than permissive advising.

Authoritarian Style

The authoritarian style of parenting is described as one in which the parents demand the children obey the parents' wishes or demands. The parents insist the child respect, not question, their orders and beliefs because they are the parents. Children raised in homes with this style of parenting have been described as likely either to reject their parents' value systems in an effort to become independent or to become models of parentally acceptable behavior. Unfortunately, in the latter situations the children too frequently fail to become effective, independent individuals before they physically leave home.

The authoritarian FFA advisor can be very effective in accomplishment of the visible goals of FFA: chapter and member awards. The chapter will be active and members will be taught a number of things which the advisor selects. There will be personal development opportunities, but the advisor maintains too many leadership roles and functions. Consequently, students are denied opportunities for the experiences critical to learning and personal development. Members may learn more about following than about leading and becoming effective citizens. They are not forced to think and make decisions for themselves.

The advisor decides the critical issues. A latent problem for the authoritarian advisor is the member's potential loss of the feeling of ownership of the FFA chapter, which in turn leads to a loss of enthusiasm and pride, the sources of great motivation. The authoritarian advisor who successfully addresses the needs of chapter members will be quite successful. The one who does not sense member needs creates a disaster. Authoritarian advisors also face



Successful chapters encourage many learning experiences such as those proposed by the Earnings and Savings Committee of the POA. (Photograph courtesy of Gary Leske.)

the problem of failing to delegate enough work to chapter members. They make their chapter too dependent on their available time or use their own time inefficiently.

Authoritative Style

The authoritative style of parenting is described as one in which the parent explains or discusses items of concern allowing the child to make personal choices. The parent will risk the child making mistakes that will not produce major injury to the child or other parties to help the child develop independence, self-control and confidence. The evidence suggests that children raised in this style environment are likely to become independent, effective individuals.

The authoritative style FFA advisor will provide information, instruction, the push to get activities started, the helping hand to pull members out of a problem situation when the need arises, and the support members need to make decisions and test themselves and others in the chapter. This style of advising will help the members run the chapter and accomplish their program of activities.

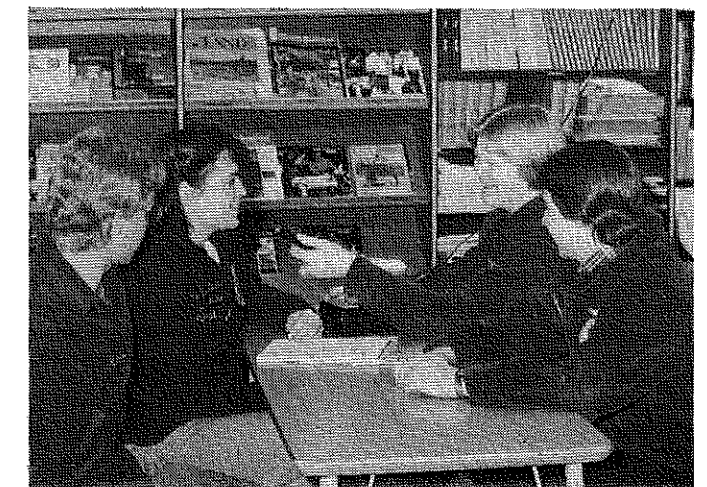
The authoritative style of advising is uniquely suited for student development in a member centered chapter. The authoritative style of advising is an excellent model for student development relative to citizenship, cooperation, and leadership in a democratic society. Can we teach citizenship by telling people what to do while ignoring their felt needs and interests? Do we model democratic leadership while telling people what to do without allowing them to question the activities?

We do not find ourselves. We develop ourselves. Think about your advising style. How does it affect the development of students? Are you becoming a better FFA advisor every day?

Chapter Activities

The second critical factor in meeting the challenge of developing students is a well planned and executed program of activities (POA). The POA determines what opportunities for student development are to be provided by a FFA chapter. The critical questions in evaluating a POA are: (1) does member participation in chapter events A to Z

(Continued on Page 14)



Informing the public of the activities of the FFA Chapter is an activity encouraged by the successful advisor. (Photograph courtesy of Gary Leske.)

Developing Students in Member-Centered FFA Chapters

(Continued from Page 13)

average 25, 50, 75 or 100 percent, and (2) does each member participate in a reasonable percentage of the chapter activities?

The exact percentages are open to debate because each member is an individual. But, the POA must appeal to the needs and interests of all individuals in the chapter or there is danger of too much emphasis on a limited range of activities and a failure to provide learning opportunities of equal or more importance for a number of students.

The National Chapter Award Program provides a quality standard for a broadly based POA and is an excellent chapter goal structuring device. Every member should understand the significance of the Superior Chapter Award and National Chapter recognition. The challenge of this recognition goal will make POA planning and execution meaningful. It is a primary opportunity to teach goal setting for the corporate good: citizenship and cooperation.

"Planning Your FFA Chapter Program of Activities" from the FFA Activity Handbook provides the basic steps for planning a POA and a number of key suggestions for developing it. The process works. Chapter members should use this guide or a similar process to insure a quality POA. Student involvement in planning is necessary to insure meeting their needs and to develop their ownership of the POA. Be sure all students have input in the planning process in a brainstorming format. All activities are accepted and prioritized, not quickly rejected by "the leaders."

The execution of a POA may be positive or negative. Student members require structure to execute a POA. Objectives, ways and means, budget, dates, and assigned responsibilities are included. The structure will vary with the planning time frame, but the effort should be the responsibility of committee members. Student involvement is the key to positive execution even when the goals are not met! Effective execution of a POA requires many successes, individually and collectively, because a positive self-image and chapter image are among the primary goals.

Obviously, the most effective way to kill the potential of a POA is to file it away. Equally effective is the development of a 150 member chapter POA for a 50 member chapter. The thickest POA is the best one. One should not teach or give the impression that planning is a waste of time. However, that is the message given students by not

completing the planned activities or not critically evaluating the activities. The use of a classroom display or calendar stating committee activities will provide a major incentive to accomplish the POA goals.

Member-Centered

The third essential factor in developing students is a focus on all students. A focus upon all vocational agriculture students' leadership and personal development needs is truly an ideal and a tremendous challenge. But, meeting student needs is the heart of the concept of integration of FFA into the vocational agriculture program. If we do not want to help all students, why do we advocate 100 percent membership? The justification for classroom FFA activity is that the experience is educationally worthwhile for all students. Incidentally, we also need to take time to help students discover what FFA activities are available to them and what they can expect as a result of participation. The Townsend and Carter "Instructional Packet on Leadership/FFA for Beginning Vocational Agriculture Students" (Iowa State University) provides an excellent minimum unit of instruction for entering students. A unit of instruction equivalent to this is an essential step in focusing of the needs of all students.

How do we focus on all students? We examine our value positions. Do you believe: (1) the FFA chapter should provide a vehicle for experiences that establish the values of all members of our democracy; (2) the POA requires members to give up personal identity, need and recognition for the good of other chapter members and the chapter; (3) the FFA advisor visits the home of every student in an effort to better understand each person; (4) I will not treat all individuals equally, but will attempt to treat all individuals fairly; and (5) so on. In short, we focus on all students by examining what we believe and how we act as advisors and help chapter members to do the same.

Developing students in a member-centered chapter is a professional obligation. Think about your advising style, help members develop and execute the POA, and focus on all students. Remember, a potential problem in the FFA awards system is that it may lead teacher-advisors to devalue the many seemingly insignificant victories and accomplishments that were major accomplishments for the individual members. To be effective and satisfied educators, we know, perhaps not as well as we should, that we must evaluate and celebrate the accomplishments of every student. I equally cherish the memory of two former chapter members; one was honored as a Star Farmer of America and the other who became misty eyed and refused to wait on FFA concession stand customers, finally was able to directly look into the eyes of a customer and ask "May I help you?"

Photographs Needed

THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MAGAZINE needs quality photographs depicting the activities of agricultural educators, their students and their programs.

Clear, well-composed 5 x 7 black and white photographs should be sent to Roger D. Roediger, Picture Editor, Curriculum Materials Service, 254 Adm. Bldg., 2120 Fyffe Road, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio 43210.

A complete explanation should be attached to each photograph. Photographs are not returned unless specifically requested.

THEME

Member-Centered FFA Chapters Begin With The Teacher

Quality is like buying oats: If you want nice, clean, fresh oats you must pay a fair price. However, if you can be satisfied with oats of lesser quality, they come a little cheaper.

This bit of horse-sense reminds one that, in most cases, we do get what we pay for. What we receive is determined by what we give.

The Future Farmers of America Organization offers unlimited paths of opportunity to the vocational agriculture student. The FFA also provides the teacher with a dynamic tool to make learning purposeful, enjoyable and rewarding.

I believe everything that happens in a vocational agriculture program begins with the teacher. The knowledges, skills and attitudes (competencies) the student masters and the value of leadership development provided through FFA participation can be no better than the combined efforts of the teacher and student.

Quality is like buying oats.

Education Vs. Activities

Being a 13th year teacher, I know how easily a vocational agriculture teacher can become an "FFA teacher". How the program becomes known as the FFA chapter. How SOE becomes the FFA project. And how the vocational agriculture student gains recognition only as the FFA member.

From the teachers' point of view, it is very easy to get caught in the myriad of available FFA activities so that educational purpose and value are lost to the chore of simply completing an event. And just as the FFA provides recognition for the member, it also serves as one of the few sources of acclaim for the teacher.

Yet, what a wonderful teaching tool the FFA is when wisely used by the teacher. For motivation, participation, recognition, decision making, leadership training, and human relations skill development; no other youth organization can offer the opportunities of the FFA.

Pride

Pride is a key ingredient to a quality FFA chapter and should be the key word the teacher employs when working with FFA members: pride of accomplishment, pride in your work, pride in your chapter, pride in your school and community, and pride in America and American Agriculture.

PRIDE — Each letter begins a word which can serve to guide the teacher who seeks a member-centered FFA chapter:

Plan — Insist that every chapter activity be planned. Teach logic and organization skills as a part of the value of planning. Confer with officers and members to develop a useable program of activities (POA) at the beginning of



By TOM JONES

(Editor's Note: Mr. Jones is Past President of the NVATA and is a Vocational Agriculture Instructor at Marana, Arizona 85238.)

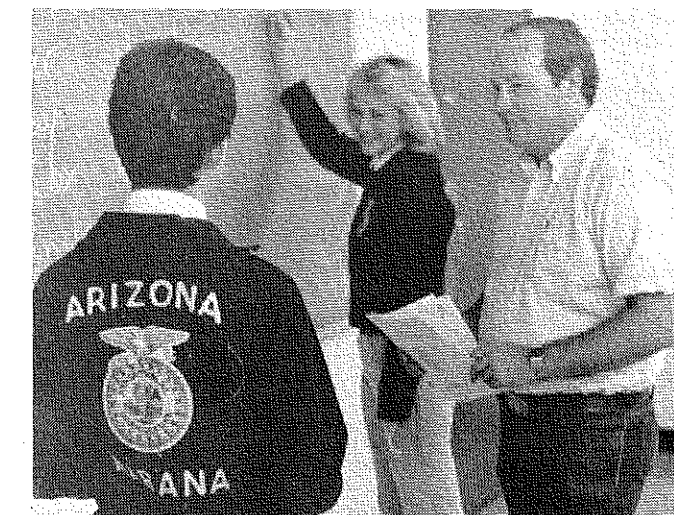
every year and then use the POA as a guide throughout the year. Plan your work and then work your plan.

Recognize — A simple but often overlooked principle of effective leadership is the need to recognize member achievement. Positive reinforcement promotes dedication and commitment among students and offers incentives for goal setting. The member-centered teacher seizes every opportunity to recognize and reward member accomplishments. The member-centered teacher is conscious of the importance of praising in public and criticizing in private.

Involve — Every student must be exposed to leadership development instruction as part of their class. This is not to say FFA membership should be automatic. Membership in FFA must require a personal and financial commitment from the member. The organization should seek to involve all legitimate students through meaningful activities of sufficient variety to appeal to every member.

Develop — The vocational agriculture instructional program teaches the technical competencies needed by stu-

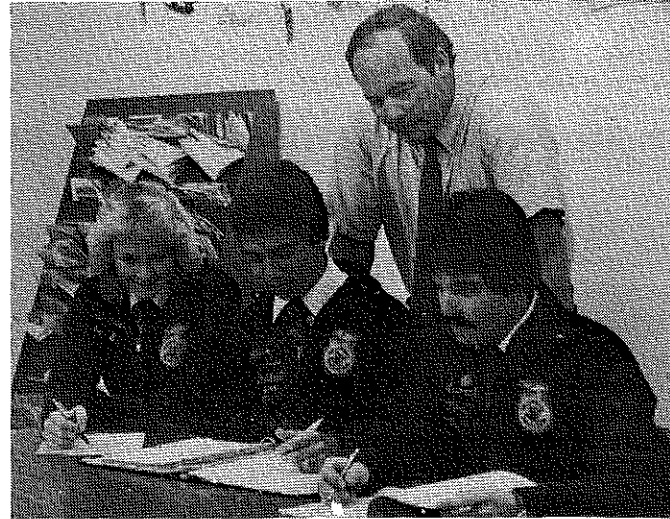
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Planning the annual program of activities should involve chapter officers, members and teacher working cooperatively. Committee chairmen play an important leadership role in the organization and must be carefully chosen. (Photograph courtesy of Marana Vocational Agriculture Department, Marana, AZ.)

Member-Centered FFA Chapters Begin With The Teacher

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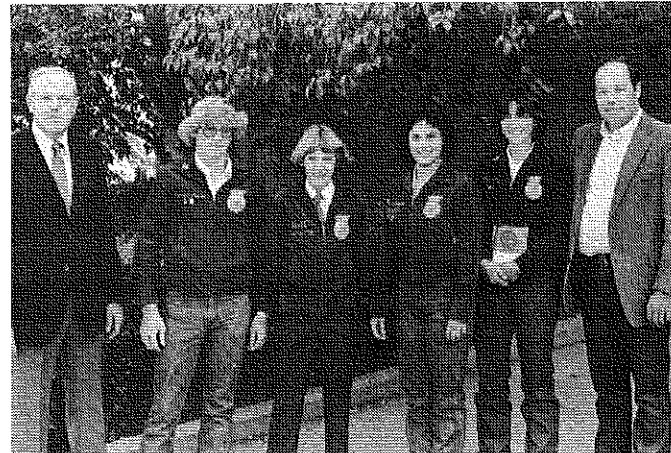


Member involvement in the planning of activities is an essential requirement of a member-centered FFA chapter. Here chapter officers and their advisor plan a portion of the chapter program of activities during a summer officer leadership training session. (Photograph Courtesy of Marana, AZ, Vocational Agriculture Dept.)

dents seeking agricultural employment. A major role of FFA is to provide development human relations and leadership activities which are also essential to success in the work place. The skills must be developed, to varying degrees, with all students. The member-centered teacher takes the time to take each student to their potential, points out the importance of developing as a leader and follower, and remembers that the success of any organization is determined by what happens between the meetings.

Evaluate — Evaluation in the member-centered FFA chapter takes three forms:

1) Evaluation of activities as close to their completion as possible. If the evaluation includes the teacher and members responsible, it affords the opportunity to learn and improve;



A variety of activities helps to involve all students in FFA activities. Events such as judging contests provide members the opportunity to learn in a way that is interesting, fun and rewarding. (Photos courtesy of Marana, AZ, Vocational Agriculture Dept.)

2) Evaluation of the POA at the close of the year serves as a basis for future planning; and,

3) Evaluation of student performance and progress towards individual goals makes the necessary tie of the leadership development to the total vocational agriculture program. The member-centered teacher will evaluate and assign grades for individuals who serve as officers, committee chairs, on judging teams, in speaking contests, BOAC projects, and realistically in any of the activities of the chapter.

If it is worth the teachers' and students' time to conduct the activity, then it deserves evaluation.

Conclusion

Member-centered FFA chapters, like everything in the program, do begin with the teacher. An educationally sound FFA program is one where a cooperative effort between the teacher and the members leads to the attainment of individual and group goals. Planning, Recognition, Involvement, Development and Evaluation, and PRIDE are important components of the member-centered chapter.

Themes for 1984

SOEP: Entrepreneurship	January
SOEP: Placement Programs	February
SOEP: Cooperative Experience Programs	March
SOEP: Laboratories	April
SOEP: Urban Programs	May
SOEP: Recordkeeping	June
SOEP: Sales and Service	July
SOEP: Horticulture	August
SOEP: Mechanics	September
SOEP: Forestry, Conservation and Recreation	October
SOEP: Adults	November
SOEP: Post Secondary	December

THEME

Member-Centered Post Secondary Organizations

With thoughtful planning and hard work, post secondary institutions can develop student organizations that can complement the educational process and help develop pride and personal growth in its agricultural technology students.

Kirkwood Community College has nearly 500 students enrolled in Agricultural Technologies programs. There are nine student leadership groups established in the Agricultural Technologies Area. They are: Hoof 'N Horn (Beef), Pork Promoters (Swine), Sodbusters (Crop), Horse Science, Small Animal Services (Pet and Small Animal), Marine and Small Engine Technicians, Rural Building Construction, Horticulture and Natural Resources, and Agricultural Power Mechanics. Perhaps the existence of these programs emphasizes the need for, and creation of, member-centered groups.

Basic Principles

During my experience at Kirkwood Community College for the past fifteen years, I have witnessed the growing pains of member-centered post secondary student organizations as they develop over the years. In my opinion, there are five fundamental principles which are important for a member-centered post secondary student organization to survive and flourish. While these are some of the same principles as other groups, they are as follows:

(1) The local agricultural leadership group should be allowed to retain its career identification, and participants should be encouraged to refer to their own separate career interest area;

(2) The local agricultural leadership group should be guided in the preparation of a thorough annual plan of activities (program of service);



By LARRY L. STATLER
(Editor's Note: Mr. Statler is Assistant Dean of Agricultural Technologies at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa 54206.)

(3) With several agricultural leadership groups organized within one institution, there must be a local agricultural leadership coordinating council;

(4) Based upon the advice of program advisory committees, the functions of the local agricultural leadership groups should be provided as an intracurricular dimension of the total curriculum; and

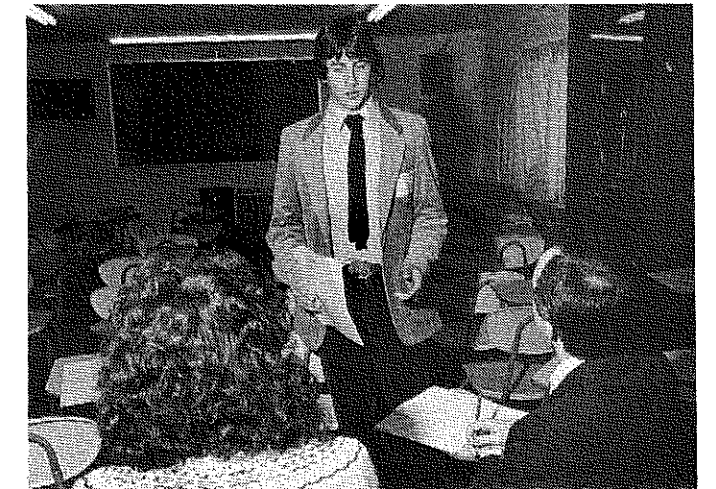
(5) The local agricultural leadership group should be provided a mechanism for affiliating with other curriculum groups on their own campus and at the state and national level.

Regarding the first principle, the more autonomy and identity allowed the individual agricultural leadership group, the higher the students' level of interest. In my opinion, it is logical and natural that post secondary students think in terms of specific careers. They are usually attracted to the institution by a specialty area of interest. Frequently, the institution may act hypocritically by suddenly trying to group all career students together. This is not consistent with the job market. With groups organized by career interest areas, overall group cooperation and institutional goals can still be achieved. Institutions may

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Kirkwood Community College's student leadership groups develop pride through image-building. Each special-interest group has its own distinctive jacket for members.



Kirkwood students had to defend their ideas for judges after presenting papers on specialty topics at Leadership Day.

Member-Centered Post Secondary Organizations

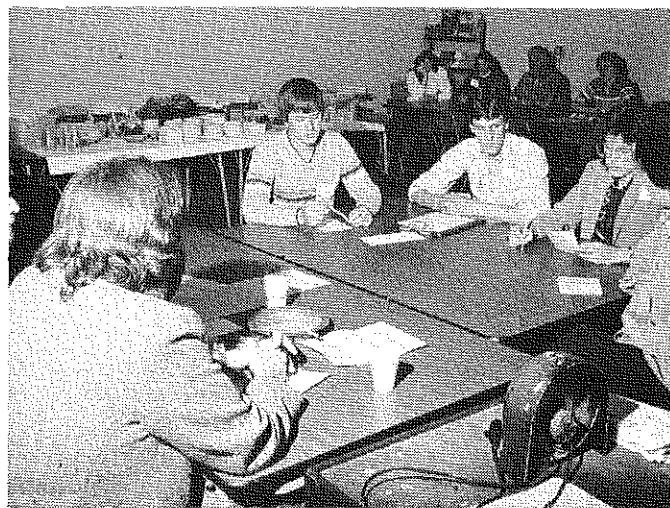
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force cooperation among groups toward an overall goal and this appears to be the most frequent approach. A preferred approach allows motivation for the larger goal to come from individuals who have experienced success in reaching their groups' goals.

Faculty members and administrators who do not understand that quality institutions function around an organized, logical plan are somewhat naive. Similarly, planning is important in realizing member-centered student organizations. I do not suggest that the local agricultural leadership group complete just another FFA program of work. I do believe the local group should organize committees and establish an executive council. The dates and plans for the activities should be identified and as a matter of school procedure supported by an approved program of activities. At our institution, each local agricultural leadership group is organized around seven standing committees. Each committee has a chairperson who preferably is an officer in the local group. The chairpersons make up the executive council for the particular group. Our seven standing committees are:

- a. Public relations and marketing
- b. Cooperative activities and community development (customer service)
- c. Technical information
- d. Budget and finance
- e. Social activity
- f. Careers and opportunities
- g. Local, state and national affiliation

It is expected that, by an assigned date, each local agricultural leadership group will establish, with their advisor and the program administrator, a plan of activities, including anticipated events, dates for the event, and tentative plans and procedures. Of course, the plan of activities can be updated throughout the academic year.



Kirkwood's agricultural council conducted a 1983 Leadership Day, featuring juried competitions among students. A group of judges, at left, rated the decision-making teams.

Advisory Group

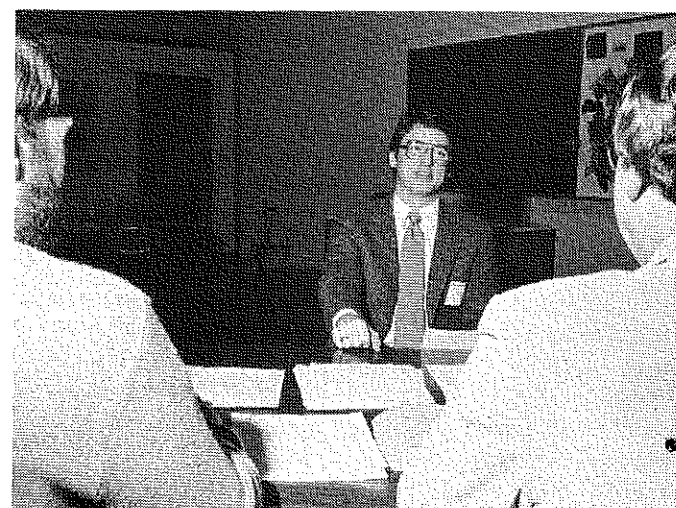
At Kirkwood, we have found that an activity of any agricultural group can fail if there is not a local agricultural leadership coordinating council. The council functions as an advisory body and its goal is to assist the groups in planning. Typically, the council meets with the agricultural technologies administrator. At Kirkwood, the council consists of the president of each local group (or his/her designee) and the advisor of the group. Any affiliated program administrator is also included. Again, I stress that ideas normally do not generate from this council. The council is active at certain times in the year when coordination is necessary for a local, state or national conference or for a major local activity which crosses program lines.

One of the most successful experiences of my career occurred last February when our local agricultural council, in cooperation with the faculty and staff, conducted a Kirkwood Agricultural Leadership Day. The purpose of that day-long conference was to begin planning the upcoming state and national leadership conferences. Each group nominated contestants in the various competitive areas. The contestants represented their local group, and a sweepstakes trophy was provided to the group achieving the most composite points from the competitive areas. A reception was sponsored by the local Federal Land Bank and Production Credit Association. This event was successful because it focused on the importance of personal development enhanced by leadership development activities.

Leadership Development

Advisory committees at Kirkwood Community College have continually encouraged us to provide educational opportunities for students beyond specific technical skills and competencies. This important goal should not be left to happenstance.

Agricultural leadership is included in the academic curriculum of every vocational technical program in the Agricultural Technologies Area. Students can elect to enroll in the course for either one or two credit hours of instruction, depending on the program. There is a limit to the number of credit hours allowable toward program completion and



Job interviewing exercises help to develop a student's poise and confidence. A Kirkwood agriculture student takes part in a mock interview for judges in Kirkwood's leadership day program.

graduation. However, students may elect the course each academic quarter they are enrolled. An appropriate instructor is assigned as the advisor to that class, and it is referred to as an agricultural leadership group or section. If we had our preference, we would require the course of all students. However, our experience has shown that approximately 10 percent of the students are not truly interested in the course. Students are graded in the course, and their grades in the course are computed in their academic grade point average. We believe that including agricultural leadership education as a part of our curriculum is necessary and that offering it as we do is the only way we can maintain an academic standard for this important dimension of the student's growth and development.

Finally, it is very important that the local agricultural leadership groups have a mechanism for feeling a sense of belonging. A clear sense of mission and purpose at the state and national level enable the local agricultural leadership group to become better organized.

ARTICLE

Food For America: More than a Children's Program

The primary objective of the Food For America program is to facilitate purposeful planning, organization, and execution of activities through which FFA members communicate to elementary school children the complex and significant role of the agricultural industry. A closer look at one chapter's Food For America program not only reflects the notion of educating children, but also exemplifies the process of utilizing community resources and establishing positive public relations.



By BARBARA J. MALPIEDI AND CAROL ELGIN

(Editor's Note: Ms. Malpiedi is an Instructor in the Agricultural Education Program at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061; and Ms. Elgin is Horticulture Instructor at Fauquier Technical Center, 707 Waterloo Road, Warrenton, Virginia 22186.)

Planning Food For American Activities

The Fauquier Technical Center FFA chapter, located in Warrenton, Virginia, decided early in the school year to make the Food For America program part of their annual program of activities. The Horticulture IV class was designated the committee responsible for planning the appropriate activities.

Chapter members were well aware of the agricultural industry's complex nature. Their own vocational training stemmed from enrollment in production agriculture, horticulture, and agricultural machinery service programs. To adequately communicate the role of agriculture to Fauquier elementary

the committee worked closely with the advisor to identify specific activities, potential community resources, and to establish a time line for completing preliminary activities. Steps involved during the early planning period included securing the Food For America educational kit from the National FFA Center, requesting administrative permission, inviting selected resource people throughout the community to participate, and setting tentative dates for activities.

One of the major purposes of this early planning process was to enable the advisor and committee members to design realistic activities, taking into consideration available resources and chapter limitations. The result of such planning was the selection of meaningful activities and the establishment of a communication network among advisors, students, administrators, and community resource people.

The final planning stage involved assigning specific duties by the committee to chapter members, informing individuals of their responsibilities, and contacting the six participating Fauquier County elementary schools to make necessary arrangements.

school children and their teachers. Food For America activities needed to include the production, processing and distribution of food and fiber farm products.

In addition, the role of agribusiness individuals including those in the fields of horticulture, forestry, wildlife, soil and water conservation, and agricultural machinery service needed to be emphasized.

With these considerations in mind,

(Continued on Page 20)

Food For America: More than a Children's Program

(Continued from Page 19)

Executing the Plan

The Fauquier Food For America program had three phases: pre-activity classroom visits, an agricultural exhibition day, and a follow-up to the activity.

Classroom Visits

The first phase involved classroom presentations. FFA members in groups of three with lesson plans, audio visuals, and Farm Art coloring books in hand visited each fourth grade classroom. The children were taught a lesson relating to the role and importance of agriculture. They were also oriented for a field trip to the Fauquier Technical Center for participation in an agricultural exhibition field day.

The Agricultural Exhibition Field Day

A great deal of time and cooperation was involved in the successful execution of the field day. The coordination of program publicity, student and resource people responsibilities, and agricultural products and animal exhibits was the responsibility of the chapter advisor. However, planning and an efficient student committee eased the job.

Orchestrating the exhibition involved many people. Chapter members were responsible for doing the following:

1. Construct animal pens from gates supplied by area farmers.

2. Bring in animals for children to see and pet, such as ducks, pheasants, chickens, goats, hogs, beef and dairy cattle.

3. Set-up vegetable and bedding crop displays.

4. Act as tour guides for the children.

5. Distribute products such as balloons, ice cream cones, rulers, and printed materials.

6. Operate equipment including a cider press, log splitter, and farm equipment used in the past and present.

School administrators were involved not only in granting permission for the activity, but also as was the case of one enthusiastic administrator — a former vocational teacher — a personal log splitter was loaned.

FFA Alumni and local agribusiness leaders also contributed. They supplied the tractor and haywagon for the children's hayride, loaned additional animals, displayed farm grains, and most importantly donated their time to demonstrate expertise in their respective agriculture professions.

Agricultural organizations and agencies including the Virginia Division of Forestry, the local Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Mid Atlantic Milk Producers Association donated materials for distribution. Local businesses donated ice cream, ice cream cones and balloons to the festivities.

The day was an exciting and beneficial one for approximately 400 fourth graders and their teachers. Imagine all the agricultural goodwill carried to

households throughout Fauquier County.

The Follow-up Visit

In most cases, a follow-up visit facilitates answering any additional questions and thanking the students and teachers who participated in the activity.

Teachers were also asked at this time to evaluate the program. The feedback served to help plan for next year's Food For America program.

The Payoff for Quality Youth Activities

From the Fauquier example, it is evident that the Food For America program served more purposes than the primary one of educating children about the role of agriculture in the community. Another purpose was to strengthen community relations as vocational agricultural teachers and their students worked cooperatively with others to promote agriculture's somewhat complex but important role in the community.

Quality activities should benefit members. In this case members learn many human relations skills as they worked together to achieve a purposeful goal. The activity was also a source of pride for work well done.

The underlying purpose for sponsoring such activities was one of influencing public attitude toward the vocational agricultural program and the school. Developing a positive public image may be well the purpose that best serves these students, their program and their school in the years to come.

ARTICLE

Involving More Members In FFA



By RICHARD F. WELTON
AND GREG SCHAFER

(Editor's Note: Dr. Welton is a Professor of Agricultural Education at Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas 66506; and Mr. Schafer is the Executive Secretary of the Kansas FFA Association, Kansas State University.)

For as long as most agriculture educators can remember, vocational agriculture programs have been in a state of continual growth. Annual reports have indicated that record numbers were enrolling in vocational agriculture and becoming members of the FFA. The peak year for vocational agriculture students and FFA members was in 1977 when 720,509 and 509,735 respectively were reported. Since then, enrollment and membership have been in a decline. The accompanying figure illustrates these trends.

As student numbers have decreased, FFA membership as a percentage of vocational agriculture enrollment has remained fairly constant at 71.5 percent. Recent vocational agriculture and FFA data from the Department of Education show that 175,571 vocational agriculture students elected to forego membership in the FFA. The extent of this abandonment is vividly dramatized when we consider that nearly one out of every four eligible students declined to join the ranks of the FFA.

Involving Students

Against this backdrop, the authors ask several vocational agriculture officials, FFA executive secretaries and a former national FFA officer to share their thoughts and ideas on what can

be done to reduce the membership gap and involve additional vocational agriculture students in the FFA.

Here is a sample of their comments:

"10+ Chapters are recognized at our state FFA convention. This is done by placing a 10+ card on the delegate sign of qualifying chapters. One hundred percent membership is also stressed at inservice vocational agriculture teacher meetings."

Emeron P. Dettman, FFA Executive Secretary/Treasurer for Iowa

"Strong tradition of the intracurricular aspect of vocational agriculture and FFA, selling the idea to vocational agriculture teachers, and an effort to maintain post high school members interested in achieving higher degrees or awards are all stressed in Missouri." R.D. Hagan, FFA Executive Secretary for Missouri

"The following are some specific factors which I believe are significant in FFA membership:

1. Students who enroll in vocational agriculture must have an understanding and interest in the total vocational agriculture FFA package.

2. Once enrolled, students must be led and guided into a stimulating and exciting program of activities which is designed around their interests and needs.

Charles Keels, FFA Executive Secretary for North Carolina

"Before 1969, vocational agriculture/FFA membership was not a big problem in Illinois. One solution is the implementation of the Century Award for 100 percent chapters. This award is presented annually at the state FFA Convention. Another is the use of beginning teacher workshops where the philosophy of vocational agriculture/FFA relationship is stressed. Since 1969, funding which is based on student enrollment and no longer requires a supervised occupational experience program and loose certification standards for vocational agriculture instructors have affected membership."

Eldon Whitt, FFA Executive Secretary for Illinois

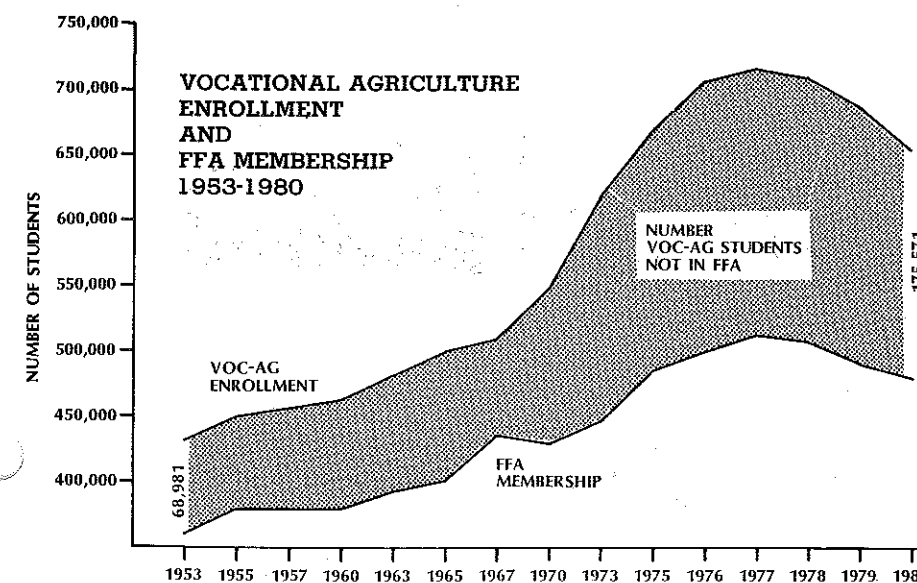
"The vocational agriculture/FFA membership gap has not been a real problem because of a strong tradition in our state. Vocational agriculture instructors stress FFA at the local level. The philosophy of vocational agriculture and FFA being intracurricular is strong throughout Wyoming."

Cliff McClain, State Director of Agriculture Education from Wyoming

(Continued on Page 22)



Elementary children learn to distinguish goats from sheep as well as appreciate the contributions made by agriculturalists to society.



Involving More Members In FFA

(Continued from Page 21)

"Vocational agriculture teachers with 100 percent chapters are recognized on the state level. An FFA chapter must have at least 50 percent membership to be in good standing."

Dan Ware, FFA Executive Secretary for New Mexico

"The problem of maintaining 100 percent membership can be attributed to the increase of non-traditional programs. Students are not encouraged to complete a four-year program. They are in and out of a program over the course of four years. Therefore, it is difficult to maintain continuity in both the vocational agriculture programs and the FFA chapter."

Paul Day, State Supervisor for Agricultural Education for Minnesota

"We have over 100 percent membership for the second consecutive year. I feel certain the national campaign helped immensely. We have also made

a major effort to include the interests of all students in all program areas. We have made changes and adaptations such as:

1. Using FFA rather than Future Farmers;
2. Giving State degrees by taxonomy, program areas;
3. Recognizing in every way possible (FFA publications, speeches, displays, etc.) the importance of the total agriculture family."

Earl Kantner, FFA Executive Secretary for Ohio

"Membership in the FFA is a problem we have been wrestling with in California for a long time. Schools want all their teachers to share in the student load. As a result, vocational agriculture teachers leave their doors open to anyone. Probably 50 percent of our total vocational agriculture students are in the class to fulfill a science requirement. We think the answer in our state is to obtain program standards which will keep the students out who are not strictly vocational agriculture students. We are trying to separate general agriculture

classes with FFA for the science requirement students and vocational agriculture with FFA for vocational agriculture students."

Jarrold L. Davis, Assistant State FFA Advisor for California

"The use of incentives has helped to narrow the gap in Georgia. These include: 1) The recognition of 100 percent chapters; 2) A luncheon at the vocational agriculture teachers conference for those instructors with 100 percent chapters; and 3) Recognition of the district supervisor with the largest increase in membership percentage."

Representative from Georgia

"The key is emphasis on the local level. If the vocational agriculture instructor insists on FFA membership, it will happen. The state should in turn emphasize the importance of membership to the local level. If there is more involvement of greenhands on the local, district, and state levels, there is a better chance for their continued membership in years to come."

Jack Stewart, 1981-82 National Vice President, Western Region

However, most of the forests are composed of shortleaf, longleaf, loblolly, slash or spruce pines. It is because of the impact of forestry on community life that the Greene County Forestry Field Day had its origin.

Cooperative Planning

Although the planning of the forestry field day centers around the county administration and the five teachers, other professional people from timber companies and agricultural agencies help make this event successful.

The Greene County Forestry Field Day is divided into both educational and recreational events for adults and students. The morning events center around the educational part of the program. It is composed of timber estimation, tree identification, regeneration recommendations and wildlife food identification. All these events are conducted by professionals from various timber companies and the Mississippi Game and Fish Commission.

There is a barbecue for all in attendance which is provided through donations from interested businesses. The food is prepared by volunteers. The problem in feeding this large group is in the estimation of attendance which has increased each year. Last year about 1200 people gathered for the events and lunch making the field day perhaps the biggest annual event in the county.

After a noon meal and country music, recreational events begin. They include pole climbing, individually and as a team of five. Next, the pole is greased and the teams form a pyramid attempting to reach the top. Other events include log rolling, pole felling, ax chopping, crosscut sawing, bow

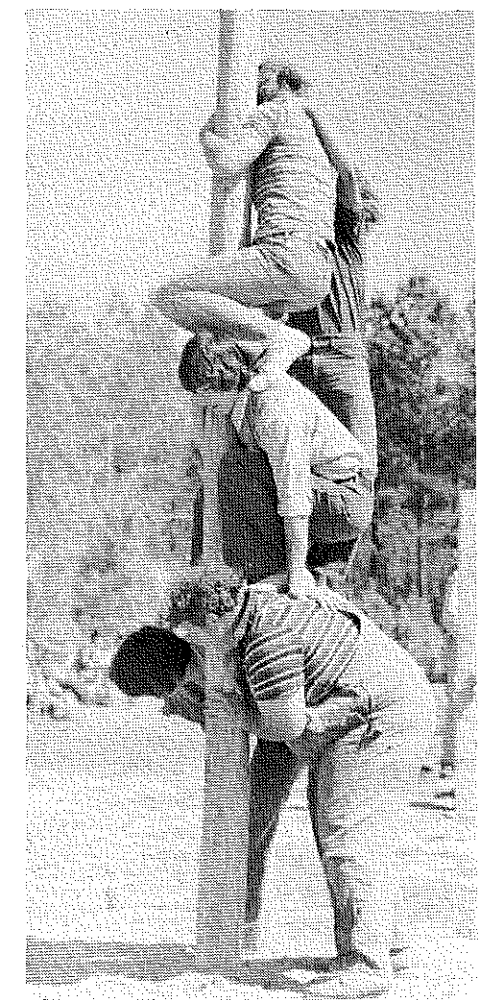
sawing and chain saw competition. Each of these events has a specified manager who is responsible for organizing and conducting the competition. In most instances, the teachers from the four schools are the official timers. Official judges are assigned to events to ensure that all rules are followed and that the competition is conducted properly.

At the conclusion of the activities, trophies are presented to winners in each event, and ribbons are given for second and third place. A school is declared the winner in the educational and recreational activities of the field day. Also, a trophy is awarded to the school with the most combined points for morning and afternoon events.

One of the major things learned from conducting the field day is that a great number of people are eager for an opportunity to help by giving time and money. Last year the field day activities involved about 50 people and cost about \$1,500. One thing has resulted from an event such as this: Never underestimate what can be accomplished through proper organization and cooperative planning.

Benefits

Several benefits to the county are realized when all four schools pool their resources in an effort of this nature. The event has helped produce the state champion forestry team for three of the last five years and has placed the county in the top five the other years. It also brings the community together and has brought statewide recognition to the county in having had the field day reviewed and aired with the Mississippi Educational Television Authority in 1981.



Participation in the field day includes greased pole climbing.

ARTICLE

Successful Forestry Field Day

A forestry field day can be one of the most enjoyable and educationally beneficial events of a school year if it is well planned and efficiently conducted. Proper planning, organization and cooperation are imperative before inviting the community to a day of educational experience and fun.



BY BOBBY WALLEY
(Editor's Note: Mr. Walley is Vocational Agriculture Instructor at Leakesville High School, Leakesville, Mississippi 39451.)

magnitude presents special problems for advisors and FFA members. All four FFA chapters work jointly to plan and organize the field day, but on the day the event takes place, each chapter competes for trophies and ribbons. Not only do the schools compete against each other, the teams of each school compete for a place on the team going to the district contest.

Greene County Forestry Field Day

In Greene County, Mississippi, the FFA chapters at Leakesville, State Line, McLain, and Sand Hill High Schools have a combined membership of near 250. Some 1200 to 1500 members, parents, guests and school officials annually attend the event. To make certain the field day is successful, the school superintendent, vocational director and advisors of the four chapters begin their planning well in advance.

The Greene County Forestry Field Day has grown in attendance and popularity because of its superb organization and publicity. An event of this

Greene County is very rural; being composed of three small towns, the largest having a population of only about 1000. About 88 percent of the county is in forest land, a large part of which is owned by paper companies and the National Forest Service. A combination of both hardwoods and pines make up the forest of the area.



The forestry field day includes log-rolling competition.



The field day is definitely a cooperative event. This photograph shows individuals who organize and carry out the field day. Representatives of Extension, government agencies, the timber industry, and the schools participate.

Stories in Pictures

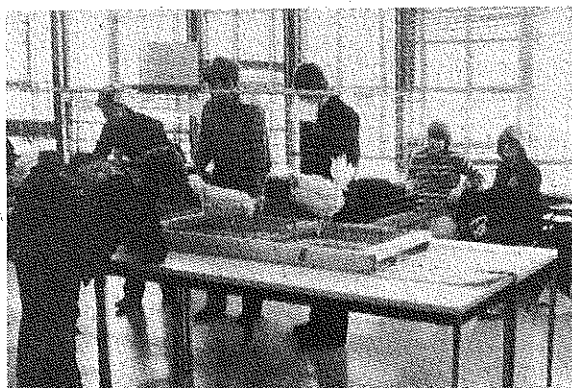
Contests Evaluate Learning



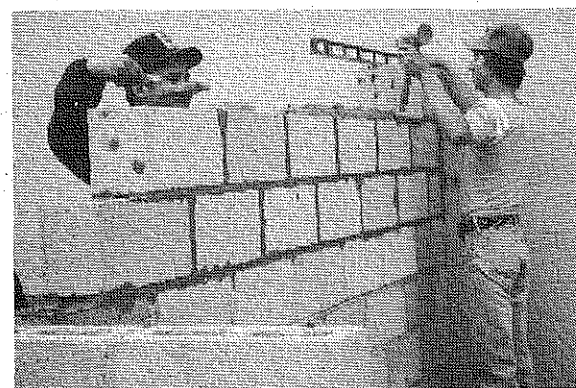
Collegiate FFA members register high school students for a contest. (Photograph courtesy of Fred Reneau and John Smith, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.)



Collegiate FFA members, vocational agriculture teachers, and students take time to visit before the contest. (Photograph courtesy of Fred Reneau and John Smith, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.)



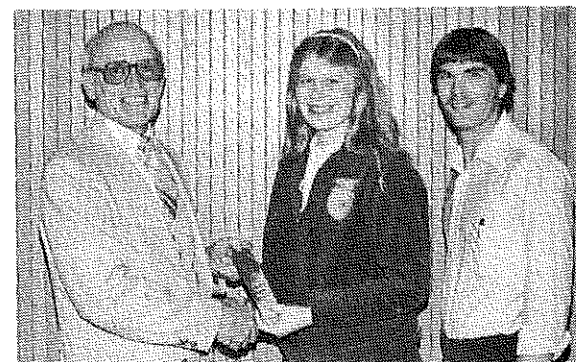
The Collegiate FFA members perform the tasks needed to make the contest run smoothly. (Photograph courtesy of Fred Reneau and John Smith, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.)



Teamwork and cooperation are essential to exhibiting competency in many contest areas. (Photograph courtesy of Paul Vaughn, New Mexico.)



Skills learned through vocational agriculture are performance tested through many types of contests. (Photograph courtesy of Gary Leske, University of Minnesota.)



A vocational agriculture student earns an award for participation in a contest. The teacher shares the joys of success with the student. (Photograph courtesy of Fred Reneau and John Smith, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.)