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**THEME: Staying Current —
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Earning the Professional Stripes



By BLANNIE E. BOWEN, EDITOR

Dr. Bowen is an Associate Professor in the Department of Agricultural Education at The Ohio State University.

Leaders in agricultural education discuss in this issue how to stay current with professional affairs from several perspectives: vocational agriculture teachers, state supervisors, teacher educators, and the Executive Director of the National Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association. Rosco Vaughn, this issue's theme editor, selected these leaders whose thoughts indicate agreement on staying current with professional affairs. When they write about that elusive beast called professionalism, there are also common themes. If polled, these leaders would agree that a profession is a group of individuals with similar occupational interests, education, experiences, goals, objectives, salaries, et al. Differences would probably surface when specific traits of a professional are discussed. Although the terminology, rhetoric, and semantics would appear vastly different, the bottom line is that a profession seeks quality and demands no less of its members.

This standard-setting and governance element of professionalism is not addressed directly by the authors. From a traditional perspective, the more respected professions exercise tremendous control over who enters the profession. Perhaps the best examples of classic professions involve law and medicine. Both of these professions have rigorous boards and associations that perform regulatory functions. In essence, they "ride herd" over the profession to block the entrance of and weed-out incompetents and those not adhering to accepted standards of professional conduct.

Enforcement of Standards

Unfortunately, the governance function has been treated lightly by professions such as education, including agricultural education. In higher education, promotion and tenure standards serve this function, but comparable elements of rigor and control are not in place on the primary, secondary, and post-secondary levels. It is apparent, however, that the educational reform movement and its "Reports" are demanding such standards for secondary and primary school teachers. Historically, most reforms in education have been imposed externally by legislative or executive mandate. Although such impositions violate norms associated with a profession, in education the housekeeping function has been severely neglected over the years. Rightfully so, guilt and blame are now being given to all segments of the education profession because the desired quality is simply not there — yet.

In the haste to reform education, however, solutions must be realistic, effective, and capable of being implemented. The earliest solutions proposed this decade involved money, i.e. teacher salaries. America has shown that teachers must be better compensated because salaries of U.S. teachers increased 23% over the past three years (THE COLUMBUS (OH) DISPATCH Newspaper, July 6, 1986, p. 8A). One suspects that such increases can explain why

51% of the new teachers hired this year are former teachers. My hope is that the returnees are committed to quality teaching and not just a higher salary.

Through all of this, a question of the hen and egg variety must be asked: Do we first upgrade the performance of teachers and then pay for it OR do we pay first and later expect the desired performance? A balance between the two extremes seems most logical. One hopes that recent salary increases are of the installment variety with subsequent increases given if teacher performance continues to improve. In a similar vein, while money certainly cannot cure many of education's ills, higher salaries will provide a larger pool of talent. As virtually all of the reports have graphically documented, the most academically able students do not become teachers. It is unrealistic to assume that the pay scale is not involved because heretofore, many very strong teacher candidates simply could not expect salaries commensurate with the required education and training. But, as financial incentives become more lucrative, America can rightfully expect higher quality performances from its teachers.

In this regard, if education wishes to continue considering itself a profession, it must accept more responsibility for quality control within the ranks. A major question must be posed regarding: How can education as a profession upgrade its performance, regulate itself, and be equitably compensated? The latest reform idea with the most promise is the Holmes Group Proposal. Since this Proposal did not generate the media hype of earlier reports, a brief description is warranted.

The Holmes Group Proposal

Some three years ago, deans of education from 17 major research universities met informally and the result is a consortium with two long range goals: (1) to reform teacher education programs and (2) to reform teaching as a profession. The most radical change involves potential teachers first acquiring an undergraduate degree in a subject matter area and then taking their professional education courses during a master's degree program. In essence, colleges of education would get out of the undergraduate education business.

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Earning the Professional Stripes

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For this plan to succeed, two major ingredients are needed. First, states must agree to certify teachers who follow this new approach. Second, other universities must cooperate. Relative to the second ingredient, Frank Murray wrote in September, 1986 issue of the *Phi Delta Kappan* (pages 28-32) that the Holmes Group has extended charter membership invitations to 123 universities (see the September issue of the *Kappan* for other articles on the Proposal). These college of education faculties are now deciding if they wish to participate. At the Ohio State University, for example, the College of Education Faculty Senate voted 11-3 earlier this year to join the Holmes Group and implement its principles by the end of this year (*OSU onCampus*, June 26, 1986).

As the Holmes Group concept gains favor, questions should be posed about its impact on agricultural education

as a profession. Currently, agricultural education and a few selected areas can be exempt from the Proposal. The Ohio State agricultural education faculty voted to support the Proposal in principle, but decided to use the exemption procedure and do further study of the potential ramifications. Naturally, if all undergraduate instruction in agricultural education is eliminated, the results could be profound to say the least.

A most encouraging dimension of the Holmes Group is that educators can make tough decisions that should enhance teacher quality and result in a more educated and I hope a more respected profession. Because the changes are being proposed from "within," this lends credence to the notion that a profession must enact standards and govern itself. If the Holmes Group Proposal is fully implemented and rigor, self-examination, and higher quality performance result, educators should rightfully expect appropriate payment of those next installments without delay.

THEME

Staying Current Through Professional Development

The formula for success in Agricultural Education may be summarized best in the Vice President's part of the Future Farmers of America (FFA) Greenhand Ceremony. In this ceremony, the vice president states that success in a career and in life is primarily the result of knowledge and hard work. Every member of the agricultural education profession has obtained the academic preparation and/or the specialized knowledge required to enter this chosen occupation. The major differences among members of the profession are usually attributed to the second ingredient of the formula for success, namely hard work.

Current leaders in agricultural education have contributed to this issue of *THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MAGAZINE* and although each represents some specific facet of the profession, their respective articles contain information that can be applied to the total field of agricultural education. The authors all agree that professionals must keep current and be actively involved in dealing with major issues.

You, as an individual, can make a difference in agricultural education, but you must be willing to make a personal commitment. First, you must participate in professional activities. You become involved by joining your professional organization, by asking questions, attending meetings, voting on issues, running for office, and applying for awards. Be willing to commit your time and even some of your financial resources to agricultural education and to your personal and professional development.



BY ROSCO VAUGHN, THEME EDITOR

(Mr. Vaughn is Past President of the NASAE and State Supervisor of Vocational Agriculture, Box 3501, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003.)

Others before you have made similar commitments that have allowed our profession to grow and mature since the early 1900s. Seek the advice of your colleagues and the officers of your professional organizations. By reading this issue of *THE MAGAZINE*, you will become familiar with much of the philosophy and advice your leaders have to offer. However, don't forget to follow-up with letters or personal contacts to obtain answers to questions you raise as you read this issue.

A cooperative attitude, with all members working together, is critical for the continued success of agricultural education in this country. The true professionals among us will ensure that this cooperation occurs and that agricultural education will remain a vital segment of our nation's educational system.

THEME

Professionalism Among Vocational Agriculture Teachers



BY MYRON SONNE

(Mr. Sonne is President of NVATA, RR 1, Box 89A, Letcher, South Dakota 57359.)

Professionalism truly is a word meaning different things to different folks. To some it might be a state of mind, to others the degree of preparation for one's job, and yet to another, a dedicated effort. I know of professional athletes, doctors, welders, lawyers, fishermen, teachers, astronauts, computer analysts, ministers, and for four years now a man in a suit and tie in a Washington, D.C. airport with a billboard, handouts, and a cause. I am sure that he thinks he is a professional. Professionals in their own minds and with a specific purpose. A heart transplant, a tractor overhauled, eleven three-point shots in a row, a baptism, a spreadsheet, a landscape design, a person placed on employment, all done by professionals. To some you would say the word is used loosely. Is there a generation gap — does it really matter?

What is professionalism to you? A suit and tie or a sweater, long hair or short, dress or slacks. Is someone with a doctorate more professional than someone with a bachelor's degree? As was said: Ralph Thomas of Oklahoma, is a professional with his hat on or with his hat off. It is a matter of perspective. We do, however, as individuals set certain values to the things that we call professional. We ask that certain levels of achievement or certain standards be met before we let something fall into the professional category. What is professionalism to you?

The people involved in Vocational Agriculture Education as I know them are very professional. Read the Vocational Agriculture Teachers Creed if you do not understand what I mean. We are teachers by choice and not by chance. It is more than a job that we are involved with, even more than a way of life — but a true responsibility to the person, usually youth interested in education in agriculture. We have not, however, avoided the post secondary, more aged, or non-traditional student who seeks education in agriculture. We are concerned that this education will lead to gainful employment and productivity as a citizen.

Be they the classroom teacher, the state supervisor, or the teacher educator, professional attitudes abound. There is concern for each other, for the constituent, be they youth or adult, and there is a feeling of respect and confidentiality between the factions. Sure there are some exceptions to the rule, but isn't professionalism being that total dedicated person? Giving that extra so that someone else does better, gets ahead, is happy and successful?

Believe what you will, but students act, dress, talk, study, and work with similar patterns shown by parents and special instructors. We are those special instructors. Especially during this time, our leadership must come forth strong. Wayne Sprick of Missouri said, "I teach students" and his program is that which is built around student needs not teacher or parent desires. Brad Moffitt of Ohio and

Monte Mason of South Dakota influence their students in different ways with different methods, but the key is that they are successful at what they do. The public relations programs developed by Regina Smick of Maryland and William Gibson of Alabama will undoubtedly take on different looks, but both will have the same goal of publicizing the student and the program to help strengthen the base for both. A professional is concerned about the total result and that is the gamut of Vocational Agriculture Education.

To become stronger teachers with updated skills, attendance at training sessions such as special inservice updating and the Elanco sponsored Partners In Professional Improvement Seminar, the teachers seek to better prepare themselves to handle the task at hand. Personal as well as professional development and improvement play an essential role in the strength of our programs. Complacency is at a minimum among vocational agriculture educators.

In another respect, we must admire those involved in the leadership of the Vocational Agriculture professional organizations. The local, district, state, and national educational associations continue to be blessed with leaders that come from this group. There is not a more dedicated group when it comes to taking the leadership responsibility and completing the task. This service to their chosen field is something neither expected nor required, but so to speak it is the frosting on the cake for a strongly assembled group with a most sincere purpose: to educate our clients, and propagate our profession.

What is your definition of a professional? I hope that most of us fit the mold.

The Cover

Teacher associations must nurture and reward professional excellence. Association of Teachers of Agriculture of New York President Victoria Woods presents an honorary membership to returning agricultural mechanization teacher LeRoy Nichols for his many years of professional service. (Photo by Warren Giles.)

Staying Current: Professional Affairs and The Agricultural Education Division

The Agricultural Education Division is one of 13 divisions in the American Vocational Association (AVA). Vice presidents from these divisions, the five regions, plus the past president, president and president-elect comprise the AVA Board of Directors. This group is the policy making body of the AVA.

The Agricultural Education Division consists of three affiliated professional organizations: National Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association (NVATA), American Association of Teacher Educators in Agriculture (AATEA), and National Association of Supervisors of Agricultural Education (NASAE). The Policy Committee is the governing body of the Agricultural Education Division. It is comprised of the elected officers of the three affiliates plus the Division vice president and Division secretary who are elected by the membership.

Missions of the Division

The primary missions of the Division are to:

- Mission No. 1: assist the AVA in achieving its goals and objectives as indentified in the annual AVA Program of Work.
- Mission No. 2: provide a mechanism whereby the three affiliated organizations of the Division can communicate with AVA.
- Mission No. 3: assist the National Council for Vocational and Technical Education in Agriculture (Council) in identifying priority issues of the profession; in serving as a sounding board for the verification of priority issues; in assisting to develop strategies for resolving priority issues and in developing and implementing plans to resolve the issues.

Let's explore how the Division, through its membership, seeks to accomplish these missions.

Mission No. 1: AVA Program of Work

One goal cited in the FY87 AVA Program of Work is to: "Increase the potential of all education programs and institutions to provide improved and expanded quality vocational education for all participants."

An objective identified to assist in achieving this goal is: "Encourage vocational educators to continue the pursuit of excellence in vocational education . . . with particular emphasis at the teacher training levels within universities and colleges and within state vocational education departments."

How can the Agricultural Education Division assist AVA to achieve this goal and accompanying objective?



By FLOYD MCCORMICK

(Dr. McCormick is Vice President of the Agricultural Education Division of AVA and Head of the Department of Agricultural Education, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona 85721.)

Division membership consists of teachers, teacher educators, and state supervisors. Therefore, let's review "what and how" each group of agricultural educators can do to "continue the pursuit of excellence."

Teachers

Teachers of agriculture at secondary, postsecondary, and adult levels can:

- Focus efforts to improve programs at the local level. How?

1. Get community into the programs.

From all indications, federal support for vocational education will diminish further in the years ahead. If this happens, community support will be essential to survival. Community support emanates from quality, relevant programs.

2. Modernize the instructional content of the curriculum.

The image that vocational agriculture programs train only farmers still persists. Too often, programs of instruction deal only with a narrow segment of production agriculture.

Over the years, graduates of vocational agriculture programs have told us they need and want more agricultural management instruction, more instruction on business management, and more competence in using sound business management tools.

It is evident there is a paramount need to stress the agri-business dimension of agriculture (marketing, managing, financing, selling, servicing) if the instructional content of the vocational agriculture curriculum is to meet contemporary needs of students.

Teaching methods must utilize computers and employ real-life situations and case studies.

3. Update teacher competence.

Vocational education in agriculture must be taught by technically and occupationally competent teachers. It is essential that teachers be "industry current" relative to agricultural competencies taught to their students.

Industry internships, industry-sponsored short courses and workshops, traveling seminars, independent study and other relevant, in-service activities must become a part of each teacher's "professional development" plan. Each year, teachers must spend sufficient time to keep themselves technically and professionally current in order to ensure their students are provided relevant instruction.

4. Revitalize the use of time proven methods.

There is a strong model in existence for designing and delivering programs of vocational agriculture at the local level. This model includes an "instructional agenda" for teaching students both job specific skills and employment related skills associated with careers in agriculture.

Preparation for careers in agriculture is the job skills portion of the vocational agriculture program. Developing attitudes, values, and leadership skills; improving public speaking; teaching students how to think; instilling the work ethic; developing responsibility; and human relations skill development are some of the employment related skills essential for students to enter and advance up the career ladder. Some have said that the "vocational agriculture model" should become the model for educational reform in this country.

To assist students in preparing for both job specific and employment related skills, agricultural educators must place a renewed emphasis upon supervised occupational experience (SOE); the problem solving approach to teaching and learning; leadership development through the FFA; developing strong relations with the community as a response to meeting local needs; and entrepreneurship development, to name a few. These "time proven" teaching tools are applicable today as in the past in the light of studies indicating a need for students to possess skills in decision making and evidence of the ability to assume responsibility.

Teacher Educators

If teacher educators are really serious about the pursuit of excellence in vocational education in agriculture, they must pay particular attention to their pre-service and in-service teacher education programs. Teacher educators can:

- Focus efforts to improve pre-service and in-service programs. How?

1. At the pre-service level, strengthen the technical competence of beginning teachers in agricultural business management.

Increased course work in the area of management, marketing, financing, selling, etc., must be incorporated into the pre-service course of study of prospective agricultural educators. Current emphasis on "production-type" courses may have to be reduced to accommodate more work in business management.

Once technical competence in business management has been attained, it will be the teacher educator's responsibility and challenge to equip prospective teachers with the ability to teach it (business management) with enthusiasm and interest.

2. In-service education must focus upon the updating of teacher competence.

Would it be effective to teach production agriculture competencies at the in-service level? Is this not plausible in the light that more business management concepts and principles must be taught at the pre-service level.

Industry internships, business-oriented workshops, etc., must become a viable part of the in-service education program offered by teacher educators.

State Supervisors

State supervision can:

- Focus efforts to champion the vocational education in agriculture programs in their states.

How?

1. Get serious about implementing program standards.

Program standards do not guarantee programs of excellence in and of themselves. Yet, the perception of quality is evident.

For quality programs of vocational agriculture to exist, there are minimum requirements (standards) which must be met. These standards must be provided vocational agriculture teachers by the local school:

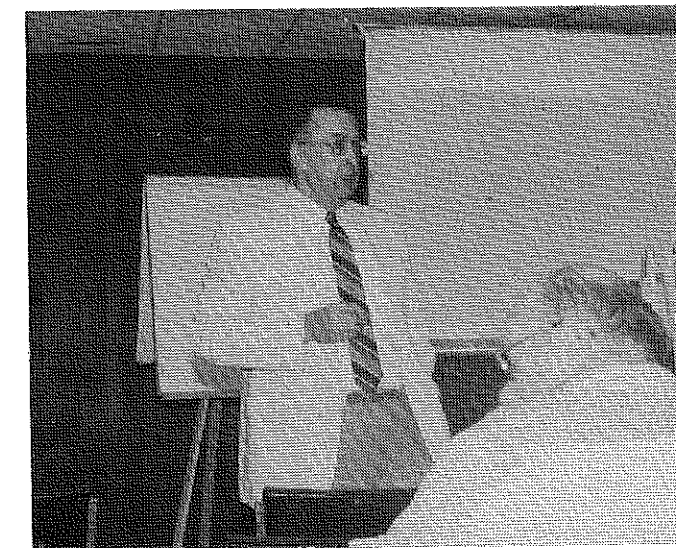
- Extended contract for year-round instruction
- Time for one-on-one on-site instructional visits
- Reporting system of achievements
- Manageable student-teacher ratio (60:1)
- Follow-up data on program completers
- Travel resources for on-site instruction

To a great extent, it will be the responsibility of state supervision to assist the local teacher in realizing these minimum standards.

2. Build an articulated system of agricultural education.

One only needs to study the wide range of curricula offered in programs across the country to realize there is a broadening of the scope of vocational education in agriculture. With fewer and fewer people engaged directly in production agriculture, there is an imper-

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A representative of the Bureau of Technology, Trade, and Agriculture, N.Y.S. SED conducting an inservice session for teachers of agriculture. (Photo courtesy of Warren Giles.)

Staying Current: Professional Affairs and the Agricultural Education Division

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ative need for the non-farm public to realize the importance of agriculture. There is an urgent need for individuals to be "agriculturally literate."

State supervision must design an articulated program of agricultural education — pre-vocational (5-8 grades) — preparatory secondary (9-12 grades) — community colleges (13-14) — adult education — in order to meet the assorted needs of a diverse clientele.

3. Market program completers to agricultural business and industry.

For too long, vocational agriculture has not been viewed as a manpower delivery system for agriculture by the agricultural sector. If the profession professes to providing students with those economic skills which will afford them a competitive edge in the labor market, there is a need to convey this message to agricultural business/industry.

Agricultural educators, especially state supervisors, must convince agricultural business that there is identifiable economic advantage gained by employing vocational agriculture completers.

Since the Agricultural Education Division consists of the elected leaders and members of the three affiliates (NVATA, AATEA, NASAE), it is possible to influence the professional affairs of teachers, teacher educators, and state supervisors. This can be accomplished if the leadership agrees on a course of action and then designs strategies and plans to have each member of the profession practice/implement the suggestions offered.

Mission No. 2: Communication

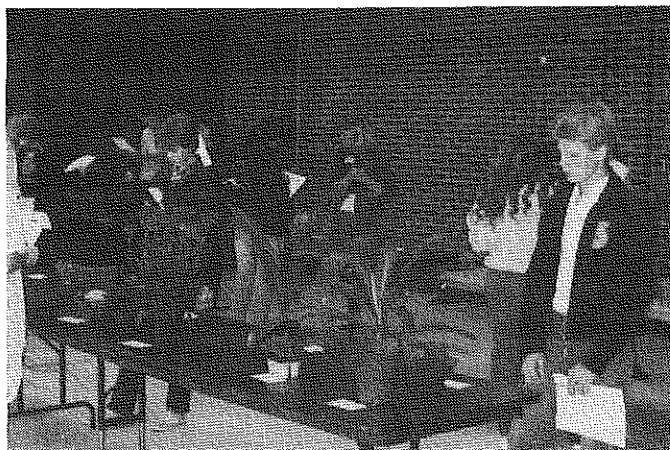
The second mission of the Division is to provide a mechanism whereby the affiliated organizations of the Division can communicate with AVA.

The resolutions process provides the means for affiliates to communicate to the AVA Board of Directors relative to concerns, issues, suggestions and recommendations of the Agricultural Education Division. By generating resolutions, the Division may impact upon AVA policy. But, only if the grassroot members of the affiliated organizations initiate the process at that level.

The Agricultural Education Division receives input from the three affiliated organizations primarily through the deliberations of the Division Policy Committee. Concerns, issues, suggestions, and recommendations can be communicated to the Division vice president by any member of AVA.

Likewise, through the resolutions process, each affiliated organization can impact upon Agricultural Education Division policy.

Agricultural Education Division input is funneled to AVA through (1) resolutions generated and approved by the Division; (2) direct dialogue by the Division vice president at formal AVA Board of Directors meetings; (3) direct



Students must be adequately prepared beforehand if they are to be successful in FFA judging contests. (Photo courtesy of Joe Raunikar.)

correspondence to AVA headquarters staff; and (4) personal contacts via letters, telephone, telegrams, etc.

How effective this mission is in influencing professional affairs for the membership depends almost entirely upon the membership. If the membership does not express its feelings through the resolutions process, the Division will be ineffective in achieving mission No. 2.

Mission No. 3: The National Council

Identifying, verifying, developing strategies, and implementing plans to resolve priority issues facing the profession is the third mission of the Agricultural Education Division.

How is this mission achieved?

On the agenda of each Policy Committee meeting of the Agricultural Education Division there is an item of business pertaining to "priority issues to be forwarded to the National Council on Vocational and Technical Education in Agriculture (NCVTEA). Representatives of each affiliated organization are provided the opportunity to suggest and discuss issues affecting the affiliate specifically, or the profession generally, which they desire to have sent forward to the Council for deliberation. At the present time, NASAE is actively preparing position papers to address several priority issues this affiliate considers of major importance.

Again, it is imperative that the Division receives input regarding priority issues facing the profession from the three affiliated organizations. In turn, affiliates must receive input from the membership.

An issue, to be an issue, must have two sides — a pro and a con. What are some of the priority issues which the agricultural education profession must address in the near future? Several issues facing the profession were presented to the National Academy of Sciences committee studying "Agricultural Education at the Secondary Level" at a hearing in Atlanta last December (see Insider, AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION, March, 1986 issue of VOCATIONAL EDUCATION JOURNAL).

Additional issues the agricultural education profession must deal with in the future are as follows:

1. Should federal presence in vocational education in agriculture programs be continued or be eliminated?

2. Should the U.S. Department of Agriculture take a more active role to support formal education in agriculture, or should support remain primarily with the U.S. Department of Education?
3. Should federal money be utilized to support local programs of vocational agriculture, or should these programs be supported by local and state funds only?
4. In the light of a declining farm population, should vocational agriculture programs at the secondary level shift their major instructional emphasis to "agricultural literacy," or should these programs be both "preparatory" and "general" in nature?
5. Should federal funds be available to local schools that offer vocational agriculture programs whose primary purpose is to teach "agricultural literacy?"
6. Should basic principles of agriculture or basic principles of science and math be stressed in vocational agriculture programs at the secondary level?
7. Should the name be changed from "vocational agriculture" to "agricultural science?"
8. Should the "preparation component" of vocational agriculture be shifted to the postsecondary level as the primary delivery system?

9. Should adult education in agriculture be a component part of public secondary education?
10. Should FFA and its related activities be made available to students enrolled in private/parochial schools, or restricted to public secondary education?

Please be assured this list of issues is not exhaustive. Of more consequence, which of these or other issues are of top priority to you, agricultural educator? Is it not time you voiced your opinion? If you do not soon, it may be too late! Please take a few moments now to write me about how you feel on these or other issues.

Summary

An attempt has been made to illustrate how professional affairs of members of the Agricultural Education profession can be affected by the actions of the Agricultural Education Division. Nothing will change without membership involvement, and then only with an involved membership that is dedicated and committed to the "pursuit of excellence" in vocational-technical education in agriculture at all levels of delivery.

THEME

Professional Affairs and the Beginning Teacher

I owe it to myself to help vocational agriculture education move forward at the regional, state, and national levels.

Professional meetings and conferences bring me ideas and information. They are put to the test before they are passed to me.

Committee projects and other activities enable me to contribute professionally.

When other obligations command my attention, the officers, directors and staff of the NVATA keep working in my interest.

We live in a society of large scale group activity. As vocational agriculture educators, we can promote our interests and discharge our responsibilities through effective organized action.

The individual teacher has an opportunity to be heard in small groups. However, in a country of more than 200 million people only the exceptional individuals will be heard on the national level. For most, successful participation means involvement through organized group action. Through a professional organization, the individual members may extend their views beyond their normal outreach. A professional organization provides a forum for persons of similar backgrounds and common interests so they can meet to discuss both old and new ideas.

Individuals who engage in association activities are



BY SAM STENZEL

(Mr. Stenzel is Executive Director of NVATA, P.O. Box 15051, Alexandria, Virginia 22309.)

more often more aware of the issues and problems confronting their profession. The individual member plays a vital role in establishing policies and goals of the profession, supplying the public with appropriate and correct information, making policy makers aware of the need for funds to improve and expand programs, securing appropriate legislation, and working for more desirable status for the profession.

Individual members, through a professional organization, can most effectively engage in the collection, development, interpretation, and dissemination of the information relative to vocational agriculture education. Through self-study, research, professional conferences and conventions, the member gains insight into the issues and problems confronting the profession.

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Professional Affairs and the Beginning Teacher *(Continued from page 9)*

The National Association

The National Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association (NVATA) is an affiliation of 50 state vocational agricultural teacher associations. The membership includes secondary, postsecondary and adult teachers of vocational agriculture, state supervisors of agricultural education, teacher educators in universities preparing students to teach vocational agriculture, and student teachers. More than 10,000 secondary and postsecondary schools teach vocational agriculture classes below the baccalaureate degree. Nearly 9,000 vocational agriculture educators are members of the NVATA. For administrative purposes, the NVATA is divided into six regions, each served by a vice president. Business is conducted by a Board of Directors comprised of the president, president-elect, and the vice presidents. All are classroom teachers of vocational agriculture education. The NVATA maintains a national office in Alexandria, Virginia, operated by a full-time executive director and staff.

Communications is the strength of a professional organization. NVATA communications are initiated and maintained through the national office, to the regional vice presidents, to the SVATA or State Association officers, and to the individual members via newsletters. Newsletters from the national office disseminate professional information related to programs, legislation, and member services. Regional newsletters not only communicate similar information, but also give directions or procedures and implementation. SVATAs communicate directly with individual members . . . the grassroots. The communications system enables members to become involved and participate in professional activities. Beginning teachers are encouraged to participate in the (1) state/region/national conferences, (2) professional improvement workshops, and (3) awards programs.

Practically every state conducts an annual conference. Some states have joint vocational agriculture meetings. Others conduct conferences for vocational agriculture educators with the SVATA conducting business meetings as part of the conference(s). Beginning teacher involvement is recommended. The NVATA conducts a regional

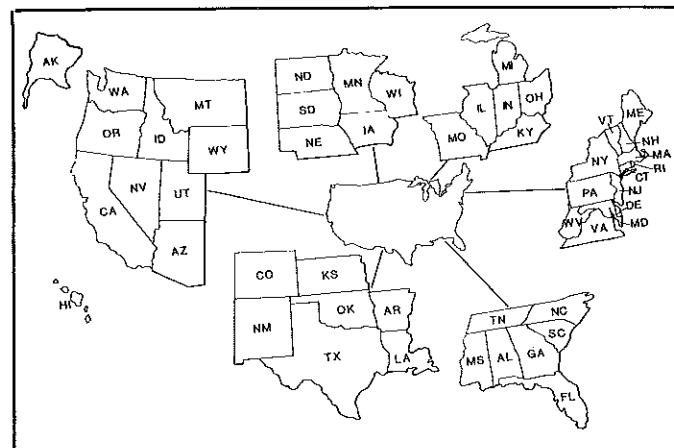


Figure 1: NVATA Regions

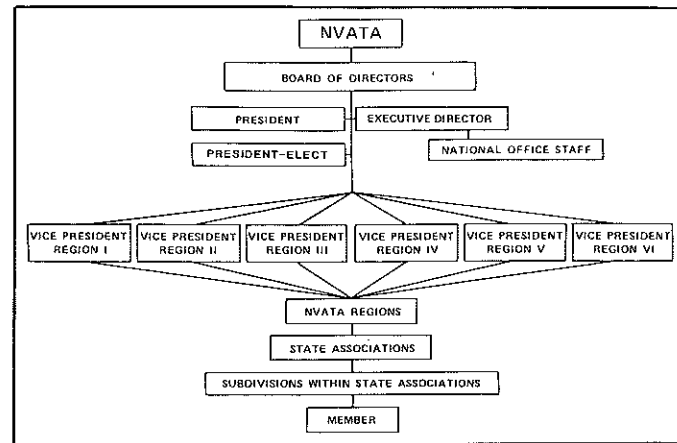


Figure 2: NVATA Organizational Structure

leadership conference annually. Although all members are encouraged to participate, travel is often a limiting factor. Members should make a special effort to attend whenever the conference is hosted by their state association or the meeting is held in a neighboring state. The NVATA also conducts an annual national conference. Since the program includes the annual business meeting, normally SVATA officers attend as official delegates. The meetings are "open" and members are encouraged to attend whenever feasible. The major advantage to attending meetings such as these is that it provides an opportunity for involvement, personal growth, and professional improvement.

Programs and Activities

The NVATA coordinates several programs which offer professional improvement opportunities for members. The "Partners for Professional Improvement" program focuses upon public relations at the local and state level. The "Grain Marketing" and "Livestock Marketing" seminars are workshops on "futures" marketing. "Ag Mechanics Technical Update" workshops provide members the latest information on maintaining modern agriculture machines and equipment. The "Computers in Agriculture" workshop incorporates the use of computers in the classroom and reviews programs available for local use. These programs are sponsored by agriculture/agribusiness industries and are conducted by their representatives. Participation is limited. Enrollment is available only to NVATA members through state associations. SVATA and NVATA have access to program information. They use their newsletters to announce programs.

Many NVATA "Awards and Recognition" programs are available. Although some give advantages to experienced teachers, several . . . Thirty Minute Club, Ideas Unlimited, Outstanding Young Member, Outstanding Vocational Agriculture Teacher . . . are amenable for those with few years of teaching. The programs vary in expanse. The "Thirty Minute Club" award provides a recognition certificate; the "Ideas Unlimited" program gives regional recognition; the "Outstanding Young Member" and "Outstanding Vocational Agriculture Program" give statewide recognition with an opportunity for regional recognition. Each regional winner received an expense paid trip to the annual NVATA National Convention. Each of

these programs is coordinated by the NVATA, but administered through the SVATA. State and national officers can provide information.

Summary

The NVATA is recognized as a leader for vocational agriculture education. It strives to provide professional leadership and services to members. The NVATA has been, is, and will continue to be an effective, viable voice

for vocational agriculture. The individual member is represented by the SVATA delegates at the national convention. It is the delegates who establish priorities for the NVATA. In this manner, the individual member is involved in determining priorities and setting goals for the profession. How the individual member assumes that obligation and discharges those responsibilities will largely determine the future and growth of the NVATA in the decade ahead. It is vitally important that every vocational agriculture educator be involved.

THEME

Professional Affairs and the New Teacher Educator

On several occasions, I have heard a distinguished teacher educator say (in a rather gruff voice), "Teacher education is the only profession I know in which we cannibalize our young." In regard to professional affairs, I think he is correct. We expect our new teacher educators to be actively involved in professional activities while at the same time, we make it very difficult for them to participate in such activities.

Much of this is due to the fact that those with leadership roles in a professional organization are reluctant to assign anyone they have not met (or know very little about) to a committee or other professional responsibility. Thus, new teacher educators are left out in the cold. Or more accurately, they are left with a blank space on their vita. When they submit their materials to a peer review committee for promotion and/or tenure, the committee severely masticates these unfortunate individuals for their lack of professional activities (or, as our distinguished teacher educator claims, digests them!).

Another problem for the new teacher educator is the Catch 22 situation that exists where one cannot travel to a professional meeting unless one has some type of responsibility. The catch is you can't get a responsibility unless you agree to go. Although this is also a problem for experienced teacher educators, it is usually the new teacher educator that is left behind.

So what can be done? One obvious thing we can do is continue to encourage our professional leaders to consciously include neophytes when making committee or professional assignments. However, most of the responsibility cannot lie with the leadership in the profession. That burden must be accepted by the new teacher educator. The following is a short list of suggestions for new teacher educators to review as they become professionally active.

Becoming Active

1. **Recognize that you are going to have to spend money out of your own pocket.** Although I am a firm believer that an institution should provide financial assistance for participation in professional activities, I am also convinced



By PAUL VAUGHN

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that there are few departments today which can afford to pay 100 percent of the costs for every faculty member's professional activities. I'm not just talking about payment of dues (we know that will come from your own pocket); I am also talking about travel to and from state, regional, and national events. You should recognize that many people in the agricultural education profession (most notably teachers and state supervisors) have, for years, paid their way to professional activities. Do not assume that all teacher educators get a free ride when it comes to participation in professional activities. We have been fortunate, as a group, to have many of our expenses paid, but I know of no teacher educator who is active professionally who has not paid a number of his/her own expenses on different occasions.

If you wish to become an active participant in professional affairs, this may be the hardest obstacle to overcome. No one needs to tell me (or my wife) the financial strain that professional activities place on the family budget of a beginning teacher educator. However, this is part of being a professional, and professional expenses should be one item that you include every year in your personal or family budget. Even though it happens at a time when you can least afford it, you will find that involvement in professional activities will pay great dividends later in your career.

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2. **Don't wait to be asked.** If you sit back and wait for professional responsibilities to be assigned to you, you may have a long wait. If you wish to serve on a particular committee or have an interest in a certain activity, be sure to let the individual in charge of appointments know of your interest. It does not mean that you will automatically be appointed, but in numerous cases this is what happens. I can assure you that no one will be offended if you volunteer your services — especially, if you indicate that you are willing to serve in *any* capacity. One of the most difficult tasks for a chair or president is identifying people who are willing to conduct or assist with a particular activity, and most individuals welcome offered assistance.

I know of several young teacher educators who were astounded at the method utilized to determine membership on a number of AVA Agricultural Education Committees. They found the major criteria for selection was *expressed interest in serving on the committee!* They were eager to participate, but had held back because they thought only experienced people could be appointed. Once they attended a meeting and expressed their interest, the leadership was more than happy to appoint them to the committee. Most of these individuals went on to chair these committees and become heavily involved in other professional activities.

3. **Be willing to do some of the more unpleasant assignments.** The desire to do a good job in teaching, research, and service, coupled with a limited number of resources (usually time), often misguides beginning teacher educators when it comes to professional activities. There is a temptation to look only at activities which do not require a tremendous amount of work. I can assure you that most important activities are usually the ones which require the most work.

Volunteering to assist with activities which are tedious, time-consuming, and sometimes unpleasant is the quickest way to get involved in professional activities. Needless to say, these are the activities that are of interest to few people; however, you might find the activities really weren't as unpleasant as you thought. Doing a good job on activities which other people tend to avoid is always noted (and appreciated) by leaders in the organization. Do a good job, and you can be sure you will be asked to participate in other activities which you may find more rewarding and less time-consuming.

4. **Take your assignment/responsibility seriously.** Complete any assignment/responsibility you have on time,



New teacher educators are often asked to organize and conduct FFA judging activities that require enormous time to coordinate. (Photo courtesy of Joe Raunikar.)

regardless of what others on the committee/program do. Needless to say, it should also be done to the best of your ability. This will mean that you may have burned the midnight oil on more than one occasion only to find the whole activity scrapped because others didn't complete their responsibility.

Regardless of what others do, professional leaders will make note of the work that you have done, and it won't be long before you will be placed in charge. Conversely, failure to complete your assigned task is the surest way to keep from being assigned another professional responsibility.

5. **Recognize the real value of being professionally active.** I am afraid that up to this point, I have emphasized the monetary or intrinsic value of participating in professional activities. In reality, there are two kinds of professional development: (1) that which improves one's ability to function in a professional field, and (2) that which improves one's chance for promotion, tenure, and merit raises. The former, which is many times extrinsic in nature, represents the true value of being an active professional and should be the major driving force behind your participation.

Along the same line, don't expect to be rewarded for everything that you do. Because of the number of people in the profession, it is possible that you can be extremely active in professional affairs and never receive an award or be elected to an office. If that should happen to you, please do not feel that you have not gained something from your professional activities. In addition to gaining information which will keep you on the cutting edge of the profession, you will have gained something that many people never acquire — the respect of your colleagues. And that may, at some point, pay the biggest dividend of all.

Professionalism Among State Supervisors



By DEWEY STEWART

(Dr. Stewart is President of NASAE and Chief Consultant of Agribusiness Education, State Department of Public Instruction, 229 State House, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204.)

What is a professional? What is professionalism within a given profession? There have been numerous books, articles, and reports written on these topics. However, I believe that the first thing one should do as an individual is to accept the responsibility to *join, attend and actively participate* in the professional activities of your profession. Numerous changes have taken place in agriculture, education, and lifestyles since I attended my first Vocational Agriculture Education Annual Conference as a beginning teacher. My high school Vocational Agriculture instructor, Mr. Justin Graves of Bloomington, Indiana, took me aside and proceeded to tell me to pay my dues and to attend and participate in the meetings. As a result of the respect that I had for him, I joined, attended, and participated in the professional activities of the association even though I had not yet received a paycheck. As I look back into the past, my former teacher's advice was just another piece of valuable information that he shared with me as a student, fellow teacher, and as a state supervisor.

Joining one's professional organization should be automatic and should be a part of life on the job. If one does not join, in my opinion, he/she should *get out* of the profession. The professional organization was developed to achieve the objectives and goals of the profession. Joining one's professional organization is not the goal, but only one step in being a professional.

Benefits of Professional Organizations

The professional organization serves as a sounding board for expressing concerns and opportunities, and uniting the body as a whole for promoting the profession.

The real goal of a professional organization is to further both the development of individual professional growth and the professional organization. An individual must make a reasonable, responsible commitment to the profession in which he/she is active. One must also be willing to do those things necessary to continue and further the profession. These activities must be considered part of the job, and not a short cut for recognition or advancement. If one wants to see improvement in oneself and/or one's professional organization, you must become actively involved.

One of the keys to becoming involved is the ability to effectively communicate with individuals within as well as outside of the profession. We are moving more and more into the difficulties of an information society. As the amount of information increases, the chance of a communication breakdown increases. To be a successful communicator, one must first determine what is wanted and realize that it must be understood. As a result, there must be continuous dialogue to ensure that what one says is heard, and is correctly understood. Second, what you want must be understood by all parties as being consistent with the goals of the profession. Third, the communication must be clearly understood as to the needs and/or goals of the individual(s) who has the authority or responsibility

for carrying out the desires and/or decisions. Fourth, the individual(s) who accepts the decision must not only be willing, but capable of doing so. Fifth, and probably most critical is the integrity of the individual in providing consistent and effective communication.

Traits of a Professional

The following are some traits and characteristics of a professional. How do you rate? 1) Do you have the burning desire to serve others? 2) Do you take full responsibility for your decisions and actions? 3) Do you continuously seek self improvement? 4) Do you feel that you are working for a boss? 5) Do you contribute to your profession? 6) Are you proud of your profession? 7) Are you honest and dependable in meeting your obligations? 8) Do you do what is necessary to get the job done? 9) Do you support all of the professional organizations within your profession? 10) Are you sensitive to problems and opportunities of others and your peers? 11) Do you avoid gossip and rumors? 12) Do you make things happen? 13) Do you plan for future results? and 14) Are you sometimes reactive but often proactive? If you will take the necessary time to thoroughly think through the ramifications of each of the above questions and to answer each truthfully, you will be provided with an indication of how you rate as a professional.

Effective Supervisors

In addition to the traits and characteristics of professionals, supervisors have some additional specialties that are effective. The following are some traits of supervisors that are effective: 1) Keep top management informed. 2) Be flexible; practice the art of the possible and sometimes the impossible. 3) Identify opportunities and/or problems. 4) Know when to deal with the cause of a problem and when to ignore it. 5) Know what to do if the problem has or has not been solved. 6) Provide inspiration; have enthusiasm for tasks and ideas. 7) Know how to brainstorm a list of solutions. 8) Know how to make a cost/benefit analysis of solutions. 9) Take calculated risks; do not be satisfied with the status quo. 10) Know the difference between actual

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Coming in December . . .

Staying Current in Horticulture

Professionalism Among State Supervisors

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alternatives and perceived alternatives, and which are more important. 11) Assign responsibility; know staff strengths and weaknesses and your own. 12) Sometimes suggest; sometimes specify; allow ideas to develop. 13) Give credit; release power, accept others' ideas, give recognition. 14) Know how to listen well; question, restate, articulate, interpret. 15) Have professional knowledge, an experimental background, imagination. 16) Understand the creative process; the flow of ideas is not continuous. 17) Respect individual differences. 18) Have insight; see beyond the obvious. 19) Know how to lead subordinates in implementing a solution. 20) Understand the process and value of setting deadlines in implementing solutions. There is the possibility that there is no supervisor who possesses all the characteristics listed above. Perhaps all supervisors could improve by being aware of the skills they already have, and the skills they need to develop. One difference between a good supervisor and a great supervisor is the mastery of time and knowing how to effectively multiply one's hands with less resources being available.

To the question, "Is There Professionalism Among State Supervisors?" my answer is a very empathetic Yes. Of course, I would be the first to agree that my perception is a very biased one. However, let me explain one small activity of the National Association of Supervisors of Agricultural Education (NASAE), which is the professional organization for State Supervisors of Vocational Agricultural Education across the nation. NASAE will be conducting its Second Annual Workshop in Kansas City, Missouri on November 10-12, 1986 which is three days prior to the National Future Farmers of America Convention. This workshop will necessitate all 83 program participants, plus the rest of the professional membership, having to arrive in Kansas City three days early with the expense of two or three extra nights lodging plus meals in order to attend this workshop. The question arises as to why would these ladies and gentlemen sacrifice this amount of time and money to attend one workshop. The reason is that they are professionals, and their professional commitment to achieve the goals of their profession overrides other considerations.

Workshop Agenda

The agenda for the workshop consists of such topics as: 1) What is the Role of Supervisors of Vocational Agricultural Education in Educating Society about Agriculture?; 2) What Adjustments in our Vocational Agricultural Education Programs are Needed to Meet the Employment



Contest coordination is one of many duties of supervisors in agricultural education. (Photo courtesy of Joe Raunikar.)

Needs of the Food and Fiber System for the Next Decade? 3) What Makes Vocational Agriculture Different from Other Education Programs and Are These Uniquenesses Necessary?; 4) How Can We Maintain Effective Leadership in Vocational Agricultural Education with Reduced Resources? Three supervisors will be independently presenting position papers as well as oral presentations to the workshop participants on one of the above topics. This process will be duplicated four times, using three different supervisors for each of the different topics. If one gives serious consideration to each of the four topics, one must surely concur that each is difficult to respond to, and that a reasonable answer cannot be executed completely in a short period of time. By the end of the workshop, there will be a position paper developed on each of the four topics which will be presented to representatives of business and industry to respond and react to at the Annual Convention in Dallas, Texas. At that time, a final position paper will be developed and will be used by all supervisors in Agricultural Education.

Another segment of the Annual Workshop which is extremely important involves the reports of nine national committees each of which is comprised of a chairperson and a representative from the central, western, southern, and eastern regions of the nation. These committee reports will have a direct effect on the future of NASAE, and must be approached with knowledge, clear communications, and professionalism. It is evident that there must be a tremendous amount of time, commitment, and resources dedicated to this activity beyond the call of duty . . . which is a part of professionalism.

**See the Professional Organizations in Action . . .
Attend the AVA, NVATA, NASAE, and AATEA Meetings
in Dallas, TX, December 5-9, 1986.**

THEME

Staying Current: Professional Affairs and the AVA



By JIM GUILLINGER

(Mr. Guillinger is President of AVA, 197 Nichols Drive, RR 3, Sycamore, Illinois 60178.)

Each of us develops different concepts of who is a professional, how professionals are developed, or how we measure professionalism. We all perceive in our minds who we believe to be professional or how a professional might be developed.

I contend that a professional cannot be categorized under a set of criteria because each of us is different in so many aspects that measurement is difficult.

We all have also listened to many describe what they believe a professional organization should be or whom it represents and how individuals can make input into their professional organization.

The American Vocational Association is no different from any other professional organization with its supporters and its critics. All professional organizations reflect the desires of either a few continuing leaders or the inputs of its total membership, and this depends on the structure and nature of their membership and the makeup of the current officers of the organizations. Professional organizations were founded or are conceived by individuals with common goals who band together to achieve those goals which the individual cannot achieve alone.

The American Vocational Association was officially organized 60 years ago to support Vocational Education in all areas known then and has enlarged as new areas have emerged over that sixty-year history. The Agricultural Education Division, along with Home Economics and Trade and Industrial Education, were the leaders in the organization and the development of the AVA.

It was believed then, and I believe today, that the joining together of more vocational educators with common interests would enable the profession to assist and encourage federal and state legislation for the good of all youth and adults to become employable through educational programs carried on throughout our nation. I firmly believe that is still the basic reason for the AVA and all other Vocational Education Divisions and individuals.

The value of professional organizations such as the AVA is more critical today than ever before. Our early governmental leaders believed it was their responsibility to direct educational and other national programs for the common good of its citizens to upgrade the nation in general. I contend today, due to philosophical changes in our social system, that the ability of government to develop long-time programs in education, energy, and other national goals has declined. It becomes the responsibility of professional organizations to now develop, support and encourage our governmental leaders to adopt long-time national goals in all areas and specifically Vocational Education if we are to continue our leadership which we helped pioneer in earlier years.

Structure Allows Input

In order for the AVA to become a more effective organization, we must develop a better structure which allows individual members the opportunity to give direction to the organization. Efforts have already begun in the changing of the AVA delegate assembly meeting time to the middle of the annual convention rather than at the close for the 1986 Dallas Convention.

The AVA Past President's Study Group recommended, and the Board of Directors has appointed a committee to fully study the current AVA By-Laws structure. The Committee will report in December, 1986 and its recommendations are to be voted on at the 1987 Convention.

The AVA must, in my opinion, develop within its structure methods for individual members, at state and affiliate division levels, a greater opportunity to address national issues and concerns before arriving at the annual meeting for enactment. Currently, too few individuals have an opportunity to make input for they may not, or cannot, attend the National Convention. The bulk of the AVA membership is still the classroom teacher and many feel they do not have the opportunity to make long-term decisions affecting their personal vocational departments where they are employed. This feeling of distance causes vocational teachers to become disillusioned with any organization which they might wish to support with their membership dues.

The AVA leadership must develop guidelines and policy statements concerning Vocational Education which cause the organization to be ready to address national and state Vocational Education concerns at the start and not be a reactive organization which must address issues after they surface. Failure to alter this position will only result in more membership unrest and criticism.

Previous and current AVA Boards are working very hard to correct this perception and turn the AVA into a broad-based, membership-driven organization that has established positions developed and will be aggressive proponents of Vocational Education instead of seeming to be reactive to issues affecting Vocational Education. The

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Staying Current: Professional Affairs and the AVA

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Board of Directors, the current Executive Director, and the staff fully believe this philosophy more today than in the past history of the organization.

Strong Divisions Needed

The Agricultural Education Division has historically been the strongest component of the AVA through its affiliated groups of the NVATA, NASAE, and AATEA. I fully expect the Division to continue that strong leadership and assist in the future directions which the AVA needs to address. Each of the Divisions of AVA has individual interests with which they are deeply concerned. Yet, all of the Divisions can agree on many issues in common. The AVA needs to support the common issues in Vocational Education which we agree upon and yet allow for individual differences which each Division supports. The leadership of the Divisions needs to understand the AVA cannot address or solve each Division's concerns individually without affecting all to the same degree. Here the divisional leadership must address those pertinent issues through their own structure and methods in a cooperative manner with the AVA.

Greater emphasis must be encouraged to all within the AVA to develop the understanding with membership as to the structure of the total organization. I learned as a classroom teacher through many years how I, as a local teacher, was part of a huge national organization that can affect national and state policies. Most classroom teachers do not understand the operating structure of the organization to which they pay dues to support.

As a classroom agriculture teacher in Illinois, I became aware that my first objective was to get support for my concerns at the section level involving 20 other agriculture teachers. Our resolution, or position, if supported and encouraged, could move through the state to the Region NVATA, through the National NVATA, through the Agricultural Education Division, and through the AVA which brought the support of the entire membership to recognize my idea or concern. The structure exists, but is not known by thousands of members and this must be corrected in order to assist the local member to bring about effective direction for his/her organization.

I believe classroom teachers are interested in improving their leadership and their instructional abilities. Greater participation and leadership by classroom teachers is quite possible if the organization encourages it. Those of us in current leadership roles must truly believe that this participation is important to the strength of the organization. If the opportunity to participate is walled-off from the classroom teachers through barriers such as financial ability, time, and lack of training, then we will not achieve leadership development and we will probably have disillusioned teachers who may not return to buy our services a second time.

Leadership Development

For many years, business and industry have effectively used leadership development programs to improve their managerial and sales personnel. Farmland Industries over twenty years ago established its own leadership school in Kansas City to improve the capabilities of all types of employees as well as newly elected Board of Directors members. We, in our profession, need also to provide this form of leadership development for our members and officers. Some AVA divisional affiliates have already developed cooperative programs with related business and industries which are presented annually at regional and state association meetings.

It is my belief that the use of the AVA regional structure is the most effective system for developing the leadership skills of state association officers. It is imperative that these programs not be organized as sessions where individuals talk about leadership; rather, they must involve the participants in an active role. Leadership qualities are not developed as well or as quickly by observation as they are through participation and evaluation.

Like the state affiliate group leaders, state association officers need to learn what their responsibilities are. We have already learned that many remitters of dues to the AVA office from the state associations have been newly elected officers who were never assisted or instructed as to their duties.

Summary

We must continue to develop and conduct programs that will aid the local members to fully understand how their professional organization is structured and how to use that system to achieve individual and collective goals.

Isolation of one's self from a professional organization due to indifference or misunderstanding will never benefit a local teacher in any endeavor to improve a situation.

State and nationally elected officers must never cease in their efforts to represent the membership in their actions or thoughts, for officers only exist to carry out the desires of a professional organization's members.



Professionalism begins at an early age. These FFA members present a professional appearance through their dress and grooming. (Photo by Rosco Vaughn.)

THEME

Staying Current: Professional Affairs and Preparing Professional Teachers of Agriculture



BY ART BERKEY

(Dr. Berkey is President of AATEA, and Professor and Coordinator of Agricultural and Occupational Education, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York 14853.)

Professionalism has been and is an integral part of agricultural education beginning with its early development. The emphasis on professionalism is readily apparent from the content of early to present day articles in *The Agricultural Education Magazine*. Although the emphasis has been a continuing one, the definition of a professional has been modified to reflect changes in the agricultural education profession, public schools in general, and society at large. Examples of such changes include a general reduction of the work week across society, a marked increase in the number of FFA activities, state supervisors of agricultural education in reduced numbers who no longer allocate budget nor provide comprehensive first year teacher supervision, increased emphasis on academics, and development of the attitude of "working to live" rather than "living to work."

Agricultural instructors teach in the current educational/societal environment. Hence professionalism must be defined in the context of these realities. Toward that end, this article defines professionalism in the context of five areas and suggests some priority activities to develop professionalism as part of the preservice and inservice teacher education program.

Areas of Professionalism

The areas of professionalism addressed in this article are: a quality local program, service to the profession, commitment and ethics, service to the community, and family and self.

A Quality Local Program

First and foremost, a professional teacher conducts a quality local program of vocational agriculture whereby students learn relevant knowledge, attitudes and skills. Such a program has the support of students, administrators, the board of education, and the community which means it will survive in times when hard choices are made. First-year teachers need to focus their primary efforts on the local program.

A quality vocational agriculture program requires a balance of classroom and laboratory instruction, FFA, and supervised occupational experiences (SOE). The "what" may vary depending upon student differences — especially for handicapped students, but the "if" should be affirmative for all enrolled students.

Effective classroom/laboratory instruction includes knowledge of curriculum and the selection and use of quality instructional materials. Effective security, inventory, and budgeting for supplies, tools, and equipment are

also needed, as is actively sought inservice to keep up-to-date technically.

The FFA as an intracurricular youth organization requires advisor guidance and member decisions. Officers and committee chairpersons to implement a program of work planned primarily by students are essentials for a successful chapter. Also, given the wide and increasing range of possible FFA activities, contests, and awards, selection based on member interests and needs is important for a balanced program. It is not uncommon to see FFA expanded at the expense of SOE and technical units of instruction.

Two national seminars on SOE in 1982 and 1984 reflect widespread concern in the profession about reduced student participation in SOE. Some of the reasons for the lower participation are lack of administrative support for travel and visitation time, and fewer teachers on summer employment. Continuance of SOE which "makes vocational agriculture vocational" is a major current challenge to our professionalism.

Public relations is integral to the vocational agriculture program. Stated simply, it involves having a quality program and informing the public about it.

It is in the classroom that the war on ignorance is won with teachers serving as the "educational infantry." It needs to be remembered that other staff are "support troops" whose mission is to support the infantry. Thus, a quality local program is the basic core of professionalism.

Commitment and Ethics

Teacher commitment and ethical behavior are a second area of professionalism. The NVATA Creed states, "I am a teacher of agriculture by choice, not by chance." Commitment also involves development of a carefully thought out philosophy of agricultural education so that it is clear what

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Staying Current: Professional Affairs and Preparing Professional Teachers of Agriculture

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one is "committed to." That is, the priorities and decisions we make should be able to be predicted based on our philosophy.

Ethical behavior is reflected in fair treatment of students, fellow teachers, and others with whom we interact. Serving as a model for youth is an important responsibility since values are taught primarily by example. The outer limits of ethics are defined by educational and civil law. It is the grey areas within the *de jure* boundaries where ethics need to follow the golden rule.

Service to the Profession

Teacher abilities and interests vary widely as do the service and leadership tasks needed to maintain and advance the agricultural education profession. The tasks range from serving as a big brother/sister to a beginning teacher in an adjacent school, to holding national office in the NVATA. It is important to learn about the purpose, structure, and program of work of our professional organizations as a basis for making a contribution based on individual teacher ability, interest, and time available.

Service to the profession (including ourselves) begins with membership in state and national professional organizations — "If we aren't willing to help ourselves, who do we believe will/should?" It is important to note here that membership in teacher organizations that negotiate wages, hours and working conditions serve an important, but different purpose. Such cannot, and do not, substitute for professional organizations in agriculture and vocational education.

The priority activities are those conducted at the county and subdistrict level. Any organization is only as strong as its grassroots. Interaction with other agricultural teachers with similar interests and challenges allows sharing of ideas that can be used to improve local programs. Regional, state, and national meetings allow you to contribute and your voice to be heard. For example, many state and national contests are possible only because of teacher volunteers. The same is true for many inservice activities. The work is light when everyone carries part of the load.

Service to the Community

Professionals also contribute to the community in which they live. However, caution is needed to avoid overcommitment in order to retain balance in other areas. The same qualities that make a successful vocational agriculture teacher also make a strong community leader. The word "No" will need to be part of your vocabulary. This in no way diminishes the satisfaction, good contacts, and public relations that result from local community service. Rather, it is a matter of balance with the other areas of professional activity which are also important. One approach is to use FFA activities such as BOAC to both contribute to your community and provide an educational experience for students. A danger to avoid is over involvement in the

local community at the expense of interaction with the profession so as to become isolated from other teachers who can enhance your professional growth.

Family and Self

The professional teacher consciously schedules time for family and self. Family relationships take time to nurture and develop. Time for self is a common need for all. High divorce and burn-out rates for teachers of agriculture attest to the results of placing low priority on this area — as it is very easy to do. Scheduling and using specific time for family and self are an important part of professionalism.

Developing Professionalism Through the Teacher Education Program

Teacher education program activities that can contribute to the development of professionalism include:

1. Modeling of professionalism by teacher educators. This means a quality program and activities in the other four areas described earlier in this article.
2. Stressing 100 percent student membership in professional organizations at the state and national level. In New York State, this means only total student dues of \$12.
3. Including *The Agricultural Education Magazine* as a required course text. The current cost of a 10 month subscription is only \$4.00 per person, less than most paper texts. Use *The Magazine* in coursework to demonstrate its values and assure that it is read.
4. Teaching a unit on professional role and development. Include exercises on developing an educational philosophy and the purposes, structure and interrelationship of professional organizations. Schedule practicing teachers who are active in organizations as resource persons. Be explicit as to what constitutes professionalism, and prepare students to ask questions of resource persons in the context of professionalism. This provides the level of realism to show it not only should, but can be done. Also, include work on developing a long-range written professional improvement plan. For example, looking at the five areas, one could decide to do one community service activity the first year without specifying the activity. This provides planning and facilitates setting priorities.
5. Taking time to explain the contribution of professional organizations to decisions on current issues, e.g., the funding levels for vocational education and how teachers are impacted by such decisions.



New York teachers of agriculture, Bruce Erath and Betty Wolanyk, performing during a teacher talent show. (Photo by Warren Giles.)

6. Selecting supervising teachers who model professionalism. All teachers are not necessarily professional despite their having a quality local program.
7. Having students elect a student representative to the State Agriculture Teachers Association. In New York, an elected student is a member of the Executive Council which has proven to be a productive arrangement.
8. Including students in professional meetings/activities as part of the teacher education program. Also, provide travel expenses where possible.
9. Involve students in writing letters to legislators on current issues. The student representative can facilitate this process.

10. Last, but not least, demonstrate through the student agricultural education organization the value of professional interaction. Take time to discuss what is intended and why it is important.

The foregoing teacher education activities listed are not inclusive and represent ideas contributed by others. This illustrates the importance of professional interaction to professionalism.

Professionalism involves balanced effort in the five areas of a quality local program, commitment and ethics, service to the profession, service to the community, and family and self. Activities in the teacher education program to develop professionalism are suggested.

THEME

The Supervisor's Role in Promoting Professionalism Among Vocational Agriculture Teachers

If supervisors are to play a vital role in promoting professionalism among vocational agriculture teachers, they must first be professional and be a member of their professional organizations.

There is a saying which says, "Tell me, I'll forget. Show me, I may remember. Involve me, I'll understand."

Yes, a supervisor should be a member of the State Association, the National Association (NVATA), the AVA, and his/her own National Organization, NASAE. How can a supervisor be effective professionally if she or he is not a part of the system? If you have a State FFA Foundation or State FFA Alumni, how can you influence others into being a part of two supportive groups if you are not a member? A supervisor must set the example rather than telling teachers, "This is good for you."

To promote professionalism among vocational agriculture teachers, the supervisor must be one who has experience, a minimum of five years as a vocational agriculture instructor — preferably 10 years, and who was recognized by peers as being a quality professional vocational agriculture teacher. Again, we must be an example and have established credibility before we can influence others.

The supervisor's objective is to assist the local instructor in improving the program. This person should not be viewed as a compliance officer or an inspector who is on the opposite side in a boss type position. A supervisor's effectiveness diminishes when she or he has many responsibilities other than vocational agriculture programs. This umbrella type arrangement can lead to a jack of all trades — master of none, and certainly lessen his or her role with vocational agriculture teachers. If we are to be effective vocational agriculture supervisors, then our supervision must be specifically Vocational Agriculture.



By JOE RAUNIKAR

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The supervisor should encourage the vocational agriculture teacher to be a professional member of the local school system. We must insist that vocational teachers cooperate and work with their administration, counselors, and other teachers in the system. Teachers should support each other and refrain from criticizing other teachers in the system. As the song goes, "If you sling dirt, you will lose a little ground." Just remember that vocational agriculture teachers are not immune to the same critics of the school system and it is good to know and have the support from your fellow teachers.

Supervisors must involve vocational agriculture teachers in planning and being a part of Professional Improvement Meetings, District Leadership Meetings, State Conferences, and other activities.

The supervisor should value the input of vocational agriculture teachers and agricultural educators in planning meetings and conferences. It is our responsibility to play a major role in providing a track to receive input from many sources to improve vocational agriculture programs.

The supervisor can promote professionalism among vocational agriculture teachers by discussing and explaining a Code of Ethics for vocational agriculture teachers.

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The Supervisor's Role in Promoting Professionalism Among Vocational Agriculture Teachers

(Continued from page 19)

An experienced teacher who has tenure in the professional group may be the most effective person to explain the code. The Code of Ethics should be written and occasionally revised by representatives of the teachers, educators, and supervisors.

A Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics should include the following relationships —

A. Relationships with FFA Members

1. Stay behind the scenes, allowing the FFA members to be in front at banquets, special programs, etc. See that each event is well-planned.
2. Never use alcoholic beverages of any kind when you are associated with students.
3. Be honest, sincere, and conscientious in your relationships with students as well as with adults.
4. Conduct yourself in a manner that will set a favorable pattern for your students.
5. Stay with FFA members during the night when away at fairs, shows, and contests; do not farm them out. (Girls should have an adult woman as chaperon.)
6. Assist FFA members with personal problems as well as with school affairs.
7. Build reliable young adults as well as sound agricultural programs.
8. Properly inform FFA members about the FFA Code of Ethics.
9. Remit FFA dues before the deadline.
10. Be responsible for your FFA members abiding by all rules when participating in FFA activities and awards programs.

B. Relationships With Your School

1. Keep busy with the responsibilities of your job.
2. Leave your itinerary with the superintendent or principal, and your spouse when working in the community.
3. Exhibit interest in the overall school programs.
4. Attend teachers' meetings and other school meetings.
5. Express your appreciation to other faculty members when they render assistance.
6. Dress appropriately for each occasion; if other men on the faculty wear suits, do likewise; if other women on the faculty wear dresses, do likewise. Have some clothing ready for field trips.
7. Be well-groomed; it costs little — only effort.
8. Refrain from overworking joint programs with other teachers.
9. Seek constructive criticism from local school officials as a means of improving your program of work.
10. Conduct the type of program that establishes you as an educator in agriculture.

C. Relationships With Other Vocational Agriculture Teachers

1. Express appreciation to other teachers and students from other chapters for their successes.
2. Be a good listener and learn from the experiences of others.
3. Always contact the vocational instructor at another department when buying projects or visiting FFA members' projects.
4. Do not voice criticism of other vocational agriculture instructors in a way that it might be gossip.
5. Consult experienced teachers near you when confronted with major problems.
6. Do not bid for other positions.
7. Never apply for a position where a vocational agriculture teacher is already employed.
8. Be a team player — give and take with your fellow teachers.
9. Give information to a co-worker to the best of your ability when asked.
10. When a new teacher asks questions that seem irrelevant, answer as accurately as possible.
11. Send letters of appreciation to other chapters having members who have rendered outstanding service.
12. Invite all agriculture teachers in a county to FFA banquets and local FFA events.
13. Attend all Professional Improvement meetings.
14. Remit NVATA dues promptly.



Student supervision during FFA judging contests is one of many professional duties of vocational agriculture teachers. (Photo courtesy of Joe Raunikar.)



An awards ceremony should be conducted in a professional manner. (Photo by Rosco Vaughn.)

D. Relationships With the State Department

1. Be prompt and accurate with all reports; be on time for all appointments within and outside the community.
2. Work on a full-time basis with the exception of vacation or professional improvement time.
3. Do not use alibis when you have failed to follow through on a detail.
4. Contact the State Department regarding transfers or interviews.
5. Notify the State Department when you are contacted by a superintendent or the board of education regarding a position at their school.
6. Never pass the buck to the State Department.
7. "Stand on your own two feet."
8. If you notice criticism, pass the information on to persons in charge.
9. Be familiar with the *Policy Bulletin* for operation of Vocational Agriculture.
10. Confide and discuss problems with your District Supervisor.
11. Be professional in your thoughts and actions.

E. Other Relationships

1. Be a recognized agricultural leader in your community.
2. Earn and maintain the respect of students and adults.
3. Be familiar with your community.
4. Be a member of the Chamber of Commerce and a civic club if these organizations are active in your community.
5. Cooperate with other agricultural agencies.
6. Do not minimize the efforts of other agencies.
7. Be discrete regarding your salary and money received from other sources.

8. Chewing tobacco should be used with discretion in public.
9. Proper titles of guests and honored persons should be recognized and used — especially in public gatherings.
10. Meet all financial obligations when due and refrain from using credit beyond your ability to meet payments.
11. Be an early-riser for the day's activities.
12. Be objective rather than having a negative attitude.
13. Utilize the professional services of industrial people. Use welding instructors, veterinarians, mechanics, and other agricultural professionals with adult programs.
14. Sponsor programs in the community that will involve more people in agriculture.
15. Send letters of appreciation to individuals, businesses, firms, and organizations who sponsor programs for vocational agriculture students and FFA members.
16. Show appreciation and favorable recognition to elected officials at both the State and National levels.
17. Remember that some problems may be resolved with time.

In too many states, we have witnessed the diminishing role, reduction in numbers, or the elimination of supervisors. Many have been assigned additional responsibilities and others are promoted to supervisory positions with no training or expertise in the area. Under any of the above conditions, promoting professionalism would be extremely difficult. Promoting professionalism among vocational agriculture teachers must be the combined efforts of the teachers, teacher educators, and the supervisors. All three spokes are essential.

ARTICLE

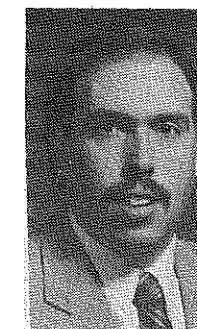
Graduate School, A Time For Decision

There is no better way of staying current in Agricultural Education than improving your educational background. Many times, teachers of agriculture seek to minimize their technical inadequacies through an in-service session or a re-certification course. Although classes of these types help to fill a specialized need, they are limited in helping to broaden your expertise in the total field of education.

Passmore (1980), provides three basic aims for graduate study:

1. To train graduate students in the conduct of research, thereby stimulating critical and creative thinking on questions of fundamental importance, and, by so doing, to throw light on the problems of contemporary society.
2. To provide such training at the graduate level will meet the perceived needs of the community whether short-term or long-term.

(Continued on page 22)



By BRADFORD J. JEFFREYS AND LARRY W. WATSON
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Graduate School, A Time For Decision

(Continued from page 21)

3. To contribute to the general pool of scholarship and discovery.

These aims leave little doubt or uncertainty about the graduate school experience either to those who have been there, or are there currently. We could hypothesize that individuals who have attended graduate school would only agree on one thing. The *decision* to attend graduate school and enthusiastically pursue the master's or doctoral degree is by far the hardest decision to make when reflecting on one's educational aspirations. The reason for apprehension could be attributed to the many positive and negative factors that you would have to consider prior to attending. It is our intention to not only elaborate on the related literature, but to reflect on the many factors we had to contend with prior to undertaking the venture of attending graduate school.

Selecting an Institution

For many teachers of agriculture, selecting an institution is a simple procedure. They may live very close to a major university or community college and find it easier to drive back and forth to complete their degree as a part-time student. Commuting is a widely practiced concept and one that is increasing in popularity for graduate students who are also holding down a full-time teaching job. However, for the teacher who wants to attend graduate school full-time and possibly receive some type of financial incentive (e.g., a loan or departmental assistantship), commuting usually does not afford such opportunities. You are then faced with the decision of selecting and critically evaluating the many institutions which grant both the master's and doctoral degrees. The quality of the program and how that program relates to your needs, objectives, and goals should be considered foremost before all else. If you desire a strong background in educational research, then seek out and attend an institution which advocates such a program. If you prefer to strengthen your technical and practical abilities in agriculture, seek a college or university that is well versed in your area of interest. The ability to assess your educational needs is an important facet of making the decision of which institution to attend.

When evaluating a particular institution's reputation in Agricultural, Vocational, or Technical Education, there are numerous guides and handbooks available which detail the institution's demographics and educational climate. However, there is yet to be published a comprehensive study which highlights the top 20 or 30 university programs for the discipline of agricultural education similar to the famous "Cartter Report" (American Council on Education) of the 1970s. Due to lack of such a study, prospective graduate students have to rely on the common or traditional approach of investigative questioning with former students and faculty of the institution along with the current staff of the institution they are considering.

Some of the things you may want to look at in selecting a school would be the following:

1. What type of students enroll?

2. What are the academic abilities, achievements, skills, geographic representation, and level of professional success of the students upon completion of the program?
3. What are the program's resources?
4. What kind of financial support does the school offer?
5. How complete and current is the University Library?
6. What type of support services and computer facilities are available?
7. What does the program have to offer in terms of curriculum and faculty?
8. What is the program's philosophy or does it have one?
9. How are the classes I have to take determined?
10. Do I pay both in-state and out-of-state tuition?
11. What placement services are available?
12. Is a personal computer required or encouraged?
13. Who most likely would be my advisor?

If at all possible, make an on-site visit to the school. It is one of the better methods the authors found in becoming acquainted with not only the faculty, the department, and the campus, but the community as well. Opportunities to talk with undergraduates, townspeople, and other professors out of your major area of study should be looked upon as time well spent. Their perspectives on issues are valuable pieces of information you should consider.

Adjustment to Academic Life

You, as a new graduate student, will often have many frustrations to deal with upon returning to the classroom as a student. Will I succeed? Can I still study? Will I be able to write a dissertation or thesis? Am I too old? Will classmates value my contributions to classroom discussions? These are viable and realistic questions we have all asked ourselves at one time or another and will probably be asked of future graduate students as well.

The question of succeeding at graduate school is simply a question of your attitude and frame of mind. If you think you can, you will. A positive outlook on your daily routines and responsibilities will definitely affect the outcome of your program. The key here is to be consistent in your thinking and attitude.

The issue of whether you can still study will be one you will find out sooner than you want. You will again have to establish a study pattern and learn how to listen in class. The only advantage your seasoned classmates may have over you is that they are disciplined in their study habits and behavior. You, as a new or returning student, are not.

Writing is a serious proposition in graduate courses. Again, as a teacher of agriculture, this may be an area where you have not had an extensive amount of experience. Graduate study will more than likely afford you an opportunity to enhance your writing skills far beyond the point you ever thought they would eventually reach.

The factor of a graduate student's chronological age is a particularly interesting one. By 1992, half of all college students will be over 25 and 20% will be over 35 (Hodgkinson, cited in Jacobson, 1986, p. 28). These statistics should illustrate that an increasing proportion of our school age population is getting older. Hodgkinson (cited in Jacobson, 1986, p. 1) also alludes to the fact that, "Colleges and universities will have to attract, retain, and succeed in educating more and more older students, or the institu-

tions may not long survive." Agricultural teachers should consider themselves prime candidates for graduate school by university recruiters.

Teachers of agriculture can be proud of their accomplishments as practitioners in the field of education. Their encounters as teachers, FFA advisors, counselors, project supervisors, and technical experts are a valued and looked upon commodity in today's graduate classroom. Many times, graduate students will find classroom discussions revolving around their vast wealth of experiences.

Economic Considerations

Foremost in the minds of most individuals contemplating graduate school are two questions: "What will it cost?" and "Should I invest in the education or in stocks or bonds?" Education has both direct and indirect costs. If you are considering residency, you must be concerned with direct costs such as tuition, fees, books, and room and board. However, you will also need to consider indirect costs such as loss of salary, loss of one or two years of retirement, and perhaps, insurance. If you currently own a home, do you rent or sell it? In addition, if you are married, will your spouse be able to obtain employment or need to give up a good paying job? There are few easy answers. Each individual must weigh these costs, and others, commensurate with her or his situation and objectives. It is often hopeful to consult sources like *Peterson's Guide to Programs in the Biological, Agricultural, and Health Sciences*. This guide gives detailed information on financial sources, the application process, and a directory of universities by department. You also may want to consult such sources as *Internships or Barron's Profiles of American Colleges*. They can give you very specific information on financial matters and are available in most libraries. In addition, *The Agricultural Education Magazine* gives an annual listing of assistantships and graduate positions in agricultural education.

With all this emphasis on costs, one may well ask: "Is education still a viable and realistic vehicle for social and economic mobility?" Bedenbaugh (1985), writing in *The Clearing House*, strongly contends that education is still a good investment and states: ". . . the educated person is better equipped to protect himself or herself from the employment opportunities associated with technological change." Johns (1983) presents charts showing that higher salaries are still correlated with educational level. He concluded: "Actuarially, the odds are much better for one to become economically successful if he or she has more education than less." Recent advances in technology have tended to benign the "Over-educated American Concept."

When assessing the benefits of advanced education, one must also consider what economists call "externalities." Many teachers are motivated by the prospect of improving the intellectual environment of the home and being able to transfer knowledge to future generations. Johns (1983) points out that this intergenerational transfer of learning may be much more significant than is commonly realized.

Family Concerns

Beyond the financial burdens of college, one must not overlook the potential impact of graduate school on the family. McLaughlin (1985) identified the following addi-

tional concerns for married graduate students: communication problems, sexual dissatisfaction, lack of leisure time, role conflicts, and restricted social life. Further, he noted that these problems are not equal for everyone. Because of the dual role played by women, he reported that the excessive demands of graduate school were more difficult for married women than men and that single women were the most successful graduate students.

Although most researchers report that the presence of children exacerbates the problems of academic stress, the writers have found the additional support of the family unit to be of paramount importance to academic success. The critical decision whether to move the whole family or have one member go it alone can have profound negative repercussions. Most students who have left their families behind to complete residency requirements report the stress of being alone and worrying about their family as "Greater than the academic pressure." Our advice is take them with you!

Moving can be a family adventure but requires careful planning. Some areas which have been of greatest concern to us have been proper housing in a secure neighborhood, playmates for children, health and insurance needs, employment for spouses, transportation to classes, church activities, storage of extra furniture and upkeep of property back home, day-care services, income-tax concerns, and automobile repair. Of course, just the logistics of moving can create additional stress within the family and needs to be well planned.

Once you arrive on campus, additional adjustments will be needed. Most of your classes will be in the evening and when you are not attending classes, you will be studying. It is understandable that your spouse and/or family may feel neglected. In order to lessen these stresses on the family, Rimmert, Lammert, and McClain (1982) made the following general suggestions for graduate students: attend time management workshops, schedule some leisure activities, maintain social interaction with peers, and participate in professional development activities.

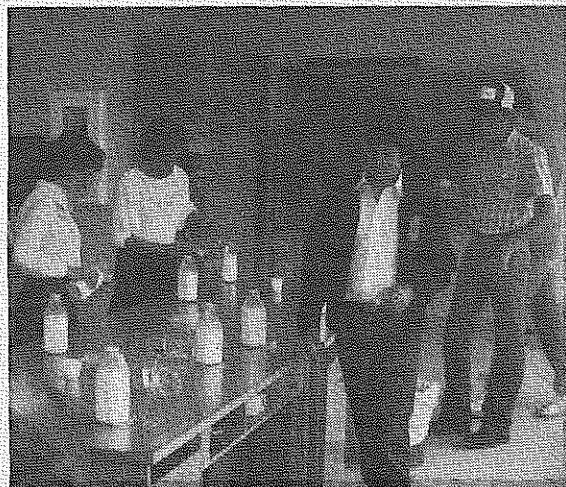
With all these precautions, attending graduate school may sound very complex and frightening. However, it is important to remember that you are not alone. Although one hears much about competition for grades, in reality graduate students do help each other and have the same common bonds of professionalism characteristic of vocational agriculture teachers.

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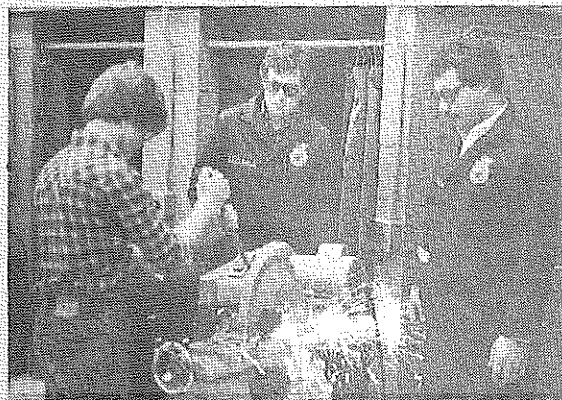
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Stories in Pictures

Future Professionals in Agricultural Education



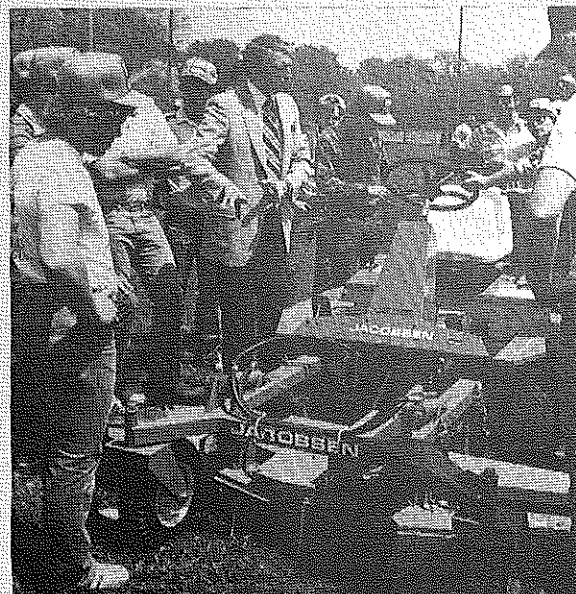
Students who are involved in all phases of a judging contest will be better prepared to fulfill forthcoming professional responsibilities. (Photo courtesy of Joe Raunikar.)



Student teaching and other experiences allow students to hone professional education skills discussed in prior courses. According to the two student teachers shown above, placing student teachers in pairs allows more opportunity for technical skill development, professional interaction, and overall growth and maturity. (Photo courtesy of Jasper S. Lee.)



Study tours to France and other countries will enable faculty and students to understand and appreciate agriculture from a global perspective. (Photo courtesy of Chris Townsend.)



Participants in the Jacobsen College Student Turf Seminar will be better prepared for careers related to horticulture and landscaping. (Photo courtesy of Jacobsen News Service.)