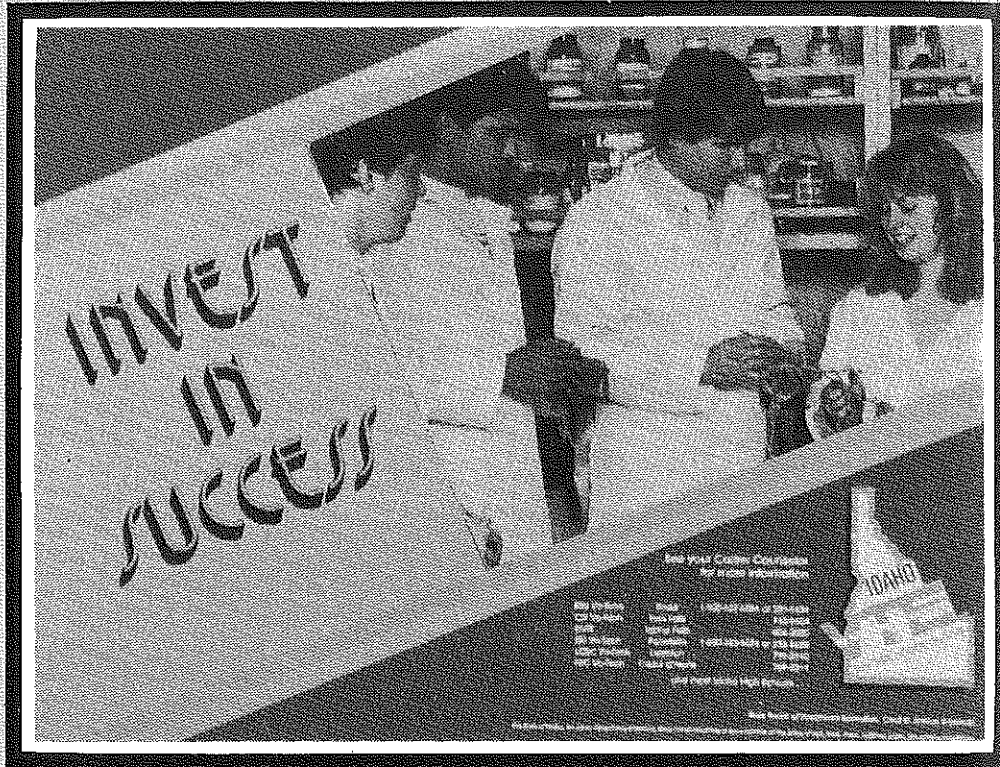


*The*

# Agricultural Education Magazine

June, 1988  
Volume 60  
Number 12



**THEME: Public Relations**

# THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MAGAZINE



June, 1988

Volume 60

Number 12

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## ARTICLE SUBMISSION

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

## PUBLICATION INFORMATION

THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MAGAZINE (ISSN 7324677) is the monthly professional journal of agricultural education. The journal is published by THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MAGAZINE, INC., and is printed at M & D Printing Co., 616 Second Street, Henry, IL 61537.

Second-class postage paid at Mechanicsville, VA 23111; additional entry at Henry, IL 61537.

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

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscription prices for THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MAGAZINE are \$7 per year. Foreign subscriptions are \$10 (U.S. Currency) per year for surface mail, and \$20 (U.S. Currency) airmail (except Canada). Student subscriptions in groups (one address) are \$4 for eight issues. Single copies and back issues less than ten years old are available at \$1 each. All back issues are available on microfilm from Xerox University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. In submitting subscriptions, designate new or renewal and address including ZIP code. Send all subscriptions and requests for hardcopy back issues to the Business Manager: Glenn A. Anderson, Business Manager, 1803 Rural Point Road, Mechanicsville, VA 23111. Publication No. 7324677.

# Propaganda, Publicity, and Public Relations

Propaganda, publicity, and public relations are terms agricultural educators sometimes treat as synonyms. The terms are similar yet very different. Journalists and communicators say the distinctions are as clear as colors such as blue and gold. Many non-communicators act as though the differences are as minute as the colors blue and green. However, an individual or group interested in relating to groups termed external publics must know the distinctions. Let's explore a few of the key distinctions.

## Propaganda

Moore (1981) suggests that propaganda in the broadest sense is forthright communication designed to achieve a predetermined end. He notes that religious, social, political, and charitable groups use propaganda as a legitimate form of persuasion. Negative dimensions of propaganda surface, however, when groups use bigotry, intolerance, hate, and fear "by suppressing facts and publishing false and misleading information in a vicious and reprehensible manipulation of public opinion" (Moore, p. 55). Propaganda is distributed via radio, television, magazines, newspapers, speeches, and various other means.

Does propaganda exist in American education? Moore offers educators a clear distinction between true education and propaganda. "Conscientious educators are motivated by a desire to reveal the truth, as they see it, to their students. When they deliberately suppress the truth by evasion, distortion, or calculated silence, they become propagandists. An honest teacher is concerned with imparting knowledge rather than promoting a cause" (Moore, p. 55-56).

## Publicity

Any activity designed to get the attention of the public is commonly labeled publicity. Moore lists news and feature stories, photographs, product publicity, etc. as items businesses frequently use to get their products before the public. Publicity, as a general rule, will be favorable.

An example of publicity in action can be found in the way universities "push" a star athlete for All-American status. A university publicist rarely presents anything negative about a budding basketball star. Only the positives tend to be accentuated. Even though a budding star plays phantom defense, is a 54% free throw shooter, never passes the ball, and is majoring in the history of sports, such items are rarely mentioned by a publicist even though these weaknesses are common knowledge.

## Public Relations

Misunderstandings about public relations should be expected because so many definitions exist. Moore offers



BY BLANNIE E. BOWEN, EDITOR

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

a definition that most public relations practitioners would accept: "Public relations is a social philosophy of management expressed in policies and practices, which, through sensitive interpretation of events based upon two-way communication with its publics, strives to secure mutual understanding and goodwill" (Moore, p. 5). The aspect of two-way communication for mutual understanding is underscored by Moore.

Greenbaum, Gonzalez, and Ackley (1986) indicate that public relations should be used to effect change. They suggest that PR is appropriate if one wants target audiences to participate and support proposed changes. They offer seven principles based on the work of George Gallup, the noted pollster (pages 16-17):

1. "Appeal to the self-interest of the consumer."
2. "Define with some precision the consumer group or groups to which the appeal should be made and conduct the appeal accordingly."
3. "Never underestimate the intelligence of the consumer."
4. "Never overestimate the knowledge of the consumer."
5. "Provide evidence that clearly demonstrates your product's value."
6. "Repetition is a necessary function of good marketing."
7. "Know and 'sell' the purpose of the product."

## Summary

Propaganda, publicity, and public relations should not be treated as synonymous terms because each serves distinct roles. Individuals involved in public education must know the distinctions. Agricultural educators are responsible for designing and delivering instructional programs to meet the needs of a consuming public. To receive support, educators must also communicate that the responsibility is being discharged.

## References

- Greenbaum, S; Gonzalez, B; and Ackley, N. (1986, September). EDUCATED PUBLIC RELATIONS: SCHOOL SAFETY 101. MALIBU, CA: NATIONAL SCHOOL SAFETY CENTER, PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY.
- MOORE, H.F. (1981). PUBLIC RELATIONS: PRINCIPLES, CASES, AND PROBLEMS. HOMewood, IL: RICHARD D. IRWIN, INC.



# Approval Of The Public

*"Any work that is a public service and is dependent upon the public for its support and promotion must, at some time or other, give an accounting of itself. Whether the verdict given at this time is one of approval or condemnation depends to a large extent upon the amount of the time that the program has been before the public eye in a favorable light. It behooves workers in public service, then, to get as much of this favorable publicity as possible . . . The program of vocational agriculture is dependent upon the approval of the public."*

These words were part of an article that appeared in this magazine before — in 1935. Obviously, the need for public relations is nothing new — agricultural programs have always depended on public goodwill for funding, for recruiting, and for the needed extras to make the curriculum meaningful. Public relations is not a single, discrete activity. It involves addressing a variety of publics for a variety of purposes.

The articles in this issue were chosen to reflect the breadth of the activity referred to as public relations. In one article, Bob Holloway compares public relations activities to marketing a product. His key point is that the product has to be something the public wants. That perspective is echoed by Dennis Engelke's definition of the public relations imperative, and the need to tap resources outside of the vocational agriculture community

Other articles cover public relations from different perspectives and provide useful information about how to do the job. Marie Wallace focuses on how to use the media to communicate your message. Michael Megeath and Carol Elgin describe the importance of "in house" public relations



By MICHAEL RUSH, THEME EDITOR  
*(Dr. Rush is a State Supervisor of Agricultural Education for the State Division of Vocational Education, 315 Len B. Jordan Building, 650 West State Street, Boise, Idaho 83720.)*

and how good working relationships within the school enhance the vocational program. Jim Cummins describes a statewide public relations effort that had a specific goal as both the object and the means of the public relations tool. David Whaley and Dean Sutphin remind us of the continuing, critical importance of involving the community through advisory committees. As R.G. Harrell concluded in his 1935 article, "Making it possible for the public to see, appreciate, and understand your program will assist materially in making your program a success."

The articles in this issue should help you to that end.

#### REFERENCE

Harrell, R.G. (November, 1935). Publicity and the Educational Program. *AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION*, pg.69.

### About The Cover

A poster/billboard/placemat design was created for a new public relations and marketing campaign for vocational education in the state of Idaho. The picture taken from the 1988 FFA Calendar. (Photo courtesy of Mike Rush, Theme Editor.)

## RESOURCES

### Bartering Creates Taxable Income

The fair market value of goods or services received in bartering is considered taxable income and must be reported on federal income tax returns. According to the Internal Revenue Service, this is consistent with the general rule that all income is taxable unless specifically exempt by law.

For instance, if a housepainter paints a farmer's barn in exchange for the housepainter's rent-free use of a mobile home on the farm for six months, the farmer must report as rental income the fair market value of the painting job,

and the housepainter must report as income the fair rental value of the mobile home.

Individuals who exchanged property or services through a barter exchange should receive from the barter exchange a Form 1099-B, *Statement for Recipients of Proceeds from Broker and Barter Exchange Transactions*, showing the value of cash, property, services, credits, or scrip received during the year. The IRS will also get a copy of Form 1099-B.

Income from bartering is taxable in the year the goods or services are received

by a taxpayer who uses the cash method of accounting, as most individuals do.

Taxpayers who have failed to report income from bartering in previous years may correct this by filing Form 1040X, *Amended U.S. Individual Income Tax Return*, for the year of omission and paying the tax, interest and any penalties due

Free IRS Publication 525, *Taxable and Nontaxable Income*, contains additional information on bartering and can be obtained by writing or calling the IRS.

# Selling Vocational Education Programs

In my job as Public Relations Specialist for Cenex/Land O'Lakes Ag Service, I conduct seminars on customer relations and advanced farm call sales training. I also conduct seminars on cooperatives and how farmers and ranchers can use them to improve profitability. I work closely with co-op managers, helping them develop effective methods of communicating with both members and the community. How does my job relate to yours? I think we have very similar job descriptions. The only products we have to sell are ideas and methods for improving skills. If we don't have the right ideas on our menu or if they are not packaged attractively, people won't buy them. We each have to develop an innovative advertising and sales program or we're not going to survive.

## Developing A Sales Plan

Many vocational agriculture instructors have the same philosophy as the vast majority of farm suppliers: If we have a good product and it has worked for many years, our customers will come in and buy it. It just isn't so. We have learned the last five years that if we don't aggressively go out and knock on doors to tell and show people what we have to offer . . . the business will go to our competition.

Who do we want for students? I believe we want the same people that the agricultural industry wants. We want those students who are in the top 50% of their class and we want our share of those students in the upper 10%. If we don't achieve this goal in our secondary schools and agricultural colleges as well, the agricultural industry will look elsewhere for its employees. It's very difficult to have a first rate finished product if we don't start with high quality ingredients.

## Where Should We Start?

1. We should encourage the agriculture schools in our states to survey every agriculturally related industry available and find out what type of individual they are hiring.
2. We should interview former agriculture students who have been successful in securing good jobs in agribusiness, and ask them to list changes they would make in their high school agriculture program.
3. We should interview successful young farmers and ask them what they use most or least of their former agriculture classroom experience. I believe they should be established for at least 5-6 years before they can be totally objective with their answers.
4. All of us in agriculture need to improve our listening skills if we are to compete. All too often we listen for what we want to hear or we fail to ask the right question to really find out what we need to know. Once we find the answers to these questions, we will be able to be much more effective and successful than we are today.



By ROBERT HOLLOWAY

(Mr. Holloway is a Public Relations Specialist for CNEX/Land O'Lakes Ag Services, Rt. 2, Box 141, Medical Lake, Washington 99022.)

## Packaging

We are doing business with a much more sophisticated and selective customer. The competition for students' time and interest will continue to increase. I am convinced teachers with good, flexible programs and good sales skills will have increased enrollment. Programs need to provide offerings that fit each student's need; schedules that do not compete with other requirements; course options so that students can buy the products they need without having to purchase something that doesn't fit; and classes that satisfy required subjects such as science.

## Keeping Those Top Students In Your Class

Your students need to learn about the well-paid and exciting careers available in agriculture. They need to receive this information in their agricultural orientation class - not just during their senior year. You should also provide an exciting hands-on class that teaches what agribusiness is all about. It should include:

1. Why ag business is important to our country's economy.
2. How it is financed.
3. The difference between an individually owned business and partnerships.
4. The difference between an ordinary cooperation and a cooperative corporation.
5. The advantages and disadvantages of different types of business structures.

This is an area that is not offered in most high schools and would put you in front of your competition. Offering a short segment on how to fill out a job or scholarship application and how to interview for a job or scholarship will increase your lead over your nearest competition. If you can relate to students how those basic classes in agricultural mechanics, animal industry, crop science, and agribusiness can be a stepping stone to an exciting, rewarding career, you will be making excellent progress as a salesperson.

## Features And Benefits

Successful salespeople have mastered the art of translating features into benefits. The benefits of the FFA are one of  
(Continued on page 6)

## Selling Vocational Education Programs

(Continued from page 5)

the most marketable products in agriculture. The FFA offers an endless list of benefits including increased confidence, better group dynamics skills, and improved speaking ability. The benefits from classroom experience can be equally marketable if we prepare our sales presentation well. All too often we get caught up in professional jargon that leaves our audiences baffled and pushes them away from our product.

### Utilizing Our Sales Tools

The best sales tools any firm has are satisfied customers. You need to track what happens to each of your students as they move along their college and career paths. Keeping a good file on successful students can be a great asset in building your advertising and promotion program. If you do not have an FFA alumni chapter to make your time and efforts multiply, you are failing to use a very effective sales tool. Your advisory committee can be another good tool if you made your selections carefully, and keep them aware of your chapter's accomplishments.

### Selling To Other Audiences

At the same time you are selling your programs to students, you have other priority targets to sell to as well. These targets include the school board, the administration, other teachers, and the agricultural community in your area. Are they sold on your programs? Even more important, are parents aware of and sold on your products?

One valuable tool is a newsletter published on a regular basis that lets others know what your students are accomplishing and the valuable lessons they are learning in your classroom. You should also develop a good relationship with the local newspaper editors. Another public relations tool is your FFA Chapter. You should choose quality activities and make sure those activities are visible.

Finally, your facility can have a big impact on the public. What does your laboratory, office, and classroom look like? Do they make a positive impression on visitors? I have visited some that I couldn't see for the clutter around the outside of the buildings. I have seen many offices and laboratories that were a total disaster. In today's competitive environment, you can't afford to take chances on damaging your image.

### Putting It All Together

1. Decide on some realistic goals on the type of students you want to attract. Decide on how many and the level of achievement you want them to attain.
2. Develop a plan that will make this happen. This should include curriculum changes and a sales strategy.
3. Follow-up on your past students and determine what you can do to improve your product and how to package it more attractively.
4. Polish your image and develop an effective advertising and promotion program that reaches all of the target audiences in the community.
5. KEEP SELLING!!

## THEME

# Pardon Me, But Your Image is Showing

Vocational Agriculture I-IV courses are gone. Ten field staff positions have been eliminated. Program funding is in jeopardy.

What happened in Texas could happen to you!

Agricultural education in Texas has undergone dynamic changes. The band-aid, fix-up repairs of the past have given way to serious surgery; not all of the surgery was performed with sharp and sanitary scalpels.

Actually, this story has a "good news-bad news" scenario. Its two-fold purpose is to explain what happened in Texas and to describe how FFA alumni members helped to salvage the state's agricultural education programs.

### Background

"We didn't get into this mess overnight and it's gonna take some time to get out of it," declares a vocational agriculture teacher. Since the passage of the Vocational Education Amendment of 1968, questions of accountability were routinely asked at meetings of the State Board of Education and the appropriate legislative oversight committees. The hand-



By DENNIS ENGELKE

(Mr. Engelke is Director of Rural Development for the Association of Texas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., 8140 Burnet Road, Box 9589, Austin, Texas 78766.)

writing on the wall of pending change abruptly surfaced in October, 1980, with the publication of a final report of a legislatively-mandated independent study of vocational education in Texas. A key recommendation was to treat vocational courses as "general academic curriculum" rather than "vocational." That devastating recommendation would have resulted in the loss of federal vocational education funds for Texas.

The depressed Texas economy, driven by the bottom fall-

ing out of the oil market, caused state-elected leaders to investigate ways to diversify the state's economic base. Economic recovery was determined to best be achieved by luring the high-tech industry to the Lone Star State. In sharp contrast was a Research Triangle Institute report projecting a decrease in the demand for jobs in the declining, economically-depressed agricultural industry.

In 1983, the Texas Legislature passed HB246 which created both advanced and general academic curriculum career paths for students. The concept implied that any choice other than "advanced" was second rate.

Reports of students' poor performance on achievement test scores prompted the legislature to establish HB72 in 1984. The law created the "10-day rule" which limited the number of days a student could be away from school to participate in traditional school-sanctioned events. The law also resulted in the "no pass-no play rule." A student receiving a failing grade on a report card was prohibited from participating in extracurricular activities for six weeks. HB72 made "back to the basics education" a household phrase.

The revamping of vocational education gained momentum because of the personal crusade of Dallas-billionaire H. Ross Perot and the seating of an appointed State Board of Education rather than one that was elected. Perot grabbed national media attention with his now famous "traveling chicken story." He claimed that a student missed 32 days of school because he exhibited his chicken at numerous livestock shows. His point was that "you can't teach a kid if he isn't in school." The State Board of Education was less responsive to public opinion and much less accessible. Frustration mounted because agricultural education had accepted the proposition that change was inevitable, but they were denied the opportunity to take part in charting a new course. The message was clear: vocational education was in serious trouble in Texas!

### The Solution

Motivated by the belief that the intent of educational reform was just that — a reform, and did not necessarily mean the elimination of entire programs, FFA alumni members stepped forward, in concert with professional agricultural educators, to mount aggressive, grassroots support to counter some of the misinformation upon which decision makers were basing their actions. The group realized the outcome was obvious if nothing was done. Perhaps a showing of support could slow the free-rolling snowball and allow something to be salvaged.

In December, 1984, alumni members organized "Friends of Vocational Agriculture and FFA" to enhance their outreach to local communities. It was believed that the Friends group could engage in public support activities in which the formal FFA alumni organization was restricted. Friends and alumni spokespersons participated in public community meetings, provided testimony at legislative hearings, wrote letters to editors, the state education agency, and legislative leaders, and mounted massive letter and telegraph-writing and telephone-calling campaigns. Members were present at monthly State Board of Education meetings. The group secured the assistance of a former FFA member and the four-term Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives to spearhead their countering maneuvers. Many agricultural, agribusiness, and civic leaders pledged

their support. City and county government leaders passed resolutions of support of the vocational agriculture program.

Vocational agriculture teachers were asked to submit the names and addresses of at least 10 people in their communities who could be called upon to help with letter writing and fund raising activities. Significant funds were raised to support the initiatives. A computerized list of over 10,000 local contacts was developed and is maintained for immediate accessibility. A communications network was also created.

As predicted, the support effort was "a day late and a dollar short" in its attempt to save the program in its entirety. Legislative considerations went down to the wire. One of the final actions of the special legislative session in 1985 was the loss of funding for the 10 area field staff positions. The work previously done by area supervisors was shifted to agriculture instructors who volunteered to serve as "area coordinators." The crippled Texas economy makes the reclamation of these positions a moot question. The change in funding formulas for vocational education programs and a shift of more of the funding burden to local school districts have resulted in a reduction of many 12-month contracts and the closing of some departments.

However, state education leaders have included agricultural educators in the decision-making process in reshaping the agricultural education curriculum. The change to semester offerings of cluster courses has met surprising acceptance among teachers. The good news is that the agricultural science education facelift has increased enrollment in the program. Students like the flexibility of being able to enroll on a semester by semester basis. Much of the new interest stems from nontraditional students who have a particular interest in only a few of the course offerings. The requirement of having to maintain the traditional "livestock project program" has been revamped to include an equivalent option where students earn points based on skill development and quality hands-on experiences in related course work.

### What Should YOU Do?

Just because no one is making waves and declaring that "the program is broke, so fix it," don't get wrapped up on the complacent attitude that, "Our friends will take care of it." Too many of our "friends" of the 1960s and 70s are no longer available. If the individuals directly impacted by such reforms can't muster the enthusiasm to save their jobs, why should "traditional friends" get involved?

Take every opportunity to expose your program. Tell your story again and again and again! Weekly articles in local newspapers should be published. Prepare brief reports of accomplishments or ongoing projects for distribution to school administrators. Does your chapter conduct community service projects? Develop a relationship with local media representatives. Invite elected leaders to chapter functions.

Get involved! Join your professional organization. Vote. Attend meetings with elected officials. If you don't get involved, then the "opposition" will have more say in influencing the formulation of laws to which you must abide.

*(Continued on page 8)*

## Pardon Me, But Your Image is Showing

(Continued from page 7)

Organize an FFA alumni chapter or "Friends" support group. When the boat starts to rock, it will be a more comfortable experience if you can rally the troops in a coherent, cooperative, and immediate manner. If you don't have 10

people in your community who will stand-up and support your program, then you deserve what you get!

Public relations initiatives for any organization must be comprehensive in scope in order to address the various audiences or "spheres of influence" that can have an impact on the organization. If you think that your program is exempt from intensive scrutiny, well, pardon me, but your image is showing.

### THEME

# Conducting a Chapter Public Relations Campaign

Public relations is a lot like the clasp that holds a member's Greenhand pin on his or her FFA jacket — you can't see it, but you know it's there.

This analogy is fitting because public relations efforts themselves are rarely seen; it's the results of these efforts that are visible.

In fact, many FFA chapters perform public relations functions without recognizing them. This is particularly true when you look at the chapter program of activities. The process of defining a problem, planning a strategy, taking action, and evaluating the results occurs both in carrying out your program of activities and in conducting a chapter public relations campaign.

This article focuses on planning a strategy (deciding what news angle you will use to sell your story to the media — and ultimately the public) and taking action (completing the steps necessary to place your story in the newspaper or broadcast media).

## What Is News?

In determining an effective strategy for getting your chapter's story printed or on the air, one must answer the question, "What is news?" and then package the story accordingly. When looking at the action steps involved in placing an article in the media, the "how to's" of writing news releases and conducting media surveys must be addressed.

When asked to define news, an appropriate response might be, "I don't know how to define it but I know what it is." This is because news has a variety of definitions — none of which is "the" definition of news.

News is timely, interesting, and significant. It is informative, educational, and extraordinary. Often people read stories of robberies, kidnappings, and vandalism and become dismayed that such violence is commonplace. Actually, these incidents warrant media attention because they are extraordinary occurrences.

News has also been described as "what sells papers." The fact that stories about kidnappers and robbers sell more newspapers than stories about flea markets and bake sales will never change.



BY MARIE A. WALLACE

(Ms. Wallace is the Communications Director for the Washington State Dairymen's Federation, 711 South Capitol Way, Olympia, Washington 98501.)

The activities in your chapter may not be as extraordinary as a kidnapping or robbery, but more than likely, the activities and accomplishments that occur in your chapter fit several characteristics of news. Perhaps your chapter was recently notified that it has its first American Farmer degree recipient. Maybe a newly-elected chapter officer's father and grandfather have also held the same office in your chapter. Maybe your chapter conducts a lawn-care program for the elderly. All of these examples could warrant media coverage.

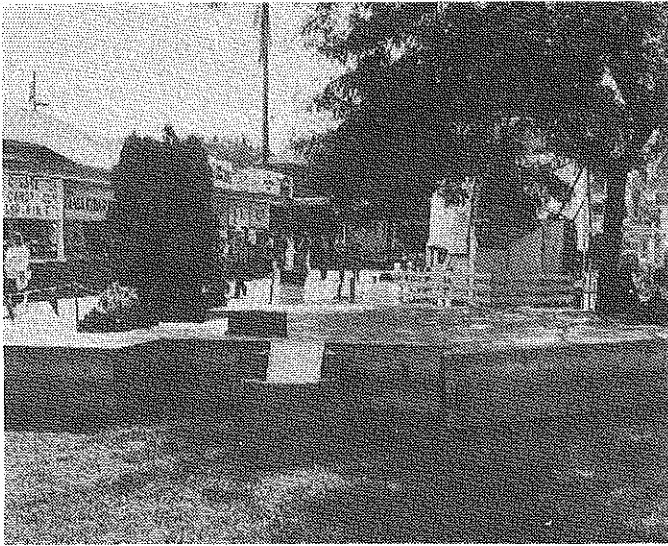
## Packaging Your News

To demonstrate how to "package" your news story and describe the mechanical steps of producing it, let's imagine we are conducting a campaign designed to make urban children more aware of farming and farm animals. Keep in mind that the same principles we will use to conduct this campaign apply to Building Our American Communities projects, fund raising efforts, member recognition, and any other activities in which your chapter engages.

Let's say that the specific event you will use to increase urban children's awareness of farming and farm animals is a chapter-sponsored baby animal farm in which hundreds of city youngsters are invited.

One of the channels you plan to get the word out about the event is the daily newspaper. Keep in mind that when your news release arrives at the editor's desk, it is part of a paper blizzard that comes storming into the newsroom each day. When a reporter receives your news release, this person operates like a fitting and showing judge in a huge





What is missing from this picture? This photograph is an example of the type of picture NOT to send to the general media. Although the landscaped deck is important to the chapter members who constructed it, the subject is not appealing to the general public. Nothing is happening in this picture. Remember, photographs should tell a story. (Photo courtesy of the author.)

class. Based on the merits of what is in front of the reporter, this person must decide which stories to include in the paper just as the judge must decide who to place in the coveted top spots. You must create a story that jumps out and says, "This is news."

By adhering to the "inverted pyramid" format used in news release writing, you will be able to package your story in such a manner that it does "jump out" at the reporter.

The inverted pyramid style involves putting the most significant news in the "lead," or first sentence and putting other facts, in descending order of importance, in the "body" of the story. News is written in this style because often times a reporter must cut part of a story because of limited space. When the reporter does this, cutting begins from the bottom, leaving the most important elements in the story. (See Figure 1.)

### Writing the Release

Now that we've determined the format we're going to use, let's create a lead for the baby animal farm story. Does this lead spark your interest? "On August 27 from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. at City Park, the Enumclaw Future Farmers of America will sponsor a baby animal farm." How does this lead grab you? "You and your family can spend a day on the farm right here in town when chickens, cows and a host of other farmyard friends come to City Park this Saturday." Most would probably agree that the second lead has more zip and would probably catch the reporter's attention. The body should contain the pertinent facts, such as time, location of City Park, and other activities that will be available. For example, you may wish to have concessions for sale or give free pony rides during the event.

Mentioning that your chapter is sponsoring the event should appear in the final sentence or near the end of the story. It is rarely appropriate for your chapter's name to appear in the lead. The media are turned off by stories that appear self-advocating. Rather than finding their way on the airwaves or in the newspaper, these stories usually end

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Lead . . . . .         | Summarizes story or emphasizes a major detail       |
| Paragraph 1 . . . . .  | Gives additional baby animal farm event information |
| Paragraph 2 . . . . .  | Quotes from an individual involved with the event   |
| Paragraph 3 . . . . .  | Describes event activities                          |
| Paragraph 4 . . . . .  | Further describes event activities                  |
| Paragraph 5* . . . . . | Reveals the prizes that event participants may win  |

\*Number of paragraphs may vary depending on type of story.

Figure 1: Inverted Pyramid News Writing Style

up in the waste paper basket, because most reporters do not have or will not make the time to rewrite them.

To even be considered by the media, news releases must be typed, double-spaced and, generally, of one page in length. If a reporter wishes to do a more in-depth story than is possible with the information you provided, this person will contact you for further details. Your name and both your school and home telephone numbers should appear in the upper right-hand corner of the release. Below your name and phone number and above the story should appear the phrase "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE," or the release date you have selected for the story. The end of the story should be denoted by centering the symbol "# # #" or "30" on the line immediately following the story. If your story is more than one page, "-more-" should be centered on the last line of the first page. (See Figure 2.)

To further enhance the quality of your news release and increase the chances of your story appearing in print, send an eye-catching photograph with it. The phrase "a picture is worth a thousand words" certainly has a lot of merit in the print media. However, not just any picture is valuable. The question to ask yourself when selecting photographs to accompany your release is, "Does this picture tell a story?" If the answer is "no," do not send it. There are a few exceptions to this, however. For example, some "people pictures" such as newly-elected officers or award winners are of interest to the local community. Whether these types of pictures get printed or not depends largely on the size of your community. Be sure that your pictures are captioned with all subjects correctly identified.

A few days after the release has been mailed, it is a good practice for you, the chapter reporter or an informed member, to call the media to see whether the information arrived and to answer any questions.

Given that stories which appeal to sound are well-suited for radio, you may want to invite a local radio reporter to capture the sounds of the baby animal farm. As an "event alert," you may want to bring a noisy chicken or goat to the studio for an interview the day before or the morning of the event. It would be a good idea to get this approved ahead of time.

(Continued on page 10)

## Conducting a Chapter Public Relations Campaign

(Continued from page 9)

Another way to involve the broadcast media is to invite a local radio or television personality to participate in the event. Perhaps you could hold an animal costume contest during the afternoon, asking one of the personalities to be an official judge for the contest. When you write your letters inviting the broadcast media to cover the event, remember to enclose the news release for background information. It is best to have an FFA member in official dress hand-deliver the invitation.

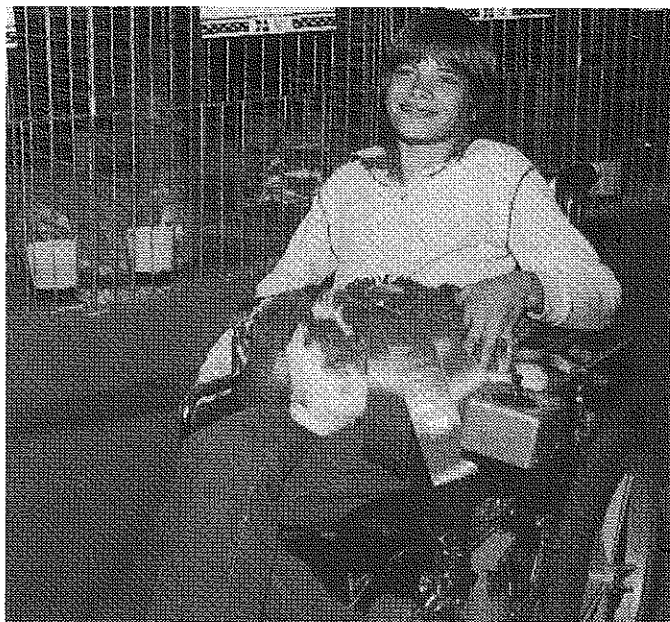
### The Media Survey

Once you know what story you're going to tell and how you're going to say it, you must determine to whom you want to market your story. Determining the media options available is commonly referred to as conducting a media survey. You may want to keep this information on file cards that are easily accessible and simple to update. This survey should contain contact names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the various newspapers and broadcast stations in your community. Also, this survey should contain any other special requirements. For example, many weekly newspapers require two weeks of time on stories. This means if you want to approach your local newspaper reporters about doing a story on your chapter's FFA Week activities, they should be contacted with details of the week's activities several weeks before FFA Week.

In addition to the individuals identified in the media survey, there are several others who should receive your chapter's news releases. In the broadest definition, public relations is more than special events promotion. Public relations is the management of communications between an organization (your FFA chapter) and its various publics (the student body, faculty, school board members, local businesses, alumni, etc). Members of these publics, such as the school superintendent, local agribusiness leaders, and neighboring FFA chapters may be included on your news release mailing list. This ongoing communication is an essential part of public relations.

Developing the media list is a project which you may wish to assign to your chapter reporter. Although chapter reporters may be responsible for developing and maintaining the media list, as well as writing the news releases, it is advisable for them to tell the media they are calling on your behalf. Chapter reporters vary from year to year and different students are often responsible for conducting various events. The reporter needs a consistent source on which to rely for further questioning or clarification on issues or events. As an advisor, you are able to provide this continuity. Along with providing continuity, you establish yourself as a resource for the reporter.

Unless your community has a media guide which you can modify to fit your needs, the best place to obtain media information is the telephone directory. When calling the media, students should first identify themselves and state why they are calling. Second, they should determine whether the reporter is working on a deadline when they call. If the reporter is, they should ask when is the best time to reach



The glow of victory is hard to find . . . Everyone loves a winner and this youngster and his prize-winning rabbit are no exception. (Photo courtesy of the author.)

the reporter and make a note on their file card. Determining deadlines not only gives you necessary survey information, but it will show reporters that you are conscientious and considerate of the time pressures they face. Also find

Contact: Jim Jones  
(206) 123-4567 (w)  
(206) 123-6789 (h)

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

You and your family can spend a day on the farm right here in town when chickens, cows, and a host of other farmyard friends come to City Park this Saturday.

The third annual Old MacDonald's Baby Animal Farm will be held from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m., Saturday, August 27 at Enumclaw City Park.

"The event allows families who are not associated with agriculture to learn more about farming and farm life," said Jina Johnson, president of the Enumclaw High School Future Farmers of America, the group sponsoring the event.

In addition to the various animals that will be on display, educational displays, free pony rides, and a concession booth will be included in Old MacDonald's Farm.

Also, at noon there will be a "critter costume contest," in which the public will be asked to select the best dressed farm animal in the park. People who vote for the best dressed critter will be eligible to win several prizes, including family admission passes to the state fair and 10 gallons of ice cream.

# # #

Figure 2: Sample News Release

out if the print or broadcast medium with whom you are talking has a calendar of events. If you are unable to get a story placed, you may at least be included on the calendar.

### Working With "the" Media

The manner in which you deal with the media is as important as the message you deliver to your audience. Again, the importance of not bothering reporters while they are on deadline cannot be emphasized enough. Proper spelling of your contact people's names is also important. Always ask for the correct spelling — even if it seems like a simple name. You'd be surprised how many ways there are to spell Jayne or Cyndi. If you want your story to appear in a newspaper or on a newscast, the reporter to whom you make your request will be more receptive if you spell his or her name correctly.

Have at least two people besides yourself proofread the release before it is sent to the media. If you give the media misinformation, you will undermine your credibility.

Another activity often overlooked is showing appreciation when a story or interview is printed or aired. Following up with a short note or a telephone call saying, "Thanks for covering our baby animal farm. You did a great job," will boost the reporter's image of your organization as well as lift your spirits.

It is also important to be aware, that the smaller the medium, the more responsibility an individual must undertake. For example, on a small-town weekly newspaper, the reporter assigned to your story may be that newspaper's photographer, editor, and advertising department. Be sensitive to this individual's time constraints.

So you thought you did an excellent job of marketing your story and the media ignored it? Don't be discouraged. A lot of great stories don't get used every day for a variety of reasons. Maybe a story similar to yours had been run prior to receiving your story. Perhaps a highly significant statewide or national event took place the day your story was scheduled to appear.

Trying to get something in the media is a lot like fishing. You offer your story as bait, use the proper gear (correct grammar and proper format), and go when the fish are biting (well ahead of deadlines).

For awhile, your fishing expeditions may send you home with an empty basket. But with experience, as with any task, you'll begin to see better results. As you continue to communicate with the media and your publics, sooner or later you'll have more to tell than stories about the one that got away.

## THEME

# Public Relations: An Inside Job

Most people think of public relations as an outside job — something done for or to a target public. This should not always be the case. To be successful you should first look in the mirror. You must make sure there is harmony and understanding among the employees within the building, whether it is a private enterprise or a public school system. With this in mind, let's take a closer look at public relations that should occur within a public vocational-technical center.

A school is made up of many different personalities. The recipe for success is keeping the personalities interested and excited about their school. It takes a constant team effort to ensure that internal public relations is a top priority item. In a vocational center with 17 instructional areas and 20 different backgrounds, it is not always easy to maintain a team effort. Regular faculty meetings are used to not only stress key events and important changes in policy, but also to highlight what various departments are doing.

Departmental communication is a must for a good internal public relations program. Instructors should be encouraged to share ideas and expertise. Without this sharing, a vocational center will crumble. There is no place for jealousy. Instructors commend each other for a job well done and readily contribute to another instructor's effort to excel. The students are necessary for success.



By MICHAEL MEGEATH AND CAROL ELGIN

*(Mr. Megeath is the Principal and Mrs. Elgin is the Horticulture Instructor at the Charles S. Monroe Vocational-Technical Center, 715 Childrens Center Road, SW, Leesburg, Virginia 22075.)*

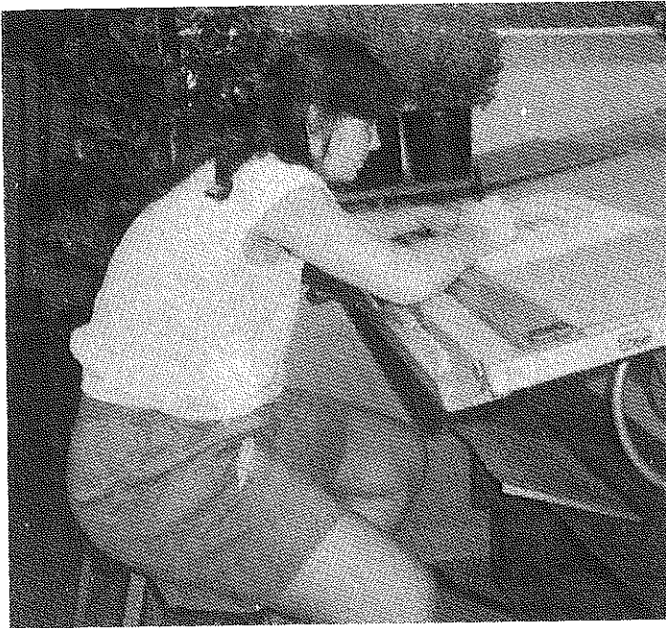
### Internal Public Relations

To explain how in-school public relations works at our Vocational Center, let's spotlight the horticulture department. This department generates as much visibility within the Center through its activities, projects, and plant sales as any other department at the Center. This department

*(Continued on page 12)*

## Public Relations: An Inside Job

*(Continued from page 11)*



Student developing a plan to be used in landscaping school grounds.

however, cannot exist without the help and cooperation of instructors and students from other departments.

As instructors we have found invaluable resources within these school walls. The administrators are most supportive of departmental activities and encourage instructors to utilize the various departments within the school to assist with our programs. The possibilities are endless.

New departmental brochures were printed through our graphic arts communications program. The FFA utilized the drafting, graphic arts communications, and data processing departments to print its annual Program of Activities. The carpentry department built a floral design work station. Sheet metal students built individual potting stations in our laboratory. Periodic greenhouse servicing is done by electricity and heating and air conditioning students. The horticulture department has also been involved in several public relations programs with the TV production class, including a holiday greens program aired on local cable television.

In return, the horticulture class contributes to the team effort in the school by making its services available to various department. On numerous occasions, we have provided flowers for in-school luncheons, banquets, and other special programs. Landscape projects completed around the school grounds stimulate a sense of pride in the school for both students and faculty. Periodic plant and flower sales not only create visibility for the horticulture department, but also provide visibility for departments which do not readily attract public attention. The simulated business-type environment evidenced in the horticulture department provides customers with a positive attitude toward the Center.

In addition to departments cooperating on maintenance type services, the school has sponsored several public relations projects involving all of the instructional areas. One example is the Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce

Trade Fair we hosted in 1986. Laboratory areas were turned into exhibition space for businesses. Instructors were available for conducting departmental tours and answering questions while students assisted with parking and food booths, and demonstrated their skills. In 1987, the instructors cooperated with the TV production class to produce a video highlighting the students' marketable skills and job potential in each of our instructional areas. This video has become a useful public relations tool for civic groups and schools within the county. The Center sponsors an annual open house and freshman tour, and meets periodically with advisory and craft committee groups. Of course, an important element of success with these projects is the evidence of a team effort among all members of the school.



Students apply what they learn in the classroom and laboratory when they prepare materials (top photo) and then plant the materials as part of school beautification project (bottom photo). (All photos courtesy of the authors.)



## PR Guidelines

None of the previously mentioned situations can take place without the following guidelines.

1. **Proper planning:** The entire faculty must be made aware of happenings and ideas within each department. Planning saves time and prevents re-inventing the wheel.
2. **Consideration for other instructors' time:** Each instructor must realize that constant infringement on other instructors' time prevents time on task. Therefore, when asking for help, the time factor must be evaluated.
3. **Constant communication among departments:** Through the use of faculty meetings, inter-departmental memos, and regular conversation, each department must be made

aware of other departments' needs and ideas so help can be given when needed.

4. **Awareness of other departmental activities:** By reporting at regularly scheduled faculty meetings, the entire faculty can be made aware of each department's activities so there will not be any duplication of events or conflict of activities. This communication allows faculty members to help each other in their educational endeavors.

In conclusion, an internal public relations program is a must for the effective operation of a school and for the success of individual programs within the school. Public relations needs to be an inside job. Each instructor's ideas are important and all instructors must learn to value those ideas.

## THEME

# The Ohio FFA Center — A Model For Public Relations

If asked, few people would refuse to grant a favor. If asked, few agriculturally related businesses and individuals would refuse to spend some time or contribute to a worthy cause. If asked in the name of young people, even fewer would fail to contribute. This premise was the basis for securing nearly \$550,000 in two years to build the Ohio FFA Center on the Ohio Expositions Center in Columbus. Developing the necessary relationships with the agricultural community to build the Ohio FFA Center followed a pattern similar to effective teaching. The steps include: determining needs, establishing goals, identifying ways and means of accomplishing the goals, and evaluating and praising success.

### Determine Need

There was a dream that someday an FFA Archives and an FFA Hall of Achievement would exist to house numerous artifacts which had been identified. The purpose of the facility would be to preserve and display the historical items relating to the vocational agriculture and FFA program in Ohio. The official delegate action at the 1980 State FFA Convention and the ratification by the Ohio Vocational Agriculture Teachers' Association clearly established the need, and preliminary development began.

### Establish Goals

During December of 1984, the organizational meeting of the board of directors of the Ohio FFA Center was held. The board was comprised of representatives from teachers, FFA members, FFA Alumni, state supervisory staff, and agricultural business and industry. The board of directors hired a development director and selected an architect. In addition, it approved the building plans, funding program, and set the goal to conduct the grand opening of the FFA Center during the 1987 State FFA Convention.



By JAMES E. CUMMINS

*(Dr. Cummins is an Area Supervisor for the State Agricultural Education Service, 907 Ohio Departments Building, 65 S. Front Street, Columbus, Ohio 43266-0308.)*

### Identify Ways and Means

An organizational meeting of the Ohio FFA Center Development Council was conducted in conjunction with the annual teachers' conference. The council was comprised of 40 business and industry representatives. It was chaired by a former state and National FFA officer who was employed as a vice president for administration in a leading agricultural cooperative in Ohio.

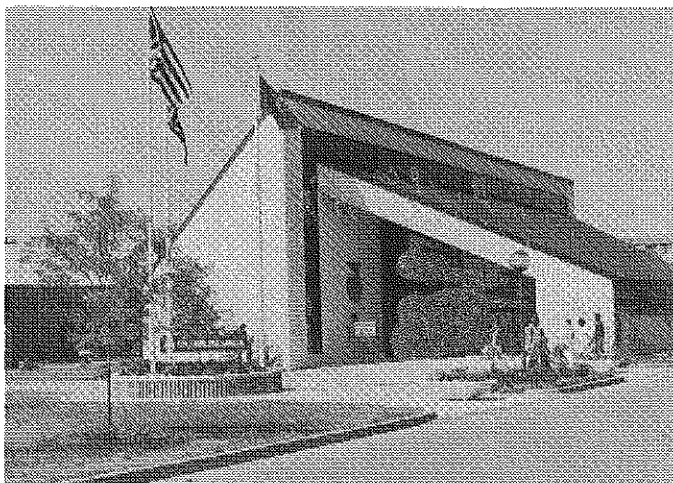
A funding plan was developed and proposed to garner the necessary financial support from the development council. To provide a solid base, the FFA members had voted a dues increase specifically for The FFA Center which raised approximately \$200,000 over three years. As a result of these activities, six members of the development council pledged \$10,000 or more within two months of the initial meeting of the development council. A brochure was developed and the plan to solicit funds from agricultural industry and individuals was approved and implemented.

Approximately 55 special projects were identified for potential sponsorship. Proposals were developed and selected individuals or agricultural firms were requested to

*(Continued on page 14)*

## The Ohio FFA Center — A Model For Public Relations

(Continued from page 13)



The Ohio FFA Center held its grand opening during the 1987 State FFA Convention.



Numerous visitors come to the Ohio FFA Center which is located on the State Fairgrounds. Over 200,000 individuals visited the Center during the 1987 State Fair.

sponsor a specific display or item. The projects included 43 historical displays in an archives room, a conference room for 100 people, a library, office, kitchenette, and storage area. Within one year of the initial meeting of the development council, all special projects were accepted for funding and The Ohio FFA Center was becoming a "Reality."

### Evaluate Progress

The Ohio FFA Center Board of Directors continued to receive updates during the building program and the design and construction of the various displays. Teachers of vocational agriculture were also kept informed of the progress being made. The development director maintained a firm timeline. Numerous activities involved with fund raising, construction of the facility, and display design and construction were kept on schedule. The assistant director of Voc-

tional and Career Education, Agricultural Education Service, was chairperson of The Ohio FFA Center Board of Directors and approved all aspects of the project.

### Praise Success

Letters of appreciation to major project sponsors were initiated upon confirmation of sponsorship. A wall of honor was established to recognize the various levels of contributions and a plaque was installed on each major display or sponsored project in the FFA Center. Each plaque indicated the name of the sponsor.

The dedication of the 5,800 square foot facility was conducted during the 1986 Ohio State Fair and the Governor of Ohio was the featured speaker. Other dignitaries included the members of the Ohio Expositions Commission, several state legislators, and founding sponsors. During the 1987 State FFA Convention, the grand opening of the Ohio FFA Center occurred. Individuals involved in the program included the National FFA President, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and founding sponsors. In both the dedication and opening ceremonies, a television network covered the official program and interviewed individuals involved with the project.

During the 1987 Ohio State Fair, approximately 200,000 individuals visited the Ohio FFA Center and observed the displays. In addition, numerous educational and agricultural groups have utilized the facilities since the opening of The Center. The Ohio Commission on Agricultural Education was the first group to meet in The Center. The Ohio FFA Center is used by the state supervisory staff, teachers, local supervisors, and FFA alumni and for training state FFA officers. Approximately two meetings are held at The Ohio FFA Center each week.

In summary, the process followed in building the Ohio FFA Center utilized sound public relations techniques and activities. The facility will promote vocational agriculture and the FFA to various publics for many years. Thus, the total public relations value of this project cannot be fully measured. However, The Ohio FFA Center represents a model of and for public relations which other states may desire to copy.



Several displays are inside the Center. Here an FFA member studies a display that features Ohio's National FFA officers. (Photos courtesy of the author.)

# Using the FFA as a Public Relations Tool

The annual FFA banquet is a smashing success. FFA members are neatly attired in their official dress, community and school leaders are recognized, member accomplishments are lauded, parents are proud, and the advisor is beaming. Following the banquet, three members decide to celebrate. A couple of drinks, a sharp turn, and a car in the ditch result in front page coverage from the morning newspaper. Names are not important when a picture vividly reveals a student, not so neatly clad in official FFA dress, standing by the vehicle. The banquet pictures also made the morning edition. However, they were on page five of section three.

During a time when the merits of public education and the image of agricultural education are under scrutiny, promoting favorable rather than nonfavorable relationships is extremely important. The image of agricultural education is generally positive. However, a few small incidents can quickly communicate negative connotations. The FFA component of the vocational agriculture program provides a wealth of opportunities for promoting the accomplishments of students and the nature of the agricultural program.

## FFA Program Activities

Numerous FFA activities suit themselves to promoting public relations as well as developing agricultural leadership, citizenship, and cooperation. The activities may include participation in public speaking, parliamentary procedure, service projects, fund raising activities, skills contests, the FFA degree program, the proficiency awards program, the Chapter Safety program, and the Building Our American Communities (BOAC) program. The benefits to members are, of course, most important. However, others may also benefit. For example, a student's speech about the agricultural economy of the community may earn the student first place in a position to support the local vocational agriculture program and act upon recommendations for improving the community's agricultural economy. Not only can a student earn a proficiency award or state degree, but also the student's family or an agribusiness could benefit economically from activities conducted through the student's supervised occupational experience program.

While students learn the meaning of citizenship and cooperation from conducting their chapter Safety or BOAC programs, the school and others in the community benefit from the activities. As soon as these favorable activities are conducted outside the four classroom walls, public interaction and positive public relations are initiated. Public relations may evolve naturally from haphazardly conducted activities. Given time constraints, however, most FFA advisors and members prefer a more organized approach to conducting activities which efficiently promote positive public relations.



BY BARBARA J. MALPIEDI

(Dr. Malpiedi is an Assistant Professor of Agricultural Education in the Department of Occupational Education at North Carolina State University, Raleigh, North Carolina 27695-7801.)

## Building Our American Communities Program

The National FFA Organization established the Building Our American Communities (BOAC) program in 1970 as a formal community development activity for FFA chapters. The BOAC program is more than a community development program. It is an instructional program that is readily integrated into the vocational agriculture curriculum. It is a tool useful for teaching students about agriculture and the people in their communities. The BOAC program promotes leadership, citizenship, cooperation, economic development, problem-solving skills, and sound public relations when used effectively. RJR Nabisco, Inc., the FFA Foundation sponsor for the program, has supported the development of instructional and public relations materials which greatly assist FFA advisors and members who implement the program.

## Relationship Between the Community and Vocational Agriculture

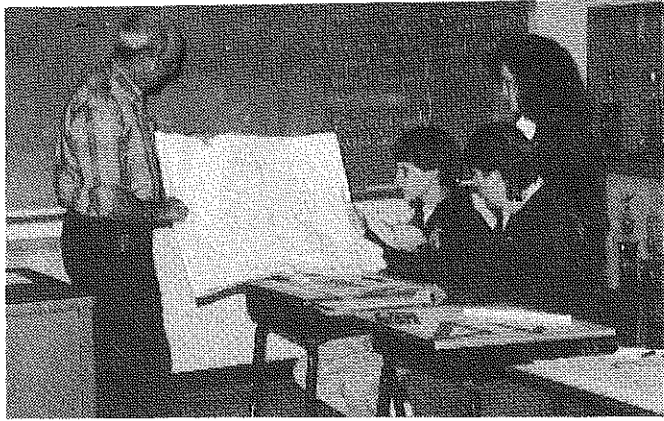
Ideally, the vocational agriculture program is an outgrowth of the community's agricultural education needs. Students need to know how their community affects its people, what role agriculture plays in their community, and what occupations and economic opportunities exist in their communities. During this first stage of the BOAC program, students seek this information in a number of ways: reviewing the latest agricultural census and/or the local telephone book; interviewing civic and agricultural leaders; and holding meetings with local farmers, FFA alumni members, and agribusiness leaders. The students' interest in the community communicates a positive image to those involved with the discussions.

Given basic knowledge of the community's status, the next question must be: How can the vocational agriculture program help make the community a better place in which to reside and work? Seeking this information may be combined with step 1, particularly in the interview situations. The survey from *Community Development: An FFA Rural Initiative Teacher's Manual* (Clouse and Cary, 1987) provides important questions:

(Continued on page 16)

## Using the FFA as a Public Relations Tool

(Continued from page 15)



After classroom landscape design instruction, each vocational agriculture student at West Carteret High School in North Carolina submitted a plan for a BOAC project. The class selected the best plan which was to landscape the local public library.

1. What do you think are the important needs of our community?
2. Can you suggest one or more projects or activities that will help to meet one or more of these needs?
3. Can you name local people who know about these needs?
4. Can you identify any groups and organizations that might help with any of these needs?
5. Do you have other comments or suggestions?

Several FFA chapters print the survey and send a copy to randomly selected community residents. Some place the surveys on all the car windshields at the local grocery store. These methods require careful instructions for completing and returning the survey. Members' families may be asked to complete the survey. The least effective but most commonly used method involves asking only the FFA members what the community needs. While FFA members' opinions are important, using this as the only source of information greatly reduces the potential for conducting significant projects. It also reduces the opportunity to interact with others in building community relations. More importantly, it is the members' responsibility to gather and analyze the information so they are able to select a high priority from the potential projects suggested.

### The BOAC Process

#### Analyzing and Selecting Projects

The community information gathered now provides FFA members with several potential projects. This critical thinking exercise should involve ranking the problems, needs, and goals in order of importance to the community. This may be determined by how frequently a concern is stated on the surveys or from the interviews.

Selecting a high priority project is sometimes difficult. Members must not only consider the need for the project, but they must also consider their available resources, work potential, as well as the economic, technical, social, political, and ethical impact of the project. A problem solving ap-

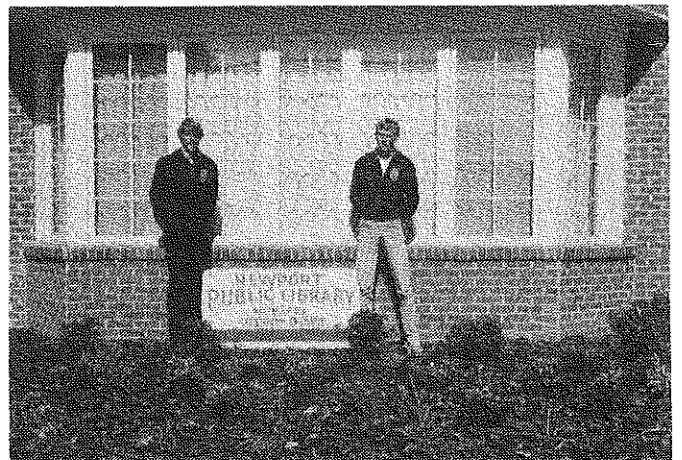
proach to this activity is helpful for arriving at a consensus for the group.

A high priority project meets the needs of the community. A typical project may focus on agricultural development: demonstrate efficient crop or livestock practices, establish a Farmer's Market, help organize a cooperative, or help identify potential markets for local products. Projects may include business related enterprises: sponsor a series of business management seminars, assist the Extension Service or Chamber of Commerce in identifying potential locations for new businesses, or operate a placement service for students interested in starting new supervised occupational experience programs.

Other projects may emphasize the following major areas: community environment and natural resources; community appearance, recreation and historic preservation; community services; energy conservation; and family life and community leadership. These project categories are used most frequently by BOAC participants (Voth, Clouse & Malpiedi, 1987). Donating 10 geraniums to the local nursing home is not very involved compared to working with a local contractor to landscape the nursing home grounds. The FFA advisor must determine if the scope of the project is sufficient to provide students with the skills promoted by



Students and their instructor reviewing the plan while the project is being completed.



Two students in a scene from the beautification effort. A ribbon cutting ceremony featuring local officials was included in the dedication activity. (Photos courtesy of Richard Peed and the West Carteret FFA Chapter in North Carolina).



the BOAC program, if it contributes to the community's needs, and if it results in desirable student-community interaction.

### Develop and Implement the Project Plan

A plan of action should include what the FFA chapter members plan to do as well as what others may be asked to do. It is helpful to select a BOAC program chair and committee from the chapter to work out project details. Sometimes the Program of Activities Service standing committee is used. The plan needs to include the following: how the project will be approached; the available resources - human, financial, and material; a budget and plan for financing if necessary; a work schedule; and specific individual or group responsibilities.

There are a few limitations to implementing BOAC projects. On the average, FFA chapters with 38 members can conduct very successful projects in less than 25 days. Many use the summer. Projects may involve no funding or as much as \$50,000 in grant monies. Dollar sources have included FFA chapter funds, Rural Rehabilitation Grants, civic and agricultural organization contributions, special fund raisers, and legislative grants. The FFA chapters usually involve three to four community organizations and on the average involve 151 other people (Voth, Clouse, and Malpiedi, 1987). What is interesting is that the "average" project does not have to be tremendously large but does employ all the resources of the community and the talents of the FFA members.

### Evaluate the Project

Upon completing the project, it is important to assess the results. It is always a good idea to invite one or more of the community leaders who assisted with the project. Did the project turn out as was expected? If not, why not? If the project is to be repeated, what should be done differently? What are the benefits to chapter members and the community? What have chapter members learned - about themselves, the community, and others in the community? What has the community learned about the FFA chapter and the vocational agriculture program? The assessment of the project should help chapter members review the community development process, their interactions with others, and what has been learned from the experience.

### Publicize the Project

Numerous publicity outlets need to be used to communicate the accomplishments of FFA members to the general public, especially when some of the benefits from the activities are returned to the community. Printed media are one method including newspaper articles with pictures, newsletters, or articles for *The National Future Farmer Magazine*. A short radio program or local television segment provides high visibility for the FFA chapter and vocational agriculture program.

Presentations to community groups with illustrated talks or slide/sound programs help spread the word of what was accomplished and may set the stage for next year's project.

Highlight the project at the local FFA banquet. More information about publicizing the BOAC program is found in the Building Our American Communities: BOAC Action Community Development Kit available through the National FFA Organization.

### Recognize the Contributions of Members and Others

Every FFA chapter that participates in the BOAC program is eligible for an attractive Area Award plaque. However, someone, probably the BOAC chair, needs to take five minutes to complete a one page application and submit it through their state FFA evaluation process. State and national recognition could result from completing and submitting the remaining parts of the BOAC application. The BOAC chair or a student who exemplifies contributions to the project should be encouraged to complete the Achievement in Volunteerism application. If selected as the state winner, the chapter member and advisor have the opportunity to attend the National Conference on Community Development with expenses paid. Regardless of the size of the BOAC project, members should be encouraged to report their activities by completing the BOAC Awards application and recognized for contributing to their communities. Publicize the recognition and help build that positive image.

Certificates for recognizing others who helped with the project are available through the FFA Supply Service. This is one of the most important steps for using the BOAC program to develop good public relations.

### Summary

The FFA is a tool for promoting positive public relations. Publically recognizing the achievements and contributions of students in cooperation with others in the community cannot help but promote vocational agriculture as a viable asset to the school and community. The BOAC program discussed in this article is one specialized tool for promoting public relations. FFA chapters and advisors who use it do not view it as an additional activity, but incorporate it into the curriculum and use it to complement other FFA activities. The program works in virtually any type of community - rural or urban. The most important outcome is the benefit of students who have learned more about their leadership abilities, their capabilities for service, and the composition of their communities. The benefits to the vocational agriculture program, the school, and the community are secondary but contribute significantly to promoting good public relations.

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Entrepreneurial Education

# Agricultural Advisory Committees: Partnerships For Public Relations

Agricultural education programs need community input and assistance. Advisory committees provide a channel for communications which helps teachers maintain positive public relations. Two way communication through advisory committees keeps the school apprised of community preferences for agricultural education and the community updated on local agriculture programs and opportunities. Advisory committees are important because of rapid technological changes in agriculture and because education is in a major transition period in America. Education decision makers need information about agricultural education to adequately supervise and administer these programs.

The federal government (i.e. Smith-Hughes Act) and many states recognize the importance of advisory committees in legislation and in educational mandates. California recently renewed its commitment to advisory committees through a senate bill and a blueprint for excellence proposal (Perry, 1984).

This article addresses the extent to which California has been successful in promoting the use of advisory committees. Secondly, successful strategies for using committees are examined in hopes that these ideas can be adapted for use in other states. These strategies are derived from research by Whaley and Sutphin (1987). Several factors linked to a successful use of advisory committees emerged from this research.

Approximately three-fourths of the agricultural programs in California use advisory committees. Three types of committees are prevalent: general agricultural program advisory committees, specialty area committees (i.e. horticulture), and occupational education advisory committees.

## Clearly Define Goals

Advisory committees that worked well, according to this California based study, had clearly defined goals. In general, advisory committees provide nonbinding recommendations to foster the successful operation of agricultural programs. They assume no administrative authority or jurisdiction.

When both advisory committee members and school officials recognize and operate within their roles, the advisory committee can have a positive influence. Some examples of the types of influence advisory committees have had in California include:

- Improvements in agricultural education facilities
- Identification of work experience placement stations for students
- Improvements and revisions of the agricultural curriculum to match local needs
- Development of local standards of excellence for agricultural education
- Suggestions for staffing of local agricultural programs
- Selection and update of equipment



BY DAVID WHALEY AND H. DEAN SUTPHIN

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## Criteria for Committee Member Selection

Procedures for member selection ensure that the community is adequately represented on the committee in a continuous and orderly fashion. Most advisory committees in California are nominated by the principal, superintendent, agricultural department chairman, and/or by the chairman of the school board. School administrators and agriculture teachers are ex-officio members. As ex-officio members, principals in California attend two-thirds of the advisory committee meetings. Their presence provides an important liaison and promotes productive operation of the committee.

## Operational Procedures

Many states have guidelines or publications which describe operational procedures for advisory committees. Guidelines for local advisory committees are essentials for their successful operation. Usually, State Education Departments publish materials for their state which describe the necessary detail needed to make committees work well. If your state does not have such materials, references from other states and general textbooks could prove useful when developing or revising operational procedures for the local committee.

California advisory committees seem to work best when their operational procedures provide for:

- Expectations of committee members
- Long range goals
- An annual program of work (plan of action)
- Feedback and update of progress made from recommendations of the committee (usually from the agricultural teacher and/or administrator).



The Building Our American Communities program is an excellent way to present a positive image to your community as well as receive national recognition.

### Summary

In summary, advisory committees for local agricultural programs can have a positive impact. Because of their importance they are mandated in California and several other states. A recent study in California found that agricultural teachers can maximize the effectiveness of local advisory committees by clearly delineating their goal, establishing criteria for selecting the committee, and by establishing operational procedures for the committee. Resource materials are available to teachers on establishing and enhancing the use of advisory committees. By working together, agricultural teachers, school administrators and agricultural advisory committees form a partnership that



Recognizing the support of political and business leaders is critical to good public relations. (Photos courtesy of Mike Rush, Theme Editor.)

will promote both excellence in agricultural programs and effective school community public relations.

Do you need assistance with your advisory committee? Perhaps the ideas in this article will be helpful. Your state staff in agricultural education, teacher educators and other agriculture teachers who have effective advisory committees may give you valuable advice.

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## ARTICLE

# Prior Planning Prevents Poor Pedagogical Performance

An instructor performs many functions but the most important and fundamental function is to teach. Most well presented, organized lessons are not impromptu but planned. Because a well presented lesson is so critical to good instruction, this article will address lesson plan development.

Planning serves many functions. It allows both teachers and students to anticipate class direction, it helps organize a course, and informs administrators of your class progress. Planning allows an instructor to use a variety of good teaching methods. A commonly heard alliteration is, "Prior Planning Prevents Poor Pedagogical Performances." Also, most instructors admit that a well planned lesson gives them greater confidence when they face a class.

BY RONALD ROSATI

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Before a lesson is developed, an instructor needs to consider the lesson's environment. A lesson is designed to take students from where they are and bring them to where they desire to be. To accomplish this, an instructor needs to know both a student's prerequisite abilities and end goal. Timeliness is an important consideration. How much time is available for the instructor to facilitate a student's goal

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## Prior Planning Prevents Poor Pedagogical Performance

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attainment? In agriculture, season of the year often limits subject matter. An instructor needs to consider the extent and type of resource available. Laboratory facilities, texts, references, visual aids, and resources persons may give direction to planning. Finally, an instructor needs to consider his or her abilities. An instructor inept in welding would be struggling to teach a laboratory in that subject. After these initial factors have been considered, an instructor often follows a series of steps while developing a lesson plan.

Course objectives are developed first. Behavioral objectives, a type of objective often used in technical education, consists of three parts: a student's terminal behavior, the conditions under which this behavior will be performed, and the criteria of acceptable performance. Evaluation items are drawn up using these objectives.

Following the development of objectives, reference materials are selected and gathered. These materials are used to further select and organize topics. Often, the table of contents from a well written text provides a good starting point when writing a course outline.

Teaching methods are developed after subject matter is selected. Using a variety of innovative, student oriented methods results in optimum learning.

A well written lesson plan can have many acceptable formats. Two commonly used formats are discussed below:

### FORMAT A

Parts of a lesson plan:

1. **Lesson Title** — Indicates the broad subject area of a lesson.
2. **Announcements** — Consists of upcoming events, dates, and other timely information to be conveyed to a class.
3. **Problem Statement** — Narrows the scope of a topic and allows students to better understand why a topic merits study.
4. **Behavioral Objectives** — Consists of three parts: a student's terminal behavior, conditions under which the behavior should be performed, and the criteria of acceptable performance.
5. **References** — A Section which tells both instructor and students where to look for further information.
6. **Materials Needed** — Reminds an instructor which teaching hardware and visual aids will be needed to teach a lesson.
7. **Interest Approach** — Discusses the motivational techniques to be used by an instructor.
8. **Subject Matter** — Lesson content listed under the subject matter heading.
9. **Student Activity** — Allows students to become involved in a lesson.
10. **Application** — Usually a laboratory activity, shows where students will be allowed to use what they have learned.

11. **Summary** — A reiteration of the important concepts of a lesson.
12. **Assignments** — Describe how an instructor will direct students toward further study in an area.
13. **Evaluation** — Allows an instructor to measure student achievement, thereby telling the instructor if objectives have been attained.

### FORMAT B

1. **Unit Title** — same as format A
2. **Objectives** — Same as format A
3. **Preparation** — During this stage, an instructor prepares students to receive instruction. Preparation includes introducing a lesson, establishing need in students, and stating objectives.
4. **Presentation** — This stage is analogous to the subject matter section of Format A - an instructor presents material.
5. **Application** — Students immediately use information they've learned.
6. **Evaluation** — Students are tested to allow an instructor to measure attainment of objectives. Evaluation should be in the affective, psychomotor and cognitive domains.
7. **Materials Needed** — Same as Format A
8. **Assignment** — Same as Format A

When developing lesson plans, underlying pedagogical principles need to be considered. Student needs are the basis of instruction. Coleman (1974) has shown that perhaps the most important need of a high school student is socialization. Maslow (1954), in his hierarchy of needs, suggested that self-esteem is a need keenly felt by high school students. Instructors need to develop lessons which satisfy these needs.

The hidden curriculum is a second consideration demanding attention. The hidden curriculum consists of incidental classroom learning such as neatness, punctuality, reflecting an instructor's morality and other forms of institutional conformity. This second curriculum is often at least as important as the intended curriculum. A competent instructor teaches a healthy hidden curriculum along with a productive primary curriculum.

Lesson plans can be developed more efficiently if some hints are kept in mind. When developing plans, develop more than one day's plan at a time. Compiling a lesson plan for one day requires almost as much time as developing a week-long lesson plan.

Once lesson plans are written, they should be filed in an organized fashion. A lesson plan can often be reused with minor revisions. Reusing well written lesson plans allows efficient use of instructor's time and results in optimum student goal attainment.

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|  | Nelson, Clifford L. .... April, 20                        | Wilson, Ron ..... October, 18                        |
|  |   | Wyatt, Windol L. .... July, 17                       |



# Stories in Pictures

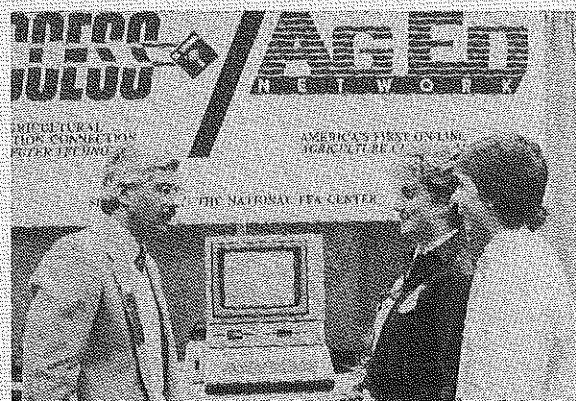
## Relating To Your Publics



Recognition breakfasts are an effective public relations tool.



Many businesses will work closely with agricultural education to help sponsor program and chapter activities.



Using the latest technology is essential for programs to remain current and attract students.

*(Photos courtesy of  
Michael Rush,  
Theme Editor.)*



Money makers should be chosen carefully to ensure they enhance the image of the program.



Booths and displays can be effective in promoting agricultural programs.