

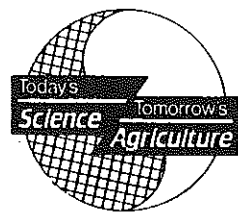
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**Collaborative Relationships**



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**Table of Contents**

	Page
<b>EDITOR'S COMMENTS</b>	
No More Lone Rangers .....	Ed Osborne 3
<b>THEME EDITOR'S COMMENTS</b>	
Collaboration — Not Competition .....	Gary E. Briers 4
<b>THEME ARTICLES</b>	
A Model for Industry/Education	
Collaboration .....	Thomas E. Marshall & Dick Brown 5
Operation Synergism: Agriscience Teachers and	
Extension Agents Working Together .....	Jim Connors, Tammy O'Connell & Edward Williams 7
Agribusiness and Agricultural Education: An Old Idea	
Has Come of Age .....	Michael L. Campbell & David A. Dwyer 10
Collaboration Begets Collaboration ..	Carla Kirts & Michael Behner 13
Collaborative Relationships With	
Agribusiness .....	Maynard J. Iverson 17
Agricultural Education and	
the Political Process .....	Dale R. Carpentier 20
<b>FEATURE COLUMN</b>	
Overcoming Procrastination .....	Gary E. Moore 23
<b>1993 THEMES</b> .....	24

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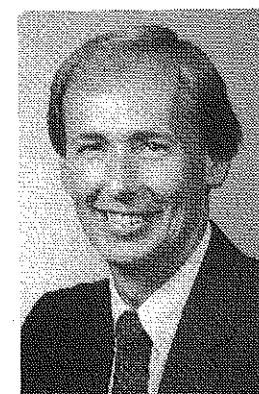
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**No More Lone Rangers**



By ED OSBORNE,  
 EDITOR  
 Dr. Osborne is associate  
 professor and program  
 chair of agricultural edu-  
 cation at the University of  
 Illinois.

In years past agriculture teachers could often be described as isolated, independent, and entrepreneurial. They could afford to manage their agriculture programs without much regard for other curriculum activities within the school. The 90s present a much different scene — one of integration, collaboration, and increased interaction with both school and non-school groups and individuals. Being sole owner and proprietor of an agriculture program no longer translates into a high quality program.

While agriculture teachers are primarily responsible for the success and welfare of their programs, the time has come for them to open their doors wide and invite others to enjoy a panoramic view of the innovative and effective components of their program. As they invite others to look into the program, agriculture teachers must become more outward looking as they consider opportunities for expanding into more comprehensive programs of agriculture. Meaningful collaboration will be a prerequisite for program expansion (and in some cases maintenance) in the years ahead.

Collaborative relationships differ somewhat from mere working relationships that are positive in nature. Collaboration implies more than friendliness, cooperation, and professional courtesy; collaboration involves working together on a jointly identified venture. Genuine collaboration occurs when individuals and groups come together as a result of some potential or already evident problem of mutual interest. Thus, the initial stages of collaboration focus upon problem identification and resolution. When agriculture teachers work with one or more individuals or groups, trust building and goal/role clarification become the focal point early in the collaborative relationship. The next stages of team performance include development of a problem solution plan and shared implementation. Finally, joint evaluation of the solution and continued renewal of the collaborative relationship must occur. Collaborative relationships are maintained as long-term programs are jointly provided and new initiatives are developed in response to arising problems. There are a number of major

areas where effective and productive collaboration can occur.

**With science colleagues** - The growing momentum in teaching more science in agriculture provides the perfect starting point for seeking collaborative relationships with other teachers in the school. Areas of mutual concern might include science credit for agriculture courses, need for shared laboratory materials and equipment, team teaching, science fairs, shared facilities and teaching resources, and similar areas.

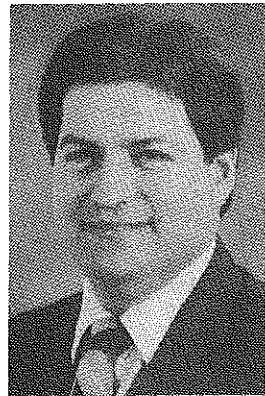
**With other teachers** - Elementary and junior high school teachers play a key role in expanding agricultural education to include career awareness and agricultural literacy objectives. Once again, identifying a problem or situation of mutual concern is the best way to initiate collaborative relationships with these other teachers. An implementation plan jointly developed by the agriculture teacher and other teachers which contains a variety of activities could greatly enhance long-term collaborative relationships.

**With other agriculture teachers** - Agriculture teachers often feel a need to be self-sufficient - to want to do everything themselves. This pattern has been especially harmful to beginning teachers, who need an effective support network to ease their transition into teaching. Agriculture teachers can share teaching plans, program ideas and information, and many other materials. For schools that are close in proximity, a shared land laboratory offers excellent potential for more time efficient and cost effective instruction in outdoor laboratory settings. We need to replace competition among agriculture teachers with collaboration and professional teamwork.

**With community groups** - Representatives from various segments of the food and agricultural system can be regularly involved in classes, SAE programs, advisory councils, laboratory experiences, FFA activities, and other aspects of the agriculture program. Historically, relationships with Cooperative Extension Service personnel have been weak in many instances. CES reorganization as it is



## Collaboration — Not Competition



By GARY E. BRIERS  
Dr. Briers is professor and interim head of agricultural education at Texas A & M University.

**W**H. Lancelot, in his book *Permanent Learning*, wrote that one principle of interest involves our natural impulses. And among those natural impulses is our desire to compete. So, as agricultural educators, compete we do! Judging contests, leadership contests, star awards, national chapter ratings, and on and on. The success of our students and FFA members in these events is a mark of our own success as teachers. We even compete for students. Sometimes, we "fight" band, sports, 4-H, leisure time, foreign language classes, honors tracks, other vocational programs and vocational student organizations, boy-friends and girlfriends, cars and pickups, after-school jobs, and perhaps even religious studies and services. Maybe I shouldn't involve you; should the pronoun be "I" and not "we"? Surely only I was guilty of competing for students — not you. If the preceding list doesn't apply to you, then skip the rest of my editorial and read all of the other articles in this issue — all upbeat articles about how you and others are collaborating with groups to further the causes of agricultural education.

On the other hand, if you are even a little guilty of competing rather than collaborating, then let's push on. Perhaps your and my motives were always pure. That is, do we always have the best interests of the individual student at heart when we compete for his or her time and talents? Again, if you answer "yes," then you can move on. Otherwise, hang with me and let's try to rid ourselves of our transgressions.

In most instances, the line between competition and collaboration is a fine one.

### No More Lone Rangers . . .

(continued from page 3)

occurring in many states provides an excellent opportunity to join with these fellow agricultural educators in providing comprehensive agricultural education to the youth and adults of the community.

Collaborative relationships require substantive joint ventures of mutual concern and benefit. As secondary agriculture

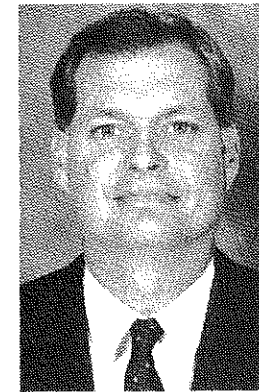
Both words begin with "co." This "co" is often used as a prefix; it denotes togetherness or a duo or some kind of shared experience. Yes, competition and collaboration — though my meager knowledge of grammar tells me the "co" is not a prefix — do imply a sharing, a kind of dual relationship. But there the similarity seems to end. Competition appears to involve opposing forces — resulting in "I win/you lose" (or vice versa). Collaboration, on the other hand, results in a "win/win" situation. Doesn't collaboration seem to yield superior results when compared to competition?

As agricultural educators, we must suppress our natural impulse to compete and instead capitalize on another of Lancelot's natural impulses — the natural impulse to be altruistic. Now, I don't know about you, but when I first studied Lancelot, I wasn't sure that I even had that natural impulse. In fact, I didn't even know what altruism was! (Did it mean that one's natural impulse should always be to tell the truth? I'm certain that wasn't my natural impulse!) Anyway, the dictionary taught me that altruism was "an unselfish regard for or devotion to the welfare of others." Ah, yes, this sounds like what we as teachers should practice.

So, if two forces (agricultural educator and drama coach) compete for the same resource (a student), then collaboration could result from our both being altruistic. What is truly best for that student? How can both forces win? If I, as the agricultural science teacher, yield to the one-act play this time, will the student be a better public speaker or member of a parliamentary team next time? This is one side of  
(continued on page 12)

programs strive to reconsider their purposes and expand into new areas, meaningful collaborative relationships will be crucial. The local program development work that needs to be done in agricultural education today cannot be accomplished by an agriculture teacher working in isolation. The challenge for the 90s is effective team building to support growth and expansion of agricultural education in the secondary schools. ■

## A Model For Industry/Education Collaboration



By THOMAS E. MARSHALL and DICK BROWN

Mr. Marshall (top) is the agriculture teacher at Portal High School, Portal, GA. Mr. Brown is Superintendent for Landowner Assistance, Union Camp Corporation, Savannah, GA.

**F**orestry is big business in Georgia. Forest land comprises 65% of the State's total land area. Including its related activities, forestry comprises a \$12 billion industry employing more than 81,000 people. These activities include forest management, timber cutting and transportation, and product manufacturing and marketing.

One of every five factory workers in the Atlanta metropolitan area is employed in a forest-related industry. There are more than 1,700 primary and secondary processors of forest products in Georgia and a total of 179 sawmills and 14 pulp and paper mills. Georgia leads the nation in pulp and paper production (Georgia Forestry Commission, 1990).

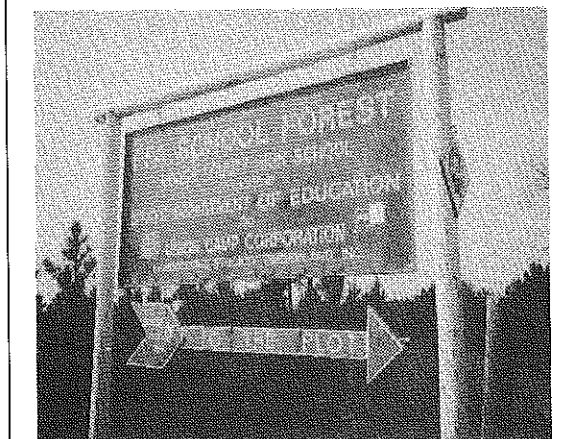
Union Camp Corporation is one of many forest-related businesses striving to make forestry in Georgia the best in the nation. A multinational corporation based in Wayne, New Jersey, Union Camp produces paper, packaging, building products, and chemicals. Its Savannah mill is one of the largest of its kind in the world. Long before the current push for industry involvement in education, Union Camp saw the need to be involved in forestry education in Georgia.

In 1953 Union Camp and the Georgia Department of Education established a cooperative program to promote and advance forestry education for high school students within the company's operating area of Georgia. Called "The Union Camp School Forest Program," it is jointly administered by foresters from the Corporation's Woodlands Division and teaching and supervisory personnel within agricultural education in the State. It consists of Corporate involvement in essentially three areas: 1) the establishment and operation of a school forest at each participating school, 2) the incorporation of Union Camp lesson guides into the curriculum, and 3) Union Camp sponsorship of forestry competition, both FFA and among agriculture departments based on forestry instruction.

### The School Forest

A major aspect of the program is the establishment and development of a school forest. Much like a land laboratory commonly used in agricultural education, the school forest serves as a hands-on laboratory where forestry students learn and practice forest management skills. Union Camp personnel, supervisory personnel from the State Department of Education, teachers, and community members are all involved in the process of locating and developing the plot.

It generally consists of 7 to 20 acres of forest land well suited for a variety of forestry practices including tree planting, hardwood control, timber measurement, controlled burning, and insect and tree identification. Once the forest is secured, it is divided into smaller plots by plowed fire breaks. A management plan is then developed based on the curriculum, sound forestry practices, and the unique characteristics of each school forest.



Union Camp Corporation provides a sign for each participating agriculture program to inform the public of the location of the school forest. The Dodge County High School agriculture department was the 1991 winner of the school forest program in FFA District II.

Union Camp also provides a sign, usually placed facing a major road, to inform the public of the designated school forest. As students move through the curriculum during the year, the school forest affords them the opportunity to practice and/or observe forest management practices. Although the program was initiated and →

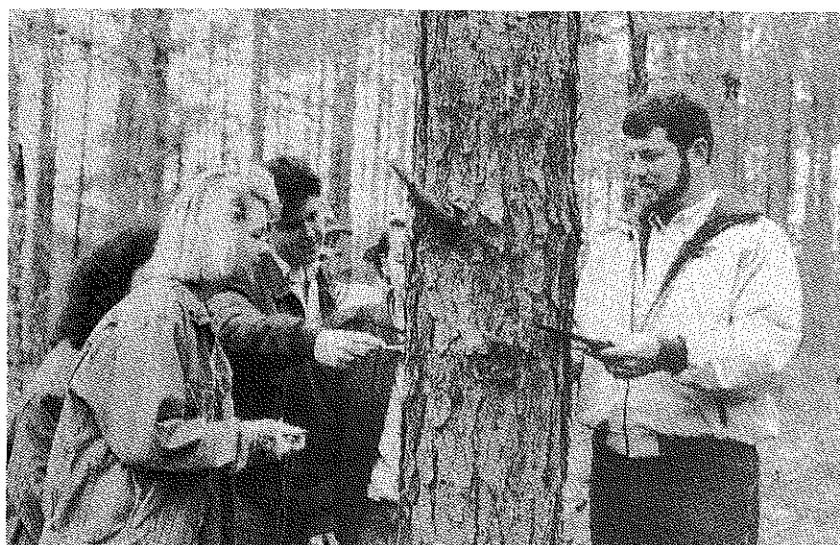
is administered by Union Camp, the Georgia Forestry Commission also plays a vital role in assisting with the management and operation of the school forest.

### Union Camp Lesson Guides

A second major aspect of the program, and one that teachers really appreciate, is the lesson guides for forestry instruction, which are jointly developed by the Georgia Department of Education and Union Camp. They are divided into twelve areas and satisfy DOE requirements for the minimum standards that should be taught in a forestry program. Each unit consists of clearly stated objectives and is written in outline format. The twelve units are as follows:

- I. Forestry for High School Students
- II. Importance of Forestry
- III. Forest Safety
- IV. Tree Identification
- V. Prevention and Control of Wildfires
- VI. Prescribed Burning
- VII. Reforestation
- VIII. Silvicultural Practices
- IX. Measuring and Marking Timber
- X. Control of Undesirable Species
- XI. Insects and Diseases of Forest Trees
- XII. Forest Management and Specialized Areas in Forestry

Blount (1991, p. 22) stated that "Business people have a unique responsibility in education because we have the best understanding of the skills that will keep America competitive in the next century." The fact that Union Camp personnel are intricately involved in developing and updating these lesson guides is perhaps one of the greatest strengths of the program.



Interaction of students and teachers with forestry personnel is one of the greatest benefits of the school forest program. Foresters often assist teachers in various activities both in and out of the classroom. Jimmy Sanders, a forester with Union Camp, works with students on the Portal High School forest plot.

### The Competition

The competition among schools falls into two categories: 1) FFA forestry contests and 2) competition among the schools involved in the school forest program regarding the total instructional program.

The district and state FFA forestry field days are held in the spring of each year. Several of these contests are sponsored by Union Camp. FFA members compete in ten areas representing various forestry skill areas. First through fourth place winners at the district level receive awards, and the first and second place teams are invited to compete in the state contest, which is co-sponsored by Union Camp.

*The fact that Union Camp personnel are intricately involved in developing and updating these lesson guides is perhaps one of the greatest strengths of the program.*

The winner of the state contest then competes in the national forestry contest held in Kansas City. Any agriculture program in the State is eligible to participate in these contests, regardless of whether or not it is involved in the school forest program.

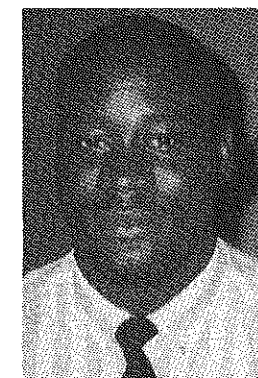
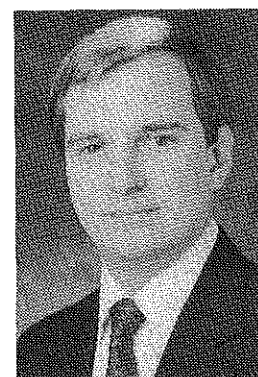
Again, although Union Camp sponsors or co-sponsors these contests, other organizations contribute significantly to their success. Personnel from the Georgia Forestry Commission and other forest-based businesses in Georgia assist in planning and conducting the forestry field days.

Each of the 38 agriculture departments in the State involved in the Union Camp program also competes against each other regarding the instructional program. The preliminary judging is conducted by Union Camp foresters and supervisory personnel within agricultural education. After the top six schools are selected, a panel of impartial judges selects the top three programs in FFA Districts I and II.

The student's class notebook and leaf collection notebook account for about 14% of the total score (90 out of 700 points). Another 100 points come from the school forestry exam. All forestry students in each program are tested by industry personnel twice a year to evaluate their knowledge of forestry; once at the end of the first semester and once at the end of the year. The scores from this

(continued on page 9)

## Operation Synergism: Agriscience Teachers and Extension Agents Working Together



By JIM CONNORS, TAMMY O'CONNELL, & EDWARD WILLIAM  
Mr. Connors (top) and Mr. Williams are doctoral candidates in agricultural and extension education at Michigan State University and Ms. O'Connell is an agriscience and natural resources teacher at Lapeer Vo-Tech Center, Lapeer, MI.

Agriscience and natural resources teachers and Cooperative Extension Service (CES) agents have many things in common. Both groups strive to increase society's awareness of agriculture and prepare clients for careers in the agriscience and natural resource industry. Yet, even though both groups have similar goals, they have not always utilized each other's talents and skills. Anderson (1979) found that, "The Cooperative Extension Service is a largely untapped resource for most agriculture instructors." In a similar study, Diatta and Luft (1986) stated that,

Agriculture teachers and county extension agents need to be made more aware of the functions of each other's job. They need to be encouraged to make wise use of each other's resources and to cooperate in carrying out activities which are similar in meeting the needs of their respective clientele.

Often, CES agents and agriscience teachers have worked together to conduct workshops or to organize county fairs. But in many cases, these activities have been the extent of their collaborative efforts. To develop and strengthen genuine collaboration, Michigan agriscience and natural resources teachers and Michigan Cooperative Extension Service agents participated in a unique technical workshop in September 1989. This workshop, titled Operation Synergism, brought Michigan agriscience and natural resource teachers and Michigan CES agents together to foster better working relationships between the two groups.

Webster's Dictionary (1984) defined "synergism" as the "interaction of discrete agencies or agents such that the total effect is greater than the sum of the individual effects." To produce the greatest synergistic effect, the talents and expertise of Michigan agriscience and natural resources teachers, Michigan State University Extension Specialists, and Michigan Cooperative Extension Service Agents were brought together.

To foster better working relationships Operation Synergism proposed to improve communication between CES agents and agriscience and natural resources teachers, provide inservice to agriscience teachers on technical agriculture information related to the Michigan Agriscience and Natural Resources (ANR) Curriculum, and increase the use of CES agents as resource persons in agriscience classrooms.

One hundred and nine Michigan agriscience and natural resources teachers attended the first Operation Synergism in September 1989. Teachers attended approximately 16 hours of technical inservice training taught by Michigan State University professors and extension specialists. Course topics ranged from agricultural economics to plant tissue culture. All classes stressed hands-on activities that could be utilized in secondary agriscience and natural resources classrooms. Attending teachers were provided with over \$400 worth of resource material supplementing the inservice instruction. These materials included books, computer programs, and videotapes focusing on agriculture's scientific and technical nature.

*Probably the most unique aspect of Operation Synergism was that while teachers were attending inservice classes, CES agents were teaching high school classes.*

The Michigan Department of Education technical certification requires 86 hours of advanced technical updating for approval to teach the ANR curriculum. The new ANR curriculum includes four basic core units: Natural Resources and Michigan Agriculture, Plant Science, Animal Science, and Business Management and Marketing. Each class at Operation Synergism directly related to one of these basic core units. Hence, teachers attending a class on plant tissue culture received approximately four hours towards re-certification as Michigan agriscience and

natural resources teachers.

Probably the most unique aspect of Operation Synergism was that while teachers were attending inservice classes, CES agents were teaching high school classes. Agriscience classes were taught by 122 Cooperative Extension personnel during Operation Synergism. This exposed Michigan agriscience and natural resources students to the expertise of Cooperative Extension Service agents. CES agents who taught agriscience and natural resources classes during Operation Synergism described teaching as an enlightening and exciting experience.

After Operation Synergism, agriscience teachers met with their CES agents to discuss their classroom teaching experience. Further cooperative ventures were planned to better utilize the knowledge and skills of the CES agents. Plans were made to use CES agents as resource persons for classroom instruction, to assist with supervised experience (SE) projects, and to serve as FFA contest judges and team coaches.



Operation Synergism is a result of the collaborative relationship between the Cooperative Extension Service, the MSU Department of Agricultural and Extension Education and the Michigan Association of Agriscience Educators (formerly MATVA).

Operation Synergism's initial success prompted Michigan agriscience and natural resources teachers to request annual technical inservice programs in cooperation with CES agents and specialists. Now, Operation Synergism is a regular part of the inservice activities offered to agriscience and natural resources teachers in Michigan. It has now been conducted for three consecutive years. Technical inservice classes have been expanded to include the facilities and resources of both Michigan State University and local community colleges. Collaborative relationships have been developed between agriscience

teachers and various academic departments at Michigan State University and Lansing Community College. These relationships improve technical inservice offerings to agriscience teachers, and many provide advanced placement courses for local agriscience and natural resources students.

**Evaluation of Operation Synergism found that both agriscience teachers and CES agents valued the experience. After Operation Synergism, 89% of the agriscience teachers stated that they planned to interact with their local Cooperative Extension agent in the future.**

Evaluation of Operation Synergism found that both agriscience teachers and CES agents valued the experience. Twenty-five percent of the agriscience teachers reported that prior to Operation Synergism they had very little or no interaction with CES agents. One agriscience teacher stated that her interaction with the CES agent was, "mostly through fair and other youth activities" (O'Connell, 1990). After Operation Synergism, 89% of the agriscience teachers stated that they planned to interact with their local Cooperative Extension agent in the future.

Agriscience and natural resources teachers reported that they would like to see new programs encouraging interaction between local CES agents. Twenty-three percent of Michigan agriscience teachers stated that they would like to see joint programs and contests between agriscience and natural resources programs and CES personnel. One agriscience teacher called for a "a program designed to work together toward a common community development program" (O'Connell, 1990).

Operation Synergism helped to enhance the relationship between Cooperative Extension Service agents and Michigan agriscience and natural resources teachers. Future cooperative efforts include regional joint training sessions between CES and agriscience teachers, team teaching in agriscience classrooms, and exchange days where agriscience teachers assist CES agents with programs. Agriscience teachers also plan to better utilize the skills of CES personnel and plan joint programs that improve agricultural education for local communities.

The Cooperative Extension Service and high school agriscience and natural resources teachers both strive to improve agricultural education in local commu- →

## A Model For Industry . . .

(continued from page 6)

test are tallied and used in the judging. This means that over 25% of the score (190 out of 700 points) in the competition comes directly from student performance. Management of the school forest also accounts for nearly 25% of the total points (160 out of 700 points).

### Program Benefits

The program is not mandatory. A teacher can teach forestry and not participate in the Union Camp program. However, what value does it hold for those who do? Teachers in the program recently responded to a survey asking them to list the five most valuable benefits of the program. Very high on the list was the interaction of students and teachers with industry personnel. Union Camp foresters frequently visit participating schools to teach certain forestry topics, to help with forestry team practice, or just to see how things are going. Teachers and students benefit from this kind of interaction by having an easily accessible source of technical expertise.

Another major advantage mentioned by the teachers was the availability of an updated, organized, and localized curriculum for forestry instruction. Other benefits included the availability of the school forest for demonstrations and student practice of forestry skills, opportunity for student participation in forestry field days, the visibility and public relations aspects of the program, and the donation of tree seedlings by Union Camp.

The heart of these advantages seems to be student and teacher motivation. The contact with industry personnel in the classroom and in FFA programs, the hands-on activities of the school forest, the fact that student notebooks are going to be judged by someone outside the school, and testing students by industry personnel give students additional motivation for succeeding. For these same reasons, some teachers find extra motiva-

nities. Improving the understanding and cooperation between CES and agriscience educators helps meet the needs of the ever changing agricultural industry.

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tion to deliver instruction in a more organized manner, to keep facilities and equipment updated and in order, and to make sure that every student succeeds. As one teacher stated, "The school forest test given by Union Camp personnel helps motivate teachers to teach lessons in more detail and review with students who have difficulty."

At all levels, relationships with industry can contribute to the health and success of education. Whether it is President Bush's America 2000 strategy, a program such as this one at the state level, or the relationship of local businesses with local schools, all play an important role in guaranteeing that our schools and educational programs reach their maximum potential.

Vocational education has a rich history of involvement with industry through curriculum and skill development, advisory committees, and contest sponsorship. Likewise, agricultural education shares that same rich history of involvement with the agricultural industry. As we move toward the 21st century and into new and exciting areas of our profession, we must nurture and appreciate these collaborative relationships that can help us achieve our highest goal: the success and well-being of our students.

### Acknowledgements

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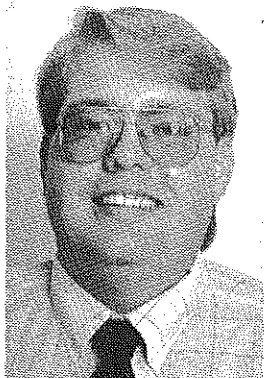
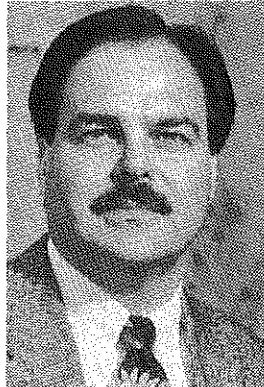
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# Agribusiness and Agricultural Education: An Old Idea Has Come of Age!



By MICHAEL L. CAMPBELL and DAVID DWYER  
Mr. Campbell (top) is agribusiness placement coordinator and Mr. Dwyer is agribusiness resource teacher at East Agribusiness/Environmental Science Magnet High School, Kansas City, MO.

**R**ecent and continuous advances in technology within the agribusiness world have transformed nearly every aspect of related careers into a more fast-paced, highly specialized workforce. Those involved or affected will undoubtedly become more reliant upon available resources and their ongoing educational training. This trend unmistakably applies to the realm of vocational and technical education.

As agricultural educators, we have the distinct opportunity, and thus a responsibility, to guide and allow our graduates to pursue the most relevant avenue for their future employment and career goals. SAE placement/entrepreneurships and agricultural internships (secondary and postsecondary) are two of the more common tools used by agricultural educators to enhance career selection and job experiences. We have restated what many of us in today's agricultural education are currently experiencing and know only too well! The purpose of this article is to examine and describe the foundation and implementation of such a collaborative relationship between the agribusiness community of Kansas City, Missouri and the Agribusiness Theme of East Agribusiness and Environmental Science Magnet High School in Kansas City, Missouri.

## Foundation of a Partnership

Students enrolled in the East Agribusiness and Environmental Science Magnet High School (agribusiness theme) are required to successfully complete a secondary agricultural internship in the appropriate "specialization strand" (secondary degree program) of agribusiness theme courses they have selected. This will be viewed and considered as an ongoing part of their SAEP. With over 1,000 agribusiness firms located in the Kansas City area, students have ample opportunities to gain experiences in a wide variety of agribusinesses — from technician through mid-management levels.

There are four components to an internship: the student, cooperating business, the school, and the parents. The student must agree to render his/her best efforts at all times and agree not to terminate employ-

ment without approval of the placement coordinator and/or program administrator. The cooperating business must agree to provide varied training experience of at least 10 hours per week. The school must provide a course of study that will assist students in improving skills, knowledge, and attitudes pertinent to the internship. Parents must agree to ultimately be responsible for transportation of the students.

All students successfully completing the internship receive from one to three units of credit. The primary purpose is for training. However, the majority of students receive monetary compensation during their internship. The East Agribusiness Magnet Theme currently anticipates the following levels of student internship completion on a credit basis:

1. Bronze Level: 180 hours of training for one unit of credit.
2. Silver Level: 360 hours of training for two units of credit.
3. Gold Level: 625 hours of training for three units of credit.

In order to graduate, ALL students will achieve the bronze level of internship completion.

East Agribusiness Magnet High School currently has active partnerships with the United States Department of Agriculture (regional office), Farmland Industries, Agricultural Hall of Fame (Bonner Springs, Kansas), Batesway Transportation Service, and Burns & McDonnell Engineers. The newest partner to this list is Miles, Inc. (formerly MOBAY Chemical Corporation). Miles, Inc. is a member of the Mid-America Consortium for Engineering and Science Achievement (MACEASA). Formation and utilization of such industry-education partnerships were outlined in the East Agribusiness Theme Planning Document. According to the Planning Document (1990),

*"These are active partnerships with the goal of assisting the school with activities and projects that can only be accomplished through outside resources. An ongoing line of communication should be developed to keep partnership organizations informed of the needs of the programs, the results of the assistance provided by the partnerships, →*

*and the mutual benefits of the partnerships to both groups.*

*Additional partnerships should be developed with other interested community and business organizations. Additional partnerships should reflect the broad scope of Agribusiness locally and should possibly include organizations involved with global agribusiness" (p. 30).*

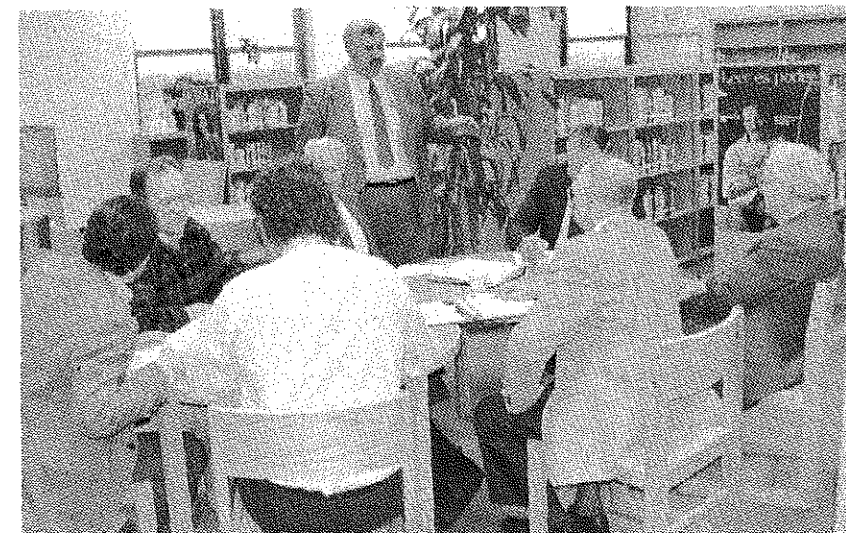
This locally aimed statement of intent was designed for the East Agribusiness Theme Magnet High School to provide students with various opportunities to "learn and earn" within the agribusiness industry.

## Implementation of a Partnership Plan

How are industry-education partners selected? What type of partnership provides the greatest amount of mutual benefits for all parties concerned? What type of evaluation or accountability system should be utilized? These relevant questions should be mutually addressed when initiating an industry-education partnership.

The faculty and administration jointly recommend area and regional businesses to contact which are related to agriculture and agribusiness. These contacts are made and an initial interview is set up regarding the school and business entering such a partnership. A panel presentation is given to the management which describes each partner's role and the desired results for all parties. Upon an agreement, the partnership is formed.

The commitment from businesses establishes excellent communication between communities, businesses and schools which, in turn, produces future successful and qualified employees in the agribusiness industry.



Members of the advisory committee sharing ideas concerning goals/objectives of partnerships.  
JULY, 1992

For all parties concerned, the greatest amount of mutual benefit is received from the type of partnership in which the industry partner takes an active role with the education partner. This will insure a successful and rewarding opportunity for both parties. Activities include speaking to classes, being involved with an advisory committee, granting use of agribusiness facilities for faculty training/staff development, and offering employment for qualified students. Such partnerships are in demand for a variety of reasons. In support of this concept, Clark (1992) stated,

*"To meet employer demand for competitive workers we need a state-of-the-art vocational education delivery system that helps youth and adults acquire the workplace skills of the '90s and beyond.*

*To achieve this system, industry and vocational education will have to link more closely with one another and become more accountable to each other" (p. 32).*

## Evaluation of Partnerships

All parties concerned need to be held accountable for the benefits received in the type of partnership implemented. Presently a pilot program has been established for the first year of business/community and school partnerships in the Agribusiness Magnet Theme of East High School. Among the topics and issues being considered for the first year's evaluation system include but are not limited to the following: a predetermined list of educational competencies, an employer's evaluation form on the student employee, and a mutual agreement between the employer and the school for a joint and final evaluation of the student's performance and potential.

Collaborative assessments will be continuously scrutinized to formulate an effective evaluation as the program grows. This line of thinking is in conjunction with and serves to support the already existing internship and placement programs throughout the secondary and postsecondary agricultural education programs currently in operation in the United States.

## Conclusion

Like it or not, changes are now a matter-of-fact occurrence in the field of agricultural education. As agricultural educators, we have traditionally held a firm, intrinsic belief in the FFA Motto, "Learning To Do, Doing To Learn, Earning To Live, Living To Serve." With this as a solid base, agricultural education has traditionally advanced toward instilling desirable workplace and societal traits and skills in its graduates. Whether students are placed for employment or complete →

## Collaboration Begets Collaboration



By CARLA KIRTS and MICHAEL BEHNER  
*Dr. Kirts is associate professor of agricultural education and natural resource management at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. Mr. Behner is an agriculture teacher at North Pole High School, Fairbanks, AL.*

What started out as a four-acre project contracted between the North Pole High School FFA and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has evolved over the past 12 years into a multifaceted collaborative effort. As the old saying goes, "one thing led to another." Currently, the North Pole agriculture program is extensively involved with several agencies and organizations in the overall management of approximately 200 acres on the Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge.

### About the Refuge

The Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge is located in the heart of Fairbanks in interior Alaska (see Figure 1). The 1790-acre refuge was originally Creamer's dairy, which served Fairbanks and the Interior from 1928 to 1966. The grain fields on the dairy attracted significant numbers of migrating waterfowl and became local citizens' favorite place to view the waterfowl as they made their way north in the spring. When the dairy was offered for sale in 1967, local citizens, wanting to protect the site for waterfowl, convinced the state to purchase the dairy. This became the first step in a sequence of events which ultimately established the refuge as it is known today. Since 1977, the original dairy facilities have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has managerial jurisdiction over the refuge. The statutory purposes of the refuge revolve around the concerns of the early Fairbanksans who proposed the refuge: provide protection and enhancement of habitat for migratory birds with special emphasis on waterfowl; and provide opportunities to view, photograph, and study various species of plants, wildlife, and geological features typical of interior Alaska.

Canadian geese and sandhill cranes are the premiere wildlife species local citizens enjoy viewing. However, cultivated fields, natural and constructed ponds, shrub thickets, and forests located on the refuge provide habitat and public-viewing opportunities for a variety of birds and mammals, including ducks, grouse, moose, hare, and fox. The refuge also accommo-

number of land uses, including dog mushing, trapping, skiing, snow machining, and various natural resource interpretation and education programs.

### Collaborative Project Development

In the summer of 1981, the North Pole FFA Chapter received permission from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to manage four acres on the refuge. The FFA was responsible for fertilizing, controlling weeds, and harvesting hay. The hay obtained from the section was sold to FFA members who had participated in supervised experience programs. Some hay was also sold to the public. All proceeds were "plowed back into" the agriculture program to purchase instructional supplies and equipment.

*Today, the original four-acre allotment has grown to approximately 200 acres. Part of this expansion is the result of the faith the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has in the FFA.*

In 1982-83, the Borealis Kiwanis donated a \$10,000 tractor to the North Pole High School agriculture program. With the tractor and an assortment of borrowed equipment, the FFA continued to manage their allotment. In return for the use of the borrowed equipment and implements, the FFA provided for their maintenance and repair without cost to the lender. FFA members benefited by learning about equipment management and operation, in addition to the agronomic skills which they were already practicing.

The FFA was the first to use fertilizer on their allotment. They began setting the pace for local producers in their application of efficient and effective practices. Essentially, their allotment became a demonstration site — the standard upon which local land management practices were measured. In 1985-86, the Alaska State Legislature recognized the contribution of the North Pole FFA by awarding them a \$125,000 grant for the purchase of additional equipment. The money provided 21 new pieces of equipment for first use during the summer of 1986. The FFA no longer had to rely on

observations within an industry/education partnership, it will become a matter of employability survival for students to be even more career ready and career oriented. In like manner, various industries who are actively engaged in education/industry partnerships will thrive more competitively in the business world by reducing time, manpower, and monies involved with employee training and employee turnover. Career exposure and preparation by proper management (industry and education) will help to ensure a quality product in supply (students) for the appropriate demand (jobs).

*Whether students are placed for employment or complete observations within an industry/education partnership, it will become a matter of employability survival for students to be even more career ready and career oriented.*

Internships for secondary level agricultural education students are certainly a worthwhile option to be considered. As we progress toward the new millennium, let us

### Collaboration . . .

*(continued from page 4)*

will the student be a better actress or actor for the next curtain call?) Further, who really knows what will be best for the student? Yet this question must be answered by all three parties involved so that the student does not feel pulled apart.

Collaboration is much easier when all parties use the same raw resources (students) and assist them toward a shared goal. But rarely is life that easy. Tough decisions must be made. The classic example for me was driven home years ago when an Iowa farm boy who was enrolled in vocational agriculture slacked off in his FFA involvement during his senior year in high school. Instead, he had been elected as an officer in his county pork producers association. One of my students, a second-year teacher, was really disappointed in this young man. The teacher was really counting on senior leadership from the student. And I was really sympathetic with the teacher. How could the young man abandon his opportunities in the FFA? He had potential to be a district FFA officer. He could put that FFA chapter "on the map." Maybe you see the error of my ways already. Thank goodness someone wiser than I saw my mistake.

With a few choice questions, this wise

remember the pathway traveled, obstacles conquered and goals achieved. Whether it is rural versus urban, secondary versus postsecondary, or vocational versus academic, one aspect remains constant — the importance and vitality of the role of the food and fiber system on a global basis. This basic foundation will undoubtedly enable all parties involved with or affected by agricultural education and the agribusiness industry to survive and flourish for generations yet to come.

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and altruistic educator taught both the teacher and me. The questions were something like this: What are the purposes of FFA? (To teach leadership, cooperation, and citizenship.) What is an important goal of vocational agriculture? (To help a young person enter and advance in an agricultural career). What is the young man doing when he holds an office in the pork producers group? Have we realized the purposes of FFA? Has vocational agriculture achieved its goal via this young man? Suddenly, it was clear to both the teacher and me. We selfishly wanted the students to help us through the FFA rather than us collaborate with the pork producers association to get more of our FFA members to realize the future in FFA — at some point in time — has to be now.

So, my one message to you and me is to be altruistic in our dealings with those young minds and bodies in our charge. Collaboration between and among forces can truly occur when we can share, and sometimes even let go.

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borrowed equipment.

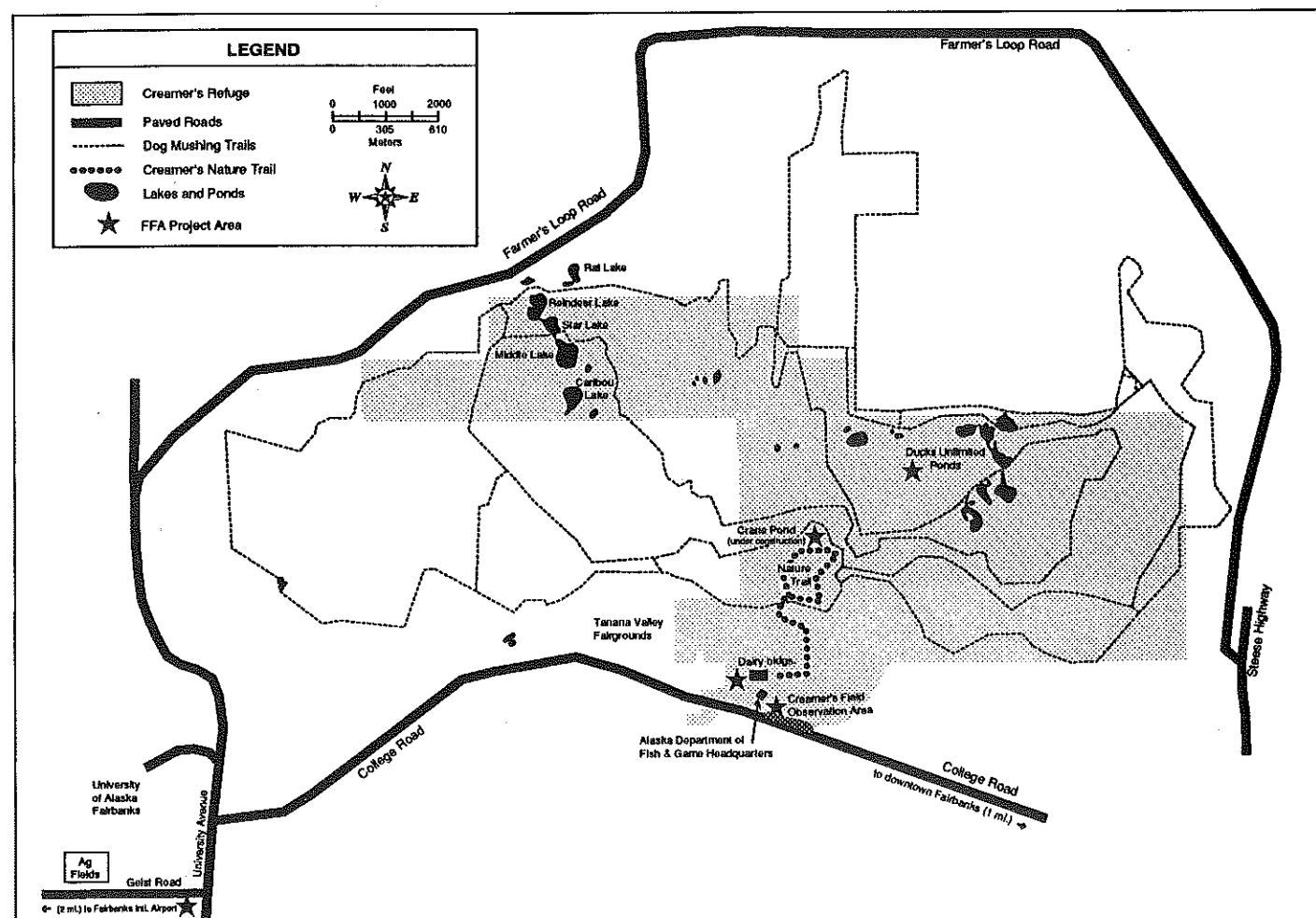
Now that the operation could be larger and more efficient, the Department of Fish and Game allotted the FFA additional acreage. Furthermore, the agency and the FFA began to arrange facilities so that the FFA's equipment could be stored on the refuge instead of being trucked 40 miles round-trip between the refuge and the school. Also, by this time the department had purchased a tractor, disk, and mower. Thus, the equipment was available for use by the agency as well as the FFA. At this point in the project the FFA was responsible for some building construction and maintenance, in addition to the agronomic management practices and the equipment maintenance and repair.

At about the same time, a pond construction project, funded by Ducks Unlimited, was initiated on the refuge (see Figure 1). The FFA was invited to participate. FFA members fertilized the riparian zones and seeded them with native grasses. The purpose of the project was to attract the waterfowl to potential nesting sites. Studies conducted by game biologists have shown that ponds and adjacent acres are being used for nesting by several

species of migrating waterfowl.

Today, the original four-acre allotment has grown to approximately 200 acres. Part of this expansion is the result of the faith the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has in the FFA. Other acres were added when the FFA participated in a cost-sharing program on the refuge with the Soil Conservation Service. This particular program is ongoing and is aimed at establishing or restoring selected fields to permanent vegetation and expanding and enhancing grain fields for the waterfowl to use. Erosion control is also a major goal of the project. Full-brome fields, free of willow and noxious weeds, are now available to the birds as they migrate in and out of Fairbanks. This is the preferred habitat for the birds and is considered a significant enhancement for attracting the birds to the refuge. Recent management stipulations allow only 75% of the land to be harvested for FFA use; the remaining acres must be left as grain for the birds. Sometimes the FFA mows the grain and leaves it in the fields for the birds. This is particularly beneficial to the cranes, who elect to nest on the refuge.

Because Fairbanks is located within →



Map of the Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge showing areas where the North Pole FFA has projects.

the major flyway migratory waterfowl use to reach arctic nesting sites, the Fairbanks International Airport is in a continuous land-use battle with the birds (see Figure 1). The waterfowl find the grasslands around the airport quite attractive for resting and foraging, while airport officials find the acculation of birds hazardous to aircraft and their passengers. Cranes are a particular problem because many of them stay in Fairbanks for the entire season.

As a result, the Army Corp of Engineers developed a plan for making the fields near the airport less attractive to the birds. Again, the North Pole FFA was invited to participate. Noise makers, such as boomer guns, were installed near the airport to scare birds away. To divert the birds from the airport, a highly visible and accessible pond is being constructed at Creamer's by the FFA (see Figure 1). The Airport is paying for the diversion pond. Subsequently, the ponds near the airport will be filled by the Corp of Engineers. Also, the FFA will be planting midsummer crops which will keep birds on the refuge later in the summer. The birds cannot resist succulent, lush crops.

The diversion project has caused more birds to use the university agricultural fields located between the airport and Creamer's refuge (see Figure 1). If the congregation of birds on the university agricultural fields continues to increase, additional measures may be necessary to relieve conflicts with research. This may be yet another opportunity for the FFA to be involved.

### Educational Advantages

A collaborative program has many educational advantages. FFA members involved in these various projects have received several educational benefits:

- **Hands-on experience in agronomic practices.** Given Alaska's climate, outdoor/field experiences are difficult to obtain during the academic year. The summer components of the refuge management project involve land clearing, tilling, planting, and harvesting of grain.

- **Hands-on experience in equipment management and operation.** Through participation in the refuge project, the North Pole FFA owns 21 pieces of equipment, including the tractor. FFA members develop skills in maintaining, repairing, adjusting, operating, and storing their equipment. Sometimes, they even have to transport the equipment to other sites for use with other FFA projects or an individual FFA member's project.

- **Integration of land lab with curriculum.** The presence of these collaborative projects has provided the impetus for adding curriculum in the classroom. For example, the equipment obtained via these projects fostered the addition of selected agricultural mechanics and safety units to the curriculum presented in the classroom and laboratory. The land lab on the refuge provides the avenue for hands-on experience.

- **First-hand experience with multiple-use resource management.** In many cases, the primary mission of natural resource management agencies is to provide for public use of the resources under their jurisdiction. This usually involves integrated management of several resources for several types of users. In these collaborative projects, the FFA has come face-to-face with user-oriented conflicts. For example, when the FFA began to install the ponds funded by Ducks Unlimited, they received numerous complaints for obstructing dog mushing trails in the area. On the flip side, local dog enthusiasts who use the refuge to train their retrievers leave metal stakes in the fields, creating hazards for the FFA and equipment. FFA members cannot harvest all the acreage for hay. Because they are working on a refuge, other uses must be considered. In this case, 25% of the acreage is reserved for the waterfowl. The agronomic crop is a secondary use. Furthermore, given refuge status, agrochemical use on the site must be carefully considered. While a farmer would not have to get permission to use an approved agrochemical, the FFA must be careful about using chemicals on the refuge. The FFA must also consider that Fairbanksans are not known for being very tolerant of chemical use.

- **Supervised experiences.** Opportunities to provide practical experience for FFA members abound. Some members have managed individual allotments on the refuge. Others have purchased hay and leased FFA equipment to support at-home projects. Still others have used the refuge project as summer employment with the FFA. In all cases, the FFA member has a realistic situation in which to maintain accurate records and develop practical management skills.

- **A sense of community.** Being a part of a significant venture in a community is an important educational opportunity. Fairbanksans provide strong, enthusiastic support for the refuge and the FFA has become an active part of that support. The North Pole FFA has received national recognition for its work on the refuge via →



silver and bronze placement in the Building Our American Communities program.

Other Advantages

FFA members involved in these collaborative efforts are not the only ones who benefit. The cooperative agencies and organizations benefit by getting projects accomplished that otherwise might not get done due to time and budgetary constraints.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, the Soil Conservation Service, and the Corp of Engineers are public agencies. They receive public monies to carry out their mission. It is an advantage when one can cooperate with another. In this case they cooperated with the Fairbanks North State Borough School District, another public agency. Collaborative efforts such as this where the mission of one public agency supports the mission of another public agency are signs to the public that their tax dollars are providing effective returns.

As the FFA established a good reputation for involvement in these projects, other opportunities became available.

In this case, one collaborative project led to another. What started out as a project with the Department of Fish and Game also led to projects with the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, U.S. Corp of Engineers, and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. It is obvious that the first collaborative program with the Department of Fish and Game provided an avenue for effective public relations for the agriculture program, leading to additional projects with other agencies.

Cautions and Concerns

Realistically, a collaborative effort of this magnitude is not without its risks. Liability is a major concern. The instructor must take all reasonable measures to prepare students to operate equipment and be responsible while working on site. This includes giving and recording safety tests, supervising work activities, and being on an official school district contract during the summer.

In some instances, competition with local private enterprise is a problem. When the North Pole FFA first began managing allotments for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, it just so happened that a

large amount of hay was produced in the Fairbanks area that year. Because the FFA had hay for sale, the school program was perceived to be in direct competition with local enterprises. However, this situation has been resolved somewhat by the fact that local hay production has never been that high since, and the FFA has built a reputation for producing high quality hay. Furthermore, all FFA receipts have gone back into the agriculture program. At the present time, business competition is not a problem.

Maintaining instructional integrity must always be a primary goal.

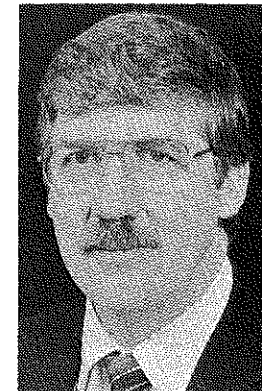
Allowing projects to become bigger than the students can handle is a danger.

Maintaining instructional integrity must always be a primary goal. Allowing projects to become bigger than the students can handle is a danger. The better job the students do of completing public projects like this and attaining a good reputation for their work, the greater the potential to be pulled into more work. The instructor is the only person in a position to determine whether the collaborative efforts are within the realm of reality. "Biting off more than one can chew" and not being able to produce success could damage the reputation of the agriculture program. In fact, just recently, the Corp of Engineers approached the North Pole FFA about managing 500 acres on the local flood control project. This project would be a major expansion of current operations and can only be accepted after careful consideration of the consequences.

In Conclusion

According to the dictionary, collaboration means "to work jointly with others, especially in an intellectual endeavor." The North Pole FFA has established such a relationship with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in managing Creamer's Refuge for the enhancement of waterfowl habitat and public education and recreation opportunities. A project that started with Fish and Game rapidly expanded into several projects with several entities. As a result, the community benefits and the students in the North Pole Agriculture Program acquire experiences outside of the traditional classroom and textbooks.

Collaborative Relationships With Agribusiness



By MAYNARD J. IVERSON
Dr. Iverson is professor and head of agricultural education at the University of Georgia, Athens.

Collaborate — (verb) to work together, especially in reference to literary, artistic or scientific work. Collaborative - (adjective) tending to collaborate; resulting from collaboration. Collaborator - (noun) a person who works with others.

— Webster's New World Dictionary

During a recent state-sponsored workshop on cooperative education programs, a group of agriculture teachers, teacher educators, and state staff members interviewed the managers of three typical agribusinesses. The firms were located along a major highway in a mid-sized metropolitan statistical area of approximately 100,000 people. The three agribusinesses dealt with unrelated products/services — farm supply, nursery sales, and farm/lawn implements. The group conducted one-hour interviews using an interview schedule that had been developed to guide the questioning toward policies affecting the cooperative education programs of the teachers involved. Even though the interviews were structured, the workshop participants were surprised at the results. The message from the three managers was basically the same, "We are ready, willing and able to cooperate in the training of agriculture students in our business; we have some specific restrictions that must be taken into account, but let's discuss how we can work together for our mutual gain."

What's wrong with this story? Is it the unlikelihood of three independent agribusinesses being positive toward entering into cooperative agreements with agriculture teachers? I think not. Rather, it is the fact that a group of agricultural educators were

Overcoming . . . (from page 23)

help you to remain focused on what is of utmost importance. For more information on overcoming procrastination, the following may be helpful.

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surprised at the positive response of agribusiness to potential collaborative relationships. The Vocational Education Act of 1963 broadened agricultural education instruction and supervised agricultural experience applications to off-farm agribusiness. Yet in 1992, nearly 30 years later, agricultural educators continue to "gather data" about business response to their program. In the above example, shouldn't the positive have been assumed? Perhaps it is time that we examine our beliefs and customs regarding the interaction of agricultural education with the agribusiness community.

Historic Relationship of Agricultural Education and Agribusiness

From its inception, agricultural education has been a community-oriented program. Early leaders extolled the values of living in the community and participating actively in the locality. In addition, teachers were admonished to work closely with parents, local leaders and businessmen, and to listen to their counsel. Numerous informal and formal relationships developed. Among these were the following:

- a) advisory committees — these often included agribusiness leaders. Later legislation required specific representation from the business community.
b) resource persons from agribusiness — teachers would identify business representatives who made presentations to classes/meetings during the year.
c) cooperative education centers — agribusiness firms were identified where students could be placed for work

experiences and after-school employment.

- d) "primary supplier/supporter" — the status given to agribusiness firms which sold, loaned or donated material to the agriculture program.
- e) field trip sites — agribusiness firms where classes could be taken for real-life experiences.

These activities, although helpful to the program, were primarily one-way relationships — contributions of the business to the school/agriculture program. This is not to suggest that agricultural educators did not contribute to their communities through service activities. In many cases teachers of agriculture became involved in local chambers of commerce, agricultural organizations and other agricultural business and industry in the community. For the most part, however, agribusiness was an occasional contributor to the school program, not a major participant.

### Collaborative Relationships Today

The pressures of increasingly difficult societal problems and a stubborn recession have caused national leaders to search for new ideas for more effective and efficient schools. President Bush's Education 2000 initiative sets high goals for the nation's schools and suggest major roles for business and industry, volunteers, and parents. Calls for educational reform are receiving more attention nationally, and business and industry are seen by many as the source of ideas as well as finances. In vocational education, there is a renewed emphasis on partnerships — the January 1992 issue of the *Vocational Education Journal* was dedicated to this topic. Still, it should be noted that for the past decade, vocational educators have been active in Public Law 97-300, the Job Training Partnership Act of 1982, which enlarged the role of private industry in federal job training programs. The JTPA involved vocational educators primarily through its Private Industry Councils, which were required for all service delivery areas within each state (Mason, et. al., 1989).

In agricultural education, the current picture is complicated by both bureaucratic and economic conditions. Heavy teaching loads and increasing paperwork in the schools, coupled with reduced months of employment, have caused many teachers of agriculture to become more "school bound", and consequently less involved in community activities. However, where strong ties have been established with the agribusiness community, these negative effects have been less pronounced.

On the industry side, a downturn in agricultural markets during the 1980's, regional weather extremes, and the recession have severely affected agribusiness. Many have gone out of business; others have had to cut back or diversify in order to survive. To illustrate the problem, a teacher of agriculture in south Georgia recently initiated a study of farm implement dealers in order to project employment needs, and thus determine the emphasis of his agricultural mechanics program. He initially targeted a 50-mile radius of this town as the area to be included in the study. Later, he had to enlarge the area to a 100-mile radius in order to have sufficient implement dealers to study (Avery, 1990)! What was once commonplace in every rural town — the implement dealer — has become a rarity. Effective collaboration in the future must reflect the realities of the stressed business climate.

The above problems notwithstanding, progress is being made to improve collaborative relationships with agribusiness. In Georgia, internships in agribusiness have been utilized by many teachers to upgrade their skills and knowledge. Some have arranged paid employment, and over 30 teachers have received graduate credit. These internships have resulted in placement opportunities for students, location/acquisition of resources, and closer ties to the agribusiness community. Another improvement came about when state staff involvement with the forestry and horticulture industries resulted in an industry certification program which better meets the needs of students, teachers, schools, and the industries involved.

### Collaboration in the Future

Most of use see the future, as the poet proclaimed, "through darkling glass" (i.e., unclearly). If the recent past is any indicator of changes to come, agricultural educators must move expeditiously toward partnerships, and think in terms of long-term commitments. They must cultivate, as never before, mutually rewarding relationships with agribusinesses. This will entail getting closer and on a more comfortable basis with agribusiness personnel than in the past. In order to work closely with businessmen/women, their values must be understood and accepted; for instance, the importance of time and contracts (Gustafson, 1992).

Responsiveness is the key to the establishment of good relations with modern agribusinesses. Logically, the agricultural educator should be familiar with the workplace environment in order to deal effectively with its personnel. In addition,

flexibility and self knowledge (i.e., realizing one's strengths and limitations) will prove helpful to expanding the relationships. Persistence, including regular calls or visits, and patience in cultivating relationships are also important to success. Obviously, agricultural educators must set aside time for collaborative activities.

### A Cautionary Note: Potential Pitfalls to Collaboration

Every business has as a primary objective to make a profit; but a secondary role often is to be a "good corporate citizen." However, Professor Robert Reich, a Harvard political economist, disputes the philanthropy of a corporate giving. In the January, 1992 *Vocational Education Journal* he posed that "... the suggestion that the private sector is taking substantial responsibility for investing in America's workers is seriously misleading." He further asserted that corporate giving to public schools is "... vastly overrated and has in fact declined in the 1990's" (page 62). Educators need to keep the business ethos in mind as they develop close ties with agribusiness. A truly symbiotic relationship is needed to best serve both the firm and the program.

Another potential problem lies in the area of perceived conflict of interest. At a time when public organizations and their employees are under great scrutiny for possible malfeasance, there are risks that close ties to agribusiness will be misunderstood. Communication of activities and benefits to administrators and the public will be of even greater importance than before.

### Implications to the Profession

Collaborative relationships of the future between agricultural education and agribusiness can and should be based on the partnership concept, perhaps best illustrated in the Land Grant university model. For this model to work well, there must be equal status, a respect for the nature of the two organizations, and provisions for faculty time to develop and nurture the relationship (Corigan & Mobley, 1990).

The term "partnership" suggests an equality of participants, which may challenge the traditional pattern in the schools. Certainly the idea of the agribusiness community as a co-leader in the schools will require adjustments in the administrative or organizational chart.

The notion of mutual support will require the teacher of agriculture to give as well as to receive. The school may have to commit resources to provide help to the

agribusiness in two areas of major need: 1) to provide a source of well-trained new employees; and 2) to provide for the training of existing employees.

In the past advisory groups gave advice which may or may not have been heeded. In a partnership model the advisory committee become more of a board of directors. Under this model the school/program/teacher will be obligated not only to listen, but also to act on the advice.

Can a partnership mode of collaboration be widely implemented in agricultural education? The opportunities are extraordinary, the potential rewards are great, but the skills of agricultural educators will have to be greater than ever. Certainly, improved preservice, inservice and graduate education will be necessary.

Activism with agribusiness will benefit the program, the teacher of agriculture and the school in ways unheard of in the past. Will we rise to the challenge? For the good of the program, I believe that we must.

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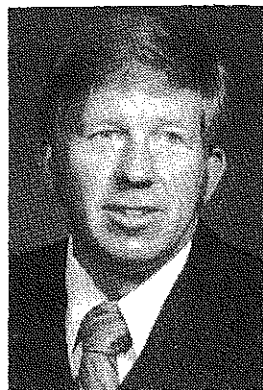
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# Agricultural Education and the Political Process



By DALE R. CARPENTIER

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The time has come for politicians to begin campaigning again. All across the country the air waves will be filled with paid political advertisements. Americans, however, will try to distance themselves from the political process and many will not even vote. Americans don't think their vote makes a difference. Can we as agricultural educators afford to make the assumption that our vote doesn't count? Before we make that assumption we need to ask ourselves some questions. Is the future of agricultural education in jeopardy? Has the implementation of newly developed strategic and tactical plans by the various agricultural education organizations at both the state and national levels had an impact on local programs?

## Where Are We Now?

At this point in time we would all like to believe that the future of agricultural education is safe, because of the foresight of our leaders. Summit I, Summit II, and the two national video teleconferences provided opportunities for the agricultural education community to demonstrate the changes which are occurring, as well as the design for the future. Can we expect funding for agricultural education to be increased as a result of these activities? Will graduation requirements be changed to include agricultural education?

The answers to these rhetorical questions are evident. The strategic and tactical plans are in place, but what should be done next? One course of action seem apparent. The time has come for agriculture instructors to become politically active and public relations conscious so the profession can grow and prosper into the next century.

Most agricultural educators would probably agree with the need to be more public relations conscious, but many would question the need to become politically active. The support of this postulate lies in the answer to the following question: "Who determines the amount of funding for vocational education, including agricultural education?" The obvious answer is politicians, at all levels of government. "It is a fact of political life that those who control the money control the program" (Jones, 1985, p. 28). This proposition does not

advocate that all agriculture instructors should run for public offices. Rather, it advocates that instructors get involved in the political process. According to Rush, state supervisor for agricultural education in Idaho (1987), "Involvement in the political process is the only option if agricultural education wants to remain a part of our educational system" (p. 6).

## Our Political Past

Traditionally, agriculture instructors have not been politically active. Former Editor of *The Agricultural Education Magazine* Blannie Bowen (1987, p. 3) observed, "Heretofore, most political involvement by agricultural educators has been quiet and behind-the-scenes."

*The time has come for agriculture instructors to become politically active and public relations conscious so the profession can grow and prosper into the next century.*

There are many reasons for not wanting to be involved. These reasons may have appeared valid in the past, but instructors can no longer sit back and allow their friends to take care of them. "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" (Engelke, 1988, p. 7).

Eldon Witt (1987, p. 9) may have best summarized the necessity for political involvement by agriculture instructors when he wrote, "The individual teacher has the most to gain or lose from the political process, be it local, state, or national." If we accept the fact that we must change our attitudes towards political activity, the next question we must answer is, "what can we do to change?" Let us explore this issue from the local agriculture instructors' perspective.

## What Can We Do To Change?

Teachers must first develop a positive mind set toward politics and politicians. It sometimes appears that legislators are

opposed to agricultural education. We need to remember, however, that most legislators are from urban areas and are not familiar with our program. They are basing their opinions on the information available to them. Eudy (1987, p. 10) wrote, "The legislators are not our enemies, but some of our uninformed friends." Educators must take the time to explain their program and its benefits to the community rather than assume the legislator already knows. A positive mind set toward politics and politicians is just as important today as a positive mind set toward our program. Once this hurdle is crossed, it will be possible for the local instructor to start making a difference.

## Public Relations

The next step, which is very important, is for the instructor to develop and implement a strong public relations strategy to inform the community about the agriculture program, as well as the FFA chapter. Public relations, according to Webster's dictionary (1983, p. 1456), is "relations with the general public through publicity; those functions of a corporation, organization, branch of military service, etc. concerned with informing the public of its activities, policies, etc. and attempting to create favorable public opinions." If the local instructor does not perform the necessary functions, how will favorable public opinion evolve?

*Teachers must first develop a positive mind set toward politics and politicians. It sometimes appears that legislators are opposed to agricultural education.*

The importance of public relations in the political process was emphasized by Rush (1987, p. 6) when he stated, "The key to the political process is simply providing the right kind of information from enough of the right people to those who make the decisions." If political support is our goal, then politicians need to know what we do, in school and the community. This point was confirmed by Hovis (1978, p. 18) when he stated, "An important step in establishing a rock-like political foundation for vocational education involves keeping the legislature informed and conscious of your existence." This step must start at the local level.

## Advisory Councils.

The local advisory council should be one of the key components of a strong public relations program. "Two-way communica-

tion through advisory committees keeps the school apprised of community preferences for agricultural education and the community updated on local agriculture programs and opportunities" (Whaley and Sutphin, 1988, p. 18). The local advisory council should develop a separate public relations plan to inform the community about the program. This would serve two purposes. First, it would provide the advisory council exposure within the community, as well as supporting the program. Secondly, it would provide another source of information about the program. Instructors are sometimes reluctant to publicize information about themselves and their program because they fear it may be interpreted as bragging. If the advisory council were to publicize the same information, these fears would be reduced.

## Community Involvement

Other groups in the community which should be utilized in a complete public relations program include, but are not limited to, FFA Alumni chapters and/or program alumni, Young Farmer chapters, parents, and concerned citizens. Witt (1987, p. 9) observed, "Lying within each community across this nation is a sleeping giant — a giant comprised of alumni and concerned citizens that can be awakened by the concerned teacher." How can this sleeping giant be awakened? It starts with a strong public relations program and then letting the community know what is happening and what needs to be done. A telephone network starting with the advisory council and spreading into the community is one way to inform the people. Some may be skeptical that people in the community would be willing to become involved in something for the agriculture program. According to Eudy (1987, p. 11), "Former students and parents seem more than ready to accept the challenge of working this pyramid-type organization."

## Effects of Public Relations

A strong public relations program will help to cultivate grassroots support for the local program, and agriculture instructors should continually cultivate this support. Eudy (1987, p. 11) echoed this thought when he wrote, "Probably our greatest strength is in the grassroots support for our program." This places a lot of responsibility on the local instructor. The instructor should only seek the support of the community when necessary. Moreover, the instructor must avoid becoming emotionally involved in issues affecting the program or school. On political matters, the instructor must be objective when seeking the support of the community. If the



community has the same perception of the outcomes of the legislation, they will provide the support the instructor is seeking. In either case, the community will recognize the local instructor as an individual who is concerned and cares about the school and community. Simply stated, the instructor will gain influence in the community. U.S. Representative Watkins (1987, p. 14) recognized this influence when he wrote, "An enthusiastic, motivated, and effective agricultural educator in the local community can influence the views of not only young people, but adults outside the classrooms."

### Cultivating Friendships

Another aspect of political involvement which should be considered is to cultivate friendships with local, state and national legislators. According to Watkins (1987, p. 14), "The most effective way to impress a legislator is to be a trusted friend." Offer a helping hand at election time. Offer to put out posters, make phone calls or other activities which may help them. You may not get to know the candidates for national office as well as those for state office, but Watkins (1987, p. 15) offers this advice when helping candidates for national office, "Get to know the staff on a district level as well as the key Washington aides who specialize in your fields of interest." If your candidate is elected, these are the people you will have the most contact with which.

### Keeping In Touch

Instructors can further develop a rapport with elected officials by keeping in touch with them. Eudy (1987, p. 11) wrote, "The political involvement does not necessarily mean we are constantly asking for help." We should contact legislators occasionally just to let them know our concerns about issues, even if they don't affect us. Another way to keep in touch is to attend local meetings sponsored by elected officials.

Agriculture instructors should not view a friendship with a legislator as a means of receiving special treatment. The goal is to be looked upon "... as a valuable asset and a source for information into problems and concerns of your community ... ." (Watkins, 1987, p. 15). It should be recognized, however, that it will take some time and extra work to reach this point, but the potential results far outweigh the time and effort invested.

Coinciding with the efforts of local instructors are the activities of our state and national organizations. It is their responsibility to keep local instructors informed. It then becomes the responsibility of the

local instructors to use that information.

### Three Goals For Instructors

The future of agricultural education rests with the local instructors across the nation. Instructors must set and accomplish three goals, if agricultural education is to continue to be a part of our educational system. First, they must have a strong local program. "Just as political apathy may kill a good program, no amount of political activity can ultimately save a program that is not meeting a social need" (Rush, 1987, p. 6). Secondly, they must develop and implement a continuous public relations program utilizing the FFA, the local advisory council, FFA Alumni, NYFEA members and other available resources. Lastly, they must become politically active. According to Rush (1987, p. 7), "... we must recognize that agricultural education will continue to be impacted through the political process, whether we are involved in that process or not."

### Final Thoughts

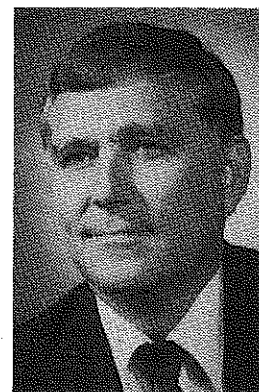
For a step-by-step guide to effective political action, see the article written by Tom Jones, former NVATA President, in the *Journal of the American Vocational Association*, January, 1985. This article should be very helpful to anyone interested in becoming more involved in the political process.

History indicates that more of us should have been involved in the political process long ago. Can we continue to assume someone else will do it? If agricultural education is to survive, agricultural educators must form collaborative relationships with politicians, and we must make the first move. Now is the time to start. Our future is in our hands.

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## Overcoming Procrastination



By GARY E. MOORE  
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Webster's defines procrastination as "to put off doing something until a future time; postpone or defer action." My definition is "doing anything other than your highest priority task." Often we work hard on a variety of small, non-crucial tasks and believe we are really getting things accomplished when what we really are doing is postponing action on a more important task — in other words, we are procrastinating. All of us procrastinate to some extent. It is natural. However, those who continually procrastinate will feel guilty, which lowers self-esteem and results in decreased productivity. Habitual procrastinators are viewed in a less than favorable light by friends and colleagues. Constant procrastination is a bad cycle to get established.

There are two steps to follow to overcome the procrastination. The first step is to determine why procrastination is occurring, and the second step is to select an appropriate technique that will work to overcome the reason for procrastinating.

### Why Do People Procrastinate?

Some of the common reasons we procrastinate are:

*Fear of failure* - If we attempt to do the task, we may fail. So to avoid failure, we don't do the task.

*The task is unpleasant or boring* - How many people really like to iron, wash dishes, pay bills, clean closets, etc.?

*We are overcommitted* - We have too much to do; something has to slide.

*It is not really a goal* - It won't help us reach our true goals. It may be a task someone else has assigned us.

*To get even with others* - If we procrastinate on a task, it may cause problems for someone else who needs the task on which we are working.

*Physical problems* - A cold or other illness may delay completion.

*Confusion* - We don't know exactly what to do or how to proceed.

*To get somebody else to do it* - If we put off doing something, someone may do it for us.

*To gain sympathy* - Putting off things to the last minute may garner sympathy from those around us.

*Ignorance* - Sometimes we just forget to do tasks that are to be done.

*It is wise* - If we think conditions are going to change soon (price will drop, interest rates will change, etc.), it may be wise to procrastinate.

*Overwhelmed* - The task is so large we are overwhelmed.

### Techniques for Overcoming Procrastination

After we determine why we have been procrastinating the next step is to select a technique that can be used to overcome the problem. Following is a list of techniques that may be helpful.

*Five Minute Promise* - Promise to work for just five minutes on the task. After five minutes you will probably continue but it is okay to quit; you have kept your promise. This is good for those boring tasks or "not really a goal" type task.

*Salami Technique* - Take those overwhelming tasks and break them down into smaller, manageable tasks. Do one task at a time.

*Worst Case Scenario* - Identify the worst thing that can happen if you went ahead and did the task you have been procrastinating on because you were afraid of failure. In nearly all instances, you will be no worse off than you currently are.

*Visualize Positive Results* - Imagine all the benefits that will accrue to you if you stop procrastinating. Most of the time you will feel better and realize a financial advantage by not waiting.

*Balance Sheet* - Get a sheet of paper and draw a line down the middle of it. On one side list all the reasons why you should continue to procrastinate. On the other side list all the reasons why you should complete the job now. When you see the pros and cons of procrastinating in writing, you should realize it will be to your advantage to proceed now.

*Reward Yourself* - Promise yourself a special treat (going to the movies, etc.) only after you have finished the task on which you have been procrastinating.

*Self Expose* - Critically challenge the excuses you have been giving for procrastinating. Do diets really have to start on Monday? Do you really need a new color-coordinated exercise suit to start an exercise program?

*Delegate* - Delegation is a tool to help  
(continued on page 17)

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