

the **Agricultural Education**  
magazine

January, 1996  
Volume 68, Number 7

*This is the first issue of a publication intended for those interested in public school programs for the improvement of agriculture and country life.*

*Its continuance for one year, without financial embarrassment, is assured. It is hoped and expected that this, or some similar publication, will be maintained permanently by workers in the field of agricultural education.*

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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 the article unless one is on file with the Editor. **Articles in *The Magazine* may be reproduced without permission.**

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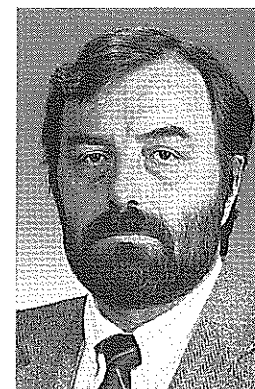
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**New Directions for The Magazine**



BY LOU E. RIESENBERG  
*Dr. Riesenber is professor and head of agricultural and extension education at the University of Idaho, Moscow.*

Since we began our tenure as Editor of *The Agricultural Education Magazine*, much emphasis has been given to discussions about changes in the format and content of *The Magazine*. During 1995, we tried to establish a new feature "Success Stories" with marginal success. We printed 2 'stories'. In all our calls for 'stories', we received many suggestions of programs and individuals to be the focus of a 'story', but no good 'stories'. Anyone not familiar with agricultural education would have to surmise that the profession has no "Success Stories" or that the professionals are either too busy or do not have the skills to write these 'stories'.

Our intent of the "Success Story" concept was to highlight agricultural education programs that are successful (the program does not have to have won an award to be eligible) and share the 'secrets' of that success with other teachers. We recognize there are many

*The Magazine does not require any 'paper work'; just a good 'story' and some good pictures. CAN WE DO THIS????*

established awards to which individuals and programs can apply. Most of the established awards have very distinct application procedures; and so some programs and individuals will not be nominated because of the 'paper work'. *The Magazine* does not require any 'paper work'; just a good 'story' and some good pictures. **CAN WE DO THIS????**

You will not find any pictures in this January issue except for those non-smiling mug shots of the authors. We hope no one will be disappointed. However, the Editor wanted to do an issue of *The Magazine* that focused on value and use of *The Magazine* in the field. The Editor invited teacher educators from each state (Rationale: The Editor had been led to

*The Theme Editor would have qualified for 10 semester credits of internship in teeth-pulling if he had been studying dentistry. As one of our favorite aggies likes to say; GO FIGURE!!!!*

believe teacher educators know what is going on in their state.) to write a short article about the value and use of *The Agricultural Education Magazine* in each of the respective states. The responses received are included in this issue. We hope you find them interesting.

*The Magazine* will begin a new column

"Letters to the Editor". *The Magazine* is interested in its readers' reaction to the content of this and all subsequent issues. Please include with your "Letter" a complete mailing address and a daytime telephone number. Many readers have suggested this feature; we hope that with all concerns writers will include hands-on solutions.

The Editor receives many suggestions to include more articles that include down-to-earth, hands-on, non-theoretical, out-in-the-field teaching tips for the classroom teacher; we are sure these suggestions are well-intentioned. But, the Editor does not write the articles published in *The Magazine*. The Editor challenges all well-intentioned suggestors to write and submit an article to *The Magazine*; an article that shows the rest of us how *The Magazine* should be. For the September 1995 issue, the Theme Editor decided to have recent teaching award winners detail for *The Magazine* the secrets of their award-winning teaching. The Theme Editor would have qualified for 10 semester credits of internship in teeth-pulling if he had been studying dentistry. As one of our favorite aggies likes to say; **GO FIGURE!!!!**

The Editing-Managing Board of *The Agricultural Education Magazine*, at its annual meeting in Denver (only about 7 of the professionals appointed to the board bothered to be at the meeting), voted to reduce *The Magazine* to 6 issues per year starting July 1, 1996. Additionally, the Board charged the Editor with a complete make over of *The Magazine* including adding 4 more pages; perhaps this will increase readership and add value to *The Magazine* for the current and potential readership. Any down-to-earth, hands-on, non-theoretical, out-in-the-field, hit-the-road suggestions would be welcome. *Quite a challenge, huh!!!*

We especially want to recognize and thank all of the authors of articles in this issue of *The Magazine* for their hard work in a very short time frame. That to us is what true professionalism is all about. The agricultural educators from the states that are represented herein should be proud of their authors for their thought-provoking articles. The authors detail the value and use of *The Magazine* in some very unique ways. They also bring forth some quality suggestions for the future direction of *The Magazine*. Again, thank you!!!

## The Importance of The Agricultural Education Magazine



BY ALLISON J. L. TOUCHSTONE

*Ms. Touchstone is a graduate student in the department of agricultural and extension education and a 4-H extension associate at the University of Idaho, Moscow.*

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines a magazine as "a periodical containing various pieces such as articles, stories, or poems", agriculture as "the science or art of cultivating the soil, producing crops, and raising livestock and the varying degrees of preparation of these products for man's use and their disposal as in marketing", and education as "the action or process of being educated, the knowledge and development resulting from and educational process, or the field of study which deals mainly with methods of teaching and learning in schools".

These three definitions directly apply to the importance of The Agricultural Education Magazine. This publication fits the definition of a magazine, having published a variety of articles, stories, and poems alike over the past 60 plus years on a variety of topics, areas of interest, and applications in the agricultural industry. The definition of agriculture as preparing and marketing agricultural products and the agricultural industry is also a vital role of The Agricultural Education Magazine. Finally, the definition of education describes the real purpose of the publication, "the field of study which deals mainly with methods of teaching and learning in schools".

As Dr. Jacquelyn Deeds points out in this issue, many of the agricultural education professionals in the United States today are separated by miles, which can make communication and collaboration difficult. Many times, programs in the same area or state are in vastly different communities and climates, and what works at one school will not necessarily be applicable at another. This separation necessitates a publication like The Agricultural Education Magazine. Similar situations may occur in different states more often than in the same county. Without a publication like The Agricultural Education Magazine, professionals in our field would be unlikely to share ideas and teaching strategies.

Tom Dormody and other teacher educators emphasize the fact that one role of The Agricultural Education Magazine is to disseminate information. This concept should come as no surprise to those of us who read The

Magazine every month when the new issue is delivered to our door. What about the enormous population of agricultural educators who never see a copy of The Magazine? Are they keeping up to date with the new trends in agricultural education? To a certain extent, yes they are. They can read the local papers, talk to professionals in the agricultural industry, and communicate with community members in the local areas. This allows for them to stay somewhat current, however, they are missing a vital resource specific to the profession of agricultural education. Information is meant to be shared, and if one teacher has tried a new curriculum or teaching method, why should someone else reinvent the wheel?

For example, in the November, 1995 issue of The Agricultural Education Magazine, Dr. Roland Peterson of the University of Minnesota related the efforts of his department to work with the urban students of Chiron Middle School in downtown Minneapolis. The program allows students of agricultural education to work with the urban students on agriculturally related projects. If one was in a similar area and attempting to involve the local students, this program would be an ideal example. However, if you did not read The Agricultural Education Magazine you may not even know of the program's existence.

The importance of This Magazine is not solely for secondary agriculture instructors. It can, and should, be utilized by any professional of agricultural education. The use of The Agricultural Education Magazine reaches teachers, future teachers, teacher educators, community members, and students of agriculture. As an undergraduate student, I was exposed to The Agricultural Education Magazine on a relatively regular basis. I had to read it in my Introduction to Agricultural Education class, in my Principles of Vocational Education class, and in just about every class I took during my professional (student teaching) semester. Why is it that these professors encouraged us, as future teachers, to read this publication? It is imperative that agricultural education professionals read The Agricultural

(Continued on page 7)

## Our "Field of Dreams"



BY TOM DORMODY

*Dr. Dormody is an associate professor and head of agricultural and extension education at New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, and he is also the outgoing chair of the Editing-Managing Board for The Agricultural Education Magazine.*

In the movie Field of Dreams (Gordon, Gordon, and Robinson, 1989), an Iowa corn farmer played by Kevin Costner hears a mysterious voice telling him to build a baseball diamond in his corn field. When the diamond is complete, the uniformed ghost of Shoeless Joe Jackson arrives. Baseball fans may recall Jackson, a Chicago White Sox superstar outfielder, was banned from baseball for life by Baseball High Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis when it was suspected that he helped "fix" the 1919 World Series. Jackson's appearance is later followed by the appearance of the ghosts of his teammates, other famous baseball players, and umpires to play ball on the field. The movie suggests that the field gives Jackson and the others a chance to fulfill their dream of playing again in the major leagues.

When the mysterious voice speaks to the farmer a second time, he embarks on a cross-country trip and ends up partnering with a famous, but disillusioned, writer to find an old doctor who hadn't achieved his potential as a baseball player. Although the farmer and writer find the doctor is deceased, they end up picking up his hitch-hiking, youthful ghost on their way back to Iowa. On the baseball field, the doctor realizes his unfulfilled dream of batting in the major leagues. The experience

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rekindles the writer's desire to write again.

The third time the farmer hears the voice, the ghost of his father arrives at the field. Father and son play catch, symbolic of completing the unfinished business of mending the rift between them when the father passed away. Mysteriously, people from across the country also have heard the voice, and they begin arriving at the farm. The line of automobiles waiting to come to the field, carrying people hoping to catch a glimpse of the famous player, is symbolic of all our unfulfilled dreams which are still within our grasp. The revenue they

will pay to watch the game will allow the farmer and his family to save their farm from foreclosure.

How the dreams of an Iowa farmer and his family, Shoeless Joe Jackson and his friends, the writer, the doctor, and the fans were all fulfilled on the magical baseball field is unforgettable. As I think about The Agricultural Education Magazine, I can't help but think about the movie and the message it hold for us. Over the years, this magazine has been the "field of dreams" for agricultural educators. Now, as we pause to consider the value of The Magazine to the profession, the same voice and messages that came to the Iowa farmer should be coming to us.

### If You Build It, They Will Come

This is the first issue in a publication intended for those interested in public school programs for the improvement of agriculture and country life. Its continuance for one year, without financial embarrassment, is assured. It is hoped and expected that this, or some similar publication, will be maintained permanently by workers in the field of agricultural education. (Hamlin, 1929, p. 2)

H. M. Hamlin, Associate Professor of Vocational Education at the Iowa State College in Ames and the first Editor of The Agricultural Education Magazine, wrote these words in the first editorial of the first issue of The Magazine in January, 1929. For 67 years, The Magazine has been documenting our professional dreams and their realization. To put its longevity in perspective, the first issues of Time, Newsweek, and Life magazines came out in 1923, 1933, and 1936, respectively. At the rate of 12 issue per year and close to a dozen articles per issue, the dreams that have been documented in The Agricultural Education Magazine are probably approaching 10,000!

Originally, magazine articles were primarily "factual is basis" with "a certain amount of speculative and philosophical material" allowed. Factual articles reporting the "activities organizations and movements" and those reporting "results of scientific investigation" were highly valued. Commentary on or interpretation of the profession's news were also encouraged. Hamlin also wrote, "It appears desirable, at least initially, to limit the material →

treated to those phases of agricultural education carried on in connection with public schools of less than college grade, excepting only material relating to the preparation of teachers for such situations." *The Magazine* has continued to emphasize public school vocational agricultural education and teacher education since. But Hamlin left the door open with this statement for *The Magazine* to eventually consider themes outside these areas. Hence, with the recognition of other career areas in agricultural education and the broadening of agricultural education to include agricultural literacy, we have witnessed themes outside public school vocational agricultural education and teacher education in *The Magazine*.

Just like the mysterious voice in *Field of Dreams*, Hamlin and the other original members of the Board of Editors would have been correct in saying, "If you build it, they will come." *The Agricultural Education Magazine* has been built over the last 67 years by the many efforts of countless agricultural educators. Our professional legacy has been thoroughly documented in *The Magazine*. A system of monthly theme issues and articles with supporting feature articles in areas of professional interest and concern has been developed that responds quickly and efficiently to our needs. This system ensures that *The Magazine* will remain a dynamic communication tool for agricultural education in the future.

#### Ease Their Pain

Just as the magical baseball field in the movie "eased the pain" of many, *The Agricultural Education Magazine* has eased the pain of countless agricultural educators. My personal experience with *The Magazine* reflects its value during a career in agricultural education. It has provided dreams to strive for,

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Our readers are our only subscription agents. We hope that they will bring *The Magazine* to the attention of workers in our field, school executives, librarians, students training for the teaching of agriculture and others. The more subscribers you secure us, the more we can give you for your money. (p. 2)

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strengthened my philosophy, and served as a forum for expressing myself. When I was in the teacher education program at the University of California at Davis, *The Magazine* was part of my training. As a teacher of agriculture, *The Magazine* was integral to my professional development. I first met the sages of our profession through their articles in *The Magazine*. As a Ph.D. student at Cornell University, I cited four articles from *The Magazine* in my dissertation.

As a teacher educator, I have used *The Magazine* like never before. At only \$6.00 an issue for bulk mailed copies, we purchase class

sets for the seniors and graduate teaching assistants and have copies displayed in the department office, the dean's office, and in the classroom for student, faculty, staff, and visitor access. I use a number of publications as curriculum resources. In my opinion, only the *Vocational Education Journal* approached *The Agricultural Education Magazine* as a tool for agricultural education teacher education. Our faculty use a number of *The Magazine's* articles to stimulate in-class discussion. For example, in Introduction to Agricultural and Extension Education (AXED 100), the students read and discuss eight articles in the public school half of the course alone. We use articles about outstanding teachers and programs to encourage the students to aim high with their professional dreams.

Textbooks and other curriculum resources don't always cover important needs or problem areas in teacher education. This is especially true when a problem is limited to a state or region. The Magazine helps fill this void. In fact, a number of the articles I have authored or co-authored were written to provide a source of information for my courses. By being published in *The Agricultural Education Magazine*, the material has more credibility. Our students take pride in learning from publications by the state's teachers and university faculty. They are encouraged to consider publishing themselves. In the past five years, five Agricultural Education Magazine articles have been co-authored by New Mexico teachers and New Mexico State University faculty. Writing partnerships between teachers and university faculty ensure articles are completed on time and edited by a professional editor, thus improving their success rate.

Unfortunately, some universities do not value *The Agricultural Education Magazine* articles for promotion and tenure. We at New Mexico State University have been successful in counting these articles: we have rewritten our departmental promotion and tenure guidelines to value them, and the department head shares their value with the college promotion and tenure committee and administration. One way to market *The Magazine* to our colleagues is to highlight it as a tool for diffusing research results to the agricultural educators who are encountering the problems we have researched. As Hamlin wrote in 1929, "Results of scientific investigation will be regarded as particularly choice news." Another way is to market the review and ranking system used by the editors of *The Magazine* to ensure only the best articles are published each month.

#### Go the Distance

As I leave the Chair of the Editing-Managing Board of *The Agricultural Education Magazine*, I wish to pass along to our profession the advice→

of the final voice heard by the Iowa farmer in *Field of Dreams*: "Go the distance." *The Magazine* is not perfect, and board members are committed to improving its quality and relative value. In my four years on the board, the Editors have made a conscious effort to solicit more articles from teachers, state supervisors, and industry representatives. The form and appearance of *The Magazine* have been improved and we have piloted a four-color cover and advertising. Other improvements are on the horizon, but *The Magazine* needs the widespread support of the profession to ensure its continued success. *The Magazine* can be as good as we decide to make it.

I ask all subscribers to renew their efforts to market *The Magazine* to other professionals in agricultural education. Teachers of agriculture can market *The Magazine* locally and to their peers. State supervisors can review the way their state collects subscriptions and promotes *The Magazine* at professional meetings. Teacher educators can market *The Magazine* by providing class sets to students, using selected articles in class, and exposing a broader clientele to *The Magazine*. H. M. Hamlin said it in a way that still applies today:

Our readers are our only subscription agents. We hope that they will bring *The Magazine* to the attention of workers in our field, school executives, librarians, students training for the teaching of agriculture and others. The more subscribers you secure us, the more we can give you for your money. (p. 2)

And it is not enough to just subscribe. As professionals, we must read and contribute articles and leadership to *The Magazine*. Certainly we can skim the articles and read those that pertain most to our situation. When we have a dream or a realized dream to share with the profession, we need to submit an article or partner with a team of writers to submit an article. We can exercise leadership by marketing *The Magazine*, contacting board members to communicate suggestions, or even by seeking to serve on the Editing-Managing Board.

Agricultural educators, go the distance with *The Agricultural Education Magazine*. We have a very useful publication with an impressive history. *The Magazine* is improving all the time. Let's renew our commitment to *The Agricultural Education Magazine* and ensure that it remains our field of dreams forever.

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- Gordon, L., Gordon, C. (Producers), and Robinson, P.A. (Director). (1989). *Field of dreams*. [Motion picture on videotape]. (Available from MCA Home Video, 70 Universal City Plaza, Universal City, CA 91608).
- Hamlin, H. M. (1929). Editorial announcement. *The Agricultural Education Magazine*. 1(1), 2-3. ■

### The Importance of The Magazine

(Continued from page 4)

*Education Magazine* because it focuses on the new, innovative, and unique trends in our profession.

The question is, are we meeting the needs of the professionals in agricultural education whom we are trying to reach? In many cases, yes. Several of the authors in this issue will attest to that fact. However, there is always room for improvement. Joe Kotrlik gives several suggestions of how to improve the content of *The Magazine* to appeal to more secondary agriculture instructors. These suggestions include writing about student activities, curriculum materials, and professional development activities. Articles concerning these topics would only enhance the quality of *The Agricultural Education Magazine*.

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*"a periodical containing various pieces such as articles, stories, or poems" "the science or art of cultivating the soil, producing crops, and raising livestock and the varying degrees of preparation of these products for man's use and their disposal as in marketing", "the action or process of being educated, the knowledge and development resulting from and educational process, or the field of study which deals mainly with methods of teaching and learning in schools"*

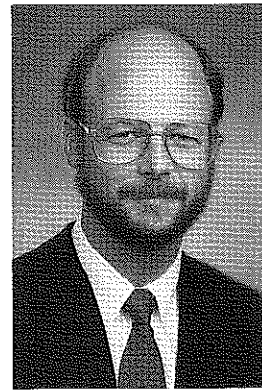
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The theme for this issue has been termed "The Value of *The Agricultural Education Magazine*". Perhaps a more appropriate title would have been "The Importance of *The Agricultural Education Magazine*". I find it impossible to put my finger on a single aspect of the publication that adequately describes its importance. Like the profession of agricultural education, the uses and applications of the information disseminated in *The Magazine* are varied and are continuing to change every day.

Perhaps the definitions for agriculture, education, and magazine will remain constant in Webster's for many years to come, but the professionals of agricultural education can count on *The Magazine* to continue to publish new and innovative ideas concerning the agricultural education profession and to meet the changing needs of its readers. ■



# Fostering Our Professional Identity



BY DAVID C. WHALEY  
Dr. Whaley is a professor and director of teacher licensure in the school of education at Colorado State University, Fort Collins.

*Who is a wise man? He who learns from all men.*

The TALMUD (from Davis, 1988, p. 333)

The Editor of this periodical has asked for opinion on the value or worth of The Agricultural Education Magazine. This is a topic that, when first approached, appears to be quite innocuous. Granted, these are transitional times for all of us in vocational education, whether secondary, post-secondary, or higher education. And, in times of change, we generally question the essence of who we are and the needs of those we serve. Yet, The Agricultural Education Magazine? Lou, say it isn't so! Could it be that next we'll be asked to reflect on motherhood, apple pie, or the National Anthem? Yet ... maybe ... perhaps, the Editor has a valid concern. Why do we have The Magazine? Why do we need it? Who should use it? These were a few of the reflective questions which, in response to the Editor's inquiry, have recently occupied my musings. My reflections, much like the FFA Creed, begin with the phrase, "I believe..."

I believe The Agricultural Education Magazine has value because it contributes to our knowledge base.

Agricultural Education at Colorado State University has a rich history, dating back to 1919 and the appointment of G. A. Schmidt as

*I believe The Agricultural Education Magazine has value because it contributes to our knowledge base.*

"Teacher Trainer in Vocational Agriculture". In the ensuing seventy-seven years, more than five hundred new agricultural education teachers have emerged from this program prepared to make educational decisions with possibly wide-ranging effects, decisions which not only affect themselves and their students, but also impact the lives and industries of many others. The knowledge base providing the core for these new teachers' understandings and beliefs has arisen out of a cornucopia of experiences, issues, ideas, and research findings in the field

of agricultural education. Certainly essential to the existence of this knowledge base is the content and opinion which is promulgated through the many themes of The Agricultural Education Magazine. Gender issues, communication technology, ethical expectations, and perceptions of community partners are but a few of the many diverse topics encountered by the readership of The Magazine.

Each preservice student in agricultural education at Colorado State University, while enrolled in agricultural education teaching methods courses, uses the regular issues of The Magazine as a required "text". The myriad of themes found throughout The Magazine create opportunities for expansive student inquiry and deliberation. Our faculty is able to draw on the unique perspectives raised by authors of diverse experiences, cultures, and geographical orientations in order to better enrich student understanding. This diverse perspective is essential in preparing preservice students with a broader view of the profession, one which is not geographically restricted to just the Rocky Mountain region.

I believe The Agricultural Education Magazine has value because it promotes a professional identity.

One of the most challenging, yet important, topics which teacher educators face with preservice students is the establishment of a professional identity. Many of our preservice students are former FFA and 4-H members. And, they've invariably belonged as members to other student, civic, or parochial organizations. Yet, we expect our collegiate students, as promising agricultural educators, to evoke the demeanor of "a professional". Although "professional" is a phrase which today pervades our rhetoric, the belief in our teaching occupation, as a professional occupation, is paramount. Further, the belief that those teachers engaged in this occupation are professional educators, is equally as important.

Professional identify is derived from many sources; it may be an outcome of formal instruction; it may be a result of a successful mentoring relationship; or it could manifest

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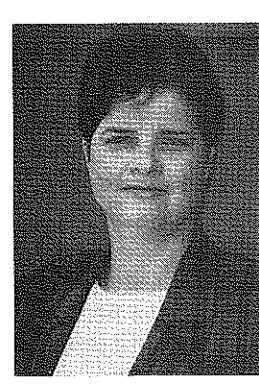
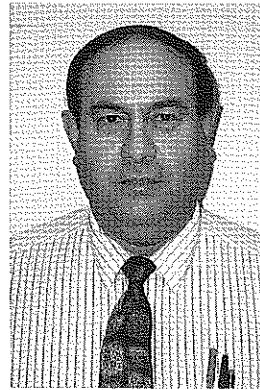
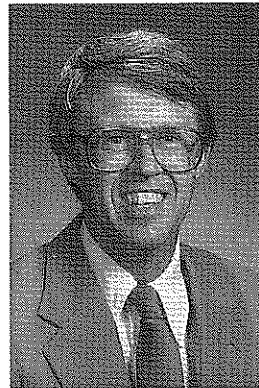
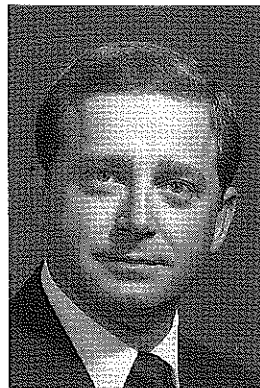
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## The Agricultural Education Magazine Is Important, So Stop Complaining and Start Writing!!



BY WILLIAM G. CAMP, JOHN HILLISON, STANLEY R. BURKE, AND DARLA L. MILLER

*Dr. Camp is a professor; Dr. Hillison is professor and coordinator; Dr. Burke is an associate professor; and Ms. Miller is a graduate student in agricultural education at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg.*

One of the characteristics of any profession is the existence of a knowledge base that is unique to that field. Another characteristic is that practitioners in a profession must be able to define the parameters of their work. In other words, the profession must have a minimum degree of coherence. Certainly both of those characteristics hold true for agricultural education. As a knowledge base and our coherence as a profession are important, it is essential to share those characteristics among the members of the profession of agricultural education. *The Agricultural Education Magazine* is one of our profession's best vehicles to facilitate such sharing.

As are most professions, agricultural education is in a constant state of flux—of dynamic development. Such dynamic development produces continuing changes in our program, curriculum, instructional techniques, client groups—in all aspects of our profession. Changes in a profession are seldom universally accepted in the beginning; they emerge first as ideas. Ideas that gain wide support become issues, and issues that produce consensus finally result in meaningful, widespread change. For agricultural education to maintain its existence as a coherent, meaningful profession of national relevance, such changes must have at least a modicum of direction; otherwise they are no more than random, "Brownian" movement. A profession in which change is random must surely cease to be coherent, and cannot maintain a meaningful body of knowledge.

Obviously, contemporary agricultural educators are interested in emerging ideas, issues, and changes in the profession. All of the members of the agricultural education community need a mechanism to provide a forum for discussion and debate as well as a means of information dissemination. These things are vital if we are to maintain a coherent profession. The only effective mechanism we have, as a profession, to provide that forum and to disseminate such information is through the medium of *The Agricultural Education Magazine*. If it did not already exist, someone would have to create *The Magazine*.

Beyond the sharing of contemporary ideas, our magazine also serves as a vehicle for preserving our profession's history. With *The Magazine* approaching its 70th year, a great deal of history is already preserved in early issues. Older articles indicate the thinking of early leaders and describe the problems of bygone eras. They also let today's agricultural educators know that many of our current issues and controversies have occurred and re-occurred over the years. True, history repeats itself, and we have a record of those events as they are preserved in our profession's magazine. Just as importantly, current issues will probably resurface again someday, and today's issues of *The Magazine* will someday document the history we are living right now.

As this article is being prepared, there are lingering concerns about the number of individuals in the agricultural education profession that will never read the issues expressed here

*Beyond the sharing of contemporary ideas, our magazine also serves as a vehicle for preserving our profession's history.*

about *The Magazine*. Those responsible for the publication must share some responsibility for the lack of circulation and readership. Obviously, some in the profession do not presently view *The Agricultural Education Magazine* as an important resource in keeping themselves informed of developing trends, new technology, and what is happening in the profession. Here are some ideas on how reader interest and use of *The Magazine* may be improved.

Recent research has shown that satellite communications will be a cutting-edge technology in future farming and agribusiness systems; perhaps *The Magazine* should have invited articles from specialists familiar with the capabilities of this system and share it with members of the agricultural educator's profession. Further, many teachers subscribe to the idea of magazine articles being easily transported into their instruction, yet there are few articles in *The Magazine* which deal with technical material in ways that can easily be used by teachers.

*Just like those registered voters who fail to vote on election day, teachers who fail to share their thoughts with their peers get what they deserve.*

Perhaps focusing a series of articles in this direction would increase circulation and use of *The Magazine*. We only have to look at magazines from some peer service areas to get ideas on how this can be accomplished. Since *The Magazine* is a monthly publication, perhaps it is time to establish closer ties with the FFA and use its pages as a means of communicating some essential information about FFA activities, programs, and career development events. Using color pictures and illustrations may have some influence on improving the image of *The Magazine* by the members of the profession. And, perhaps a more detail-specific emphasis by *The Magazine* could help the profession more clearly understand what methodology to use when teaching agriscience and utilizing the systems approach.

It is important that contemporary articles,

issue, and themes be designed to serve the teacher-practitioner. But *The Magazine* is also important to all members of the profession—teacher educators, state departments of education personnel, students preparing to become teachers—as well as current teachers and others. Often, teachers complain that *The Magazine* does not give enough emphasis to their needs. That may be true. Some teachers also complain that not enough articles are written by teachers. That complaint may also be legitimate. However, the fault lies not with *The Magazine* nor its Board nor its Editor. The fault is with those teachers who have good ideas or who have positions on emerging issues, but who choose not to write for *The Magazine*. Just like those registered voters who fail to vote on election day, teachers who fail to share their thoughts with their peers get what they deserve.

Writing a manuscript for submission to the Editor is not so hard; nor is it really as intimidating as it sounds. The theme issues are announced and published for several months in advance. Find a theme in which you have an interest, outline your thoughts, and write a draft of an article. Ask another agricultural education teacher to read it and make suggestions on the content. Ask a third person to review it for grammar, structure, and composition. Then submit it to the Editor, whose name and address are on the inside cover of *The Magazine*. The process is that simple.

Sure, it is possible that your manuscript may not be used. So what? We are all busy. We all dislike rejection. The only real failure is the failure to try. We have all prepared and submitted manuscripts for articles that were never published. If you try writing an article, at the very least, you will have forced yourself to think through something that is important to you. At best, your thoughts will get into print and will make some other teacher stop and think. Your article might actually make a difference to somebody.

Consider this challenge, from us to you. Be an Ag Ed mover and shaker, not a complainer. Help the profession move in a positive and coherent direction. Share your ideas, your positions on emerging issues, and the changes that you want to see in the profession. Put your thoughts on paper and submit them to *The Agricultural Education Magazine*. You have nothing to lose, and our profession will almost certainly have something to gain from your effort. ■

## The Agricultural Education Magazine Ends Isolation



BY JACQUELYN P. DEEDS

Dr. Deeds is an associate professor of agricultural and extension education at Mississippi State University, Mississippi State.

### Professional Isolation

Teaching agricultural education is often a profession of isolation. You might ask, how I can say that about individuals that are surrounded by students all the time—class time, preparation period, lunch period, and even after school several times a week. What I am referring to is professional isolation.

The majority of agriculture teachers in the United States are in single teacher departments. Those that are lucky may have one or more other agriculture teachers in their county, but in some areas that may be miles away. Thus, agriculture teachers are isolated from others within their field. Often due to the nature of our mechanics laboratories, greenhouses and other outdoor facilities, agriculture teachers are also geographically isolated from other teachers in the same school.

Teachers in most other disciplines, no matter how small the school, have someone else who teaches in their subject area. As an agriculture teacher, on those rare opportunities I had to spend in the faculty room, it was not unusual to hear math or social studies teachers share concerns, questions and teaching tricks. These teachers learned from each other and found new ways to teach and help their students succeed.

### Agriculture Teachers Learn From Each Other

When I was asked to prepare an article on the "The Value of *The Agricultural Education Magazine* to Teachers" the first thing I decided to do was to ask teachers. I asked experienced teachers in Mississippi, who have received *The*

*Keble Luter, Northeast Jones High School, said, "I always get something out of The Magazine, it might be a new way to do something or just an idea I can incorporate in to my program." John Overby, Jackson Career Development Center, compare The Magazine to a really good meeting. He said, "It's informational, motivational and inspirational. The articles make me feel good about the profession."*

*Magazine* over a period of several years. Without exception one of the responses was

that *The Magazine* was opportunity to learn from other teachers or to see what other teachers are doing. In other words an opportunity to end professional isolation.

*The Agriculture Education Magazine* is the agriculture teacher's opportunity to sit and drink a cup of coffee and learn from other agriculture teachers. However, they do it in their easy chair at home rather than the faculty lounge at school.

Keble Luter, Northeast Jones High School, said, "I always get something out of *The Magazine*, it might be a new way to do something or just an idea I can incorporate in to my program." John Overby, Jackson Career Development Center, compare *The Magazine* to a really good meeting. He said, "It's informational, motivational and inspirational. The articles make me feel good about the profession."

### The Magazine Provides a Challenge

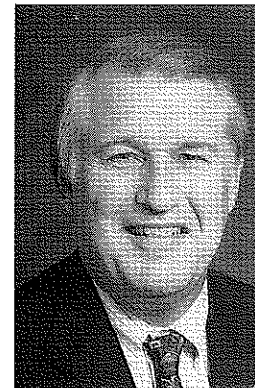
Charles Howell, George County High School, told me that some of the best learning experiences he had participated in as a teacher were on-site visits to other programs. He said, "*The Agricultural Education Magazine* allows me to visit other programs without leaving home. That provides me with a challenge, I can see what other people are doing and compare my program to theirs. It's good for my ego to see areas where I think we are doing well by comparison. I can also identify areas where we might improve or make changes."

Lee James, Weir Attendance Center and Larry Carr, Water Valley High School gave similar answers to the value of *The Magazine* to them. Both said they like seeing what other teachers were doing and being challenged to include new ideas and activities in their local program.

The other thing that James, Carr and the others agreed on was that subscribing to *The Magazine* was the professional thing to do. They would encourage new professionals to subscribe because part of being a professional is self improvement and staying current. *The Agricultural Education Magazine* is the way

(Continued on page 16)

## Value in the Eyes of the Beholder



BY JOE W. KOTRLIK

Dr. Kotrlik is a professor of vocational education at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.

The latest issue of Volume 68 of *The Agricultural Education Magazine* rolled off the presses in December, 1995. This magazine has been a standard fixture in the agricultural education profession during most of this century and has almost enjoyed a sacred or untouchable status. Its pages have been graced by the opinions, ideas, philosophies and concerns of many of the leaders in our field.

As has occurred several times in the past, the Editor, Lou E. Riesenberg, and the Editing-Managing Board are again looking for ways to make *The Magazine* a more valued tool in the agricultural educator's arsenal. They continue to be concerned about the inadequate number of agricultural educators who subscribe. Only one-fourth of the agriscience teachers, about half of agriscience teacher education faculty, and about one-third of state department agricultural education staff are current subscribers.

In an attempt to modernize *The Magazine* and attract more subscribers, cosmetic changes are being initiated now that will result in a reduction from twelve to six issues per year and the redesign of *The Magazine* to give it a more professional and modern look and feel. These cosmetic changes will not result in substantial increases in subscriptions. When I asked one teacher why he did not subscribe to *The Magazine* this year (he had subscribed last year), he said he would have subscribed again "... if it was something that would help me out." Others echoed this sentiment. Although

### What Are We Doing Right?

he enjoyed reading the articles, he did not feel the articles alone were worth the \$10 subscription cost and he had voted with his checkbook.

As the Editor said when he asked me to write this article, much has been written about the value of *The Agricultural Education Magazine*, including suggestions for changes and attempts to incorporate these suggestions into *The Magazine* by previous editors and Boards. Every Editor, along with the Editing-Managing Board and members of the profession, has worked hard to make *This Magazine*

a valuable resource for all agricultural educators. Where have we all gone astray? Why isn't *The Magazine* valued by most of our professional family?

### What Are We Doing Right?

First, we must recognize the strengths of *The Agricultural Education Magazine*. As the primary professional publication for all secondary and post-secondary agricultural educators, it does an excellent job of reporting the state of the art in agricultural education programs. *The Magazine* is a valuable information source for graduate students as they study agricultural education philosophy and programming. It also serves as a forum for political, philosophical, governance, and other issues impacting our field. Teaching ideas, curriculum concerns, and professional needs addressed in *The Magazine* have resulted in positive programming changes.

### What Needs to be Changed?

What will it take to attract teachers, state supervisors, professors, and yes, other agricultural educators to subscribe to this magazine and to cause those who are subscribers to value *The Magazine* more favorably? What will it take to persuade busy agricultural educators to pick up this magazine and read it? Something is needed that will cause agricultural educators to look forward to receiving their issue of *The Magazine* — something that will cause them to pick it up and read it on a regular basis — to find those things they know they can use and to also "accidentally" find an article or other feature that will stimulate them. This will happen only if something causes them to pick it up in the first place.

The content of *The Agricultural Education Magazine* should be expanded to include a number of new sections that would be of immediate value to agricultural educators. A few suggestions are provided below.

**Sources of Curriculum Materials** There are so many materials on the market today, it is difficult to keep track of them. Current and back issues could serve as a valuable curriculum materials information source.

**Student Activities** Several education →



publications provide activity sheet masters than can be duplicated for immediate use. These

## What Needs to be Changed?

could range from technical transparency masters to cartoons and other graphics. Games, role playing, field trip and other instructional aids could be highlighted.

**Professional Activities** This would include professional and technical meetings, conferences, workshops and other activities of interest to agricultural educators.

**Technical Articles** Although the emphasis on professional articles should continue, additional space could be allocated to technical articles. Agricultural educators find it difficult to stay up-to-date, given the diverse technical content of the agriscience education program.

**Important Dates/People** This would include due dates for NVATA or AVA pre-registration, FFA awards applications, National FFA Convention housing or other deadlines. It could include addresses and phone numbers for key leaders in our field.

**Innovative Activities** This sections would contain reports on truly innovative instructional, FFA or other projects and activities would serve as a catalyst for program improvement and expansion. Information needed to contact key organizations and individuals could also be provided.

**New Books** A list of professional and technical books on the market would make it easier for teachers to identify and select new reference and classroom texts.

**Computer Programs** A listing and brief description of new, high quality computer programs would be an invaluable aid. This section would include both applications programs (technical agriscience) as well as utility programs (grade books, certificates, etc.). As electronic technology progresses, this section could diversify to include electronic resources available via cable TV or other service providers.

**WWW and Gopher Sites** Although many agricultural educators are not on the World Wide Web or Gopher, many are. This would be beneficial for those who are on the cutting edge of technology and would serve as a motivator for those contemplating "surfing the net."

**Research** Practical "thumbnail" summaries of research in progress at universities and elsewhere would provide an entree' for those who would like to know more.

**Job Listings** A listing by state of available

teacher, supervisor, faculty, and other agricultural education positions would be a valuable service to the profession.

**Letters to the Editor** And finally, a "Letters to the Editor" section. This would provide a regular invitation to subscribers to speak out and say what they liked or disliked about *The Magazine*, occurrences in the profession, or any other topic of their choosing. It could serve as an excellent forum for debate of current issues.

If all of these ideas were incorporated, the number of pages in *The Magazine* would have to be substantially increased, which would result in a major increase in production costs. These costs could be partially or totally offset by the additional subscriptions that would be generated. Additional revenue could be generated by selling advertising space to commercial curriculum developers, book publishers, software companies, and others who would like to get their product noticed by 12,000+ agricultural educators. Everyone in our professional family could find several useful ideas or pieces of information in every issue.

However, the benefits, both additional subscriptions and otherwise, would far outweigh the costs because *The Agricultural Education Magazine* would truly be an indispensable key tool for all agricultural educators. It would be valuable in the eyes of the beholder — the agriscience educator. ■

### Fostering Our Professional Identity

(Continued from page 8)

merely through expectations of others. Regardless, a professional identity is framed through one's commitment, honesty, responsibility, sincerity, and conscience. It is also framed through one's willingness to explore issues relevant to the profession, and if necessary, to change or adjust. *The Agricultural Education Magazine* provides our professional

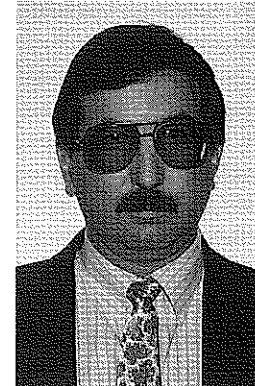
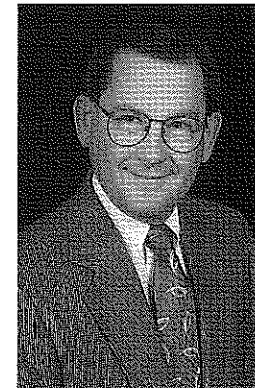
*I believe The Agricultural Education Magazine has value because it promotes a professional identity.*

educators with a tool to examine many issues germane to this profession and to become more skillful, analytical and insightful. Innovative pedagogy, time management, political processes, and global economies are reflective of additional issues raised recently in *The Agricultural Education Magazine*.

*I believe The Agricultural Education Magazine has value because it promises a shared authority in agricultural education.*

(Continued on page 18)

## The Magazine: A Valued Publication



BY VERNON D. LUFT AND GEORGE C. HILL  
Dr. Luft is a professor of occupational teacher education and Dr. Hill is an associate professor in the cooperative extension system at the University of Nevada, Reno.

The very nature of this issue of *The Agricultural Education Magazine* implies that its value is questionable. The value of anything is usually in the eyes or minds of those who view its usefulness, whether it be this magazine or a car. If one drives a car that is eight years old and desires one that is newer and better, the value of the vehicle would be low. However, if someone is in the market for an older used car, higher value would be placed on that same car. Thus, the value of *The Agricultural Education Magazine* is dependent upon its usefulness to its readers.

Previous editors of *The Magazine* have always been concerned about producing a quality and valued product. A former editor of *The Agricultural Education Magazine*, Osborne (1993), conducted a survey to gather information on methods of improving the quality and readership of the publication. His findings were similar to those we found when visiting with some teachers in preparation for writing this article, which will be discussed later.

We take this opportunity to share several ideas related to the value of the publication and offer several suggestions to increase its value to the field.

### Magazine Value

Of what value is *The Agricultural Education Magazine*? While it depends on what the expectations are, there are several key values we view as noteworthy.

*The Magazine* serves as an outlet for the exchange of ideas and practices among members of the agricultural education profession. Issues in the past have revolved around contemporary themes which are relevant to professionals in the field. They have contained practical, theoretical, philosophical, historical, and research-based articles, all of which offer an opportunity for exchange among leaders in the profession. In fact, there is no better method or media today for distributing creative ideas or practices on a wide-scale basis within the profession.

*The Magazine* provides members of the professional organization with a publication in return for their dues. Most organizations have a major publication such as a journal or maga-

zine which professionals receive as a result of membership. *The Agricultural Education Magazine* is by far the most widely read professional publication among agriculture teachers. We feel *The Magazine* should be a part of the dues package for NVATA, as is the case in Nevada, to assure members receive the publication that represents their profession. Members of the FFA receive *New Horizons* and AAEE members receive *The Journal of Agricultural Education* upon paying their dues. Why not make *The Agricultural Education Magazine* part of the dues for NVATA? From our perspective, *The Magazine* is the principal professional publication for practitioners in agricultural education who are primarily secondary and post-secondary teachers.

*The Magazine* serves as an outlet for the publication of articles by agricultural educators. One of the major responsibilities of university faculty is scholarly activity. *The Magazine* serves as an appropriate media in which university faculty can publish new ideas. Agriculture teachers and state supervision may also want to share ideas on a national basis, and *The Magazine* serves as an appropriate outlet for them.

*The Magazine* functions as a resource for pre-service and in-service agriculture teacher education. *The Magazine* is an excellent source of appropriate ideas and strategies for use in pre-service agricultural education classes. *The Magazine* can be purchased in bulk and distributed to pre-service students. Required readings in *The Magazine* for pre-service teacher education students help to set a precedence for their continued reading of the publication once they become teachers.

### Improving the Value

In preparation for this article, we surveyed several secondary agriculture teachers in Nevada, asking them if they were reading *The Magazine*, and if so, which type of articles do they read regularly, and lastly, what did they perceive as helping to improve its value? Each teacher surveyed receives and reads *The Agricultural Education Magazine*. Each of the teachers surveyed indicated that they focus on articles of practical value, such as those which →



reported on classroom teaching strategies, motivational ideas, student laboratory projects, and ideas for program changes. Virtually all surveyed indicated they spend little time reading research-oriented articles.

Teachers surveyed had several suggestions to improve the value of *The Magazine*, including the following topics: how FFA team coaches prepare their students to reach competition at the national level; good fundraising ideas for FFA chapters; examples of shop projects; examples of agriscience lab activities; ideas for recruiting students and marketing the agricultural education program; how teachers can prepare candidates to run for FFA office above the chapter level; ideas for FFA chapter officer training; and classroom management strategies. Another point mentioned was that recent issues of *The Magazine* contained articles which address program ideas and issues for larger schools. Their feeling was that we should not forget the small rural school with traditional agriculture programs.

#### Increasing Contributions by Teachers

Teachers noted that they would also like to read more articles from the "grass roots level", such as articles prepared by secondary and post-secondary agriculture teachers, a finding which is consistent with Osborne's (1993) study. Such articles should be contributed by practicing teachers. However, agriculture teachers are very busy people, and there is very little incentive for them to publish since it is not a typical part of their job requirements. Then how do we increase participation by secondary and post-secondary teachers in submitting articles to *The Agricultural Education Magazine*?

We propose that local teachers team with teacher educators and co-author articles. Both of the authors have co-authored articles with teachers in the past with good results. Local agriculture teachers outline and prepare the draft of their ideas or concepts and then send it to teacher educators with whom they wish to develop an article for publication. Upon its completion, it is important for the teacher to review the manuscript, prior to it being submitted. Local teachers are in a better position to provide good quality photos as well.

#### Summary

The profession in which we are employed is highly competitive. Unless a product is viewed as having value to its users, it tends to go the way of the Edsel. *The Agricultural Education Magazine* must serve the needs of all in the profession. Teachers have consistently stated that they want and need quality articles which are useful. All members of the profession have a

responsibility to make an effort to meet this need so that *The Magazine* will be viewed as a tool which teachers can utilize to improve their expertise as leaders in the field.

#### Reference

Osborne, E. (1993). Targeting readers. *The Agricultural Education Magazine*, 65 (9), 3-4. ■

### The Ag Ed Mag Ends Isolation

(Continued from page 12)

that they stay up-to-date on what others in the profession are thinking and doing.

#### What Would Increase the Value of *The Magazine*?

The experienced teachers were asked what would improve the value of *The Magazine* to them and their programs. The unanimous response was give us more of the teacher sharing that occurs when we get together. They wanted the faculty lounge, agriculture teacher get-together conversation in print.

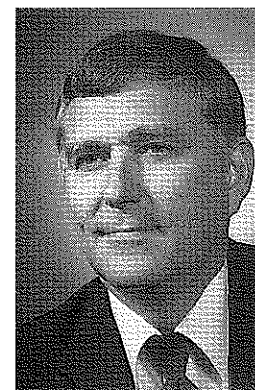
Monroe Clark, Newton Municipal Vocational Center, indicated he would like to see more hands-on, how-to-do-it types of articles. Several indicated they would like to see more one-page type of shared materials such as agriscience experiments and other laboratory learning activities.

Overby also indicated he thought more teacher sharing on program management such as recruiting students for vocational center programs, and working with counselors and administration would be of value. Teachers wanted more articles that provide success stories from other programs that they could transfer and adapt for use in their local situation.

#### Summary

*The Agricultural Education Magazine* is the best way teachers have of ending their professional isolation. *The Magazine* allows them to visit other programs and learn from other agricultural educators without leaving home. Most importantly *The Magazine* helps teachers to grow in their profession and improve their local program. ■

## Study The Past If You Would Divine The Future



BY GARY E. MOORE  
Dr. Moore is a professor of agricultural and extension education at North Carolina State University, Raleigh.

Did you know that many of the hot topics in agricultural education today are decades old. If you were to search for information on these current topics, you could consult these references:

Studying past issues of *The Magazine* can give us many benefits, including:

*New insights into why we do what we do.*  
Have you ever wondered why we, as a profession, put so much reliance on the problem

Current Topic	Reference
Academic-Vocational Integration	Baker, K. (1934). Teaching Related Science. <i>The Agricultural Education Magazine</i> . 6 (7), 103.
Agriculture in the Classroom	Extension work in rural elementary schools. (1929). <i>The Agricultural Education Magazine</i> . 1 (9), 8.
Agriscience	Massachusetts Chapter Holds Science Exposition (1937). <i>The Agricultural Education Magazine</i> . 9 (9), 135.
Business-Industry Partnerships	Davis, C. L. (1929). County-Wide Agricultural Cooperation in Texas. <i>The Agricultural Education Magazine</i> . 1 (9), 3, 15.
FFA Alumni	Jarvis, J. W. (1934). An Alumni FFA Association. <i>The Agricultural Education Magazine</i> . 6 (11), 173. or Ahrensbrak, H. C. (1937). Why a Future Farmer of America Alumni Association. <i>The Agricultural Education Magazine</i> . 9 (10), 159.
Improving SAE Record Keeping	Hopkins, J. A. (1931). Recent developments in farm records. <i>The Agricultural Education Magazine</i> . 4 (4), 58, 64.
Leadership Institutes for Adults	Cowart, I. C. (1937). Training Farmers in Leadership. <i>The Agricultural Education Magazine</i> . 9 (11), 175.
Professionalism	Wright, R. T. & Woelfle, F (1929). The National Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers. <i>The Agricultural Education Magazine</i> . 1 (6), 4, 13.
School-to-Work Transition	Sasman, L. M. (1929). "Wisconsin succeeds with part-time work." <i>The Agricultural Education Magazine</i> . 1 (10), 6.

Are you surprised that these hot topics were discussed way back then? These examples illustrate that the greatest value of *The Agricultural Education Magazine* may be its historical or reference value. *The Agricultural Education Magazine* is our professional encyclopedia. It contains a wealth of information.

solving approach to teaching? This is thoroughly discussed in the pages of *The Magazine*. Many of the other practices we use in agricultural education are also documented in the pages of *The Magazine*.

*Information to improve our teaching and programs.* Past issues contain numerous ideas→

that can be used to improve our teaching and our programs. The thought of using clothes pins to teach pruning jumped out at me from the pages of *The Magazine*. Students place clothes pins on branches where they plan to cut before they cut. Great idea. It has saved the lives of numerous limbs from over zealous students.

**Information about legislation.** Most graduate programs teach about the legislation that has impacted agricultural education. Often this seems abstract. However, when you read about the legislation at the time it passed from the perspective of an agricultural educator as recorded on the pages of *The Agricultural Education Magazine*, the legislation comes alive.

**Understanding of trends and issues.** It is hard to keep up with all the trends and issues in agricultural education. *The Magazine* helps do this. For example, after the Vocational Education Act of 1963 was passed, considerable emphasis was placed on placement as a type of SAE. For teachers with no experience in placement, the articles about this new trend in *The Agricultural Education Magazine* were helpful.

**Information about our leaders.** For decades articles about leaders in education and agricultural education were printed in *The Agricultural Education Magazine*. This information is invaluable as we try to document our history.

**News.** At one time *The Magazine* was full of news items. Information about conferences, people, states and special events (such as the FFA pilgrimage to Monticello and the FFA radio show) were recorded in *The Magazine*. The only documentation for some of our history is found in *The Agricultural Education Magazine*.

**Additional knowledge about the FFA.** While much of the standard FFA history has been recorded by the National FFA Organization, the real flavor, value and zeal of the FFA in its early days can be gleaned from the pages of *The Agricultural Education Magazine*. Early issues of the publication are complete with stories of FFA students building log cabin meeting facilities, shipping car loads of celery to market and marching in FFA Bands. A renewed sense of the critical importance of the FFA to rural America leaps up from the pages of the early issues of *The Agricultural Education Magazine*.

**An abundance of interesting, but not earth-shattering facts about agricultural education and the FFA.** Teachers can often spice up their teaching with unusual stories and anecdote. *The Magazine* is full of them. Have you ever heard of Blue Boy? He was the champion boar of the Iowa State Fair in the 30s and was featured in a movie (State Fair) starring Will Rogers. After the movie was completed, Blue Boy was given

to the FFA in California. It was envisioned that he would improve the swine projects of the agricultural education students in California. However, Blue Boy had been kept in show condition for so long that he never returned to breeding form and only sired a few litters. This is one of hundreds of interesting anecdotes found in *The Agricultural Education Magazine* that could be used to liven up our teaching.

#### Conclusion

Agricultural educators tend to be pragmatist. We place the most value on what works today. We don't spend much time thinking about our past. Yet, knowing about the past is important. Confucius said, "Study the past if you would divine the future." *The Agricultural Education Magazine* is our guide to the past; and it can point to the future. ■

#### Fostering Our Professional Identity

(Continued from page 14)

*The Agricultural Education Magazine* encourages a cooperative forum for articulation by all professional educators, whether secondary, post-secondary, or higher education. This forum is not intended for "one group" administering "down" (or "up") to another group. Although, there may appear to be a preponderance of authorship representing higher education faculty, substantive contributions are published from all sectors — the secondary and post-secondary teaching ranks, as well. *The Agricultural Education Magazine* ensures a shared authority for the professional partners engaged in this profession.

It appears to me that *The Agricultural Education Magazine* is intended to serve as a solid foundation for conversations that need to take place in the profession of agricultural education. The value of the work ultimately resides with the quality of the dialogue and changes that it effects. Without question, agricultural education faculty and preservice students at Colorado State University have benefited from content and curricula gleaned from *The Agricultural*

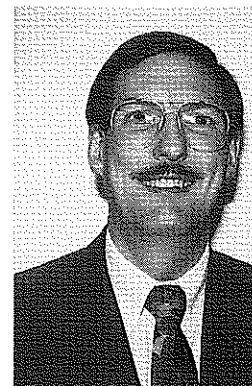
*I believe The Agricultural Education Magazine has value because it promises a shared authority in agricultural education.*

*Education Magazine.* With the impending holiday season and accompanying good cheer, I find myself evermore appreciative of the efforts of our colleagues in bringing us this publication. Lou, thanks for asking.

#### Reference

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## The Value of The Agricultural Education Magazine: An Indiana Perspective



BY B. ALLEN TALBERT  
Dr. Talbert is an assistant professor of agricultural education at Purdue University, West Lafayette.

What value does *The Agricultural Education Magazine* have for Indiana agricultural science and business teachers, undergraduate and graduate agricultural education students, and university teacher educators? The answer is almost as varied as the groups and the individuals within each group.

Indiana is a unified dues state (Indiana Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association, National Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association, Indiana Vocational Association, and American Vocational Association) which means that a person belongs to all of the professional organizations or none of them. However, subscription to *The Agricultural Education Magazine* is a separate item. For the 1994-1995 school year more than 70 percent of Indiana's agricultural science and business teachers paid their organization dues while approximately one-third subscribed to *The Agricultural Education Magazine*. Does this mean that *The Magazine* is not important? That its cost is too high relative to perceived benefit? Some teachers have voiced concerns that in the past *The Magazine* was boring and geared more toward university teacher educators than toward practitioners. They reflected that *The Magazine* has gotten better in the past two to three years; however, the word has not gotten out among teachers that *The Magazine* has changed. Another concern is whether beginning teachers are encouraged to subscribe to and read *The Magazine*.

An informal survey of agricultural science and business teachers who did subscribe to *The Magazine* yielded the following responses and frequencies:

7	I get <i>The Magazine</i> , skim the articles, and see if anything interests me.
7	I use <i>The Magazine</i> based on the theme; some are real good and some are not useful to me.
7	I like the teaching tips.
7	I don't have time to read it.
7	None of the articles ever interest me.

The overall feeling from the teachers was that articles that had an application in the day-to-day operation of the agriculture classroom were helpful; other articles were either not use-

ful or not interesting. Those teachers surveyed liked the mix of authors and valued perspectives from teachers and others who have a direct link to the classroom.

*The Agricultural Education Magazine* is used in many ways at Purdue University. In the teacher preparation program, juniors receive a copy each month and are required to read *The Magazine* and report on it in class. This exposes them to national agricultural education issues and topics and hopefully forms the habit of using *The Magazine* to improve teaching practice. Students have made comments that ranged from "Why do we have to do this?" to "Wow, there's some good stuff in *This Magazine!*"

The comment that occurs the most often is "*The Magazine* allows us to see what is happening in the real world of teaching [as opposed to the theoretical world of the university]."

Both undergraduates and graduate students are encouraged to use *The Magazine* for papers, reports, and course assignments. Graduate students are also encouraged to write an article for *The Magazine*, which provides them with national exposure.

As university teacher educators, we have debated the relevance of *The Agricultural Education Magazine*. We like the theme-based issues, the effort taken to include practicing teachers as writers, and the value that *The Magazine* has in providing a forum for discussion of important topics. However, we have begun to wonder whether the *FFA Advisors Making a Difference* has taken over the role of giving teachers practical, just-in-time information. The articles in it are short, to the point,

and designed to have an immediate impact upon the teacher and the agriculture program. If this is so, then what is the purpose of *The*

(Continued on page 24)

## Arizona Secondary Agriculture Teachers Said ...



BY JACK F. ELLIOT  
Dr. Elliot is an assistant professor of agricultural education at The University of Arizona, Tucson.

Seventy-nine percent (69/87) of the Arizona Secondary School Agriculture Teachers responded to a survey by the author addressing the value of *The Agricultural Education Magazine*. Forty-eight percent of the responding Teachers were currently receiving *The Magazine*. Of the 52 percent that did not have a subscription, 36 percent had never subscribed and 64 percent had, at some time, not renewed their subscription.

Arizona Secondary School Agriculture Teachers agreed *The Agricultural Education Magazine* was valuable to them. The number preceding the comment indicates the frequency of that comment.

15	There are some good (useful) ideas for teaching (I can incorporate ideas into my coursework.)
15	Keeps teachers up-to-date with what's (trends) going on (insight to other programs/views).
4	Do not have time to read it.
3	It is very useful for professional research (i.e., provide information for administrators).
3	It talks about the philosophy of agricultural education programs (theoretical).
3	It is too theoretical (does not fit my needs).
3	Do not subscribe anymore.
2	Do not read it often.
2	Would like to subscribe.
1	In ten years of receiving it, there has been nothing practical (usable) provided for lesson planning (just talking about it).
1	There are interesting ideas for SOE.
1	I like it when I take time to read it.

The Arizona Teachers felt that *The Magazine* was not too costly. They agreed that more secondary teachers of agriculture should prepare articles and they were undecided as to having too many articles by university personnel. The following comments are recommendations for improvement of *The Agricultural Education Magazine*. Again, the number preceding the comment indicates the frequency of that comment. ■

20	It needs more practical ideas (hands-on application) for use in the classroom (more stuff {helpful hints} for people out in the trenches.) (e.g., include lesson plans, tests, not just how good something is, make articles complete and useable for secondary school teachers by secondary school teachers.) (What works and what doesn't work.) (Best practices/innovations in the classroom.) (Specifics.)
9	Include more relevant articles by secondary school teachers.
4	Simplify articles (it's currently bland and boring) with more pictures, color, diagrams, etc (make it readable).
2	Keep doing what you're doing (up-to-date articles).
1	Include more industry and student related articles.
1	It would help if it came already 3-hole punched.
1	Don't use <i>The Magazine</i> as an outlet for publication experience.

## The Magazine: Its Value



BY C. VAN SHELHAMER  
Dr. Shelhamer is an associate professor of agricultural education at Montana State University, Bozeman.

“A magazine for those interested in public school programs for the improvement of agriculture and country life” is the inscription that appeared on the cover of the first agricultural education magazine published in January, 1929. The Editor, H. M. Hamlin and the Board of Editors “hoped and expected that this publication will be maintained permanently by the workers in the field of agriculture education.” The Board of Editors consisting of state supervisors, teacher educators, and state directors who had assembled a 16-page magazine addressing such topics as “Part-time Classes,” “Evening Classes,” “Professional News,” “Future Farmers of America” and “A Class Project in Feeding Baby Bees.” The annual subscription was \$1.00.

Sixty-eight years later, *The Agricultural Education Magazine* continues to be published and maintained by professional in the field of agricultural education for an annual subscription of \$10.00. It is interesting that the inscription on the 24 page, January, 1995 issue read “We’ve Come a Long Way - or Have We?” The articles in these issue were written by 7 teacher educators and 2 industry representatives covering such topics as: “Agriculture is Taught? In High School?,” “Let’s Tell Our Story,” “Agricultural Education Under the Bright Lights” and “A Hat is Amended: A Parliamentary Procedure Demonstration.” There is an interesting parallel between the two issues when one considers the nature of the topics and the authors. In the latest issue, the Editor, Lou E. Riesenberg, stated “In order for *The Magazine* to be successful, members of the agricultural education profession must read *The Magazine* and the membership must be willing to invest time and energy into articles for others to read.” In analyzing 9 of the 1995 issues, it was found that 55 percent of the articles were authored by teacher educators, 14 percent by secondary teachers, 12 percent by industry related personnel and 6 percent by agricultural education supervisors.

The profession of teacher educators has consistently utilized *The Magazine* for publication needed for professorship. While it has served that purpose, one wonders if *The*

*Magazine* has made a difference in “agriculture and country life”. Why is it that only about 4000 agricultural education professionals subscribe? In Montana, only about one third of the teachers subscribe. Using electronic technology, I posed several questions about *The Magazine* to Montana agriculture teachers.

Pete Rising, MVATA treasurer, captured the feelings of most teachers when he stated, “I subscribe to stay informed of the current issues facing agricultural education in the nation, to gather new innovative ideas for my program and to develop a new and continued awareness of items that faces public education.” Other reasons offered were; “it is important as a professional to subscribe to the professional association magazine”, “it cause one to think professionally on occasion”, “it is written by agricultural educators for agriculture educators”, “the articles are short and to the point and focus on a specific topic”, “some issues are motivational”, and, “some issues are cheaper than corn cobs”.

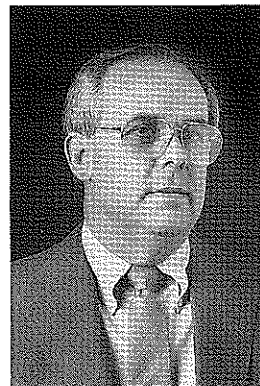
*The Magazine* paints a picture for the direction agricultural education is moving to meet the demands of the industry and is supportive of ideas that teachers have thoughts about trying. It is a professional magazine for the teacher, not for high school students. It does not find its way into the instructional process as an instructional aid at the high school. Yet teacher educators find it a valuable tool in preparing teachers of agriculture. For example, a recent class activity required students to review and determine the important issues addressed in the issues since the start of *The Magazine*. While the objective was to help students learn about the philosophy, historical and federal involvement in the development of agricultural education; the students learned more about instructional techniques and ideas. The resultant student-produced video continues to serve as an instructional aid in preparing teachers.

The Department purchases ten subscriptions which are placed in the student lounge. In a matter of several days, all the copies have been taken by students. Students and teachers com-

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## The Agricultural Education Magazine - Is It A Classic or A Relic?



BY GLEN C. SHINN  
Dr. Shinn is a professor and head of agricultural education at Texas A&M University, College Station.

Our son, Russ, and I share a 1965 Ford Mustang Coupe. You bet, it's original with a 289 - 200 hp engine and an A-300 automatic transmission. The Mustang sports original chrome wheels and Firestone tires plus factory dual exhaust. Perhaps the reason the Pony Car has established itself as a Classic can be reduced to 4 criteria: (1) design principles, (2) functionality, (3) customer appeal, and, (4) value. Stick with me for a couple of minutes while I contrast Ford's Pony Car and The Agricultural Education Magazine. Then you draw your own conclusions as to whether *The Magazine* is a classic or a relic?

### Design Principles

Lee Iacocca's design team crafted a new model based on design principles and stuck to it! While Ford lost the focus for a time in the '80's, the '95 Mustang recaptured the spirit of the original Pony Car.

In his first issue as Editor of The Agricultural Education Magazine, Cayce Scarborough cited H. M. Hamlin's 1929 publication as "intended for those interested in public school programs for the improvement of agriculture and country life" (1965). Scarborough then set out with the goal to connect "theory and practice." Frankly, some of the articles were boring, but in retrospect contained good advice. In the January 1995 issue, Editor Riesenbergs asked the rhetorical question: "We've Come a Long Way (or Have We)? Both the '65 and '95 issues struck at the issues of the day and generally based recommendations on principles of sound teaching and learning.

### Functionality

The '65 Pony Car emphasized practical utility and incorporated a form that enhanced materials, structure, and use. The result was widely accepted by the customer and sales soared.

As a comparable test, does The Agricultural Education Magazine emphasize practical utility and form adapted to materials, structure, and use? The '65 magazine examined critical issues of the day: the Vocational Education Act of 1963, philosophy and objectives, the new occupational mix, using resources, ... and planning local programs. The '95 magazine focused on the collective views of agricultural education, the information highway, business and industry partnerships, promoting integrity ... and rural education. Again, the readability was tough, very tough.

### Customer Appeal

You only have to roll the windows down and cruise across campus to validate customer appeal. The open air, exhilaration, and rubber-necking add to a confidence that the Pony Car has customer appeal. Visit any auto show and you will find a crowd of enthusiasts swapping ideas and parts. You may want to visit their Home Page on the Web: <http://www.dwx.com/~bob/topics/mustang/mustang.html>.

Cayce Scarborough reported ... "there were 1,500 paid subscribers in advance of publication of the first issue [1929]. This was about one-half of the total number in Agricultural Education at this time" (1965). In 1995, Bill Camp reported 10,119 teachers and Glenn Anderson reported the average total circulation of the magazine was 4,015. Sure, it's not Car and Driver. You only have to thumb through the pages to find that you have to be a committed reader! The font looks as if it was designed by Johannes Gutenberg and the majority of photos looks like mug shots from Who's Who ... and nobody is smiling.

### Value

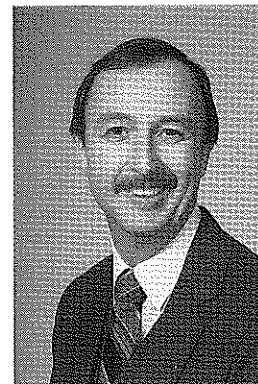
Today, the '65 Pony Car will bring three times its original list price. However, if it has been parked under the chinaberry tree and ignored, it is likely only junk. The subscription rate for the 1965 year of The Agricultural Education Magazine was \$3.00. Today's subscription is \$10.00. The average salary for a 12-month teacher in '65 was about \$5,000. Go figure!!

Well, nobody said it would be easy; but they promised it would be fun! In The Road Ahead, Bill Gates lamented, "I've worked long hours on this book. I work hard because I love my work." He observed that "the greatest benefits will come from the application of technology to education, formal and informal" (1995). I'll bet Editors Scarborough and Riesenbergs felt the same way, and earned a lot less money.

This is the best time to be alive and to be engaged in agricultural education. Sure, we need to improve our tools. The Agricultural Education Magazine can be a tool for program improvement, but only if we as readers connect theory with practice. As the reader, it's your call. ■

**Note:** The opinions expressed are solely the author's and do not represent Texas, Texas A&M, or its faculty. They all express their own ideas!

## The Value of The Agricultural Education Magazine



BY H. DEAN SUTPHIN  
Dr. Sutphin is associate dean and director of academic programs at Cornell University, Ithaca.

My association with The Agricultural Education Magazine began as a student in high school and continued during the 6.5 years that I taught agricultural education in the public school system in Virginia until the present time. I have read *The Magazine* through various perspectives, and most recently as Associate Dean and Director of Academic Programs at Cornell University.

During each of these roles in my life I found *The Magazine* of value. It represents a professional view and a description of our current interest, the content of our subject matter and the views of those of us who are working in the profession typically from the perspective of state supervisors, teacher educators and teachers. It defines who we are, often describing where we have been and unfortunately doesn't portray where we are going as often as it should.

As a graduate student of The Ohio State, I had the opportunity to complete a thesis on issues in agricultural education. To complete the thesis I reviewed The Agricultural Education Magazine from the first issue until 1981. and, of course, I have followed *The Magazine* since that time. As a result I think I have a collective view of the progression of articles during the various time periods. For those who may have had the fortune of conducting a similar review, I suspect your feelings are like mine. The issues during the early years of the 1930s were rich with philosophical conceptual articles outlining where the profession should go and why. For our profession these articles are almost landmarks. They represent a time period of growth, maturation, deep commitment and deep thought regarding not only what the profession was engaged in, but why it was moving in this direction, and why it should continue to do so in the future.

As years passed, *The Magazine* became more of a practice oriented magazine that described what was happening in various schools around the country, a type of show and tell. Of course, these articles made significant contributions, because they represented key innovations and practice, provided a model for others, generated new ideas and stimulated

development of practice in our profession.

It appears that in our most recent issues of The Agricultural Education Magazine, we have turned our attention again to an examination of who we are as a profession. Actually, there is a blend of both practice and theoretical and conceptual oriented articles. For those who are highly practice oriented, the philosophical, conceptual and theoretical articles may not rate a ten. However, if we fail to address this line of inquiry, the critical issues of the day may escape us and we may meander across a critical time period steeped only in our history.

While significant changes in the rest of education carry us into a new area, should it not be the purpose of The Agricultural Education Magazine to raise the critical issues? It causes us to think more deeply about what we do and not cheer us on to continue just as we have for many years. I recall speaking to a high school principal this past year whom I had not seen for about five years. He commented that agricultural education was the only curriculum in the school that had continued just as it had been, oblivious to all the changes that were going on around. It stayed the same and was never changing. He was amazed that we were able to survive.

In the 1930s the writings in *The Magazine* were very thoughtful. Creative individuals dominated The Agricultural Education Magazine. They have little to say about practice but much to say about the underlying philosophies and characterizations of agricultural education. In addition to the principles, they addressed purpose, the clientele whom we should serve, the curriculum that we should adopt, the procedures that should be used to evaluate our programs and the resources that were needed to carry out effective programs well connected to the entire school system. In my view, this was of great value, almost a mandate for an emerging profession.

What value should we expect from The Agricultural Education Magazine today? For one thing, it appears that it serves to make us feel good about what we are doing. But, in doing so, there is an absence of discussion about the major challenges that confront the→

profession. We highlight our excellence in programs that are high achievers from throughout the country. We espouse high ideals to generate enthusiasm for what we do. For most of us this generates loyalty, unity, and a cohesive organization built on pride, citizenship, innocence of accomplishment. We espouse high ideals, lofty goals and are very mission oriented, an important message.

Yet, we obscure or ignore critical events that threaten our very existence. While we may write about the roles of state supervision, the reality in many states is there is hardly any state supervision left and what do we do in the absence of this valuable service upon which we have relied.? In addition, we, in the past ten years, have seen a major redefinition of funding patterns for state programs throughout the country with the absence of federal dollars that have traditionally served as enticements for matching state and local funds. Yet *Our Magazine* has not addressed alternative funding models or the utilization of Perkins funds through creative programming.

We have encountered significant decline in the number of students interested in traditional teacher education programs. Yet we do not write about these declines in meaningful ways that would help us analyze the root cause or sort out the alternatives for future programming as had the founders of the agricultural education profession, the leaders of the late 20s and early 30s, when writing for *The Magazine*. These articles were not for the faint-hearted, for they engaged in debate, wrestled with critical issues, looked at the alternatives and argued them in discourse that was rich in meaning and apparently motivating to read.

From my analysis of the current situation in many of our states and nationally, the value of *The Agricultural Education Magazine* is critical to our renewal and vigor. *The Magazine* should again engage us in renewal by asking the hard questions, by discussing the difficult and by engaging us in an analysis of our principles.

What is the value of *The Agricultural Education Magazine*? Past articles and issues defined where we have been. Current issues define where we are. I pray future issues will increasingly help us look to the future. That will be a challenge because we must deal with difficult issues and some are not pleasant. Many are ill defined problems with invasive solutions, but together we can move in a very positive direction. Someone must set the course. Someone must engage us in an examination of our philosophy, of the content of our curriculum and of our relationship to the public school system and the national education agen-

da. We must deal with scarce resources and a continuing declining funding base through traditional sources. Thus the value of *The Agricultural Education Magazine* is at a premium. If we would only think and write and rise to the occasion, we have the intellect within our profession to do so. But, do we have the will?

This has not been an argument to ignore practice but rather to create a balance in practice and theory. ■

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### **Classic or Relic?**

(Continued from page 21)

ment that it is nice to see articles written by someone they know and makes them feel like they belong to a profession.

Yes, *The Magazine* does make a difference in the lives of Montanans involved in agricultural education. Unfortunately, it doesn't reach enough people and is exclusive of the school administrators and school and community leaders that need to be aware of the importance and role of agricultural education.

The vision of Hamlin and others have served the professional well; yet there is always a need to reflect and evaluate ourselves as educators, our profession and our future. The words of wisdom from the 1929 issue of *The Magazine* still apply today.

#### **Reference**

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### **Indiana Perspective**

(Continued from page 19)

#### **Agricultural Education Magazine?**

Whether through tradition or actual value, *The Agricultural Education Magazine* is used by practicing teachers, university students in agricultural education, and university teacher educators in Indiana. The extent to which it is used varies with the individual over time. Teachers view it as a way to see what someone else in the country has done in a particular situation. They want teaching tips, themes that are related to classroom instruction, and interesting articles. Students want articles written by practicing teachers describing what is going on in their programs. Finally, university teacher educators want a magazine that is widely read, has practical articles, and allows us to share our research findings with the broad agricultural education profession. ■