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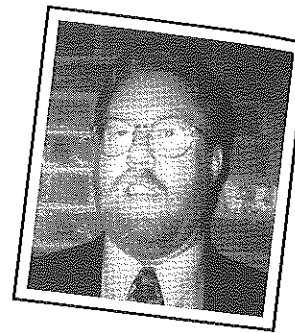
The Agricultural
EDUCATION
M A G A Z I N E



Career Development Events • Career Development Events

Career Development Events: What Do I Do?

By Dale Crabtree



Career Development Events--these three words can stir emotion ranging from excitement to pure anxiety in many of us. For 18 years, I had the wonderful opportunity to teach agricultural education in a rural program in the southwestern corner of Arizona. I still remember during my first year my students' desire to compete in career development events (they were called contests at that time). As a first year instructor, my experience in some of the areas was very limited. The process of selecting events in which to train my students for competition was a major decision. At that time, there were only eight national events. Over the 18 years, I had the fortunate experience of bringing 10 teams in 5 different areas to compete in national events. Today, however, everything is not as simple as it was then.

We are now faced with the challenge of selecting from 18 different events (and five additional events may be available in the future through special funding of the National FFA Foundation). How can a state association conduct them all? How does an instructor train students to do them all? The key is that we do not have to do them all. We must be selective in our approach.

Selecting events which make sense for your state or community is a key way to start the process. For state associations, selecting events that are major agricultural industries within your state is not only a legitimate reason for selection, it will also assist

in finding individuals to help conduct these events. The National FFA requires that a minimum of 15 states compete in a national event after three years and a minimum of 26 states compete after six years for it to continue. By utilizing this approach, it is the hope of the National FFA to offer events that meet the needs of most students. States who struggle to offer all events, may want to consider implementing a process such as this one. Although the National FFA offers an event, this may not justify offering it on the state level. How many events are at the state level but not at the national level?

Every year, local agricultural education instructors are faced with the decision of which teams to train. Training teams based upon the information taught within the local curriculum should be the primary factor to consider. By utilizing this approach, students are able to apply instruction to real life situations. Those instructors who tie Career Development Events to the curriculum they teach, as well as

"Those instructors who tie Career Development Events to the curriculum they teach, as well as their students' agricultural experience programs, are giving their students an advantage to becoming successful in their chosen career."

their students' agricultural experience programs, are giving their students an advantage to becoming successful in their chosen career. More and more emphasis is placed upon competencies taught to students.

Graduation requirements continue to climb. Why not train Career Development Event teams in the areas that reinforce those competencies being required? The benefits of this

approach will have an affect on your students for a lifetime.

I taught in a single person department and it took me a long time to realize that my community had an endless supply of experts who could assist me with teams. One of the most difficult things for an agricultural education instructor to do is to admit that someone else can help do the job. My wife, Roberta, who is also an agricultural education instructor, helped me realize that there are many individuals willing to assist. Active alumni are a great place to start in getting help. If you don't have alumni, ask the parents of the students in your program if any of them would be willing to help. You will be amazed to learn of the vast experience other teachers in your school can share in training students. Local businesses are another excellent resource in preparing Career Development Event teams. Past graduates, who were successful in Career Development Events, are another tremendous training source. If I could share one piece of advice, it would be "DON'T ATTEMPT TO DO IT ALL BY YOURSELF." A successful agricultural education instructor is resourceful and taps into the community resource base for assistance in the classroom, as well as in training students for career development events.

Career Development events should be an extension to classroom instruction. If this is the way you approach the activity, then certainly, the task should be easier for you to tackle.

Dale Crabtree is a Teacher Services Specialist with the National FFA Organization.

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Editor

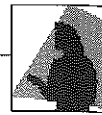
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Some Random Thoughts on CDEs

By David Coffey

if only
ag. teachers
would...

Realize that contests are a teaching tool

Recognize students, not advisors

Read the rules of the CDE before competition

Share the rules with their students

Keep references current

Utilize references in classroom instruction

Have chapter level competition

Recognize students at the local level

Work with team members who win chapter competition for further competition

Realize that FFA is a somewhat democratic organization

Utilize the same forms on local and regional level that are used in state and national competition

Realize that one doesn't have to enter every CDE

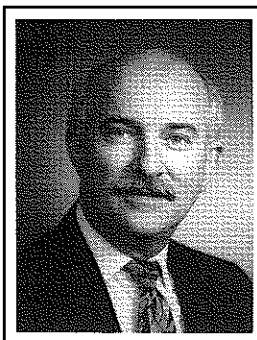
Enter only CDE's which are relevant to curriculum

Develop CDE's to fit local program

Host a CDE

Not lose their cool

enough said!



David Coffey
is a teacher
educator at
Western
Kentucky
University.

How Chatham Central Does It!

By Julian Smith

The Chatham Central FFA Chapter of Bear Creek, N. C. is small with only fifty-six members enrolled during the '96-'97 school year and is part of a high school that enrolls approximately four hundred students in a given year. We have enjoyed some measure of success in state and national Career Development Events in nursery/landscape and floriculture over the years. (Editors Note: Chatham Central has won five national titles in Floriculture, five in Nursery/Landscape and one in Horticulture. They have placed in the top three at the national level in these events on 11 other occasions.) The question is often asked, "How in the world do you do so well year after year?" It all starts with the curriculum that is taught and the emphasis that is placed on learning the content in the curriculum. The curriculum is based upon a mix of science, math and hands-on-experience needed for a career in horticulture. For those students that master the classwork this curriculum is a good preparation for further training in two-year horticulture programs, four-year programs or entering the work force in horticulture.

It all starts with what we call Horticulture I that begins for most students at the sophomore level. The only requirement for taking Horticulture I is that the student has passed biology or is currently taking biology. They do not get science credit for horticulture in our system. The Horticulture I class is basically taught in the classroom. It includes plant botany, which is used as the basis to teach plant identification. I believe identification is a corner stone of any

good horticulture program. The students learn identification by leaf composition, leaf arrangement, bud size and shape, leaf scars, etc. The botany approach to plant identification is the reason we have always done well in plant identification. We do not memorize what a plant looks like, but rather, use botany to identify the plant. We cover five plants per week and have a test on twenty plants. The students are asked to identify twenty specimens on each test, the five new ones from the previous week and any other fifteen that we have covered. They receive five points per plant if they give the botanical name and it is spelled correctly including capitalization, punctuation, and underlining. They receive four points if it is identified correctly but has spelling or punctuation errors. If they do not know the botanical name but can give the common name they receive four points. The heart of identification is botany. They never see the same specimen twice; may see the same specie, but never the same form of it.

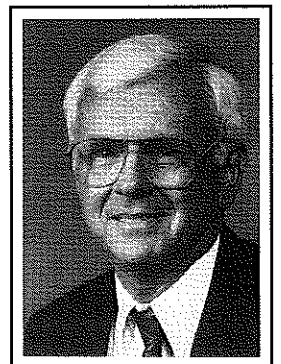
Horticulture I includes plant growth and development, soils, propagation and tissue culture, plant growing structures and containers as well as pesticides. All of these areas are as science based as I can make them. In Horticulture I, the students get very little experience out of the classroom except when we cover plant propagation. All of our testing is a result of teacher generated tests. We never use standardized tests. Our students never see multiple choice or true false tests. The testing is based on botany, defining, and being able to apply learned knowledge to situations.

Once a student passes Horticulture I, they can take Horticulture II. Horticulture II is almost entirely taught in the greenhouse or nursery. Horticulture II is the lab experience for Horticulture I. This is where students put into practice the knowl-

edge from Horticulture I. The students learn greenhouse plant culture and nursery/landscape practices by growing many different species of plants along with continued plant identification.

Our third horticulture course is Horticulture Design. One-half of the course is floral design. The other half is landscape design. The principles are basically the same for the two and a form of applied art. This combination works really well. In floral design, the students learn to construct the different designs and price them. In the landscape design section, the students learn basic drawing and lettering. The student will draw several design plans, calculate costs and learn to make bid proposals. Basic math is utilized in calculating square feet, cubic feet, cubic yards, etc.

With a curriculum such as this, it is not a major task to enter Career Development Events. I would not want to imply that we learn everything in class but being on a floriculture or nursery/landscape team is an outgrowth of our horticulture curriculum. The curriculum has in it the ingredients to make a student successful in the area of horticulture. If a student chooses to be on a career development team it is my responsibility to hone and polish knowledge and skills already learned. There is a total correlation with the quality of this curriculum and the floriculture and nursery/landscape career development success we have had in FFA.



Julian Smith
has been an
agriculture
teacher at
Chatham
Central High
School in Bear
Creek, NC for
32 years.

The State's Perspective

By Steve Brown

Career Development Events (CDEs) are a mainstay of skill application in agricultural education. From the state prospective, Career Development Events motivate students to learn, develop problem solving and communication skills, assess student knowledge and recognize student achievement. To conduct and maintain successful Career Development Events at the state level, they must be based on a sound up-to-date-curriculum, have policies in place to govern participation, and involve partnerships with other agencies, agribusiness, colleges and universities.

Curriculum Based

The agriculture curriculum must keep in step with current technology and the agricultural work place. This is one of the main reasons why states must continually evaluate and update curriculum, provide in-service education and keep current with agricultural technology.

Student participation in Career Development Events should be as a result of sound classroom teaching. CDEs will then be curriculum and instructional based. Career Development Events provide the application phase of classroom instruction with recognition for proficient performance as well as career exploration opportunities. With the development of curriculum using agriculture teachers', agricultural teacher educators' and business and industry representatives' input, the curriculum will drive the content of Career Development Events for the next century.

Develop Policies

In Missouri, new Career Development Events are added when a curriculum is developed. When fifty percent of the agricultural education programs in the state teach the new curriculum unit, the Joint Staff for Agricultural Education recommend and approve the new event, and a pilot Career Development Event is completed before the new CDE is established. (The Joint Staff for Agricultural Education is composed of State Agricultural Education Staff, representatives from the State Agriculture Teacher Organization and Agricultural Teacher Educators from each college or university that certifies agriculture teachers.) Each Career Development Event is evaluated annually by an agriculture teacher committee, the Joint Staff on Agricultural Education and the contest Superintendent. Major CDE revisions are completed every three years by publishing a state Career Development Events/Contest Bulletin. By having such policies in place, Career Development Events effectively showcase agricultural education.

Encompass Partners

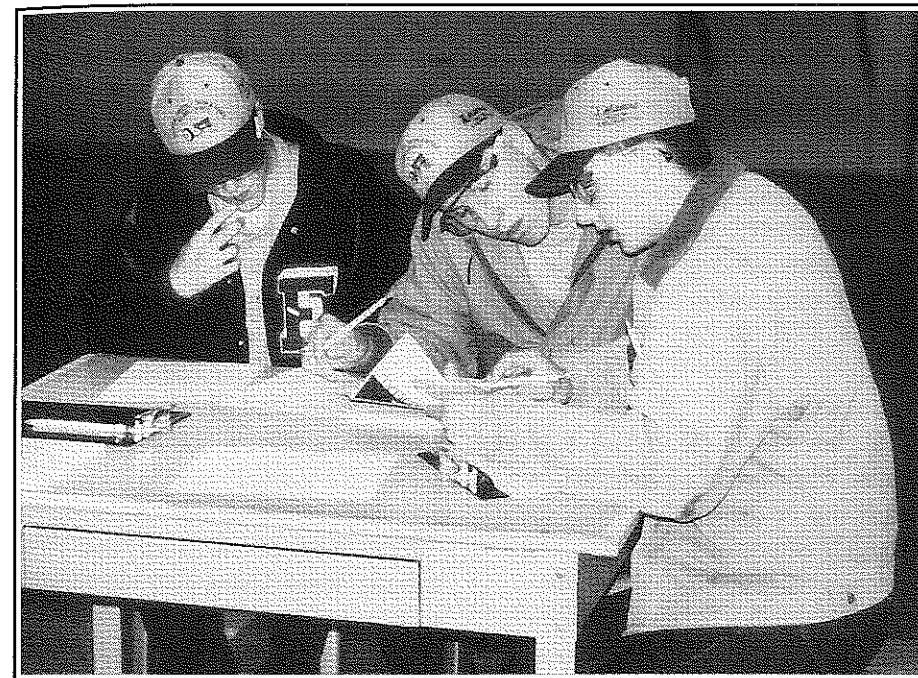
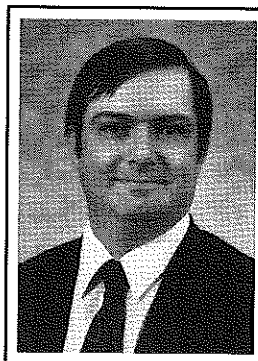
The strengths of our state Career Development Events are the partnerships and relationships built with the agribusinesses, state agencies, and colleges and universities across the state. The College of Agriculture Food and Natural Resources at the University of Missouri - Columbia sponsor and host the State Career Development Event in conjunction with the State FFA Convention in

April. Over 6000 students participate in six district qualifying Career Development Events. The top one-third continues on to the twenty State Career Development Events. High individual students receive scholarships based upon their performance. In certain Career Development Events, such as Agricultural Business Management, students may receive college credit for outstanding performance.

Reflections

The key to successful Career Development Events is a well developed curriculum system with the State Agricultural Education Staff, the State Agriculture Teacher Organization, and the Agricultural Teacher Educators working together with equal responsibility, ownership and input for the benefit of students and agriculture.

Steve Brown, serves as a District Supervisor in Agricultural Education at the Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education and is the Executive Secretary of the Missouri FFA



Carefully following the directions presented in the scenario is an essential part of successfully completing the activity. (photo courtesy of Dale Perritt)

It's A Team Effort

By Dale Perritt

In the Beginning. In 1971, a consultant committee of eight far-sighted individuals met in Alexandria, Virginia to explore the opportunities for a national contest in agricultural mechanics. This committee developed five broad-based statements on which to build support for a national event that would showcase the agricultural mechanics curriculum, which at that time composed 25% to 60% of the instructional time in agricultural education in the public schools. Of those five statements, perhaps the most compelling was statement five which essentially said, "agricultural mechanics is included as an instructional area in all agribusiness occupational areas" - a common thread throughout the industry of agriculture. The technology certainly has changed over the years, but the fact remains that agricultural production, processing, handling, storage, and marketing are all significantly advanced or con-

strained by the mechanical system in which they function.

The idea that agricultural mechanics is a system common to all has in essence brought the National Agricultural Mechanics Career Development Event (CDE) to its present application. Even though we continue to place emphasis on the product - to what degree can the student perform a skill - we are now perhaps equally concerned with the process or system that students use to arrive at conclusions and recommendations. Rather than present contestants with five skills and problem solving areas that often were unrelated, the event now focuses on a theme with activities interrelated to that thematic area.

Why Change?

In 1996, the format of the event changed dramatically. One might ask why? The CDE Handbook answers that question very succinctly:

"To effectively prepare for the expectations of the agricultural mechanics workplace, tomorrow's workers must not only develop a high degree of knowledge and skill, they must also develop the ability to solve difficult problems. The agricultural mechanics worker of tomorrow will perform these skills while working with others, and in the process, may be required to apply a wide range of technologies that interrelate as a part of a system. In short, the workplace requires that workers be able to do much more than perform tasks."

No one will argue that tomorrow's worker will be required to solve difficult problems. The stark reality is that for a number of years, workers have been working in groups and using a wide array of technologies to solve difficult problems. The primary difference between yesterday and today is that the rate at which things change has been compressed significantly. Industry, which has always been closely aligned with the National Agricultural Mechanics CDE, has made it clear that its need is for employees who can work collaboratively in teams to solve difficult problems. Industry needs employees with strong interpersonal skills who can rely on networking and

...continued on page 17

CDEs in Preservice Teacher Education

By Robert M. Torres & Ken Sabo

Preservice teacher education has a lofty challenge in preparing capable and creative agriculture teachers. In preparing preservice teachers for their roles in agriculture education, preparation programs typically provide instruction in curriculum and program planning and development, and delivery and evaluation of instruction throughout the various courses offered. In some preservice programs, specialty courses in FFA and SAE are offered to prepare preservice teachers for their roles in these areas. Other programs integrate these topics into existing planning or program development courses. Yet where do preservice teachers gain knowledge and skills in and about Career Development Events (CDEs)? Are there certain skills and knowledge that warrant specific instruction?

Traditionally, preservice teachers gained much of their knowledge and skills in and about CDEs through their student teaching experiences. However, what preparation and instruction have preservice teachers had prior to these experiences? Will they perpetuate acceptable behaviors and approaches when preparing FFA members for CDEs? Will their FFA members realize the full academic and vocational potential of CDEs? Because of the mostly traditional student pool in agricultural education, we sometimes assume that preservice teachers come to us with experiences in "contest" participation and have the knowledge necessary to assume this responsibility in their role as a teacher. What about those preservice teachers who do not have these experiences? Should this be a serious consideration when preparing well-

rounded teachers? We believe so! Despite preservice teachers' experiences, teacher education programs must give this teacher role adequate attention.

A Course

At New Mexico State University, a course was developed specifically to address this concern titled "Philosophy and Methods of Contests." The course was conceived based on the need to establish a balance between what teachers currently practice and the theory for doing so. This was accomplished by addressing some fundamental topics specifically related to CDEs. Topics included in the course are:

- Ethics and Character
- Objectives and Purpose of CDEs
- Cooperation versus Competition
- Winning and Losing
- Using Community Resources
- Academic and Employability Skills
- Judging Techniques and Tools
- Recognition and Awards
- Rules and Regulations
- Program Management
- Coaching as a Teaching Approach

In addition to the classroom topics addressed, preservice teachers are required to carry out several out-of-class assignments. For example, preservice teachers conduct an in-depth interview with an individual in charge of conducting a CDE at the state level, develop a critique of the reference list from the CDEs offered at the state level, and conduct a training session on three CDEs for class members. Moreover, preservice

teachers are required to develop a written philosophy statement concerning CDEs and how they assist in accomplishing the program goals and objectives.

Knowledge and Skills Learned

Throughout the course, preservice teachers gain knowledge and skills in the various CDEs offered at the district, state, and national level. Using peer teaching with an emphasis on application, preservice teachers instruct each other in and about the various CDEs, the purpose(s) and objectives associated with each, the academic and employability skills gained through participation, the competencies learned, and basic techniques for preparing FFA members for CDEs. Preservice teachers also are given an opportunity to be involved in preparing and conducting a selected CDE during the State CDEs. This gives them a unique perspective on planning and organizing, the financial and physical resources required and the number of volunteers needed to have a successful CDE. Preservice teachers then analyze and discuss the various state CDEs strengths and weaknesses. They also learn about the use and abuse of CDEs and that preparation is derived from classroom instruction and serves as one of many instructional tools available to them.

A Coaching Approach

While there are many ways to prepare FFA members for CDE participation, one familiar method used is "coaching." While not listed in common agriculture teaching methods textbooks, coaching is an

appropriate and valid approach for instruction. As in athletic events, coaching skills and techniques are important to have when preparing FFA members for CDEs. Just as an athletic coach offers words of encouragement, praise, criticisms, and direction to his/her players so does an agriculture teacher to his/her FFA members. The coaching approach combines many teaching methods and nurtures the enthusiasm in FFA members from beginning to end. Preservice teachers are taught that with coaching, the teacher must carry out "preseason" planning, select and sequence the specific skills they teach, provide verbal instructions, prepare instructional aids and materials, demonstrate skills, plan for practices, and provide feedback. In the preparation, coaching all CDEs is impossible. Thus, as with sports, the agriculture teacher must select the assistant coaches—that is the volunteers to help prepare FFA members for the CDEs. And above all, preservice teachers leave with an understanding that every decision the teacher makes and every behavior the teacher displays is based first on what is best for the learners, and second, on what may improve the FFA member's or team's chances of winning.

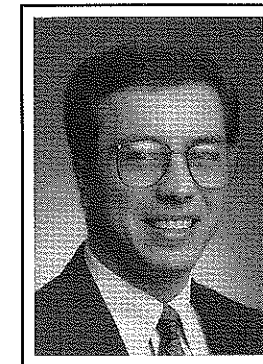
Concluding Comments

CDEs provide students an opportunity to apply what they have learned in the classroom. It is vital that preservice teachers understand that CDEs are an extension to the total agriculture program and are not an isolated event. Throughout the course offering, preservice teachers learn about the array of CDEs offered and the need to manage their time using community volunteers to provide opportunity for most of the students to participate in the various CDEs. Preservice teachers also learn that preparing FFA members for

CDEs is a process, not a product. Students not only apply the knowledge and skills learned through classroom instruction, but equally important they learn how to make decisions and reason based on knowledge, communicate with others their understanding of the event, and utilize academic and employability skills by participating in CDEs. Preservice teachers must be prepared to communicate to administrators, teachers, and the public the inherent value CDEs provide because CDEs are more than student activities, they are educational events!

Ken Sabo is in the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education at New Mexico State University. (no photo)

Robert M. Torres is in the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education at New Mexico State University.



The Cover

The photo on the cover is of vocational agriculture students judging mules.

The photo was taken in Missouri, probably during the 1920's. The photo is courtesy of Bob Stewart.

Coming in the
May-June Issue

Buzz
words

What does Tech Prep, School-To-Work and all those other buzz words have to do with Agricultural Education?

Answers to...
Go to the Head of the Class:
1. C. Twelve states participated in this contest in Chicago. A first hand account of the event is found on page 19 of this issue. Times have changed. 2. D. Sixteen teams participated in Indianapolis. 3. C. 4. A. 5. B. Between 1942 and 1946 there were no national judging contests because of travel restrictions caused by the world war. 6. A. The National Dairy Judging and Dairy Products contest were held at the National Dairy Cattle Congress in Waterloo, Iowa for decades. The Poultry Contest was also conducted here for a number of years. 7. C. The land judging contest in Oklahoma is not currently sponsored by the FFA, but there may be a relationship in the future. 8. D. Parliamentary procedure is the most recent event. It should be noted that a motion was passed by delegates at the national convention in 1950 encouraging the development of such an event. 9. C. 10. D

Tony the Tiger and a New CDE

By David R. Stevenson

Will the next new cereal product success come from the work of those students who competed at the 1997 National Convention event?

For nearly 40 years, Kellogg has supported various FFA programs and awards. When the FFA Foundation proposed we become a sponsor for the new Food Science and Technology Event at the National Convention, we quickly agreed. Several factors entered into the decision to be the lead sponsor of this new and exciting event.

The event fit with our core business: Kellogg Company is the world's leading producer of ready-to-eat cereal products and a significant producer of other grain-based convenience food. The purpose of the event was to stimulate learning activities in food science and technology to help students develop a good working knowledge of the food industry and enhance their team decision-making skills.

The Food Science and Technology event has allowed Kellogg to focus our energy and investment. The opportunity to participate in the development of the event by serving on the original planing task force also enhanced our interest. While this participation required additional support in meeting times and developing materials for the event, the reward was an event that was as close to the "real world" as possible. A particular challenge to the committee was conducting the first event at the National Convention less than one year from the original task force meeting. Usually new events hold a demonstration the first year to work out details. The committee worked hard to meet the challenge of producing an event that would be successful in the first year.

Overall, Kellogg was pleased with the outcome of the first event. The specific team and individual tasks worked well and mirrored conditions in our business. Responses from participating students and from various committee members who helped conduct and judge the event were very positive. Students were required to perform sensory tests that simulated actual tests performed inside Kellogg to the point that one of our sensory technicians setup the tests and was on site to monitor and evaluate the scores. The team event, developing a product to meet a specific market need, went well and I had the pleasure of serving as one of the six judges as teams presented their products. All team products were returned to Battle Creek for review by our Nutrition Marketing and Research and Development staff. Will the next new cereal product success come from the work of those students who competed at the 1997 National Convention event? Probably not, but their input and approach to the case will be studied by our employees.

Building on the success of the 1997 event, ideas for the future have already been developed. Our committee will meet again in early 1998 to begin working on the next event which is expected to grow significantly in participation from the 16 four-member teams this past year. Future events will continue to focus on the business world and what can be done to the event to keep a real-world focus. The event will continue to be fun and interesting for participants. As our pal Tony the Tiger would put it, the future looks "GR-R-REAT!"

Our founder W.K. Kellogg once said, "We are a company of dedicated people making quality products for a healthier world." Our shared values as a company involve profit and growth, people, consumer satisfaction and quality, integrity and ethics, and social responsibility. Supporting the FFA is an example of how we meet our Social Responsibility value of being an asset in the communities in which we do business. The FFA has a rich heritage driven by agricultural education and leadership development. We are privileged to help the FFA, through the Food Science and Technology Career Development Event to educate students and prepare them for careers in the food industry.

David R. Stevenson is the Director of Corporate Contribution Programs at the Kellogg Company.

New Career Development Events

By Dale Crabtree

How are CDEs started? Have you ever wondered how Career Development Events (CDE) are started? Does a member of the National FFA staff just conjure them up in their mind or is there a formal process that is followed. Let's explore that thought as we look at the birth of Career Development Events and the new ones to come.

Each time a National Career Development Event is added, it must go through a process before being approved. One path it might take is from the recommendation of National FFA Delegates through their delegate committees. Another major way of introducing the concept of a new event is by a state providing information to a representative of the National FFA Awards and Career Development Event Committee. The final method is a national study or task force may identify an area to be a new CDE (i.e. Environmental/Natural Resource, Food Science and Technology). This study may be approved by the National FFA Board and then in turn National staff must survey to identify state support. All three methods should be backed by a survey showing a minimum of fifteen states interested in the event.

Once the initial concept is presented using one of these three avenues, a national task force is developed. The task force consists of equal representation from the four regions as well as representation of agricultural education instructors, state staff, teacher educators, students and business and industry representatives. This group will determine if there truly is a need for the new event

and then develop the draft content and format. This information is in turn presented to the National FFA Board of Directors for their decision. If the event receives approval from the National Board of Directors, it must be approved by the National FFA Foundation Board of Trustees. Once this process is completed, the event proposal is taken to potential sponsor(s) for support. Once the event secures a sponsor, it is ready to be introduced as a new event or demonstration on the national level.

Five new Career Development Events have been approved by the FFA Board of Directors. When these events obtain sponsorship, they will start. Two events have been created to meet the needs of the growing number of middle grade (7, 8 & 9) members. The first is the Creed Speaking event. This event will be conducted similar to the two other national speaking events with a maximum of four minutes to present the creed. A maximum of three questions will be asked to each contestant with up to five minutes total to respond. "The FFA Creed by E.M. Tiffany" is the only introduction that may be used and the time will stop when the contestant finishes the last paragraph and says "Thank you."

The second of the middle grade level events will be a four-person team event in which all four scores will count. This new CDE is the National Chapter Challenge. The event will include:

1. A timed quiz using the FFA Manual and Student Handbook as the references.
2. An on site activity. An example may be to plan a Food for America presentation. The activity will require the team to work together on the development of a four to six minute oral presentation with an additional five minutes to answer questions.

3. A home site activity consisting of video shot in the team's home community related to the agriculture in the area. Members will answer questions following the eight to ten minute video.

Our third new event is Agricultural Communications. This event will consist of a four-person team in which all scores will count. Each team will report on a communications project their chapter conducted. It will involve both written and oral presentations. Member ability will be tested with both an exam as well as an editing exercise. Finally, the event will consist of four practices: news story, broadcasting, press release and visual production (i.e. photos, cropping charts, graphs, captions etc.). The fourth event, Environmental/Natural Resource, is another four person team in which all four scores count. The team activity will be a scenario dealing with an environmental/natural resource problem. Problem areas could come from ecosystems, soils, water, waste management or air. Members will be challenged by a written exam taken from the Applied Environmental Science instructional material available from the National Council for Agricultural Education. Annual practicums will be conducted in national/global issues interviews and press release writing. Rotational practicums will be conducted in areas such as air/water analysis, soil nutrient testing, soil profile analysis, environmental analysis, GPS locations, waste management, species identification and ecological succession.

The final new Career Development, which has been approved, is a single person event. The National FFA Job Interview Career Development Event will be conducted with preliminary and final rounds. Each participant will submit a cover letter,

...continued on page 27

Bridging the Gap

Between School & Work With CDEs

It's all important. Every component of a total program of agricultural education is important. Whether it is classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, SAE or FFA, each plays a vital role in preparing students for careers in agriculture. A case could be made for any one component that, when effectively delivered and based upon current industry validated competencies, it "bridges the gap" between school and work.

Beginning teachers should not be misled by the title of this article and other articles in this edition of *The Agricultural Education Magazine*: No single component of the total program of agricultural education is MOST important. All must be used in concert if you are to succeed in educating students for the world of work. Singling out career development events and the FFA as the most important is much like suggesting that the roots are the most important part of the plant. Even the casual observer can see that roots are of little benefit without leaves, stems and flowers. It's ALL important.

Back to Basics

At some point during our preservice education, all agricultural educators sat in a classroom and listened to a professor extol the virtues of the FFA and, more particularly, of Career Development Events. We were told that Career Development Events motivate students to learn. We were told that such events provide additional opportunities for

personal growth and leadership development. Few of us doubted the wisdom of such. None of us should. It's true!

Guidelines for Success

However, not all Career Development Events are created equal. Some are better than others, especially if your goal is truly to prepare students for agricultural occupations. Additionally, not all career events may be appropriate for your program. Here are a few guidelines for your consideration.

✓ Choose those that support your program direction

Most agricultural teachers conclude sooner or later that it is impossible to "be all things to all people." Many eventually decide that they need to narrow the focus of their program if they are going to provide significant instructional depth for their students. Consequently, they—like the author—may conclude that a particular cluster of occupations, like horticulture, is the best use of instructional time. This decision should be based upon employment data. Once made, it is then important that the instructor choose those career development events that support the program's direction. If, for example, the program has a horticulture slant then contests such as landscape management and floriculture become more important while contests such as dairy management or livestock selection become less important. The rule of thumb to remember is: Do a few and do them well.

✓ Evaluate the quality of the contest....

The National FFA Organization has done a good job of organizing and delivering quality, industry-driven Career Development Events. The events are based upon industry validated competencies and are revised on a regular basis. Industry representatives assist in conducting the events and help to keep teachers "honest" by reminding us of what is important to employers, not what is important to educators. However, it is well to note that national contests are national in scope and therefore often fail to adequately prepare students for local and regional job markets. Read on.

✓ Think outside the lines....

Students and teachers alike strive to win state contests so that they can compete at the national level. This is all well and good and the author has no desire to eliminate this motivation for students. Nonetheless, it is important to remember our ultimate goal: employment for students. As such, it is important that state FFA offices and professional organizations evaluate state contests to be sure that they reflect local and state agricultural skills. A landscaping contest in the arid southwest should not, for instance, use the national plant list. While using the national plant list may prepare students for the national contest it does nothing to prepare students for employment in their region.

Further, teachers need to be sensitive to local demands and prepare contests accordingly. There is nothing wrong with developing and delivering state and local career development events in specialized areas such as small engine repair, turf equipment maintenance, etc. If you truly believe in the motivating value of

career development events, then create your own contests for your community, your state, and your region. Involve business people in developing and delivering the contests. In so doing, you'll not only develop good contests, you'll also make vital contacts with the agricultural community that will benefit your program for years to come. Dunk outside the lines!

✓ It's just a contest.....

All of us have been reminded that the "tail should not wag the dog." That is, the FFA events should not control the entire program. We have been told to keep the FFA events in their proper perspective and to avoid the temptation to place all our emphasis on the FFA and Career Development Events. This is good advice. Once again, we must remember that the FFA is just one part of the program.

Nonetheless, if properly handled, training teams for Career Development Events is much more than "just a contest." If the instructor allows students to assume responsibility for scheduling practices, preparing written materials, resolving conflicts among team members, and coordinating contacts with business and industry representatives then it becomes much more than "just a contest." In addition to acquiring technical skills, students begin to develop leadership skills and to progress mightily in terms of personal development.

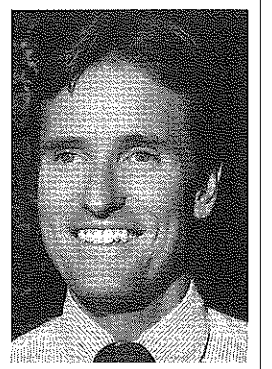
Further, if the instructor "lets go" and invites community representatives to train teams then it again becomes much more than "just a contest." It becomes a partnership with industry representatives. It invites business people to make a real investment in the program. It reminds us all that the best public education is education

which involves business and community members as well as professional educators.

They can all win!

"Some gotta' win and some gotta' lose" is a lyric to an old song. For years, the lyric aptly described FFA Career Development Events. In recent years, every effort has been made to award all members for their participation. Still, in most events, at least at the state and local levels, the top five teams or individuals walk away with the trophies and ribbons and the rest of the students are left to contemplate what could have been. If a teacher follows the guidelines listed above, then he or she can truly feel that all of their students are winners regardless of the final rankings in any particular contest.

John Mulcahy is an instructor at Peoria High School in Peoria, Arizona.



By John Mulcahy

CDEs: Students' Soundoff

New Jersey

FFA Career Development Events are very valuable to both FFA members and the Agricultural Industry. These events allow FFA members to be exposed to various areas in the agricultural industry. CDEs also allow us to highlight our students' skills and talents to the agricultural community and allow them to become more aware of what FFA members will have to offer as future employees. These events are also an excellent tool for teachers to use as motivation to help students achieve inside and outside of the agricultural classroom. CDEs do have a competitive nature to them, but so does everything we do in life. We compete for jobs in the workforce; at least FFA and CDEs are showing our students a positive way to compete with some educational value attached to it. Through my years in the FFA, my experiences with CDEs have been a very valuable part of my FFA Career. I have competed on both the State and the National Level. These events helped me prepare and gave me an edge for entering college. I am a junior Agricultural Education major at Delaware Valley College in Doylestown, Pennsylvania. My personal experience in CDEs such as Floriculture, Nursery and Landscape, and Parliamentary Procedure has helped me a lot. The reason they helped me is that I was well trained for these events. I was trained in the classroom as well as many hours outside of the classroom, to ensure that I was fully prepared for what I might encounter in both the State and National level competition. Through that training for those CDEs I was well prepared for my introduction to horticulture classes in college. I was even asked to teach Parliamentary Procedure to many of the clubs on campus because of my knowledge of it through the FFA. CDEs are an excellent tool to help educate students on what is available to them in the agricultural industry. I truly believe that CDEs are an asset to agricultural education, and will use every opportunity available to have my future students take part in these events.



Christine Patten

Illinois

I think Career Development Events are great. It gives FFA members a chance to learn so many new things. I do feel that there is too much competition in CDEs though. It should not be about beating another person or chapter; it should be about learning new things and meeting new people. I think that some advisors don't use CDEs properly. Those advisors consider it an opportunity to outdo another chapter instead of teaching their members something new. I like CDEs because they give me a chance to learn new things and I get to see old friends plus make new ones. CDEs have made an impact on my future plans. They have given me an opportunity to view all the different careers that the field of agriculture has to offer.



Lindsay Donovan

West Virginia

In responding to instruction and training of CDE participants I remember something that someone once said to me. All agriculture teachers must evaluate themselves to see if they are teaching agriculture and developing FFA leaders, or if they are teaching FFA and doing a little agriculture now and then. Contests and FFA should not be based out of the classroom. Yes, it needs to be a part of the classroom, but a small part. Instruction needs to be done after school. Honestly CDE's were not my favorite contest when looking at the competitions themselves. I did enjoy them very much because it brought your entire state together at a different time of the year than convention. I got to be around others and made a lot of friends and connections there. Now it is one event that I look forward to so that I may see other members. The more FFA can get members together from other chapters the better it will be for the FFA and for its members.

Adam Dobbins

From Parts Unknown

CDEs are a great opportunity in which FFA members can participate. They require you to think and formulate your own opinions. Quick and accurate decisions are needed. You absorb more information in a shortened period of time, which later in a college class will put you at more advanced level. Or even just in your current classes. They allow you to expand your knowledge of career options and their settings. You get a hands-on learning experience and might discover that you like a particular job or maybe find out that job doesn't really suit your interests. Over night stays with friends are great. You get to know them better and meet people from other chapters. Competition between chapters sometimes gets carried away. Personally, I will cheer for the other school as long as everyone plays fairly and with integrity.

Posted by: Bug3916 (Jessica)

New Mexico



I'm a 15 year old student from Clayton, New Mexico. I am very involved in FFA, and this past year our team won the New Mexico State FFA Poultry Judging Contest. We went to compete at Nationals in November in Kansas City and earned sixth place with three gold medals. I was the 8th highest individual. We also competed in an international video judging contest where we placed first. I was very involved in public speaking as well and won the National Creed Contest. By getting involved in FFA's career development events, I have learned very important life skills. I have learned how to work well with others. When four brains come together to work towards a common goal the outcome can be amazing. Also, to be competitive much time must be spent studying. It takes a lot of hard work, but you are rewarded in the end. You set goals and work hard to achieve them. And once you've put your blood, sweat, and tears into doing your very best, you reach those goals. There is not a better feeling than knowing you achieved something that once seemed impossible. With every different CDE, you learn different skills that will benefit you for the rest of your life. For instance, in farm business management you learn how to manage money and you also get a better understanding of how the farm markets work. With all of the events that require oral reasons, you learn how to think on your feet. In my opinion the greatest skill one can learn in FFA's career development events is the ability to speak publicly. This is something that everyone needs to do. For, when we get older, we are going to have to express ourselves in front of other people with any job we do, especially when we feel strongly about an issue and are trying to convince others. Although it may be wrong, we are judged by the way we speak and express our opinions, and through the career development events we learn this very important life skill that leads to career success. I am so glad that we have the opportunity to participate in these events. They give you a taste of what jobs you may want to pursue. Although I competed in the poultry contest this year and had fun while doing it, I have decided not to get into the poultry management. Through the oral reasons in giving the speeches that I have written, I realized that agricultural communications might be something that I would like to do. Also, by competing around the state and nation, you get a chance to meet so many people that you have a lot in common with. FFA and its CDEs are something that, if given the opportunity, everyone should experience.

Britt Carter

Brian's Why

By Craig Edwards

What should be the role of career development events (CDEs) in a comprehensive agricultural science and technology program? How often do we ask "whether we should" or "why do we" create, support, and perpetuate these activities? Perhaps, you do; but (I think) for many of us it is more an issue of "how" and "which" activities should we continue to create, support, and perpetuate. But, ultimately, is the heart of the matter really not the philosophical issue of "why?" By asking ourselves the cathartic question "why?" hopefully, we are guided and motivated to execute these activities in a more purposeful, effective, and efficient manner.

His name was Brian Estes.

Our lives first crossed paths in the 1980s, during my tenure as an agriscience teacher at Robert E. Lee High School in Baytown, Texas. Brian was the epitome of the "little guy with the big heart" persona. As a high school freshman he barely stood five feet tall, and that was probably in heels. But, from the time this painfully shy 14 year-old first stood up to recite the FFA Creed in front of his peers, I knew he was something "special." On this point, he would prove me right numerous times. Brian's achievements in the FFA spanned from serving his chapter as its president to being a member of a national winning parliamentary procedure team, with many, many milestones in between. It was during

his sophomore year, and first year as a chapter officer, when preparing to speak at our new member orientation (to greenhands and their parents) that he penned and delivered these thoughts about "FFA Leadership."

FFA Leadership

"What is leadership and why is leadership important? Leadership is the ability to lead and govern effectively, and we need leadership to accomplish any goals or tasks, orderly and systematically.



Baytown, Robert E. Lee FFA Chapter President, Brian Estes, congratulates long-time chapter supporter, Mrs. Sue Gray, on receiving her Honorary State FFA Degree. (Photo courtesy of Craig Edwards.)

FFA leadership is much more than just the chapter officers. It's also District, Area, State and National officers, as well. When I think of FFA leadership, I think of those outstanding FFA members that participate on competitive leadership teams. Teams such as FFA Quiz, Farm Radio, Creed Speaking, Extemporaneous Public Speaking, Chapter Conducting and the Farm Skills teams.

Many benefits are to be gained by participating on a leadership team. Participating on a leadership team can help you to overcome emotional

barriers such as shyness. FFA leadership can also help you to improve your speaking ability, but most importantly, FFA leadership will help many people to gain self-confidence.

FFA leadership training has helped me greatly. I was a member of the Junior Farm Skills team last year in which three members explain and demonstrate differential leveling skills to a set of three judges. We applied ourselves and won 1st place at the district and area levels and went on to win 4th place at the State competition.

In all three contests our chapter won the Sweepstakes Award, which is a total of points won by each individual leadership team.

I believe that FFA leadership is one of the more important areas of study in the Agriculture Science Program and would like to stress the participation and involvement of each member on a FFA leadership team."

Brian Estes Epilogue

Brian was a 15 year-old, second-year FFA member when he wrote these words. By this time he had been a recipient of what he was describing; and, a full-fledged proponent of its potential for creating positive change in the lives of young people. As stated at the onset, "why" is the primal question, and Brian's "why" is the best I know. You may have noted, earlier I used the term "was", for you see, Brian died tragically in an accident during his twentieth year. It was my great honor and deep sorrow to be one of several to offer his eulogy. He is sorely missed, but as you have seen, his thoughts and deeds, and most importantly, his "why" is forever with us.

Craig Edwards is a graduate student at Texas A & M University.

...It's a Team Effort, continued from page 7.

use advanced technologies to master a set of complex systems that exist in the areas of machinery and equipment, energy, structures, environmental and natural resources, and industry and marketing.

Of Carts and Horses

Sometimes change occurs because it is mandated, other times because it seems like the thing to do. Hopefully change occurs most often to meet the needs of a changing clientele. The change in the Agricultural Mechanics Event occurred as an attempt to try to keep the horse in front of the cart – the horse being the curriculum and the cart the CDE. The overriding idea is to have the curriculum drive the event rather than the event mandate the curriculum. In truth, the activities that occur at each national event will certainly have an impact on the local curriculum. It is the hope of the agricultural mechanics committee, however, that the new format will encourage teachers to teach the "whole" curriculum rather than specific skills needed for the next contest event.

Collaboration

The most significant change in the format of the Agricultural Mechanics CDE is the team activity. The team activity probably has caused more critical thinking to take place than the National Agricultural Mechanics Committee could have imagined. The agricultural mechanics CDE committee, coaches, and contestants have shared the critical thinking effort. After two years, most agree the team activity has increased student problem solving and critical thinking skills. It has improved the student's abilities to seek out knowledge rather than memorize facts. Students in the team activity also become part of a team by accepting the role in which they may

best help the team effort. They must also evaluate their own progress as they complete the activity presented in the event.

The 1997 team activity focused around the theme for the entire event, which was "hay harvesting equipment." Teams were presented a scenario of a dairying operation in which managerial and mechanical



Effective Collaboration as a team requires a division of labor that best suits the abilities of the participants. (photo courtesy of Dale Perritt)

decisions were needed in order to promote profitable production. Contestants were required to analyze and make recommendations for replacement parts for two pieces of hay harvesting equipment. Manuals and other supporting materials needed for the process were provided to the participants. The team then had to make managerial decisions related to new equipment acquisitions based on the proposed expansion of the dairying operation. Collaboration between team members was essential in order to cover all the bases required for the formulation of a "best case scenario" that could be presented to the judges in a computer generated format.

What's Next?

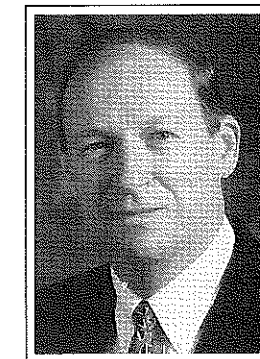
Change, or maybe the term "refinement" would be a better description of what is anticipated from the National Agricultural Mechanics

CDE Committee. Most seem to agree that there needs to be a further delineation of the identified skill and problem solving elements listed in the CDE manual. This clarification of skills and problem solving elements should go a long way in alleviating some of the anxiety suffered by teams and coaches as they prepare for the event. One of the most

common comments has been, "About the time I figure this thing out you guys change it." I suspect this comment will continue to be heard long after those of us who are students of the discipline are no longer involved. The thing that

must be remembered is that like all curriculums, the agricultural mechanics curriculum must remain fluid. As we were all taught in agricultural mechanics, one of the characteristics of fluids is that they assume the shape of their container. Our container is the industry that we serve. Pre-operational checks and periodic service and maintenance will likely keep our curriculum running at optimum field efficiency for years to come.

Dale Perritt is a professor of Agriculture at Stephen F. Austin State University in Texas.



The Benefits of the Parliamentary Procedure CDE

By Malisah May Johnson & James J. Connors

Why would I participate in a parliamentary procedure contest? I must admit, I've asked myself that very question many times. I ask these questions:

- ◆ When the term "lay on the table" takes on a whole new meaning aside from setting down my books.
- ◆ When I know Robert's Rules of Order better than Robert himself.
- ◆ When I stand up and address the chair, knowing that when she recognizes me I'm going to have to open my mouth and hope something intelligible comes out.
- ◆ When that all too familiar feeling in my stomach returns when I stand up to convince the assembly that my logical opinion is correct.

Parliamentary procedure involves all of those things that I don't necessarily find fun--studying hour after hour, impromptu speaking, rebutting arguments and formulating a logical opinion. But you know what your parents always said about vegetables: if you keep eating the broccoli, someday you'll grow to like it. Well, the broccoli day is still a long way off in the future, but the idea is right on.

By participating in parliamentary procedure for four years, I certainly learned not only the basics of running an orderly meeting, but every single thing about which Robert had something to say! In the process of doing this, however, I learned to tolerate those things having to do with fast

thinking and public speaking that I'd disliked. In fact, I became good at them. I even began to like them. And those abilities I have begun to master are already beginning to benefit me, even outside the meeting room.

The purpose of a parliamentary procedure Career Development Event is to give participants the ability to run or participate in an effective meeting. Parliamentary procedure was created to insure that business is conducted in an orderly manner, where minority rights are protected, and action concludes with the will of the majority. By taking part in such an event, participants become not only familiar (very, very familiar) with the rules of parliamentary procedure itself, but very efficient in putting those ideas into practice. These skills carry over from the event into the world of business, city councils, and governmental agencies, entities in which FFA members will be a part of in the future.

Becoming best friends with Robert is certainly a benefit of participating in a parliamentary procedure event. But, as far as benefits go, parliamentary procedure moves way beyond that. Parliamentary procedure involves an ability to master the art of critical thinking and quick decision making. You can't get away with memorizing an answer and being able to rattle it off in perfect public speaking form. The event requires not only recognizing that a problem exists, but it insists that the problem be analyzed and evaluated and that a solution be presented. Within a very short amount of time you must figure out exactly what you are trying to accomplish. Are you trying to raise money for a trip to Nationals? Are you trying to promote the FFA to the community? Where exactly are you

going with this idea? Once that is established, it takes some quick thinking to decide on the most effective solution. Then that solution must be organized in a way that will "sell" it to the rest of the assembly. Sounds like brain-stressing exercise, doesn't it. Well, try doing that while you're standing there in front of a group of FFA members or city council officials. The term "thinking on your feet" must have been coined while watching a parliamentary procedure event.

Maybe that's what parliamentary procedure teaches the most. The idea of standing up in front of a group and having only a faint notion of what the next words out of your mouth will be makes most people uncomfortable. But being able to think on your feet is necessary in parliamentary procedure, as well as life in general. Sure, you may have an opinion and know what you want to talk about, but action on the floor is constantly changing--new ideas are thrown in, motions are amended, issues are altered, and ideas are argued from all sides. You have to be prepared not only to defend your stance but to argue your case while your brain is spinning, trying to think of exactly why you said what you did. Floor action moves so fast that there is no time to carefully formulate an opinion, set your thesis statement, give supporting evidence for two or three good points, and conclude effectively, then stand up to speak! By that time the assembly will have adjourned! You have to work on getting your point across and persuading the assembly to see it your way while you are standing there thinking about it.

Thinking on your feet like this builds confidence in your public speaking skills. Getting up in front of people and opening your mouth becomes easier and easier the more you do it. You may not stop getting nervous, but you can actually get up

...continued on page 27

A Trip to the International Livestock Show

By Alsey Hunter

(Editor's Note: This is a first hand student account of the first multi-state competitive event in vocational agriculture. This was taken from the 1920 Cary (NC) High School Yearbook).

Accompanied by Mr. Howard, our teacher, and Mr. Evans of the A. & E. College, we left Raleigh at 4 p.m., November 24, 1919. From Raleigh we went to Salisbury. Here we got supper and took a Pullman for Asheville. Passing over the Blue Ridge Mountains at night, we could not see anything. When we reached Asheville next morning it was about 5:30; so we got breakfast and caught a train for Lexington. We reached Lexington about 8:30 p.m.

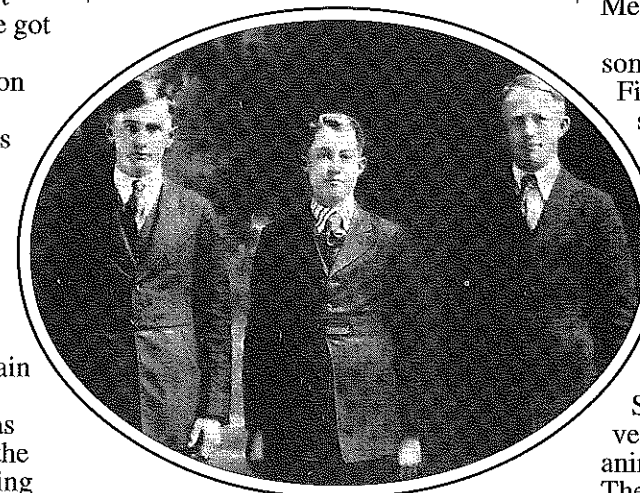
The scenery in the mountains was very pretty, especially along the French Broad River. Besides the scenery, we noticed some beef cattle in the mountains. This of course, interested us most, as we had livestock on the brain. Beef cattle, hogs and sheep are raised on these mountain pastures.

Another place of interest was Sulphur Springs. This is where the German prisoners were kept during the war. We noticed that the farther west we went, the wider the valley was, and the country was more thickly populated and the people more progressive. Our next stop was Lexington. Lexington is one of the chief cities of Kentucky. It was also one of the cleanest cities we visited.

After leaving Lexington, we went to Frankfort, the capital of Kentucky. This stop proved to be a very interesting and helpful one, for we went to Colonel Taylor's Hereford farm and Mr. McKee's Duroc farm. We were given some valuable instruction on judging by the manager of Colonel Taylor's farm. We also judged several classes of fine stock. Colonel Taylor has one of the finest farms we saw while we were gone. He has a farm of twenty-two hundred acres. Practically all of this is covered with blue grass. He has between six and seven hundred purebred Hereford cattle. From the Taylor farm we went to Mr. McKee's farm. Here we were given some instruction on

judging swine. Mr. McKee's brothers are among the largest breeders of purebreds Durocs in the West. We saw one of the largest Durocs living. This animal gained fourteen pounds a day in a feeding test at the Experiment Station at Lexington.

From Frankfort we went to Louisville. We reached Louisville about 9:30 p.m. There we took a Pullman for Chicago. Thursday, November 27th, about 9:30, found us really in Chicago. We went at once to the Sherman Hotel, where we stayed while in the Windy City. After dinner we went to the stock yards.



Here we saw some fine stock of all kinds. It was about six miles from the stock yards to the main part of the city.

The contest was held Friday. There were twelve States in the contest. Each state was allowed three representatives in the contest. The contestants had to be at the stock yards at 7:30 a.m. There, they were given the rules of the contest by the one in charge.

The boys were divided into three groups. No one was allowed to speak during the contest. There were two classes of horses, two classes of beef cattle, and two classes of swine to be judged. One class of each was to be judged for breeding and one class to be judged from the standpoint of fat. We started judging at 9 o'clock and finished at 2:30 that afternoon. After we had placed each class, we had to tell our reasons for judging each class of animals as we did. These reasons were given orally

to three different groups of judges. After we finished we were carried to dinner at the Stock Yard Inn. We stayed around there till 6 o'clock to see what place we got in the contest. We got eighth place. One of our boys won first place in judging beef cattle, which made us all very happy. We went to the stock yards every day and watched the judges place the animals.

On Saturday morning there was a contest open to all who wished to enter. This contest was to pick the five best steers out of twenty-one in ten minutes. A boy from New Mexico won first place.

After this contest we visited some packing plants and stores. First, we visited the store of Marshal Fields & Co. This is one of the largest wholesale and retail stores in the West. This firm employs twenty-five thousand clerks. We also went to the establishment of Sears, Roebuck & Co. We could not see much here except the packages wrapped for mailing. On Monday we went through the Swift packing plant. This was a very interesting place. We saw the animals killed, dressed and packed. The meats are inspected by a Government inspector. He puts the government seal on each piece as it passes him. In this plant it is said that a thousand cows, six thousand five hundred sheep, and six thousand hogs are killed each day.

We left Chicago for Washington Wednesday night, arriving in Washington about 7:30 p.m., Thursday. We stayed here about half an hour. As it was dark, we could not see much of the city. The station at Washington was the prettiest we saw while we were gone.

At 8 o'clock we left for home and reached Raleigh about 6 a.m., Friday. It did not take us long to get to Cary. We were glad to get home, but each one of us declared that he would not take anything for the trip.

This was the first contest of the kind at the International Live Stock Show. These contests will be held annually in the future. It is well worth while for any boy to try to win this trip.

Agricultural Education at Paxton-Buckley-Loda High School

By Doug Anderson

The Paxton-Buckley-Loda High School is located in east central Illinois, just north of Champaign-Urbana, home of the University of Illinois. The PBL school district, which comprises about 260 square miles, includes four towns: Paxton, Buckley, Loda, and Roberts, whose populations range from 400 to 4,500. The grade schools are located in Paxton and Loda, and the junior high and high schools are situated in Paxton, which is in the southern part of the school district.

PBL is located in a rural area where agriculture is the predominant industry and foundation of the local economy. Paxton could be considered a "bedroom" community due to its proximity to Rantoul, Champaign-Urbana, and Bloomington-Normal. A significant number of residents earn their incomes outside the communities of the school district. Consequently, there is a diverse population consisting of white and blue-collar workers with agricultural and non-agricultural interests. Therefore, PBL students come from a variety of backgrounds and bring with them a wide range of interests.

The communities exhibit a tremendous amount of pride in all facets of the school district including elementary, junior high, and high school academic and extra curricular programs. Several years ago, they passed a nearly record-high tax referendum demonstrating the

communities' pride and support in education.

In 1990, the school district underwent one of the smoothest consolidations one could ask for in the consolidation of the Paxton and Buckley-Loda school districts. Just two years later, the Ford Central School District to the north dissolved. Roberts, representing about one-third of that district was annexed into the PBL school district. The school enrollment increased from just over 300 students prior to consolidation to approximately 475 students presently.

Most of the high school programs, both academic and extra-curricular, enjoy a great deal of success. Each year many of the programs receive recognition for outstanding accomplishments. The school board and administration demonstrate tremendous support for all programs, which enables those programs to be successful.

The PBL Agriculture Education Program has in place a very diverse curriculum designed to benefit students pursuing post secondary

receive laboratory science credit for this course. Most of the state universities in Illinois accept BSAA as a laboratory science credit for admission.

The PBL High School operates on a traditional 50 minute, 7 period day. Class sizes in the agriculture department generally range from 12 to 18 students. Facilities include an agricultural mechanization shop used primarily for welding, small engines, and electrical wiring. The program utilizes a 1,000-gallon aquaculture unit, which is integrated with a hydroponics unit, and used to raise tilapia. The wastes from the fish are utilized in the production of lettuce and various herbs grown hydroponically. The horticulture and BSAA classes utilize a 30' x 60' greenhouse that is used for horticultural plant propagation and production as well as various plant sciences experiments. The program also utilizes a portion of the agriculture shop area for various agriscience laboratory activities. In the classroom, students have access to 6 different computers for various class activities. One computer is connected for Internet access and is on-line on a daily basis. The classroom also features a DTN system through which students can keep current on agriculture markets, news, and weather.

Master's Degree from the University of Illinois and have served and continue to serve in leadership roles of the agriculture teacher's professional organization. The agriculture teachers are open-minded and attempt to utilize and teach new technologies in agriculture as they attempt to implement new directions in agricultural education. In addition to local responsibilities, PBL agriculture teachers serve or have served on various state and national committees and organizations including National Treasurer of Alpha Gamma Sigma Fraternity, Cooperative Extension Service Advisory Committee, Interstate Publishers' Advisory Committee, University of Illinois Agricultural Education Advisory Committee, and others.

The program has an active FFA Alumni chapter, which supports many of the FFA chapter's activities throughout the year. Seven members are elected as officers of the Alumni chapter and also serve on the Agricultural Education Advisory Council. The remainder of the council is appointed to represent each of the communities in the school district and also to represent various segments of the agricultural industry throughout the district. The council offers input and direction for curriculum and program development. The advisory council also provides input in planning adult education that is offered each year sometime between January and April. Adult education at PBL is generally in the form of mini-classes in areas of interest suggested by council members which have included the areas of horticulture, agriculture and the Internet.

The PBL FFA Chapter is a very active chapter, with the goals as balanced and complete in scope as possible. The chapter competes in every CDE available at the section



Students inspecting lettuce plants in hydroponics systems

level and nearly all state CDEs. Leadership is also a major emphasis in the chapter. Students from PBL participate in State Leadership Camp, Made For Excellence Workshop, Farm Bureau Youth Conference, and Washington Leadership Conference among others. Students maintain SAEs related to their specific interests. Each year PBL FFA members win 15 or more section proficiency awards. The FFA chapter operates a six-acre land lab. Money earned from the crop enterprises is used to support various activities of the chapter. This past year the chapter received gold rating in the state and a national two star rating for their program of activities.

A major activity of the chapter is to conduct an annual farm toy show at the high school, which requires about five months of planning and organization. In addition, the chapter contracts with a toy manufacturer to sell 100 model farm toys all across the country. This is the one activity the chapter does that involves nearly all of its members, members' parents, and FFA alumni.

FFA members are taught how to create their own home pages on the Internet. They are then created on the chapter's home page (<http://www.cu-online.com/-pblhs2>) to highlight members' FFA and school activities. Members are encouraged to review the National FFA home page and its various links.

Much of the success of the PBL Agriculture Program can be attributed

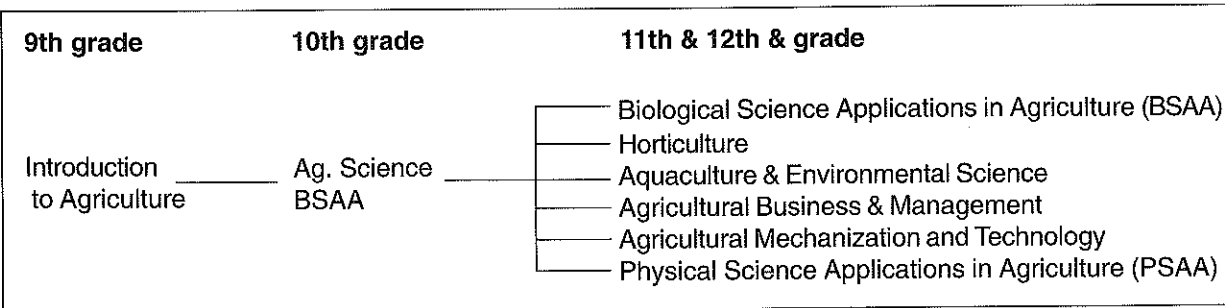
to an incentive funding project through the state of Illinois. The incentive funding project, which started about 10 years ago, earmarks over \$1,000,000 a year in the governors' budget specifically for agricultural education. Each year, the PBL agriculture department receives approximately \$3,000 which has enabled the department to stay current in agricultural education.

These monies have purchased



Students filleting and processing fish. Fish will be served to students, parents, and FFA Alumni at a fish fry.

nearly all of the computer hardware and software in the department as well as the aquaculture and hydroponics systems. Incentive funding monies were also responsible in part for acquiring the greenhouse and related equipment. Other items the program has benefited from include numerous videotapes, reference books, incubators, agricultural mechanics tools and equipment. All of this money has been in addition to the department's regular budget through the school. No other initiative, in recent time, has had this degree of impact on changing the direction of agricultural education and creating interest among students in agriculture in Illinois.



programs as well as those interested in employment right out of high school. The course offerings and sequences are shown in the diagram above.

Students who complete BSAA

The PBL Agriculture Program is fortunate to have one and a half agriculture teachers and two FFA advisors, with Mike White in his 5th year of teaching and Doug Anderson in his 15th year. Both teachers hold a

AN AGRICULTURE TEACHER'S SUCCESS STORY

Dennis Burley: An agriculture teacher with a servant's heart

By Mark A. Balschweid

"I have received many awards, but those things are kind of like perfume. You know, *enjoy the smell of them, but don't swallow them.*"

Anyone who has met Dennis Burley and watched him teach will tell you that he is quiet, yet thoughtful; a true inspiration to his students and a genius at getting students to believe in themselves and maximize their potential. This doesn't mean that his students always finish first or bring home a banner. But why should it matter? It doesn't once you hear his philosophy on FFA competition: "Banners and ribbons are a lot of fun. They're an incentive. It's fun to come home with a ribbon or banner, but if you feel bad because you don't have a banner, then you've missed the point of the function. So, I never feel bad if a kid comes home without a banner as long as he did the best he could."

Many would say that in Dennis Burley's quiet way, he has built a tradition in Knappa, Oregon, where he has taught agriculture science for 27 years. Students in his program expect to give their all, whether it is in the agriculture classroom, working at local community service projects, or at an FFA competition. And even though he has had more than his share of State FFA Officers, State Degree winners, State Public Speaking and Parliamentary Procedure participants, he does not spend every waking moment absorbed in FFA competition and practices. "I depend on my chapter officers and the older students that are involved to be leaders. They participate and encourage the younger members. And so that's really what I depend on. The younger kids have to see from the older kids 'Hey this looks like fun....they're doing it so I must be able to.' As long as they're doing that, it just perpetuates."

But if you think that success in the classroom and in FFA competitions came early and easy for the man who has been nominated to receive the American FFA degree this fall, it didn't. It was 10 years before Dennis had a state officer. "Cindy Schoenborn was the first state officer we had, and actually she was the first person who stayed in the program for four years and had real academic potential. Ever since then, it seems like every year we've had valedictorians or salutatorians, who are FFA members. I guess she was the first one that put value on that kind of training. She just told the school, 'I'm going to college, I believe leadership training and agriculture and FFA are important.' She did it for four years, and ever since then, we've had academic kids. I think she broke a barrier."

Even with top quality students laced throughout his classes, Dennis still feels he needs a concrete philosophy for program purpose and function. At a time when the role of an Agriculture Science and Technology program in the local school can take on so many meanings, Dennis has not lost sight of what a successful program should look like. "I think a successful agriculture program is a program that takes students where they are and advances them, and that includes so many things. Progression towards a career, development as an individual, attitude toward learning, and working with other people. Work

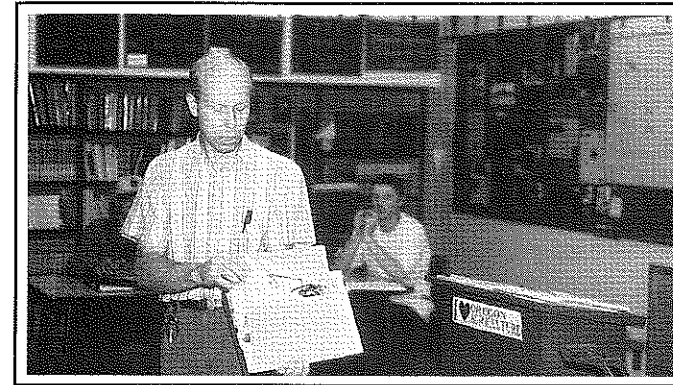
with students wherever they are and move them on."

As I watch the first year agriculture science students file into his classroom, I can't help but wonder if any of them realize the wealth of knowledge this man brings to the classroom. Once voted by his peers to be Oregon's Outstanding Agriculture Teacher of the Year, Dennis Burley started teaching agriculture in 1969, fresh from Oregon State University. Working for a local Intermediate Education District that had him splitting his time between two schools, it was in 1970 when Knappa, a small community an hour and a half north-west of Portland, offered him a full-time agriculture teaching position. "The curriculum was basically production agriculture, so we emphasized all the production areas. Everything we taught came from the perspective of production agriculture. Crop farmer, livestock farmer, that's what we thought of. We talked primarily in terms of careers in production agriculture, although we

realized that not all students were going to get jobs in this area."

All of us can remember our first year of teaching (and some of us would like to forget) and Dennis is no different, "I think teaching is one of those things you learn by doing, at least that was my situation. You know, I had a degree, and I had a certificate that said I could teach, but there are some things you don't

"I think the worth of a person is measured by what you do for people. And I see teaching as an excellent opportunity for doing that. Where else can you work with people through a program like Agriculture and the FFA, and provide opportunities for people and can see the changes in them."



Dennis Burley

learn by being told. Once you start working with students, you realize that there are certain things that you have to do to get information across. You have to be real to students, and so I think I learned on the job."

As a man with a great deal of humility it is no wonder that when asked about his greatest accomplishment over the years working with students, Dennis Burley turns the attention away from himself. "I have received many awards, but those things are kind of like perfume. You know, enjoy the smell of them, but don't swallow them. So those are fun, and I certainly feel honored, but I don't see those as accomplishments. I had a kid a few years ago and he had a learning disability. He was in the agriculture program for four years. He always wanted to be a chapter officer. He really participated in a lot of things. His academic skills were low. His junior year he was an assistant officer and when he was a senior, he was elected to be sentinel. He had a horrible time of memorizing things, and he knew that as an officer he had to memorize the part in the opening ceremonies, because he had to be in the rituals contest. Well, he was elected in the spring, and all summer long, he and his parents worked on memorizing that part. He spent hours going over that with his folks, trying to get that down, and finally by September he had it down

pretty good. He was in the rituals contest and did a very nice job. I don't know if that's an accomplishment of mine, but just motivating students and having those opportunities available to students, those are

the accomplishments of a teacher from my perspective."

One of the pure joys of teaching is having your own children come through your program. For Dennis that means his three children Jason (1994 graduate), Janae (a senior and Oregon State FFA Reporter), and Jarid (a freshman). For Dennis it is obvious how strong he feels about having his family involved in his work. "It's great! It's not just my kids, it's my wife too. Sandy (Dennis' wife) has been at every state convention I've ever gone to since we've been married. The kids had their FFA jackets from the time they were small, and so it's been a family project. It has to be a family. You have to be in agreement with your family. Your wife has to enjoy it, or take part, or at least appreciate what your doing because it takes so much time."

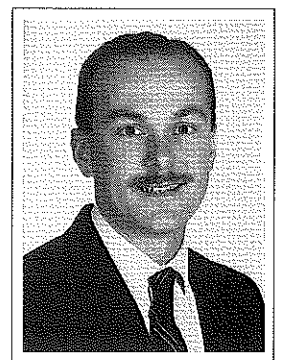
Someone else who appreciates Dennis' ability as an Agriculture Teacher is Dr. Lee Cole, Department Head for Agriculture Education at Oregon State University, and friend of Dennis' the entire 27 years that Dennis has taught. When asked, Dr. Cole stated, "Dennis Burley runs a solid program with great diversity and continually has developed students with excellent backgrounds in leadership and human relations skills. Dennis sets an exemplary ethical model for his students."

When asked what he would tell a new agriculture teacher coming out of

college today he replied, "pick out a good agriculture teacher close by that you could get a lot of advice from, and just share ideas and get new ideas and talk about things that you are doing. Either problem areas or things that aren't going well—have someone that you can share with, I think that's really important because you can pick up so many things from other people, and that's one of the strengths of agriculture teachers in our state, as I see it. We get together on a regular basis."

For many teachers just starting out, to spend 27 years in the same profession and in the same school may seem like an impossibility, but to Dennis it all matters on your outlook. "To a large extent I think the worth of a person is measured by what you do for people and I see teaching as an excellent opportunity for that. Where else can you work with people through a program like agriculture and the FFA, and provide opportunities for people and see the changes in them. And for some of them, you get to see students develop into adults, and take responsible roles as citizens. What a neat opportunity. There are very few professions that I can think of where you can do that. Where you can see the results like that. And that's what I like about it."

Mark Balschweid is a teacher educator at Oregon State University.



webmaster@agedmag.edu

By Matt Raven

The World Wide Web is an excellent resource for preparing students for Career Development Events. This installment of webmaster@agedmag.edu highlights five sites that would be useful in getting ready for a CDE as well as five other useful sites. Remember, each review

sites on the web

provides the location, a description, a brief review, and a rating of 1 to 5 stars (with 5 being the best) for each Web site. If you know of a Web site that should be included in a future installment, please e-mail the URL to me at raven@ra.msstate.edu and place Ag Ed Web Site in the subject header. Now for this issue's ten Web sites!

The Ohio State University Horticulture and Crop Science in Virtual Perspective (<http://www.hcs.ohio-state.edu/hcs/hcs.html>)

One of the first and still one of the best agriculture sites on the Web. A tremendous horticulture resource compiled by the Ohio State University Department of Horticulture and Crop Science. Horticulture and Crop Science in Virtual Perspective offers on-line tutorials, a plant dictionary with over 1600 images, and a searchable database of factsheets that will be useful for both the classroom and getting ready for a Career Development Event. A must entry in your bookmarks. ☆☆☆☆☆

E-answers (<http://www.e-answers.org/>)

One stop shopping for electronic answers to an agricultural question. E-answers is a dynamic, on-line, searchable resource that brings research-based information and education into the classroom. The practical, current, and unbiased information in this site represents the work of Extension Service and Agricultural Experiment Station professionals at Land Grant universities throughout the United States. Another essential entry in your bookmarks. ☆☆☆☆☆

Robert's Rules of Order Revised (<http://www.constitution.org/rror/rror--00.htm>)

A section of the Constitution Society Web site (<http://www.constitution.org/>) dedicated to Robert's Rules of Order that is easy to navigate and loads easily. The site is segmented allowing the user to print the parts of interest. This site provides a comprehensive description of Roberts Rules of Order. Sections are cross-referenced for easy clarification of a specific motion or rule. An added bonus is a plan of study for parliamentary procedure with lesson outlines. The site could be improved by providing examples of the various motions. ☆☆☆1/2

Weed Science Society of America (<http://piked2.agn.uiuc.edu/wssa/>)

The web site for the Weed Science Society of America contains a great deal of information related to the science of weeds. Photos of over 200 weeds common to the U.S. Also has information regarding herbicides and other pesticides as well as links to other sites. Navigation could be improved by utilizing consistent graphics and colors throughout the site. Also notes indicating the date of the last modification would be helpful. ☆☆☆1/2

Virtual Presentation Assistant (<http://www.ukans.edu/cwis/units/coms2/vpa/vpa.htm>)

The Virtual Presentation Assistant is an online tutorial for improving your public speaking skills. A comprehensive site with excellent content. This site is maintained by the Communication Studies Department at the University of Kansas. Extremely well organized and easy to navigate. Links are provided to related sites. ☆☆☆☆

Kansas State Research and Extension Publications (<http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/PUB/LIBRARY/LIBRARY.HTM>)

The digital version of the Kansas Cooperative Extension Service's publications are available on this site. Kansas State Research and Extension is in the process of digitizing all of their publications as are many other Cooperative Extension Services. The site features a search engine to locate publications and is easy to navigate. The publications are provided in Adobe PDF format which maintains the publication's original layout. ☆☆☆☆

WWW Virtual Library: Agriculture (<http://ipmwww.ncsu.edu/cernag/>)

An index of agricultural sites. An excellent starting point when you just want to see what is out there on the WWW in terms of agricultural sites. The site is maintained by the National Science Foundation Center for Integrated Pest Management located at North Carolina State University. This well organized Web site provides a local search engine to help locate sites of interest. ☆☆☆☆

American Angus Association (<http://www.angus.org/>)

A full service Web site dedicated to Angus cattle. This well designed site provides information regarding up-coming shows and events. Users can also conduct sire evaluation and access other beef cattle sites. Pictures/graphics would improve the site. ☆☆☆☆

Shareware.com (<http://www.shareware.com/>)

One of the best sites to locate shareware and freeware software. Provides an excellent search engine to locate the software you are looking for. Easy to navigate and easy to follow directions for downloading the software you want. Shareware.com also provides reviews of the software. A professionally done page. Another must on your bookmark list. ☆☆☆☆☆

Surplus Direct (<http://www.surplusdirect.com>)

A one stop place on the WWW for your computing hardware needs. Since Surplus Direct specializes in hardware that is surplus or previous versions, the prices are very reasonable. Well organized with a local search engine to help locate what you need. Once you find it Surplus Direct provides an ordering page that is encrypted for secure transactions. ☆☆☆☆



What Do You Know About Career Development Events?

By Gary Moore

Judging contests (oops! Career Development Events) in agricultural education pre-date the FFA. Shortly after the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act and the implementation of a formal administrative structure for vocational agriculture, competitive events emerged. Go to the head of the class if you can answer the following contest/career development event questions.

- The first multi-state invitational livestock judging contest for vocational agriculture students was held at the:
 - Eastern States Exposition (Big E) in West Springfield, MA in 1917.
 - National Western Livestock Show in Denver, CO in 1918.
 - International Livestock Exposition in Chicago, IL in 1919.
 - Ak-Sar-Ben Livestock Show in Omaha, NE in 1920.
- The first national dairy cattle judging contest for vocational agriculture students was held at the:
 - Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition in Moultrie, GA in 1922
 - Pennsylvania All American Dairy Show in Harrisburg, PA in 1923
 - World Dairy Expo in Madison, WI in 1924.
 - National Dairy Show in Indianapolis, IN in 1925.
- A forerunner of the FFA was the National Congress of Vocational Agriculture Students. The first Congress was held in Kansas City in conjunction with the America Royal Livestock Show. Will Rogers spoke to 1,524 boys from 22 states who attended the first Congress. The major purpose of this Congress was to conduct judging contests. In what year was the first Congress held?
 - 1922
 - 1924
 - 1926
 - 1928
- A new competitive event emerged in the FFA in 1930. It was originally sponsored by Senator Arthur Capper of Kansas. The event was:
 - Public Speaking
 - Crops Judging
 - Poultry Judging
 - National Chapter Contest
- There were no national judging contests in the FFA for a five year period due to the:
 - Financial difficulties caused by the Great Depression during the 1930s
 - Travel restrictions caused by the world war during the 1940s
 - Polio outbreaks during the 1950s
 - Energy crisis of the 1970s
- Prior to 1968 the National FFA Dairy Judging Contest and Dairy Products Judging Contest were not held in Kansas City. These contests were held in:
 - Waterloo, Iowa
 - Louisville, Kentucky
 - Columbus, Ohio
 - Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- There has never been a national FFA sponsored competitive activity in:
 - Farm Safety
 - Community Development
 - Land Judging
 - Computers
- Which of the following FFA contests is the newest one at the national level?
 - Agricultural Mechanics
 - Farm Business Management
 - Meats Evaluation and Technology
 - Parliamentary Procedure
- There is a national FFA Awards and Career Development Event Advisory Committee. This group advises the National FFA Board of Directors on issues affecting both National FFA Career Development Events and Awards. Which of the following statements about this group is not true?
 - The composition of this committee is two FFA members, two teacher educators, two agriculture teachers, two state staff, and two members of the National FFA Board of Directors.
 - A sub-group of this committee makes all final decisions on interpretation of rules at the national FFA convention.
 - This committee selects the Star Farmer and Star in Agribusiness.
 - This committee meets twice per year.
- The New Farmers of America (NFA) had several competitive events similar to the FFA. They also had some contests unique to the NFA. Three of the following were actual NFA contests at the national level. Which was not a NFA contest?
 - Quartet
 - Quiz
 - Talent
 - Scrapbook

...The Benefits of the Parliamentary Procedure CDE continued from page 18.

without worrying about your breakfast doing the same thing! This type of quick thinking enables you to work through blunders and pull all the pieces together despite mistakes. Even if you totally forget what you were saying and where you were going, being able to think on your feet means that you can pick up the pieces and put them in order as you conclude, letting the assembly dwell on how you ended, not on what you blundered.

Even with the numerous benefits participation in parliamentary procedure offers, many agricultural education students are not receiving these benefits. A significant number of agricultural education programs do not include parliamentary procedure instruction in their curriculum. As a result, many FFA chapters have not participated in any district, regional, area or state parliamentary procedure competitions. A recent report by the National FFA Organization listed a total of 1,260 local FFA chapter teams that participated in a state level parliamentary procedure event during the 1996-97 school year. Twenty-nine states had ten or fewer teams participating in a parliamentary procedure event. All agricultural education students and FFA members can benefit from instruction in parliamentary procedure and participation in a career development event.

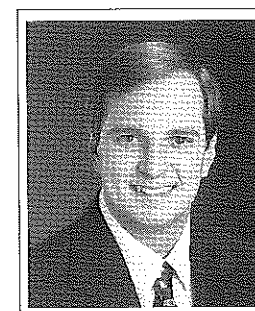
Participation in a parliamentary procedure event also teaches students skills that will lay the ground work for a productive career. The 1992 SCANS Report for America 2000 identified foundation skills needed by workers in high-performance careers. Skills such as speaking, listening, the ability to reason, think creatively, make decisions and solve problems are just a few identified in the

SCANS report. Parliamentary procedure is one of the few career development events that require participants to learn, practice and master all of these essential employability skills.

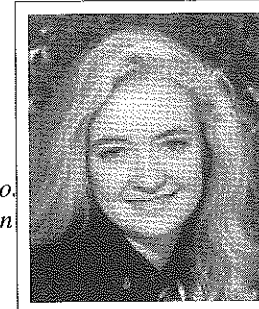
Congress will certainly benefit when a former participant of a parliamentary procedure event takes the gavel in hand to bring order to a session of the House. But being involved in parliamentary procedure has so many more benefits than simply handling a meeting with ease. Those who can get up in front of a crowd with confidence and eloquence are ahead of people who turn queasy at the thought of more than two or three pairs of eyes looking at them simultaneously. The ability to think critically and make decisions comes in handy all the time--it's not too often in life we get the chance to write out our opinions and ideas and have them edited and memorized. As future leaders in the food, fiber and natural resources system, FFA members must be able to clearly articulate their ideas and publicly defend their opinions.

So why would I have participated in a parliamentary procedure event? Well, even now I use those abilities that parliamentary procedure taught me. I have a jump start on handling myself effectively in whatever I do in life. And I have hope that one day even broccoli might become tolerable!

James Connors is a teacher educator at the University of Idaho.



Malisah May Johnson is a member of the Meridian FFA Chapter in Meridian Idaho. Malisah was on the Meridian FFA parliamentary Procedure team that participated in the National FFA Parliamentary Procedure CDE last fall in Kansas city.



....New Career Development Events, continued from page 11.

resume and complete a job application. In addition, the contestant will interview both by telephone as well as in person. The preliminary round of personal interviews will be done with a panel of employer judges. The final round will be four separate interviews dealing with specific employee characteristics. The participant will be required to complete a follow up letter to the potential employer.

It is imperative that classroom curriculum be the catalyst for adding more Career Development Events. As National FFA adds events, one thing will be for certain, curriculum will drive the event and not the event driving the curriculum. Hopefully the next time you wonder how and why the National FFA adds another Career Development Event, you will be able to understand the process that was taken.



Joe's Cat Experience

By E.V. Walton

Joe Scatterscrew parked his pick-up on a hilltop ten miles east of Birdcraw and waited for dark to come so he could sneak back into town and on home.

He rubbed a hand across the worry lines in his forehead and tried a cigar to see if it would taste any better than the last one.

"I gonnies!" he moaned. "I don't see how these things are always happening to me! Dadburn it, there I was teaching along fine on selecting baby chicks for broiler production when this argument breaks out between Red Holt and Adolph Jackson!"

He puzzled over how it happened a little while but the details did not come clear. Things happened so fast in that class.

"It seems like Red ast if a man ought not to git rid of cats before baby chicks is bought—and then Adolph Jackson claimed cats wouldn't eat baby chicks if they was plenty of mice around—and then what happened-?"

There was so much confusion that broke out then. Joe wrinkled his head again. "Dadburn it! I'll just be scientific and analyze what did happen. Now after that...well, I remember, but I don't know how the discussion got off on it. It was an argument came up about whether a cat sweats or not. That came up when Aldoph Jackson said a cat couldn't sweat and if a cat had a pick between eating baby chicks and chasing mice, it would eat chicks because it might get overhet chasing mice. Yep! That's the way the discussion went!"

He groaned at the recollection of what followed and got out of the

pick-up and threw some rocks at a telephone post.

"Then, dad blast and dad gum it! Red Holt said he didn't recollect ever seeing a cat sopping wet from sweat and Aldoph Jackson said he had. And then the boys took sides and it got so interesting I got to wondering, did a cat sweat or not!"

Joe sat down on the running board and looked helplessly at the ground. "I thought it was a fine opportunity to give the boys some practical stuff on research. Scientific inquiry and all that. So I proposed that Red and Adolph settle it by catching a cat and putting it in a shoe box and take it down to the boiler room and shove the cat box up close to the fire and see if a cat would sweat. Along toward the end of the period that awful thing happent! Old Mrs. Sourly came screaming into the ag room claiming that two of my ag boys had chased her blue ribbon award-winning Maltese cat and caught it, and what was I going to do about it!"

Joe shuddered. It had been terrible! It was bad that Dr. Sourly was president of the board and that Old Lady Sourly put such great store on cats. Joe turned pale thinking about how scared he had been that some of the boys would spill the beans about the experiment.

As soon as he had sort of half-way pacified Mrs. Dr. Sourly and eased her out, he rushed down to the boiler room. "Oh!" Joe moaned. There them boys was with that cat's box stuck right up close to the fire, the cardboard smoking!!

"Lordy!" he cried, thinking of the blackened charred object he found when he tore the box apart. "Lordy

Lord! I wonder if old Roy Dugger or Doc Abrams got any jobs open!"

He tried to decide what to do. The sun was sinking low in the west, but he knew Mrs. Sourly would be waiting and maybe the whole school board.

"I could sneak in and move out during the night. Be long gone by morning. A fine career shot to pieces by a burnt cat. It all comes from listening to them smart alecs at that dadburn University. Always talking about directed study and developing appreciation of research! Class participation! Bah and humbug twice! I should of jist took them on a field trip or give a test. Develop interest, my foot! Look what turn it took! Didn't hardly get started on chickens!"

Joe got so mad he jumped up and threw some more rocks, but he missed the phone pole.

Back at the school, the janitor looked curiously at the charred loaf of bread in the boiler room. "I wonder how come them ag boys always doing crazy things. I saw them boys turn a cat loose right after they caught it and rush down here and burn this loaf of bread up on a wire coat hanger and then put it in this burnt box."

He swept the box and charred bread up.

"I reckon it's some sort of scientific experiment!"

E.V. Walton taught at Texas A & M University in the 1950's when he wrote these stories.