The Agricultural
EDUCATION
MAGAZINE

November/ December 2007 Volume 80 Issue 3

"If reality is illusion, where does Agricultural Education fit?"
Words of Wisdom

Past Experience or Present Wisdom?

By Billye Foster

Why do we always seem to think wisdom can only be found in the past? The past fascinates me, and I enjoyed scanning past issues of *the Magazine* for additions to this issue. Things always seem simpler in the past--maybe that's because we already know the outcomes. We can pick and choose the stories we want to remember. We don't have to read or think about colossal failures--*Custer's Last Stand*? We can focus on the good decisions--*George Washington Carver and peanuts* ...

Of course for many of us the memory of our own parents and grandparents connotes wisdom. As we grew up, we expected wisdom to come from those older and more experienced than we were. Old habits die hard. This issue is devoted to the collection of respected professionals' experiences. Experience leads to wisdom, and we have assembled a very interesting assortment of individuals to share some of their thoughts and values within these pages. Following each article you will find a box, similar to the one at the bottom of this page, reflecting the experience of the author of the article. If you take time to sum the total years of experience of the 10 individuals contributing to this issue, you will find a total of **263** years of experience in Agricultural Education.

I was once told in order to be considered an expert on a subject, you had to live at least 50 miles from the location in which you intended to share your "expert" opinions. Not being able to determine the actual distance of each author's location to each reader's location, I guess we will have to settle for a comparison of "years experience." I think our "total" will withstand most criticism!

Looking behind us is often a good way to "discover" things we seemingly misplaced--much like baking. As the holiday season approaches, I drag out my cookbooks,--my mother's, mother-in-law's, grandmothers', and other well-known family favorite recipes. Struggling to find and collect the necessary ingredients, I realized many of the secrets of baking continue to slip away from a generation that would rather take something from freezer section, or items that can be reconstituted in the microwave. I hope that as a profession, Agricultural Education will not let the lessons learned by experience slip away, but instead will choose to embrace the wisdom that only time can bring, and put it to work to create an even brighter future!

Billye Foster

- Associate and Assistant Professor, UofA --12.5 years
- Assistant Professor--ETSU--1 year
- Graduate Assistant--Oklahoma State--1 year
- Instructor, Paris Junior College--6 years
- Vocational Agriculture/Science Teacher--4.5 years
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Lessons Learned

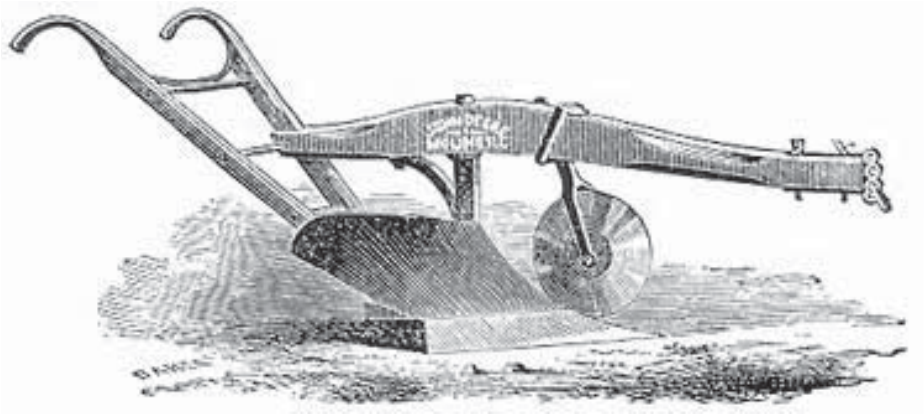
by Brenda Seevers

"We should be careful to get out of an experience only the wisdom that is in it - and stop there; lest we be like the cat that sits down on a hot stove-lid. She will never sit down on a hot stove-lid again - and that is well; but also she will never sit down on a cold stove-lid anymore."
- Mark Twain, 1835-1910

Words of Wisdom. What can we learn from those that have come before us as well as those we work alongside of? Our distinguished authors for this issue include a National FFA Advisor, Provosts, College Deans, teacher educators, agricultural education teachers and State Supervisors for Agricultural Education. Collectively these individuals represent over 250 years of experience, knowledge and wisdom.

Although agriculture and even agricultural education can be traced to the beginning of man, agricultural education as a discipline is still relatively new. The passage of the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917 (a mere 90 years ago) saw the development of a national system of vocational education. Like any discipline, change was inevitable. The passage of new legislation mandated reform. Societal issues including a more industrialized nation, high inflation and an increased emphasis on academics required not only a hard look at where we were but at where we wanted to be.

In the 1980's, a National Assessment of the Cooperative Extension Service (Warner and Christiansen) concluded that this very important agency was at a crossroads. Their choices were to anticipate change and become an agent of that change, or to ignore what was happening and be dragged "kicking and screaming" into the future. They stated, "Extension can shape it's own destiny, or it can allow it's future to be molded by others" (p. 147). The 21st century is here and with it comes continued opportunity and responsibility. Agricultural education is also at a crossroad. Over the past 90 years, the profession has experienced and survived many changes, but the one thing that is certain is that more change is to come. Agricultural education has chosen to become an agent of that change. Not willing to allow it's destiny to be molded by others, the Council has introduced the 10x15 initiative whose primary goal is increased growth and strengthening quality of agricultural education programs nationally. A concentrated effort and commitment by all can make this goal a reality. The future of agricultural education is in our own hands. What do you want that future to be?



1850 era plow

"Life can only be understood backward, but it must be lived forward."
- Soren Kierkegaard-

Warner, P. D., Christenson, J.A. (1984). *The Cooperative Extension Service: A National Assessment.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Brenda Seevers is a Professor of Agricultural & Extension Education at New Mexico State University

Brenda Seevers

- Professor (Assistant & Associate too), NMSU 16 years
- Graduate Assistant--the Ohio State University--2 years
- State 4-H Specialist for Wyoming-- 5 years
- County 4-H Agent Saratoga, New York--5 years
- **Total years experience--28**

Wisdom from the Past

Six Rules for Successful Farm Practice

Adapted from the Orginial Rules Proposed by Glenn Frank

(Note: This gem is published anonymously because the ediotr is not quite sure from which state newsletter he clipped. If the author can be determined, he will be given credit in another issue.)

I have found something I never expected to find. I have founda set of "rules for successful work" which I think will apply without a single change to every sort of worker and to every sort of work.

The six rules fro successful work which I have found, differ from much of our professional "success" literature in that they are not offered as a magic formula that will make you a millionaire before you are 30 or money refunded. They are offered as being simply the ABC's of effective work in any job, big or little.

1. **Make Your Project in Writing.** This forces you to be clear about your purpose. If you merely mull it over in your mind all sorts of loopholes in your logic will escape you. Most of us do not realize how foggy our ideas are until we try to write them down in clear and simple sentences.
2. **Compare Your Plan With the Methods of Most Successful Farmers and the Recommendations of Agricultural Colleges.** It is always wise to check your own plans against the plans other men or boys have followed successfully when they faced similar problems.
3. **Have Your Plan Criticized in Advance by Those Whom It Will Affect.** Certainly the father and the teacher should criticize a boy's project plan. Other members of the agricultural class may have helpful criticisms. If you find flaws in your plan before you begin work you will save yourself many mistakes.
4. **Put Your Plan Into Operation.** Otherwise remains merely a day dream. You may have incorporated in your plan worthwhile practices which you should follow, but if you go out on the farm and fail to practice them your plan has been of little value.
5. **See That Your Plan Keeps Itself in Operation Until Revoked.** Until your plan keeps in operation automatically, you have not really organized it. Maintain an attitude of efficient execution of your project plan.
6. **Keep Your Plan Open to Revision But Do Not Allow It to Be Changed Except After the Most Careful Reasoning.** You must not keep digging up your beans to see if they are growing. Be open minded about your plan, but remember that a mind can be so open that it is draughty. The best minds have swinging doors rather than open doors. They open for a draught of fresh information in order to close on a decision, to be gladly opened again when the decision needs to be revised.

Sound wisdom is timeless. This article was taken from Volume 2, Issue 4 of the Agricultural Magazine, April 1930.

THEME ARTICLE

From the Past and for the Future

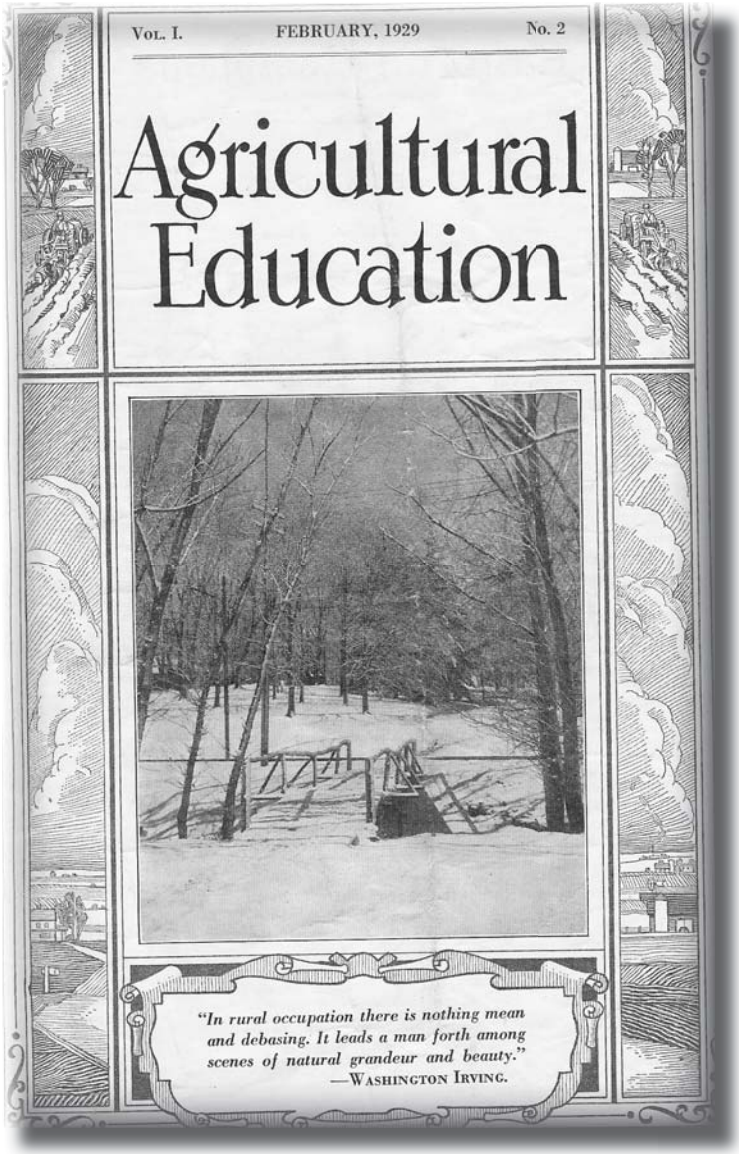
By
Kirby Barrick

I believe it was Will Rogers who said, "Things aren't what they used to be, and probably never were." How tempting, and easy, it is for us to reflect upon the past and yearn for those good old days. But the past is past; we live in and for the future. What have we learned from the past--not to wish for what was but to help us plan for what will be? My perspective is only one, and it is tainted (good or bad) by what I have done and where I have been.

Some History. When federal legislation formalized and funded vocational agriculture in the public schools of this country, things were, indeed, quite different. The need was great to educate a different group of people in different ways – farm boys who would return to the farm after high school (hopefully they graduated) and help feed the U.S. and later the world. Farming was fairly consistent across broad geographic areas, so instruction in farming practices was similar in most schools within a region.

The Federal presence was important and respected. An article I once read regarding the construction of the "new" high school in my hometown (1922) mentioned the "Federal man" and his involvement in and approval of the plans for the vocational agriculture facilities in that school. My dad graduated from that high school several years later, having completed courses in vocational agriculture and farm shop, along with about every other farm boy in that community. Teaching must have been easy; the boys all had the same needs and the same opportunities on general livestock farms.

Imagine starting a program



Cover of 2nd issue, 1929

of instruction and having no mechanism to identify and prepare adequately teachers for that program. Such was the case after the Federal legislation was enacted. Vocational agriculture teachers were recruited from anywhere they were found, and agricultural teacher educators (teacher trainers) were recruited from agriculture programs and later earned advanced degrees in education. Obviously, agricultural teacher education programs evolved from that base.

Since education is the responsibility of the states, there was also a need for (and was provided for in the law) state supervision of these new programs. Approval was the word of the day, and the state assumed sufficient control to ensure that federal dollars were spent according to law.

Fast Forward Fifty Years and More. Then things changed. Actually the changes were progressive, but new legislation really made things happen fast. The whole program of secondary agriculture expanded, which meant an expansion in the curriculum, an increase in enrollments, and a huge demand for teachers.

Despite additional federal legislation, Federal control actually decreased immensely when the U.S. regional offices of education were closed. And, later, with the advent of a U.S. Department of Education, federal leadership for all of vocational, occupational and adult education diminished substantially, not because of the people but because of the elimination of staff positions. In fact, agriculture is the only "vocational" area that has been able to maintain any type of presence in the Federal bureaucracy.

At the state level, the emphasis on vocational education also continued to decrease over time. Less state presence meant less state mandate and less state leadership. In the era of the 1970's, Ohio had ten state supervisory positions in agricultural education. Today, there are only four, and that is one of the largest "state staffs" in the country.

Similar situations arose within agricultural teacher education. Some states had typically provided funding for teacher education to universities and that practice has virtually ended. Teacher education programs have expanded to become more comprehensive in teaching and learning, incorporating extension education, leadership education, communication and other related areas into the program, predicated by the needs of the professions as well as the need for critical mass and survival.

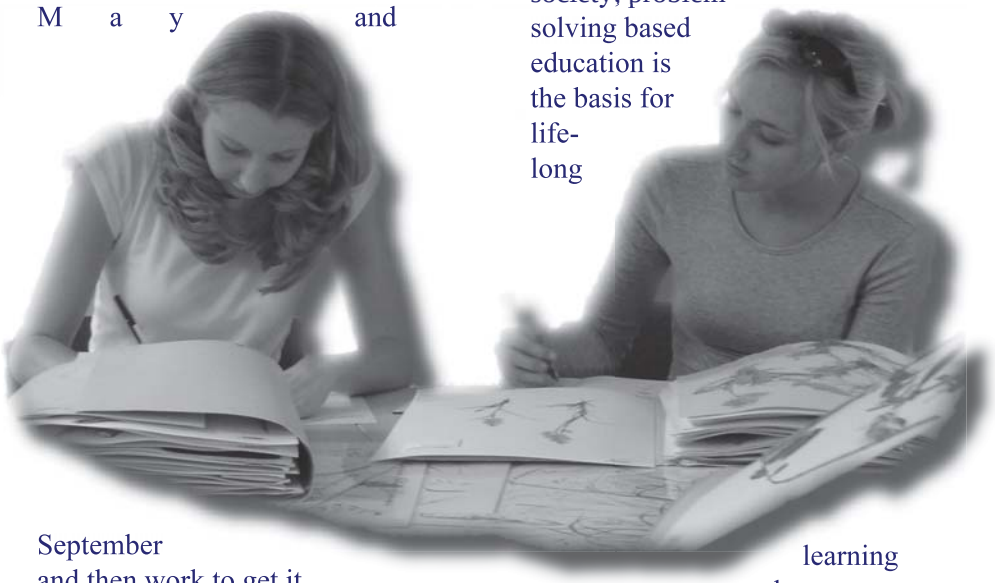
So with these decreases in state and Federal presence, teacher organizations have assumed a much larger role in providing leadership for the agricultural education programs. While this movement was not openly welcomed at times, there has truly been little other choice in many instances. State agricultural education teacher organizations learned to manage their own affairs in conjunction with supervision and teacher education in most states.

Focus on the Future. What does the future hold? Any conjecture probably depends on who is looking and where they are currently standing. Admittedly a bit removed from the mainstream of agricultural education, I may not be on target at all. Surely there will be less Federal presence, but the potential for management from the national level can be disconcerting. Career and technology cannot survive the high-stakes testing wars, simply because what is measured does not address the goals and objectives of career and technology education. All parties, and especially teacher organizations since that is the current source of strength, must be vigilant and proactive in ensuring that the 80 percent of high school graduates who do not *need* a college degree are protected from being labeled failures because of standardized test results. Otherwise, there is an end in sight for career and technical education, at least in agriculture.

The acute shortage of high school teachers will cause even greater concern for teacher education. In some areas (states as well as program areas) the vast majority of teachers enter the profession without having completed a teacher certification or licensure program. Eventually the question will be asked, why have teacher education at all? If agriculture teachers who hold baccalaureate degrees in a technical field can teach, some could assume that that should be the model rather than the exception. The movement nationally is in that direction. Surely teacher education has more to offer than that. There will need to be strong leaders to show that agriculture is a science (rather than trying to find science in agriculture) to reinforce the need for strong programs conducted by well-prepared teachers who can teach to solve problems rather than

to do things.

Finally, there will need to be an affirmation of the basic philosophy of education in agriculture. Year-round programs are mostly school-year programs, because teachers did not want to work summers, or there was insufficient cause to support summer programming, or both. The profession must determine whether some educational programming is needed between May and September and then work to get it incorporated into the school year and funded. The farming program concept has evolved considerably to something much larger and then to something less rigorous. The concepts of problem-based learning were inherent in the farm project methodology, and those concepts are absent in skill development (as opposed to experience-based programs). Since problem-solving, decision-making and critical thinking are so prevalent today in education at all levels, perhaps agricultural education should renew its commitment to those concepts and move beyond skills and activities.



Summary. Things will never be the way they used to be in terms of state and federal presence. But all is not lost! If we all believe in the premises and philosophies that have made agricultural education great, then the future is bright, regardless of who is providing leadership or oversight. We simply need to work together more vigorously toward the common beliefs: all people deserve appropriate educational opportunity; career and technical education is vital to the economy and the welfare of society; problem-solving based education is the basis for life-long learning and career advancement; teacher preparation, public school teaching and state/federal agencies can work together to achieve. Based on the past, the future is bright.

Kirby Barrick, Professor of Agricultural Education
Dean, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences
University of Florida

Kirby Barrick

- Vocational Agriculture Instructor--4 years
- Area State Supervisor, Agricultural Education, Ohio Dept. of Ed--6 years
- Assistant Professor, Ag Ed, OSU,--4 years
- Associate Professor, Ag Ed, OSU--4 years
- Professor, Ag Ed, OSU--8 years
- *Director, Central Ohio Vocational Personnel Development Center*
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- *Chair, Dept. Agricultural Education, OSU*
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- Associate Dean for Academic Programs, College of Agricultural, Consumer & Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois--9 years
- Dean, College of Agricultural & Life Sciences, University of Florida--2 years
- **Total years experience--37**

THEME ARTICLE

Patience and Perseverance

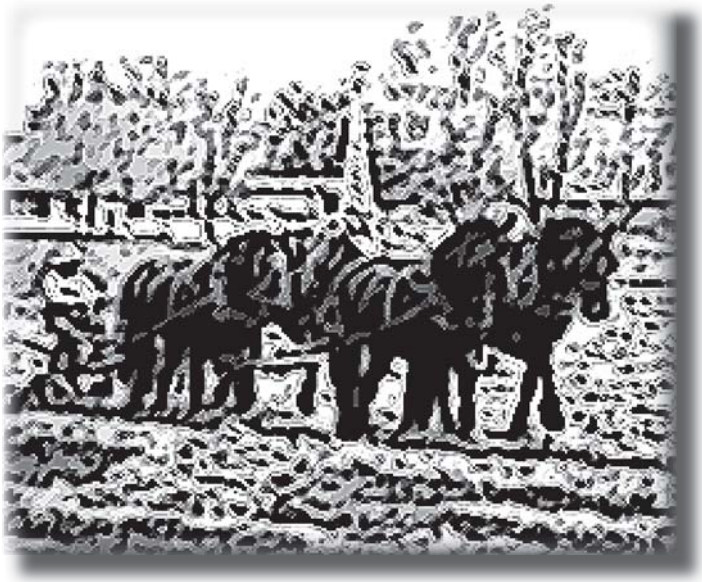
by Heather Dye

Everyone is familiar with Aesop's fable of "The Tortoise and the Hare." In a race, the hare jumped to the lead immediately. He was so far ahead that he decided to take a nap. The tortoise kept a slow, but steady pace and ended up passing the hare to win the race. Whether it is agricultural education or a new job, it can be similar to this fable.

You just graduated and got your first job. School starts in five days and although you are a little nervous, you are also ecstatic. Ideas and plans for your program are just popping out of your head. You are going to bring about some changes. Just like the hare, you have jumped to the lead immediately.

Fast forward a few months. Your pace and ideas have slowed down a bit. Unlike the hare, you don't have time to take a nap. Although the lack of sleep may be slowing you down, it is really the sense of drowning and the slow pace of change that make you feel like you have nearly stopped. This is a time when you need to look at the tortoise versus the hare.

As a new teacher you want to create a successful program immediately. Seasoned teachers still want to create a successful program, but realize that it will take some time. You will make changes but it may not happen immediately. During the first year it is hard to make all of your changes when you feel like you are drowning in the everyday details about 90 percent of the time.



Horse drawn plow from photo courtesy of B. Foster.

I believe that you really start hitting your full potential about the third year in your career. You fumbled through your first year. The second year you have a better grasp of what to expect, but you are still fumbling a bit. The third year you know what to expect and the small changes you have made the previous two years have laid the groundwork for success. Like the tortoise you have consistently progressed.

This same pace can be applied to difficult situations. Whether you have been hired into an existing program or starting a new one, you will inherit some baggage and misconceptions about agricultural education. Difficult students, parents, and administrators are all additional challenges that you face. However, you can outlive any situation with time. Patience and perseverance is the key.

Similar to the hare, we often focus on what is immediately in front of us on the path. "Today I have to come up with a lesson on beef reproduction and visit three student projects." Different from the hare, the tortoise constantly keeps the end goal, the finish line, in perspective. As a teacher, you will have to focus on the immediate tasks, but it is important to constantly keep your end goal of a successful, well-rounded program in mind.

The question becomes, how do you get to this end goal? I think the new National Program Quality Criteria Standards can be a useful tool in accomplishing the goal. This document defines what a successful, well-rounded program is and serves as a framework for total program improvement. It can be used for self-assessment and then turned into your personal long-term planning guide.

There are other tools and activities that can also help you on your path. Some specific activities are

to find a mentor, continually seek professional development, become active in advocacy efforts, and establish a strong advisory board. I also believe it is important that you stop counting hours of work, but yet still take time to rest and rejuvenate. These are all actions that can help you face any challenge or change in agricultural education, and yet still work toward the finish line.

Similar to an athlete, I like to think the tortoise had to prepare mentally for the challenge. As a new teacher, I also think it is important to prepare yourself. Know that you are entering a noble profession and that you have the power to positively influence thousands of people. You will face challenges on your journey to the finish line, but you will also see and experience some amazing successes along the way.

As a new agriculture teacher always strive to jump to the lead like the hare, but know that the patience and perseverance of the tortoise will help you on your journey to the finish line--the successful, well-rounded agricultural education program.

Heather Dye

- Executive Director, Nevada FFA Association and Foundation--6.5 years
- Public relations with Fleischman Hillard within the agriculture division--6 months
- **Total years experience--7**

Heather Dye
Executive Director
Nevada FFA Association & Foundation

Each golden sunrise ushers in new opportunities for those who retain faith in themselves, and keep their chins up....Meet each sunrise with confidence. Fill every golden minute with right thinking and worthwhile endeavor. Do this and there will be joy for you in each golden sunset.

~Alonzo Newton Benn

Stick to the Prinicples: Expand the Horizons

by Robert Martin

"*This obsolete system is in the process of breaking down*" (Draves & Coates, 2007, p. 259).

In their recent publication, entitled ***Nine Shift…***, Draves & Coates comment on the public school system and how it fails to meet "expectations and requirements for students in the 21st Century" (p. 259). They go on to state that a great number of alternatives to the public system are being developed. These comments, in fact Draves & Coates' whole treatise, give us some reason to ask if they had considered agricultural education in their analysis (not likely). They also make us wonder where does agricultural education fit in this system and where it is destined to be in 25 years.

It is always dangerous to provide some perspective on the past, present and future of a profession. There is always the possibility of leaving out some important point. I feel somewhat like Richard Thieme when he said, "I am not a futurist. I only describe the present to the 98% of people who are not there yet" (In Draves & Coates, 2007, P. 1). This seems to imply that we haven't caught up to where we are now, let alone where we may be going. Perhaps in reviewing these comments, some insight will be gained regarding a major issue in agricultural education – where have we been and where are we going?

Where have we been?

> *I am not a futurist. I only describe the present to the 98% of people who are not there yet.*
> *~ Richard Thieme*

Our glorious past has had some significant achievements, some of which may or may not be as helpful today and into the future as they once were, but they are a part of our history. For every element of the program, there exists a past, present and a future. That future may demand some enhancement of the program components. There is no question that we have come a long way over the years. New programs, gender balance, new curricula, new technology, new activities, expanded leadership development activities, and new professional development opportunities, all represent positive movement in the profession. Some negatives that threaten agricultural education include: declining involvement in supervised agricultural experience (SAE), membership in FFA does not match enrollment in

Agricultural Education

Past Experience	*Present Transition*	*Future Preferred*
Predominantly rural	→	Predominantly urban
Production enterprises dominate	→	Expanded entrepreneurship
Future Farmers of America	→	Future for America
Cows, Plows & Sows	→	Food, Fiber & Natural Resources
Production framework in curriculum	→	Science framework in curriculum
Limited field-based teacher prep	→	Expanded field-based teacher prep
Limited diversity of clientele	→	Expanded diversity of clientele
Career awareness/exploration	→	Career development
Independent program delivery	→	Collaboration across disciplines
Production symbols	→	Science Symbols

agricultural education programs, outdated facilities and equipment, traditional image of "farming", ongoing teacher shortage, lack of adherence to appropriate standards and outdated teacher preparation. Perhaps we need to think carefully about where we have been and honor the past but admit that a new commitment to a new approach is needed now and in the future. The following chart indicates ten programmatic features that deserve a new "twist" (table on page 11).

Where are we going?

Gary Marx, a futurist, indicates in his book entitled ***Sixteen Trends . . .*** that we need to take the following actions:

1. Develop new approaches to teach career and entrepreneurial skills.
2. Adapt to change faster – individuals, organizations and communities.
3. Adjust to the reality that the minority will be the new majority.
4. Realize that the social and intellectual capital will become economic drivers of the future (Marx, 2006, p. 308). It seems as if Marx is speaking directly to agricultural educators.

If it is to survive far into the future, agricultural education needs to follow a path of new adventures that could lead to greater things than we now know. As Albert Einstein said, "We cannot solve problems with the same thinking that generated the problems" (Draves & Coates, 2007, p. 129). In that vein it is suggested that we:

- Don't let ceremonial traditions of the past rule the future. Be open to new and perhaps radical program directions.
- Diversify, diversify, diversify
- Develop model urban programs.Focus on food, fiber and natural resources.
- Market programs aggressively.
- Change the image.

The overall message here is to stick to the principles and expand the horizon. The very foundation of our profession is grounded in the following principles:

- Studying the science and technology of agriculture.
- Learning through experience.
- Developing personal and leadership skills.

> ***We cannot solve problems with the same thinking that generated the problems.***
> *~Albert Einstein*

These principles should be our constant guide as we move to new delivery systems and address the major actions that must be taken. They have served us well in the past and will continue to do so if we follow them carefully. But I would be less than honest if I did not say that the learning through experience component (especially Supervised Agricultural Experience) is our weakest component. We cannot continue to ignore the fundamental principle of learning through experience even as the leadership programs expand and the curriculum takes on a new face. We must expand the horizon of career experience to fit our new clientele. Again, stick to the principles, but expand the horizon.

To support these principles and expand the horizon we need more new programs, new locations (urban, suburban and rural), new and diverse clientele, new delivery systems, new curricula, new teaching approaches, new competitive events, a new image, new experience programs, and a new cadre of dedicated professionals (especially teachers). Most of all, we need to change our collective "mindset". By that I mean making a major shift in thinking about who we serve and how we will accommodate the needs of a vast sea of humanity not currently being served well by agricultural education. This is not going to be easy, but we must do it if the food, fiber and natural resources industry we strongly support is to survive by acquiring the human resources they need.

Is agricultural education in the process of breaking down? The answer is no, not yet. Agricultural education has not failed, even though some authors imply that public education in general has failed. If anything, agricultural education has had much success but the real question is where to go from here? Let's expand our horizons very carefully and strategically so we are part of the solution not a reason for the problem. A new day is dawning in

agricultural education if we let it.

Draves, W.A. & Coates, J. (2007). *Nine Shift: Work, Life, & Education in the 21st Century*. River Falls, WI: LERN Books.

Marx, G. (2006). *Sixteen Trends: Their Profound Impact on the Future.* Alexandria, VA: Educational Research Service.

Robert A. Martin

- 9 years Department Head
- 24 years at Iowa State
- 8.5 years as high school teacher
- 6.5 years as a graduate student
- **Total years experience--39**

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You must do the thing that you think you cannot do.
~Eleanor Roosevelt

THEME ARTICLE

Agricultural Education: Looking Around

By William G. Camp

"***Nothing endures but change***."
~Diogenes Laertius
(3rd century, AD)

In spite of an inherent desire for stability in our lives and in our professions, the only thing about which we can be absolutely certain as agricultural educators is that our profession will change. Those who do not embrace change and move with it are destined to be overrun by it.

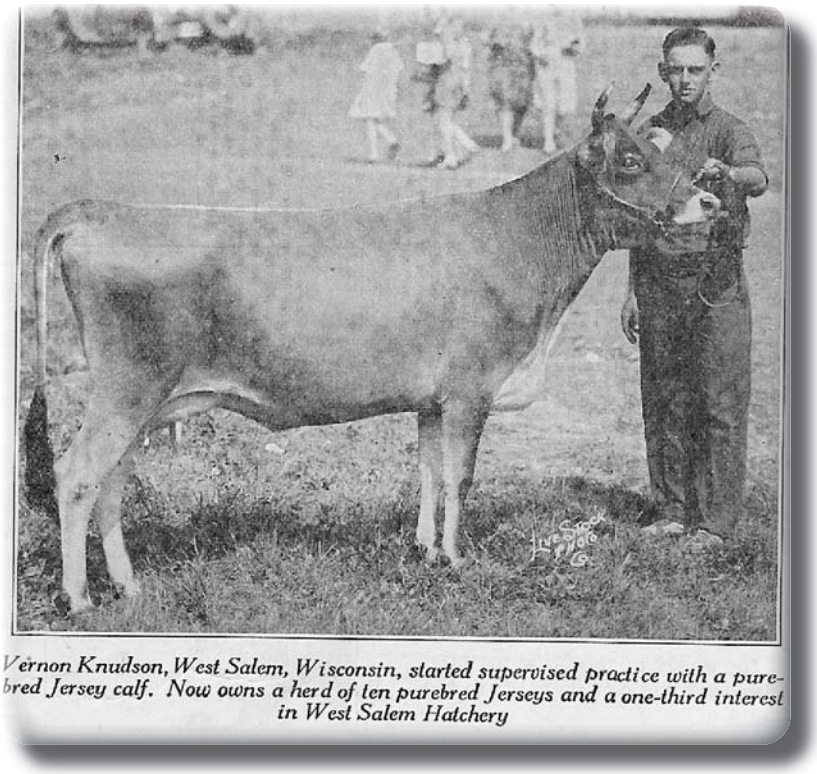
I wish that I knew what the future for our profession will be like. While predicting the future is not really possible, it is possible to examine some parts of our profession's history, both recent and more distant, that are likely to affect our future, as well as some of the conditions in which agricultural education operates today and consider how those conditions might affect our future.

"Nothing endures but change."

~Diogenes Laertius (3rd Century, AD

Where did we come from?

The national system of vocational education (career and technical education as we know it today) was established by the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 after a heated and rancorous debate between two opposing factions of educational reformers. One group, led by John Dewey, saw vocational education as a means of humanizing education and making it relevant to students' lives and as a means of helping students become "industrially intelligent." Essentially they saw a focus on occupations as general education and as a means of improving instruction in the traditional academics. The other group was



Vernon Knudson, West Salem, Wisconsin, started supervised practice with a pure-bred Jersey calf. Now owns a herd of ten purebred Jerseys and a one-third interest in West Salem Hatchery

Taken from the April 1930 issue of the Agricultural Education Magazine.

led by David Snedden and Charles Prosser and sought to position vocational education as a means of preparing skilled workers for the burgeoning American industrial and farming economies (Wirth, 1972). To the Dewey faction, vocational education was a means of strengthening schooling for general learning, while the Snedden and Prosser faction saw it as a means of training workers for social efficiency and economic development. Eventually, the social efficiency faction won the debate and vocational education, including vocational agriculture, were codified in the Smith Hughes Act as a program intended to train entry level workers to meet the needs of America's factories, trades and farms.

What many people don't realize is that agricultural education in America actually predates the Smith Hughes Act by over two centuries, and in fact it predates the nation itself. Informal agricultural education goes back to the Jamestown colony in the early 1600s when Native Americans taught the colonists how to grow indigenous crops (Moore, 1988). Some of the earliest formal agricultural education in this country began in the colony of Georgia as early as 1732, when Englishman, James Edward Oglethorpe, arranged for agricultural instruction in an attempt to bring silk and wine production to the New World (Wheeler, 1948). By 1915, fully two years before the passage of the Smith Hughes Act of 1917, 90,708 students were enrolled in agriculture courses in 4,666 US schools (Moore, 1988). Nevertheless, it is critical to remember that agricultural education as a formal program and as we know it today became a part of the career and technical (vocational) education family in 1917 (Wirth, 1972) and remains so today.

Where are we today?

It has taken almost 90 years, but under the four pieces of Perkins legislation and the much maligned No Child Left Behind act, career and technical education is now becoming more like the Dewey group's vision and less like Snedden/Prosser's job training program. To those of us who have witnessed these changes first-hand, this is not a trivial matter. As late as the 1960s, at the end of each school year the single most important requirement for every vocational agriculture teacher in Georgia (where I taught) was the dreaded annual report. In that report we were required to provide the number of graduates from our programs and indicate their job placement. "Placement in field" as it was called then was the percentage of our graduates from the previous year working in a job for which the vocational agriculture classes had prepared them. Students who went on to college or who were placed "not in field" were considered failures for us. Placement in field was the single most important criterion used to determine whether a program was successful under that rubric, and finding ways to classify jobs as "placement in field" produced some pretty creative thinking in those days.

Program completer follow-up data are still collected, but the purpose of the data has changed and the definition of program success is much broader today. Nobody in a position of influence that I know

of would advocate measuring an agricultural education program's success solely by "placement in field" today as it was done in the 1960s, and that is a fundamental change. The mission of vocational agriculture when I began teaching was to prepare entry-level workers for a limited number of specific agricultural occupations. According to the National Council for Agricultural Education, the mission of agricultural education today is to "[prepare] students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in the global agriculture, food, fiber, and natural resources systems" (*http://www.teamaged.org/aged.htm*). That change in mission might seem insignificant on the surface, but it represented a complete reversal of the profession's direction within the span of a single career and meant reshaping the thinking of every agriculture teacher in the country at the time when the changes were taking place.

What factors are acting on us today to force change?

The modern workforce requires higher academic skills and is less focused on entry-level job performance skills. The New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce issued a call for higher academic skills for all *Tough Choices or Tough Times* (National Center on Education and the Economy, 2007). This report is a follow-up to the same Center's 1990 report *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages* (National Center on Education and the Economy, 1990), which emphasized the threat to American workers from low-skill, low-wage workers in developing countries. We have seen that 1990 warning come to pass with the ongoing loss of our manufacturing industries which have been largely moved overseas or outsourced to countries with lower wage scales, and other embedded costs associated with America's emphasis on workers and their rights and working conditions. Many of our mid-and high-skill technical jobs are going to high skill workers in countries such as India and Pakistan. Technological changes are moving so fast today that simply keeping up is not only a full time job, it is impossible. Demographic changes in our country are altering what we mean by American. Our economy is changing rapidly to meet the demands of a global economy and vastly improved communication and shipping industries.

For most of the past 25 years, significant political forces in this country have actively sought the privatization of education in America and the effective elimination of public education as a major player on the American landscape. That movement seems to have failed, and it now appears that public education might be under less direct attack than we saw in the mid-1980s through the beginning of this century. Nevertheless, some by-products of that movement remain in place in the form of school report cards and high stakes testing.

Where have these forces been pushing us?

In the early 1990s, I became convinced that agricultural education in the public schools of this country was facing extinction. The causes of that belief were five-fold. First, there was a growing emphasis on student academics in this country. That change was a result of the so-called "excellence movement" that had been going on for a long time but that had been energized by the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Second, there was an apparent lack of willingness in our profession to change with the changing educational landscape (I don't have a reference for that, but I was there). Third, was a continuing decline in the number of agriculture teaching positions available nationally. Fourth, was an even more rapid decline in the number of teachers being prepared each year in university teacher education programs. And fifth was a fairly steady decline in secondary student enrollments.

It is clear to me that agricultural education turned the corner on extinction about 1992. I believe that the single most critical event in that turn-around was the formation of the National Council for Agricultural Education in 1983. I also believe that the single most important step taken by the Council to change the future of agricultural education in this country was to promote a National Research Council study that produced the landmark report entitled *Understanding Agriculture: New Directions for Education* (National Research Council, 1988). The so-called "Green Book" proposed a vision for agricultural education as more than just vocational agriculture. The combination of visionary leadership from The Council and the effects of curriculum and program reforms resulting from the Green Book, along with the hard work and dedication of agricultural educators at all levels, turned our profession around.

Continued on page 17

Know how to live within yourself: There is in your soul a whole world of mysterious and enchanted thoughts; they will be drowned by the noise without; daylight will drive them away; listen to their singing and be silent.

~~ Fyodor Tyutchev
(1803-1873)
Poet

I often think the hardest thing we do is take an honest look at ourselves. Taking on the concept of a regular column devoted to the inclusion of all students in our programs might not have been my wisest decision in regard to time managment. However, I believe it may prove to be the most valuable thing I bring to *the Magazine* in my term as editor. Taking time to understand who we are and why we think the way we do is never an easy thing to do. It is much simpler just to adopt an attitude of "that is just the way I am and I can't change."

Over time I have collected, invented, and devised a number of activities for understanding self when regarding issues of diversity and inclusion. By far my favorite is the activity I call "Tracking." Perhaps my fondness for this exercise comes from childhood fantasies, or memories of hunting with my Dad, but it is a powerful technique.

Tracking is the process of observing--observing people to be exact. Combined with journaling, tracking becomes a powerful tool. Amazingly when we watch how other people treat each other, we tend to edit the way we treat people.

Have your students begin a tracking journal. Each week have them record one observation. Usually we walk along barely even acknowledging the presence of other people. For this assignment we look for situations when people treat others differently due to things beyond the other person's control--like gender, ethnicity, age, size, type of dress, etc.

The task of tracking is to learn to observe. The ultimate outcome is to learn how to think. No one can change your beliefs and values or behaviors except you. Only you can edit the way you think. This assignment is not about changing who you are, but rather about developing a habit and a skill--the habit of observation and the skill of seeing the reality of the situation.

Below are a few examples of tracking journal entries:

- *Today in the grocery store there was a middle-aged woman with two small children. One of the children was crying. I noticed when she was in the check-out line, there were people behind her making comments. Things like "should have left the brat at home." I wondered if she could afford a babysitter.*

- *Yesterday in the gym, I was sitting with my friend who is a little overweight. She is very self-conscious about her weight, but can't seem to loose any. Two guys walked by and when they passed us one made the comment, "Looks like someone ate all the fries at Mc_____'s." My friend turned red.*

- *The other day I was watching a show on TV. I noticed every series episode that has aired since 9-11 has focused on the Arabs and making people of Arab descent terrorists. It is shocking that people will still not let this go. It is almost 6 years since that happened and people are still stereotyping Arabs as terrorists for all these television shows. Well, the last episode finally killed off the main Arab terrorist, and it a shock to see who they picked on next. The next terrorist was Chinese. It makes me sick to my stomach to see how these people pick on different groups.*

The examples shown come from freshmen students at the university--it is amazing the change you will see over the course of one semester with tracking. Imagine if students in your program practice this for 4 years!

Think about it!
Billye

Things are looking up.

I believe that the future of agricultural education in the US is bright--brighter than it has been for at least 25 years. Current initiatives of the Council are very promising. The 10X15 Project, the National Program Standards Project, the National Content Standards Project, and the CASE Project are the most ambitious and possibly the most far-reaching undertakings in agricultural education in well over half a century. If you don't know what those four projects are about, you really need to go to the Council web site (*http://www.teamaged.org/aged.htm*) and find out. They will fundamentally affect the future of the agricultural education program in this country for the next 20 years.

We cannot foretell the future, but we can all be certain that things will change. We can sit back, watch the changes and complain about the unfairness of life. Or, as individuals and as a profession, we can embrace the inevitability of change, remain alert for factors that will force change, decide what we want those changes to look like, and work together to make them happen.

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William G. Camp

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- Assistant Professor of Agricultural Education-Purdue University, 2 years (1978-1980)
- Supervisor of Vocational Education-Cobb County Schools, Marietta, GA, 3 years (1975-1978)
- Agriculture Teacher, Douglas County Schools, Douglasville, GA, 3 years (1972-1975)
- **Total years experience--31**

THEME ARTICLE

Reflections on Agricultural Education's Past and Future

by L. H. Newcomb

(*Much of this article is from a speech given to the 10x15 National Conference on June 13, 2007*)

This is a propitious moment for agricultural education. The opportunity is the "10x15" effort of the Council. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for the profession.

Such an opportunity happened in 1917 with Smith-Hughes and again in 1963 with the passage of the National Vocational Education Act. Such opportunities occur about once every 50 years.

If we as a profession falter with this opportunity before us, called "10x15," if we are timid, if we tinker rather than transform, then I suggest this may well be the last great opportunity. This moment is starkly different than the earlier moments in our history. The others were driven by federal legislative mandates and funding. This one has neither.

These are unchartered waters. The task before us is noble, stimulating and sobering.

No journey, no expedition, no great transformation can be successful if it is not grounded in the deep knowledge and wisdom of prior experience which must guide and inform choice making. But the great confounding factor is that prior knowledge, wisdom and experience are often limiting. They tend to blind our field of vision, to keep us from seeing the full range of possibilities.

Historical Strengths of Agricultural Education That Can Apply to the Opportunity Before Us

One needs to dig deep enough to tap the core constructs that propelled Agricultural Education and not stop with buzz words and acronyms, thinking such surface and passing notions are the real drivers. It will not work to transfer current practice – even though derived from the core genius of Agricultural Education – to this new opportunity. Direct transfer of current practices will not likely meet the needs of the new audiences we seek to attract. Rather they are likely to be a major barrier.

SAE is not a core construct. FFA is not a core construct. CDE's are not a core construct. Record books are not a core construct. Problem method teaching, as we have known it, is not.

They are all useful tools for past and some current programs. It is because for those settings they have adequately translated the leverage of sound psychology of learning to "a" context but won't work for "all" contexts. The real genius of agricultural education is deeper.

Four Fundamental Constructs

Construct one – Needs- Based Curricula.

The needs-based local curricula we have historically developed were easier to develop then than now. Curriculum of old was based on well-defined local agricultural needs. These local needs tended to be homogeneous. Communities were homogeneous a few generations ago. The purpose of the program was too. This homogeneity seldom exists today.

Needs-based curricula must be implemented differently if "10x15" is to be successful. If you transfer current practice to new venues, you are assuming the new venues have the same needs as current venues. They do not. The question is: what are the needs we seek to meet? We must still strive to tailor what we teach to the "real" needs of the students enrolling. However, in the future, this may require complex multifaceted curricula. Sometimes there may need to be multiple versions for the same class with various students afforded varying options or choices.

Construct two - Problem Solving and Decision Making.

Problem solving has a far broader meaning than the term problem solving teaching or problem method teaching often used in agricultural education. Problem method teaching is but one way to imbue students with transferable problem solving and decision making skills.

The old lock step approach (as in problem method teaching) loses its punch when the students do not have sufficient homogeneous "real" problems related to the curriculum. There have not been such homogeneous problems for students in most agricultural education classrooms for more than a decade. Yet we have continued to push a restricted view of problem solving teaching (I have personally contributed to this somewhat lock-step approach).

Problem solving can also be captured in "active learning" approaches, such as "collaborative" or "cooperative learning" approaches and other "student centered learning." Student-centered learning is very potent. It is more robust and more nimble than problem method learning as we have known it.

Collaborative learning, cooperative learning and other student-centered approaches are similar to problem solving and draw on the same core strengths but are far less method bound. We need to embrace a wider portfolio of teaching approaches given the changes in clientele and curriculum that must emerge if we are to be successful with the "10x15" effort.

Construct three - Application of Learning.

"Projects" and "SAE" have historically been the mainstay to achieve application of learning. The key is not the traditional "project" nor SAE as currently construed. It is not how we do it today, rather it is that we must provide meaningful application which need not be confined just to projects and SAE. We must "design" learning which is concrete and relevant and provides true application of theory and concepts in a variety of settings. This need not be limited to SAE. The requisite applications can take additional forms. The depth of science we need to teach to new audiences will require additional means of providing students with meaningful approaches to applying learning. Such students should not be forced to also have an SAE.

Learning by doing works. But we must broaden our view of what we mean by doing: doing what; doing where; doing within what structure.

Construct four – FFA.

FFA is not a core construct; building self esteem is. Student organizations and activities can help nurture positive self esteem. Belonging is a powerful psychological concept, but belonging to what?. What a student is asked to belong to is a critical question if agricultural education is to attract new audiences.

Leadership development can nurture self esteem but the leadership activities must be viewed as positive and meaningful to the culture of the student. Cultures differ not just by ethnicity but also by socioeconomic status and geography. City youth are culturally different from rural youth. Students with a passion for the environment are different from students in production agriculture. Their difference often means they are attracted to different organizational cultures with different styles than we currently offer through most FFA programs.

Competition can build self esteem-- but what kind of competition? What is the subject matter? What is the activity? Different student

groups require different approaches. Competition like judging may appeal to some students, whereas creative design or research projects and reports on inventions appeal to others.

Recognition and reward enhance self esteem. The forms of recognition and reward that matter to the "new" students we need to attract may be very different than for current and prior students. For new urban students, being the "star greenhand" may not cut it. What else do we offer in FFA that may not be appealing and that may, in fact, be repulsive to some audiences we seek to serve?

Each of the above leadership principles can work with different: colors other than blue and gold; symbols other than plows, ears of corn, doors; ritual than that which was appealing to the Grange members of the 1920's. Again, consider that different cultures find meaning, attraction and passion in differing expressions of leadership activity, subject matter content, formality and rigidity.

The structure of youth leadership activities matters. More than one structure can work. More than one variation of a student organization is possible.

We cannot be successful with "10x15" trying to replicate what is today – trying to export it to new markets. As much as it seems heretical for agricultural educators to think it – not only will curriculum and instructional approaches have to change but FFA will too. We will need a new version of FFA for the new markets we need to penetrate.

How Can We Possibly Do This?

We are prone to say we can't figure this out. Often our thinking is bound by what we have experienced. Yet, with nothing but good judgment, Newman, McGill, Saunders and Groseclose sat down and said "We must help these 'boys' increase their sense of worth," and did it.

Maybe we need the same kind of fresh start they had. Maybe we need to reinvent what is needed for this new audience we want to serve.

The Gift We Need to Give Succeeding Generations

The first teacher educators drew from non-agricultural education reservoirs of knowledge and insight to create the gift they gave us. They came from education and educational psychology backgrounds and created what was needed for agricultural instruction in that day. They were pioneers.

We owe it to succeeding generations to give them as great a gift as we were given. Agricultural education teachers, supervisors and teacher educators of today must be pioneers if the profession is to meet the ambitious goals of the "10x15" effort. This will be tough. But it is our opportunity to expand instruction in and about agriculture to new audiences. It will take all of our best thinking to figure out how to reinvent our approaches to meet the needs of different students in difference places.

We owe it to unserved audiences who can benefit from modern science-based food, agricultural and environmental instruction to figure this out. We need to become the pioneers with a "can do spirit" who give these new audiences as great a gift as previous pioneers gave us.

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L. H. Newcomb

- Senior Associate Dean and Price Chair; Associate Dean or Senior Associate Dean--18 years.
- Professor and Chair, Department of Agricultural Education--3 years
- Asst, Assoc and Professor – Dept. of AgEd--for a total of 13 years
- Teacher of Vocational Agriculture for 2 years
- Past President of Virginia Association of FFA
- **Total years professional experience--36 years**

Agricultural Education: Meeting Needs of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

by Larry D. Case & Amanda Cloud

Taken from the January 1983 issue--How much change do you see?

The Challenge of the 70's and 80's.

During the 1970's, agricultural policy opened world markets and farming was very prosperous. Demand was great and production was expanded. However, inflation was out of control. Farmers went in debt to buy land and were paying the debt with inflated dollars. This was good until the central bank raised the interest rates as high as 20%, which put the agricultural economy into a tailspin. During the 1980's, farms were lost and agricultural businesses consolidated. Agricultural education (then vocational agriculture) enrollments dropped and programs were closed. National FFA membership was in the low 300,000's. To complicate things even more, a report was released in 1983 entitled "A Nation at Risk" emphasizing the need to reform education. It focused on requiring students to take more academics and did not mention a role for career technical education or any other elective courses. The profession seemed to be going out of business.

How did the profession respond?

The national leadership structure changed. During the early 80's the National Council for Agricultural Education (The Council) was organized. The idea was to bring together leaders, thinkers and visionaries of the profession who were nominated to focus on keeping the instructional program "cutting edge."

The curriculum changed. Under the guidance of the Council, instructional content was broadened to include more applied science. More topic areas were developed such as Food Science and Safety, Animal Welfare, Environmental Science, Water Quality, Aquaculture and Biotechnology

A National study was launched. The Council was able to persuade the US Departments of Agriculture and Education to jointly fund a study on secondary agricultural education. The prestigious Board on Agriculture, a committee under the National Research Council, conducted the study. The resulting report,entitled "Understanding Agriculture, New Directions for Education," helped change the direction of Agricultural Education. The National Research Council, a creditable

group outside of the profession, brought National Focus on the need for educational programs in and about agriculture.

We restated our purpose. With all the changes, the profession tended to lose their sense of purpose and identity. The Council led the profession in developing a series of strategic plans. The first plan helped to solidify and restate what the profession valued. This helped to restore the sense of purpose, and all of the agricultural education organization leaders signed the plan in December of 1989. In 1994-95, the plan was revised and evolved into a National thrust in 1996-1999 entitled "Reinventing Agricultural Education for the Year 2020.

What were the results? These activities resulted in adjustments to the local program content and the enrollments went up. As an indicator, the National FFA membership is at a 28-year high and is expected to reach all time highs.

The Challenges of Today.

Meeting the Needs of Educational Reform. Educational reform is now codified in Federal and State laws. The Federal Law is known as "No Child Left Behind." Currently educational accountability is determined by student achievement scores primarily in the core academic areas and thus places pressure on all elective subjects to justify their existence. This could be a threat to local programs. If the Agricultural Education programs are not seen as contributing to academic and school success, resources will be moved away from these programs.

Meeting the needs of industry. While we are focusing on the educational issues, the agricultural business world is on the move. As in the 70's, the economic picture is looking good for the Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources industries. Related businesses seem to be expanding and the need for qualified workers is increasing. It is important that we look at the information from agribusiness--these businesses can give us compelling information as to the demand of agricultural education students as potential employees.

Agribusinesses of all sizes are looking for individuals who have an understanding and/or background in agriculture. The main concern is finding people who have a true interest in agriculture. We must find a way to attract people who have no agricultural background and help them to develop a true passion and interest in agriculture in order for the industry to succeed.

As educators we need to work with industry to increase the awareness of the opportunities in agriculture across the board.

With a high retirement rate projected, the needs for talent in agriculture will be incredibly high, and if the trend continues, the number of interested, qualified people will be low, leaving the agribusiness industry struggling to fill their positions, and in turn negatively impacting their ability to meet demands of their business.

In short, agricultural education is not producing the number of prepared people to meet the employment demand of agribusiness. We have to face one of our leading issues--we are not increasing the number of schools offering agriculture. If we do not have enough students learning about agriculture and the need for agriculture continues to grow as it has, the agribusiness industry will be forced to think of non-traditional approaches to resolve this talent shortage.

As educators, we need to work with industry to increase the awareness of the opportunities in agriculture across the board. The largest issue facing the agriculture industry as a whole is the lack of knowledge and awareness. Students are not aware of what opportunities are available to them if they go into a study of agriculture; they are not knowledgeable of the type of jobs they could hold, the skills they would receive, and the versatility they would acquire by being involved in agriculture as a career/study major. School administrators, career counselors, and parents also need to be aware.

Once people are knowledgeable

and have a perked interest, the quality of the educational experience at the local levels must also be high quality and stable. Internal groups (Team Ag Ed contingencies) must be aligned on this in order to show a strong, united front that in turn will raise awareness and skill.

How do we respond?

It is obvious we must respond to program quality to address the educational reform of today. It is also obvious that we need more students preparing for a career in agriculture, food and natural resources. We must focus our efforts to address these issues.

A growth and quality goal.

Collectively, the profession is responding by adopting a national growth and quality goal. We believe that by the year 2015, we will need to have 10,000 quality agricultural education programs in place. This is known as the 10X15 initiative. Resources of the 10X15 growth goal are being aligned around 8 key initiatives. The initiatives include: Program Curriculum Standards, Develop Multiple Agricultural Education, Program Data Reporting, Agricultural Educator, Agricultural Education Advocacy, Agricultural Education Brand and Program Funding Strategy.
It is our belief that when these initiatives are completed, we will be successful in addressing the challenges of educational reform and meeting the needs of students and the agricultural industry.

The agricultural education profession has a proven record of meeting the challenges of change. Each time we have become better at serving more students. It is up to each of us to meet our current challenges. The entire profession is challenged to participate in the 10X15 initiative to assure success. We know how to work together, and if we work with the focus of 10X15, success will be ours.

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Larry D. Case

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- *An agricultural student and FFA member-grades 7-12.*
- Taught secondary and adult agriculture , served as vocational director--10 years.
- District Supervisor of Agricultural Education and served as the MO State FFA Association Executive Treasurer--1 year.
- Director of Agricultural Education and served as the Missouri State FFA Advisor--7 years
- **Total years Professional Experience--42 years**

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Amanda Cloud

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- *Agricultural Education high school student*
- *Agricultural Education major at Montana State University*
- *Montana FFA State President*
- *Collegiate FFA Vice President and Secretary,*
- *Young Farmers and Ranchers Secretary*
- *Student Council Rep. & College of Agriculture Student Council*
- **Total years professional experience--1**

THEME ARTICLE

Fifty Years in the Rear View Mirror: An Interview with James E. Christiansen

by T. Grady Roberts

In 1951, a gallon of milk cost 92¢, a loaf of bread cost 16¢, a gallon of gas cost 20¢, the United States had 48 states, Truman was the president, and James Christiansen began his career as an agricultural educator. "Dr. C," as he is affectionately known, graduated from the University of Arizona in 1951 and began teaching agriculture at Gilbert High School, but after two months he was drafted into the Army. Upon discharge in 1953, he began teaching at Tolleson Union High School, moved to Snowflake Union High School, and later to Tempe Union High School, where he taught until 1961. He then spent two years working in Iran helping develop a school for agriculture teachers and extension agents. Upon returning to the United States, he enrolled at The Ohio State University to work on his doctorate. Graduating in 1965, he accepted a position at the University of Florida. In 1968, he moved to Texas A&M University where he has been ever since. He "retired" in 2004 and was bestowed the title of Professor Emeritus.

During his career, he worked with over a thousand undergraduate and hundreds of graduate students in agricultural education, many of whom have risen to prominent positions in agriculture and education around the world. The breadth and longevity of his agricultural education experience provide a perspective that few can match. Recently, I posed a few questions to Dr. C.: What changes have you witnessed in the profession? What do you see as the future for agricultural education? What advice do you have for those following in your footsteps? In his own words, his responses are below.

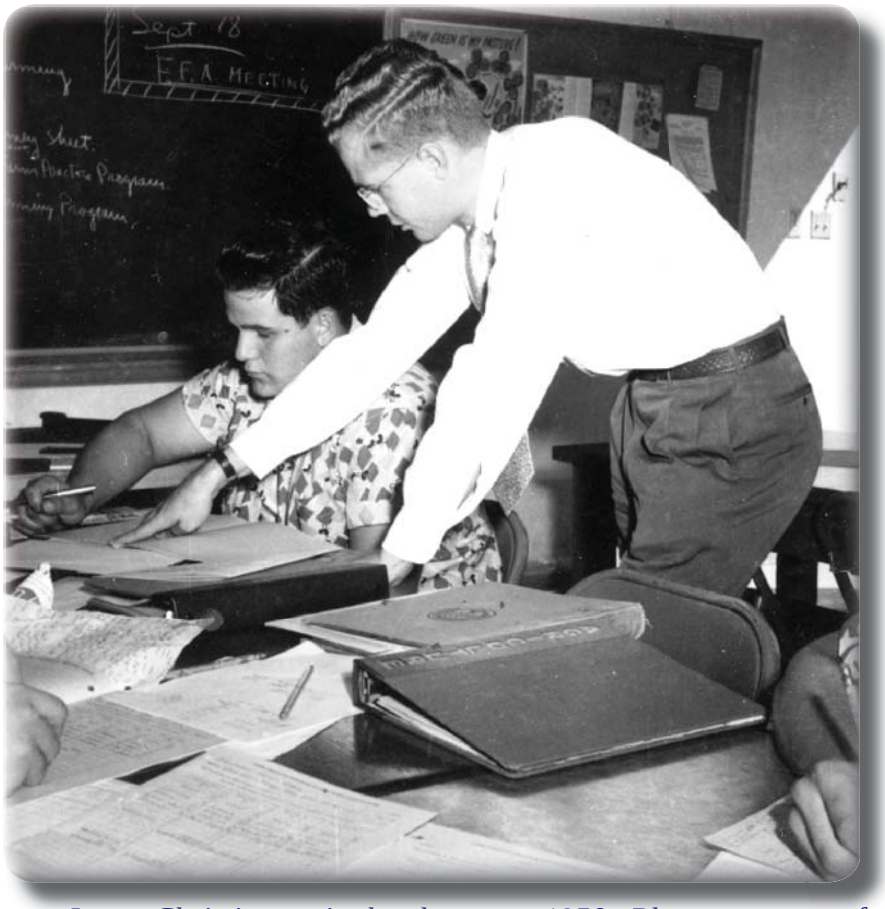
Pick-up sketch courtesy of B. Foster.

What changes have you witnessed in the profession?

1. Agriculture programs being extended from the high school level down to the middle school.
2. More girls enrolling in agricultural science courses in public school programs and more women entering the ranks of higher education in agricultural education.
3. Greater diversity among the students being served in agricultural programs today. Having an agricultural background is no longer a requirement or the norm.
4. Shifting in emphasis away from public school programs in agriculture being geared solely for preparation in production agriculture > to off-farm agricultural programs > to preparation in agriculturally related occupations and > to entrepreneurship development in agriculture.
5. A tendency for the curriculum in agriculture programs to be swinging more toward general education rather than adhering primarily to being a program of vocational education. Put in very simplistic terms, we see today more teaching in agricultural programs on "how does corn grow" (general education) instead of "how to grow corn" (vocational education).
6. The curriculum has moved from the universally applied Ag I, Ag II, Ag III and Ag IV to courses on a variety of specified topics with

many of those courses being elective courses for which a prerequisite course are not required. In the "good old days," a student had to take Ag I before he could take Ag II, etc., and the program was focused primarily on production agriculture. Today, agriculture programs include also an emphasis on development, use, and conservation of natural resources; courses related to safeguarding the environment; non traditional agricultural activities, and so on.

7. Increase in number of high schools devoted to agriculture, such as some of the magnet agricultural high schools seen in several states.
8. Involving local businesses and industries to a greater extent in carrying out programs of agriculture and to provide opportunities for field experiences and internships.
9. Changes in the nature of supervised agricultural experience (SAE) programs.
10. Decrease in numbers of general production agriculture-related competencies and skills possessed by teachers of agriculture today as compared with those held when I started teaching in 1951, but an increase in numbers of teachers with specialized skills.
11. Decrease in truly using local departmental advisory committees.
12. Today, we see very little supervision and/or assistance from the regional or state level as was the case in years past.
13. The student contact loads for teachers has really increased. In the 1950s, the state plans for vocational education in many states considered a full load of students for a single teacher to be between 35 and 45 students. Today, it is not uncommon for a teacher to be responsible for three times that number of students.
14. The state plans for vocational education in most states today don't carry the level of clout and requirements that they did in the 50s, 60s, and even the 70s.
15. State professional associations consistently have remained strong in most states down through the years and have had great impacts on the nature of the programs in their states.
16. Increasingly, programs of agricultural education have adapted to serving the urban students who make up the classes in the program in many, many areas across the country.
17. Rules of bureaucracy, red tape and loads of paper work at the local level seem to have increased over the years as reported by long term teachers.



James Christiansen in the classroom 1950. Photo courtesy of Texas A & M .

What do you see as the future for agricultural education?

Despite the doomsayers who say that production agriculture and

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January/February 2008 Theme & Theme Editors

January/February 2008

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"Sustainable Agriculture—Sustainable Education
***How can we ensure a future for Agricultural Education*?"**

Sustainable agriculture integrates three main goals--environmental health, economic profitability, and social and economic equity. This movement continues to gain momentum in our society. But, *what about the sustainability of Agricultural Education*? Since 1929 this Magazine has served as a reflection of the health and well-being of the Agricultural Education profession. What will we report in 2008?

2008 Subscription Rates to Increase

In an effort to continue to improve the quality of the magazine and cover the rising cost of production, *The Agricultural Education Magazine* will increase subscription rates for the first time since June 1994 when rates increase from $7.00 per year to $10 per year. Beginning in January of 2008, subscription rates will increase as follows:

- Domestic rate — $15 (including mailed copies and password access to issues archived on the web)
- Domestic rate — $12 (hard copies only)
- Domestic rate — $10 (digital access only--password entry)
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The Agricultural Education Magazine has served the profession of agricultural education for eighty years. It has documented the history and evolution of an educational system with humble beginnings in Des Moines, Iowa that is now recognized as the premiere educational systems in the world. The Editing & Managing Board offer our thanks to the subscribers and practitioners that have helped make this publication an integral part of the profession.

agriculturally related occupations are dying, I see a continuing bright future for agricultural education. People have to eat and to use those things that come from agriculture, no matter what may be its way, shape, or form. One can see that programs in agricultural education emphasize dealing with and preparing people, and that recognition is made of the consequences, whether technological, social, cultural, or environmental, and paying attention to those consequences. It is true, however, that we probably do not see as much emphasis on having students examine consequences of engaging in agriculture and agriculturally related activities as we could.

Also, in the future, we have to recognize that agriculture is affected by what happens in the global community and that agricultural programs can affect that global community as well. We are just barely becoming aware of this need. If we examine the nature of globalization, we can see that agriculture and agricultural programs, whether at the secondary education level or the post secondary education level, cannot expect to ignore the effects of globalization.

What Advice do you have for those following in your footsteps?

I hope that agricultural educators can remember that:

1. a good program is built around people, not things;
2. an educator needs to teach people starting at the level of skills and knowledge where the students are, not where the teacher assumes they should be;
3. he or she teaches individual students and not classes to make a difference that counts over the long haul, even though most often teaching does take place in group or class sessions;
4. every student needs to be treated with respect and his or her name is that person's most important possession;
5. most students can accomplish more than they usually think is possible, but they often have to be encouraged to do so;

James Christiansen with student 2007. Photo courtesy of Texas A & M.

6. one can't know everything, but one can find the answers;
7. one accomplishes more by working with people and not over them;
8. there almost always is more than "one way to skin a cat" to solve a problem and accomplish a task;
9. it is usually better to ask forgiveness than it is to ask permission to do something, and one should continually ask himself/herself the "what if" question, what if I try this instead of that; and
10. it truly is more important to teach how to grow corn than it is to teach how corn grows.

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