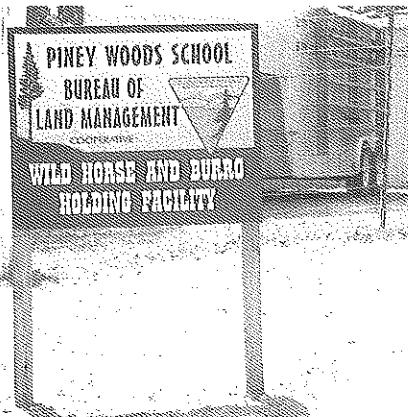
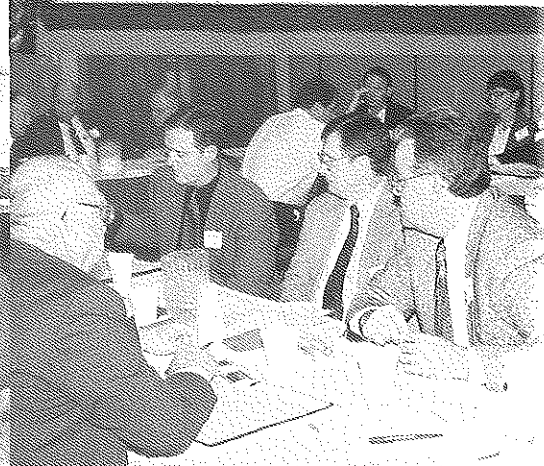
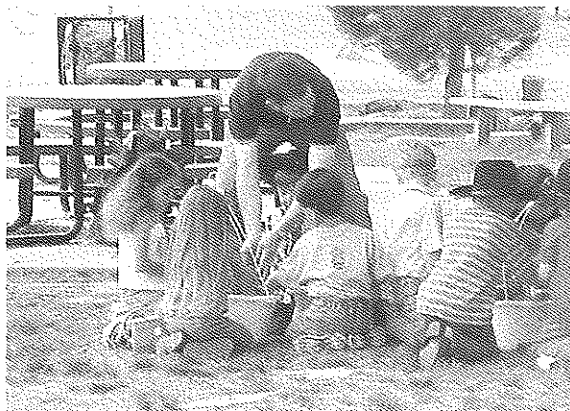
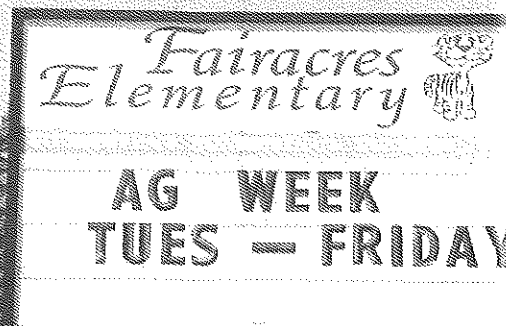


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The Agricultural EDUCATION MAGAZINE

Achieving 2020 Goal 4:

Partnerships and strategic alliances ensure a continuous presence of education in and about agriculture, food, fiber, and natural resources systems.



Building Partnerships and Alliances

By Dean Folkers

The past four issues of the Agricultural Education Magazine have explored three of the four goals of the Reinventing Agricultural Education (RAE) 2020 Project. This issue focuses on the fourth and final goal of partnerships and strategic alliances and serves as the catalyst to ensure the other three goals are accomplished and sustained.

The fourth goal as stated is "Partnerships and strategic alliances ensure a continuous presence of education in and about agriculture, food, fiber, and natural resources systems." The first three goals focus on teacher quality and supply, student access, and agricultural literacy. These all require some level of partnership and strategic alliance to be accomplished.

The strategies to creating alliances are nothing new to agricultural education. The essence of an agricultural education program is tied to the needs of the community and the resources available. What is different about the focus of this fourth and final goal, in our current state of rapid change, is the importance that must be placed on developing relationships and balance that must be found between traditional alliances and new connections.

In This Issue

The articles and authors in this issue focus on a variety of different partnerships or alliances at the local, state, and national levels. Strategies for striking the balance of new and old partnerships are explained. In addition, various strategies or techniques for developing partnerships are highlighted. The common goal of all the articles is to advance agricul-

tural education toward the future.

The approach of RAE 2020's development has centered on the statement, "The best way to predict the future—is to invent it." Inventing this future within a vacuum does not provide sustainability or progress toward accomplishing any goal. With that in mind the examples, suggestions, and demonstrations of partnership development are located throughout the issue of the magazine.

Partnerships and strategic alliances occur at all levels within agricultural education. The articles within this issue were selected to provide perspectives from a combination of stakeholders including local teachers, technical schools, state agricultural education leadership, teacher education, and the agricultural industry.

The Practical Application of Partnerships

Strategic alliances occur at many different levels, but often the focus is at the national level. Creating connections at the national level certainly has a level of merit, but the most beneficial and enduring relationships occur at the local level.

Many people or organizations are tuned into that infamous radio station WIII-FM when approaching new relationships. The "What Is In It For Me station" is always on the air and must be factored into the relationship development process.

Creating partnerships for the sake of doing so is an effort in futility and will result in wasted resources and potentially close the door to future opportunities. Careful consideration must be taken when developing relationships, as they need to be tied to specific objectives and goals.

Therein lies the strength and benefit of every connection.

When I was teaching high school agricultural education at Lakeview High School in Columbus, Nebraska, it only took me four years to figure out (so I am slow) that I could not do everything for everybody. Believe me, I tried. What occurred was a clearer definition of what we do well and developmental strategies that would allow for improvement. The strategic relationships were then built with the school and community partners to accomplish key goals. From this "revelation," the results were extra time, programmatic growth, resource enhancement, and a long list of additional successes most important of which was community ownership.

Make it Happen

The implications of strategic alliances and partnerships are more than a function of some grand RAE 2020 national plan. This goal truly is accomplished at all levels of agricultural education. In fact, I would contend that it might be more important to create these connections at the local level. The key is to make it happen!

Dean Folkers is Teacher Services Team Leader at National FFA Organization, Indianapolis, IN.



Theme: Achieving 2020 Goal 4: Partnerships and strategic alliances ensure a continuous presence of education in and about agriculture, food, fiber, and natural resources systems.

Editorial

Building Partnerships and Alliances.....2
By Dean Folkers

Theme Articles:

Agricultural Education: Preparing For the Era of Strategic Alliances4
By Anna Melodia and Kent Schescke
Partnerships—Secrets To Success8
By Joyce L. Winterton
Patches for the Holes in Our Coveralls 10
By Matthew T. Portillo
Growing Partnerships 12
By John Mulcahy
Strategic Alliances: An Industry Perspective..... 14
By Bud Porter
Wanted: Agriculture Partners 16
By Billy W. Sumrall
Public and Private Partnerships! 18
By Lloyd Bell, Dick Fleming, and Richard Katt
Maintaining Traditional Partnerships 20
By Brenda S. Seevers, Jaime X. Castillo, and Robert M. Torres
A Partnership for a Better Preservice Teacher Education Experience 22
By Robert M. Torres and Jennifer Hopper
Strategic Alliances for Agriscience Programs in the Technical College 24
By Joy A. McMillan

Next Year

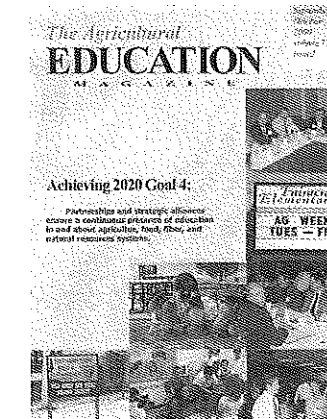
Learning Takes Center Stage for 2001 26
By Robert A. Martin

Joe Scatterscrew

Myrt Flies Off the Handle Back Cover
By E. V. Walton

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Agricultural Education: Preparing For the Era of Strategic Alliances

By Anna Melodia and Kent Schescke



"Partnerships and strategic alliances ensure a continuous presence of education in and about agriculture, food, fiber, and natural resources systems."



The world of agriculture has changed significantly over the past half-century. Fifty years ago, competition was simpler; farms or agricultural industries did not need to excel in all capabilities or participate across the globe. The pace of change in technologies and markets was modest compared with today's activities. In recent years, however, agriculture has become bigger, more intensive, competitive and specialized, both in the developed and much of the developing world. It has developed to such an extent that it can no longer be contained within the traditional definitions of agriculture. It now includes such areas as precision agriculture, agribusiness and agriscience, which in turn have given birth to new fields, specialization, technological advances and global demands that continue to develop at an exponential rate. All of which contributes to a global crisis for an increasingly educated workforce that is able to evolve with the rapid pace of scientific and technological change.

In the United States, agricultural education has worked diligently to evolve and meet the demands of this rapidly changing world. New curricula are developed to ensure students are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge. Professional development opportuni-

ties are provided to update teachers on the latest, cutting-edge research, technology, and certification requirements. Industry helps provide incentives for new and current employees to increase their skill and knowledge base. The question is, can agricultural education continue to keep up with the lightening pace of agricultural advances? Perhaps the answer is yes, but at what cost, and can we truly be successful if we conduct business as usual, managing the same partnerships and resources?

We must continue to build on the strengths and values of agricultural education that stem from our roots as an agrarian democracy. It is one that encourages engagement in a social contract to serve the needs of society and develop new approaches to new challenges. In fact, it is these fundamental strengths and values that help undergird the "Reinventing Agricultural Education for the Year 2020" initiative and its goal of fostering partnerships and strategic alliances to ensure a continuous presence of education in and about agriculture, food, fiber, and natural resources systems. It also provides the clarion call to move forward in new and innovative ways in forging strategic alliances and partnerships within agricultural education.

Acknowledging Our Strengths

First, we must acknowledge the complex network of relationships that comprise the agricultural education model: classroom instruction, supervised agricultural experience, and FFA. For example, agricultural education reaches approximately 800,000 youth annually across the United States. Teachers are not only responsible for content learning, but also, more importantly, contextual learning which requires relationships outside of the classroom in order to provide students with an array of internships, career development opportunities, leadership experiences, and the like. Managing relationships or partnerships is also a critical component of Local Program Success. Involvement of key partners, such as school administrators and business and community leaders can increase resources and enhance support in significant ways for both teachers and students. Yet, being able to forge such partnerships and then manage them are skills often disregarded or devalued. Instead, they are viewed as additional expectations of agricultural education teachers.

However, it is precisely this model of strategic partnerships and alliances that many corporations and industries are voluntarily creating in response to industry demands. At the same time,

one of the strongest dynamic forces driving strategic alliances is the insatiable appetite for technology and a globally-linked world which has forced unlikely partners to collaborate rather than compete with one another. This cooperation has spawned a new type of business entity—a less discrete enterprise with clusters of common activities in the midst of a network of relationships. The goal of this new network is to share knowledge and core capabilities in order to meet the demands of the "customer" and the quest for innovation. This network is the model that has been at the core of agricultural education.

"Growing" Our Own

As we enter this new era of reinventing agricultural education, we must revisit our own foundations and continue to grow our knowledge base and core capabilities to meet the demands for a changing society. One such demand is from government and industry for a more skilled, knowledgeable, and better-prepared workforce. A similar demand comes

from students seeking the education or certification that makes them immediately marketable for careers while preparing them for lifelong learning opportunities.

So, how do we respond? We respond with the same set of values that created our foundation—respect, trust, collaboration, and entrepreneurship. We find potential partners, listen to their needs, find common points of interest, share values and a vision for the future, and are willing to break old paradigms.

An Example: The Green Industry

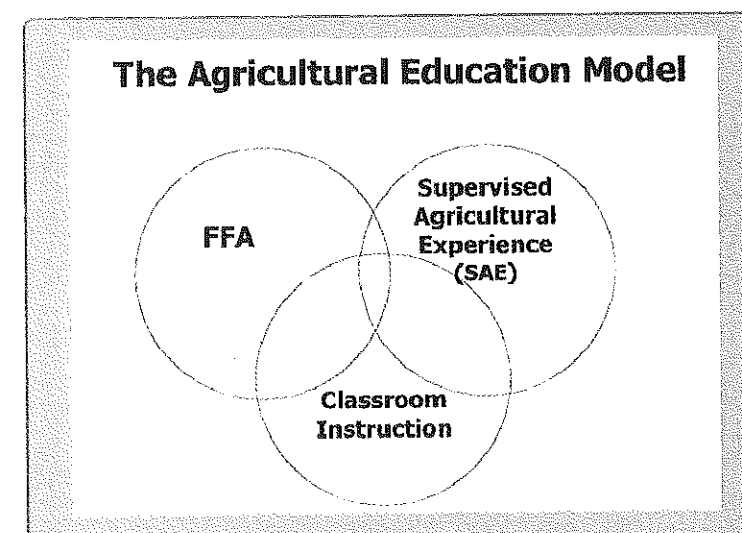
A current example of a developing strategic alliance emerged through a request from members of the "green industry," which includes horticulture, turf development, and landscape management. Concerned with a shrinking labor and talent pool, the green industry was committed to finding ways to increase awareness, education, and expertise in order to continue quality service and innovation in their field. Alone, they could

provide certification and employment opportunities, but they could not develop the networks necessary for a systematic and comprehensive approach that spanned curriculum development to certification and a better-prepared labor force. Through a series of conversations with agricultural education leaders, it became evident that successful strategic alliances are not short-term discrete activities, filling in a hole here or there, primarily where one cannot purchase a capability or build it. Instead, real alliance power comes not from discrete connections, but from utilizing a group of alliances in a concentrated manner that creates a string of interconnected alliances. Therefore, when all of the current and potential alliances were identified, a model was developed (on page 6) that illustrated the integrative nature of agricultural education. The projected outcome: a better-prepared employee.

A Three-Phased Process Model

Perhaps the most important aspect of this model is the developmental process rather than each discrete activity identified. This is important to keep in mind as each component can change when different needs are identified over time. This keeps the emphasis on being a dynamic, rather than static model.

The first phase requires working with industry leaders and educators to design a set of curricular and co-curricular experiences that will provide the knowledge and skills necessary for employment. Such experiences are provided both in and out of the classroom, through instruction as well as experiential learning



Agricultural Education: Preparing for the Era of Strategic Alliances...

(continued from page 5)

community service component critical to this model? In addition to providing hands-on experience, it encourages other "habits of the heart" such as volunteerism, service, and citizenship—important components of character development necessary for long-term employability and life satisfaction.

The second phase reflects the importance of strategic alliances. It creates the connections with teachers in terms of their preparation and professional development. It identifies the role of technology as a delivery channel and a communication vehicle to organizations, industries, and others that may have an interest in the development and core capabilities that

can contribute to the overall development of the curriculum and training.

Phase three is insuring the student connection through a series of opportunities that focus on areas of student development: academic achievement, personal growth career exploration, and leadership development. It also engages them in the field in meaningful ways (e.g., through career development events, proficiencies, and competitions) and provides a recognition and reward system to enhance motivation.

Throughout the system are ongoing evaluation efforts and a comprehensive public relations and communications campaign. Evaluation becomes the vehicle for continuous assessment and improvement of the entire delivery system. An effective evaluation system can identify gaps, as well as strengths and weaknesses, allowing for change and further development. At the same time, the communications campaign continues to build awareness and understanding among current and potential partners, including the students it is attempting to attract to the field.

The end result is a focus on the outcomes of students, skill and knowledge development, certification, and employability. Most importantly, the model strives to illustrate that successful "outcomes" do not develop in an industrial or educational vacuum. They result from a process of necessary and integrated alliances that build on core competencies and mutual support.

What is the Value?

Clearly, this is only one response to an industry request for collaboration to meet its workforce development

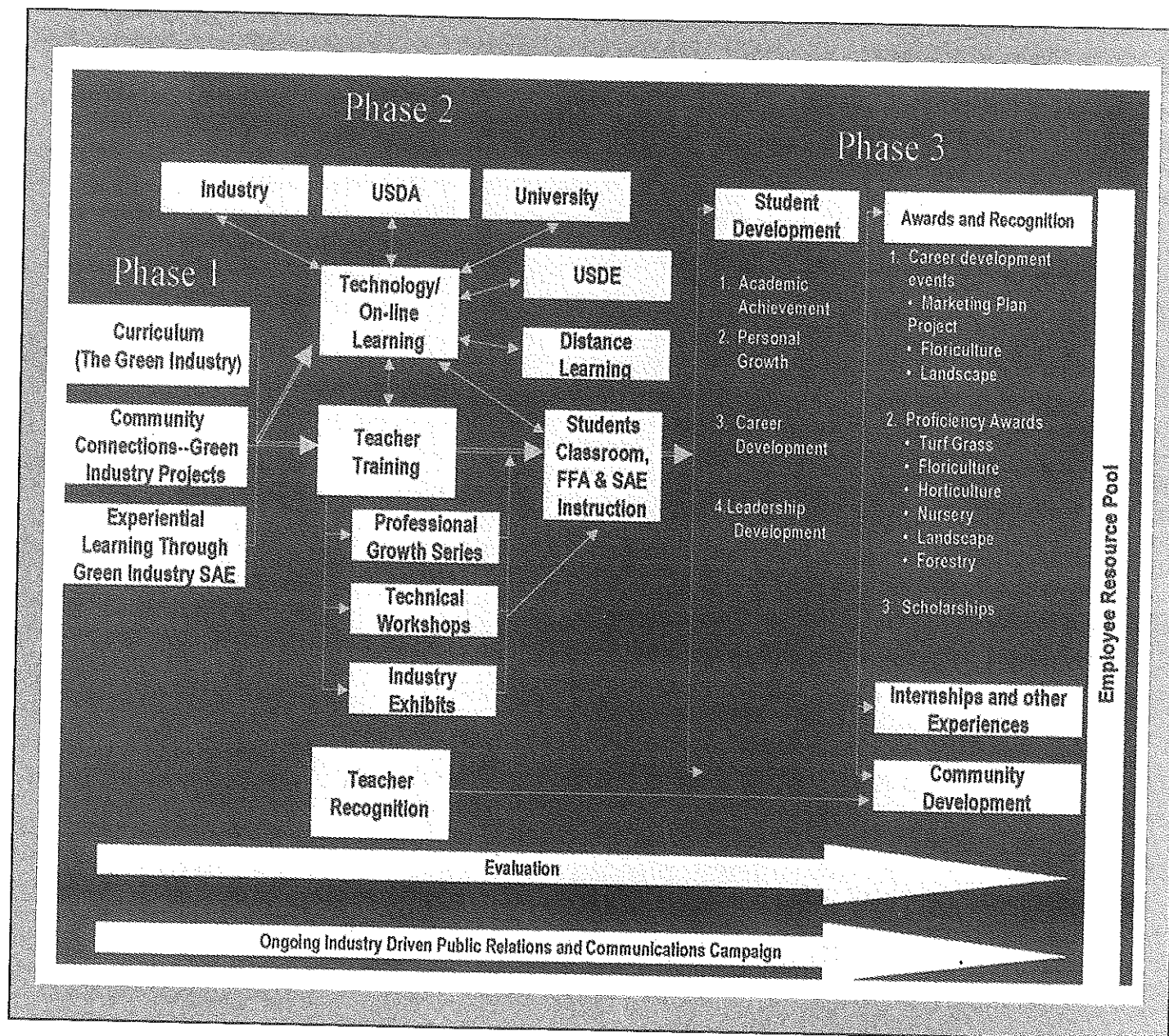
needs. However, it begins to illustrate the complex nature of agricultural education that is often viewed as a single enterprise or educational community. Yes, the industry requests can change. Just as easily, a model could have been created to address biotechnology, international agriculture, or even character education. The content of the connections would have adapted to meet the need, but the requirement for collaborative partnerships would remain the same. This is the enduring legacy of agricultural education that stems from the democratic, agrarian communities that still exist, albeit threatened.

What is the value of creating such models? They serve as a reminder of the strength of agricultural education; they challenge those in the field not to forget the importance of alliances as a resource and ally; they educate others about the complex nature of the educational process; and they challenge all parties to become part of the solution. This is the era of strategic alliances to ensure the future of education in the agriculture, food, fiber, and natural resources systems. Our great opportunity is to harness their power.

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Partnerships—

Secrets To Success

By Joyce L. Winterton

"Think outside of the box." This familiar phrase is commonly heard in brainstorming sessions. However, today's innovators are more likely to respond with the question, "what box?" When developing key partnerships, agriculture educators could benefit by following this same line of questioning. Organizations, companies, and individuals who are not directly involved with agricultural education or even agriculture can be key partners. Partners who do not appear to have a vested interest may be agricultural education's best allies and resources. In today's competitive world, success is as much about who

your partners are—as what product or service you provide.

A good example of "what box" thinking can be found in the experience of USA TODAY. In 1982 when USA TODAY was founded, many predicted it would fail. Those who could not think outside of the box did not see the need for a national newspaper with color, short-concise reporting, consistent format, and graphics. Yet through innovative marketing and partnerships, combined with consistent improvement of the quality, USA TODAY is the nation's number one newspaper with over 6 million daily readers, Monday through Friday. At the same time, the usatoday.com web site records 10 million page views per



day. This persistence in overcoming negative attitudes may sound familiar to agriculture educators. The perception that there are limited job opportunities in agriculture can partly be corrected through successful partnerships. Communication companies like USA TODAY can be valuable partners in developing strategies to overcome negative attitudes about agricultural education programs.

How to Develop Partnerships

There is a six-letter word that is key for successful partnerships. This word is not used as often as it should be in developing and keeping partnerships. It is a word that can mean success or failure early in the process of establishing a partnership. The word is "listen." It is through effective listening that one can understand the needs or hot buttons

Listen

*Through Effective Listening
One Can Understand!*

of a potential partner and how to meet their needs. Too often we think about the needs of our own organization before we think about how we can help the organization or company with which we are looking to partner. The fact that we have two ears and one mouth should be a reminder to listen twice as much as we speak. The results of listening can be a successful collaboration where both partners feel they are winners and will benefit long term from the partnership. Generally, business partners want proof that there will be a mutually beneficial partnership before committing resources or personnel. In fact, an effective partnership strategy is to develop a sound working relationship without any expectations other than "goodwill." *More often than not the good will eventually be returned several times over.* There is truth in the saying "what goes around comes around." It is important to remember that developing successful partnerships is not an overnight process, and that it takes patience and understanding.

The Benefits of Partnering

It has been said that if you have a committee of ten people who all think alike—you do not need nine of them. Diversity in thinking and planning is a benefit to short and long-term goals. Partners who look at issues or challenges that agriculture educators face may suggest additional alternatives or recommendations from their experiences. For example at the time when agricultural education was facing reduced student enrollment, the partnerships with related agriculture industries in the areas of aquaculture,

turf, and landscape management, horticulture, floriculture, and biotechnology helped expand enrollment. Likewise, partnering with organizations or individuals that are perceived as being negative about agricultural education can produce positive results. When agriculture educators expressed concern about school counselors encouraging students not to enroll in agricultural education programs, the National FFA through the Partner Development Team joined the American School Counselors Association (ASCA) and became a member of the ASCA Business and Education Alliance. When ASCA needed to print a publication on how school counselors should be involved in School-to-Work initiatives, National FFA used its corporate relationships to have the publication printed at no cost to ASCA. Subsequently, when National FFA wanted to provide information to school counselors on the breadth of job opportunities related to agricultural education programs, the ASCA leadership scheduled two National FFA officers to address the state presidents and presidents-elect. As a result, there have been increased opportunities to reinforce to school counselors the importance and value of agricultural education programs.

A Job Never Done

The challenge with successful partnerships is that it is a job that is never done—personnel change, companies are consolidated with new leadership, organizations are reorganized. Thus, there are always opportunities to build support for partnerships and expand them. It is

probably safe to assume that most agricultural education teachers/FFA advisors do not need something else to do. The work of developing partnerships can be shared. Part of the secret of successful partnerships is to utilize an advisory committee to plan and implement partnerships. It is also helpful to use the "secret weapon"—let your business partners and students be the ones who do presentations to school, district, community, and state leaders. Successful partnerships are a valuable resource to enhance the current and future support for agricultural education and FFA programs.

Joyce L. Winterton is the Associate Director of Education for USA TODAY Arlington, VA.



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Patches For the Holes in Our Coveralls

By Matthew T. Portillo

"Oh terrific! Another article describing how I need to do more. I am already up to my clippers in livestock shows. I can't even visit all of my students that have SAE projects. What I need is more time in the day, better administrative support, and a student-teacher to teach my classes while I run my errands."

Relax, PETA says milk is bad for you, "Got Beer?"

In 1988, the National Research Council showed agricultural education had holes in its favorite coveralls with the publication of *Understanding Agriculture: New Directions for Education*. Ten years later in 1998, The National Council for Agricultural Education (1998) described how to patch the holes in our favorite coveralls with the publication of *A New Era in Agriculture: Reinventing Agricultural Education for the Year 2020* (RAE 2020).

Goal four of RAE 2020 focused on the holes caused by an absence of partnerships and strategic alliances. Objectives of goal four suggested to sew on patches that will "ensure a continuous presence of education in and about agriculture and natural resources."

The First Patch: Positive Working Relationships

Cooperation
Collaboration
Teamwork
Networking

In the article, *Getting Serious About Strategic Alliances*, Kirk Astroth (1991) claims "a frontier

mentality continues to exert an important influence on the value system and management practices of many organizations." For Astroth, this "frontier mentality" is likened to the cowboy hero at the end of a movie riding off alone into the sunset. The cowboy prefers to be alone or with a few trusted pals. Is agricultural education a lone cowboy living day-to-day relying on rugged individualism or just a few pals?

Today's buzzwords like "cooperation," "collaboration," "teamwork," and "networking" have circled the wagons of frontier individualism (Astroth, 1991). For agricultural education, what does this then mean? It means that teaching institutions, secondary agricultural educators, and agricultural businesses need to re-enforce the communication lines between each other, not just at the national level, but more importantly, at the local level.

RAE 2020 suggested the first patch should develop positive working relationships with multiple stakeholders in order to build lines of communication and provide a diverse workforce. Whether you are a secondary agricultural teacher, a teacher-educator, or employed in the agricultural sector, identifying who your stakeholders are and developing positive working relationships are paramount for success.

This is not an easy task when relying on a do-it-alone attitude. Identifying stakeholders and developing positive working relationships with others is time consuming and difficult. However, there exist ample opportunities throughout the workweek that are not effectively used. Utilize those rugged individualism skills and aggressive effort to shore up your base

supporters at every opportunity. Remember, those coffee shop talks, field conversations, and cajoling when purchasing equipment parts are important power lunches. Remember, those boring and long-winded school meetings can serve as an ideal opportunity to communicate with others you normally would not encounter. Remember that students offer a lot about themselves during conversations. Students can act as lightning rods for communication between you and others.

The Second Patch: Broad-Based Coalition

Collaborate
Develop
Disseminate

RAE 2020 suggested a second patch made up of a broad-based coalition of groups and organizations is required. This type of patch is needed to collaborate, to develop, and to disseminate contemporary agriculture and natural resources curricula for all students.

"Sounds good, but I don't have the time to organize more meetings, make cold calls, or sit on another committee."

Empowering your stakeholders and providing them with the opportunity to act goes along with developing partnerships and strategic alliances. For Webb (1989), the greatest obstacle for Extension to overcome is tradition. "While we've often talked about cooperation with other partners, we've been afraid to genuinely work

with others in effective alliances to attack major issues" (Webb, 1989). In the same manor, tradition is the greatest obstacle for agricultural education. Agricultural education must overcome the tradition of a go-it-alone mentality. Agricultural education is not the sole beneficiary to producing a student prepared to enter the workforce, nor the sole keeper of knowledge for curriculum.

Fowler (1991) asked what was the relationship between Extension and the private sector. The private sector is a necessary member of the team to solve problems for existing and new challenges in order to make up for financial constraints (Fowler, 1991). For agricultural education and the private sector, "there are other areas where the public/private agenda involves mutual interests and a need exists for collaborative effort" (Fowler, 1991). The private sector requires a pool of qualified applicants, a chance to evaluate employees in working settings prior to hiring, a reliable source for skilled labor, an ability to reduce turnover of entry-level employees, and an opportunity to influence curriculum development to meet industry requirements (Bremer and Madzar, 1995).

In short, agricultural education should recognize that broad-based coalitions of groups and organizations are needed to collaborate, to develop, and to disseminate contemporary agricultural and natural resources curricula for all students. Next to an ill-prepared student, these broad-based groups and organizations stand the most to loose. Their economic and social sustainability is inherently attached to their ability to control the factors of production. Let us then involve others in the production of a skilled worker.

The Third Patch: Strengthen the System

Strengthen
Benefit
Support

Material for the third patch would strengthen the system of public and private support for agricultural education. Huber (1993) asked, "What would a successful academic/industrial partnership accomplish?" For Huber, "a successful partnership should produce benefits for all partners." However, Huber stated there exists three factors that influence successful or failed partnerships and strategic alliances. First, people are the most important factor in which there must exist a primary mutual interest. In other words, the goals and objectives between the partnerships and strategic alliances must be beneficial to each other.

The second factor that influence partnerships and strategic alliances are resources. These resources can be financial or the expertise of others. Failure to secure these resources may be due to a lack of understanding of the benefits to be received, not knowing how to apply for grants offered by private corporations or local government, or the lack of establishing positive working relationships.

Lastly, the third factor of a successful partnership is time. Time is money in business and time constraints in academia are different than business. In order to strengthen the system for public and private support, goals and objectives should be

established which benefit all partners with tangible results.

The Fourth Patch: Shared Vision, Mission, and Goals

Vision
Mission
Goals

By sewing a fourth patch made of a shared vision, mission, and goals between agricultural education and stakeholders, partnerships and strategic alliances become preventive in approach and strategic in nature. Dare (1996) described this preventive approach and strategic alliance as a blend of Education and Human Resource Development (HRD). Preventative HRD would benefit education with the strategy of supplying a skilled workforce for the private sector. "The end result might well be the development of more effective and efficient workers for the work place of tomorrow" (Dare, 1996). The advantages would be to the individual, the organization, and for education.

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(continued on page 13)

Growing Partnerships

By John Mulcahy

"J.P. Morgan buys his partners, I grow mine."

Andrew Carnegie

The mission of Reinventing Agricultural Education for the Year 2020 is to "prepare students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in the global agriculture, food, fiber, and natural resources systems." That is a tall order and a particularly formidable task for one teacher, one teacher educator, one FFA executive secretary, or one state supervisor. No one can do it alone. As long ago as 1992, Professor Ed Osborne reminded agricultural educators that "the local program development work that needs to be done in agricultural education cannot be accomplished by an agriculture teacher working in isolation."

It will take a "village" to accomplish this mission and that village must include partners. In years past when speaking of partners our tendency was to focus on business and industry. In

1995, the *Agricultural Education Magazine* devoted an entire issue to business and industry partners. To be sure, our partners in business and industry are essential players as we strive to accomplish the mission outlined above. In recent years, however, we have come to understand that the term "partners" belongs to anyone who can influence our programs for better or worse. As recently, as May 2000, *Making a Difference* devoted an issue to building partnerships. It is clear from this publication and many others that the term "partners" includes business and industry representatives but goes much further.

It Begins With a Plan

If we accept the premise that it is impossible to achieve success without the assistance of others, then the question of "how does one begin" is

the logical rejoinder. As in all things, it begins with a plan. At Peoria High School, we began by developing a strategic and tactical plan for our agricultural education program. Using categories such as student achievement, safety, equity, professional development, communications, organizational culture, funding, growth, technology, and partnerships, we developed goals for what we wanted our program to be by the year 2010. In addition to goals, we also developed criteria for measuring our success. We invited parents, administrators, students, and local business people to participate in the process. With a plan in place, we were now ready to seek the help and assistance of partners. Like many before us, we defined partners as anyone who could say "yes" or "no" to our plan. Students began to make lists of agribusinesses near their homes. Teachers solicited mailing lists from the Chamber of Commerce, commodity groups, professional organizations, education associations, civic groups, alumni, politicians, government employees, ad infinitum.

Invite Them and They Will Come

Once the lists were developed and put in a database we invited our perspective partners to visit our program. We hosted a breakfast with the theme "Making Connections." The breakfast featured a sumptuous meal, a 20-minute program and a tour of our facilities. The program outlined our strategic plan and gave examples of how partners might assist us in making the plan a reality. Attendees were asked to

complete a brief survey that asked how we can help them and how they might help us. The results were overwhelmingly positive. Ideas for how we could help them provided us with community service projects, internships, and employment opportunities to keep our students busy for years. In return, partners from all walks of life offered to do everything from purchasing the plants in our nursery to teaching classes.

The Path of Life is Paved With Good Intentions

Follow-up is a key piece if "contacts" are to become "partners." Partners must be cultivated and grown or they will remain only names in a database. Following the breakfast, we began to meet with various partners to revise our strategic plan. Business leaders helped us to shape the direction of our career and technical education curricula. Citizens formed a foundation and began to raise money for educational and travel scholarships. Government employees and local politicians apprised us of grants and supported our applications for the same. And everyone began to ask us to participate in community service projects of all kinds.

Beware the Double-Edge Sword

As with many things, there is some good and some bad to working with partners. Clearly the good outweighs the bad, but it is well to be mindful of the fact that when you invite partners to play a role in your program they will rightfully expect results. Be prepared to be held accountable. When partners invest valuable time and resources in your program, they expect to see positive results. These results can take many forms including improved facilities, placement of graduates in local

businesses, and community service. Partners may pressure you to subordinate your mission to theirs. While these situations are rare, they do occur. Keep the department mission in mind, learn to say "no" occasionally and your program will prosper.

We Grow Our Partners

Growing partners is an ongoing process, one that requires diligence and constant attention. It requires a plan and daily attention to that plan. Start growing your partners...one at a time.

Patches for the Holes in Our Coveralls...

(continued from page 10)

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Matthew T. Portillo is a Graduate Teaching Associate at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK.



Agricultural Education student, Bonnie Allen describes the biotechnology program at Peoria High School to a businessman at the Arizona Biotechnology Symposium.

Strategic Alliances: An Industry Perspective

By Bud Porter

Imagine that somewhere in the U.S. right now, a boy or girl has just completed a day at grade school. The child is not yet aware of the wide range of career choices still yet to be made sometime in the future.

Imagine also that somewhere around the globe right now, two companies involved in the agriculture industry are discussing a merger, a plan that would bring together the very best in both organizations to change their segment of the agriculture industry forever.

Now imagine that the young grade school student grows older and graduates from high school and then college, with a deep desire to work for that large international agricultural corporation.

Finally, imagine that because the student was introduced to agriculture education through programs such as FFA, that he or she achieves a successful career with the large international agricultural corporation.

You don't need much imagination to know that the entire story is well grounded in reality. Indeed, students are provided a full set of career choices in today's world; there is a plethora of mergers and acquisitions in the agriculture industry; and activities such as FFA will certainly improve a young person's potential.

Perhaps never in the history of agriculture have things changed at the rapid pace experienced today. No matter which way you turn, companies in every segment of agriculture are in the midst of redefining markets and business partners to include all or most of the global village in which we live.

Some companies are merging to gain economies of scale. Others are forming joint ventures or strategic alliances to reach out across international borders. And, indeed, the producer today must think globally more than anytime in the past.

Whatever the tactic, the state of agriculture today is much different than it was in the recent past and will most definitely be different again in the near future. Importantly, this also impacts agricultural education.

I personally believe it is absolutely vital for leaders in private industry to help mold the future of agriculture education. This active role will benefit both their individual company as well as the entire agriculture industry. Appropriate support of educational programs and student mentoring is a wise strategy.

That's why, for instance, that John Deere dealers support local FFA chapters. As well, John Deere is a major contributor to the national FFA. This is a sensible investment since it aligns the company with the future leaders of agriculture.

Relationships, formed during the early years of a student's exploration into the business of agriculture, will most likely position John Deere well with the students who are likely to be future employees, customers or key decision makers somewhere in the agriculture industry.

There is a growing need for this level of integration between the interests of private industry in agriculture and the FFA and other activities in agriculture education. This continuous presence will help steer some outstanding students into agriculture and related areas. It will give encour-

agement for the best accounting students to work for an agriculture-related enterprise; for the best business leaders to work in agriculture; and for those who will be tomorrow's producers to be best equipped for that challenge.

There is an age-old frustration for young people. They are often told that they do not have the experience required for a particular job. At the same time, private industry can lament, "Where are all the young people who are motivated to work in agriculture?"

Only through active involvement in agriculture education can these two dilemmas be solved. There is a responsibility we have as educators and as private industry to ensure we are proactively creating an abundance of interest in agriculture careers.

This process is much like the harvest. Proper funding is required of course through such programs as the FFA Foundation. Then, there is the preparation of the soil that takes place when we make sure local education efforts such as FFA chapters are well equipped and staffed to produce the harvest.

Finally we plant the seed and nurture the student throughout the growing cycle.

I am familiar with some examples that work in this area. At John Deere, we established programs with local community colleges to provide the appropriate skills required for individuals to work in John Deere dealerships.

The initial career partnership program, called Ag Tech, was started in 1988 at Southeast Community College in Milford, Nebraska. Now,

19 colleges in the U.S. and Canada offer Ag Tech two-year associate degrees.

Students spend about half their time on campus and the other half as an intern employee at the dealership. It's real hands-on experience for the student and for the employer and it helps encourage many students to begin a career in the sales and service of agricultural equipment.

In another activity, John Deere also offers internships for four-year college students. Students begin in the summer after their freshmen or sophomore years. Each summer, these students have an opportunity to work for John Deere and to grow in the responsibilities they handle. Some 300 students are just completing their summer education right now at John Deere locations across North America.

This experience will help students see that technology is a significant part of agriculture, that global perspectives are part of agriculture and that agriculture needs the very best talent to succeed. This harvest of the finest talent, of the development of our young people, is our responsibility.

Bud Porter is Retired Senior Vice President, North America Marketing, of John Deere and Company, Moline, IL. (no photo)

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WANTED:

Agriculture Partners

By Billy W. Sumrall

All educators are interested in preparing our students for the best and brightest future possible, right? How do we achieve this goal? What obstacles are out there? Many of us can relate to horror stories of trying to foster the growth of our programs and the success of our students. Is there an answer to the madness of growth with all of the extra responsibilities that are demanded with our jobs from school administration and the ever-changing role of education today? How do we cope with the less than desirable outlook of agriculture in this new millennium? Are we fighting a losing battle?

I feel that there is an answer to all of the above questions. The role of agriculture educators is challenging to say the least, but for the most part, that is why we chose this profession... the challenge, the love of agriculture, and the joy of working with youth. Life is Good!

Imagine, if you will, that we can roll back the clock and we are sitting in the Freshman seat and needed to take a pre-test. The subject is agricultural education. The pre-test is as follows:

Pre-test Agriculture Education and the Future of our Program

1. What is beyond the doors of my classroom? Is there really life out there?
2. Is anyone really interested in what I do?
3. Does anyone really care about the future of agriculture?
4. Do people care about the future of our youth?
5. How can I improve my classroom and laboratory?
6. Is there any way to gain academic as well as financial support?
7. How do I provide learning experiences for my students regardless of the size of my community or school?
8. My students are not wealthy; what can I do to help them see the world?
9. Is there a way to improve the quality of education in my classroom?
10. Am I really supposed to do all of this alone?

If you are a first year or relatively new teacher, these are some very hard questions to answer. Even if you have been in agriculture education for some time, in a small program or one that is hard pressed for resources, the answers can be hard. Sometimes the hardest part of improving our programs is being honest with ourselves. We as educators need to look at our programs and ourselves. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of both.

So, what should I do then? Take a long hard look around, and what do you see? The science instructor down the hall, the administrator in the front office, the local extension agent, the agencies in the state, the universities down the road and out of state, the organizations committed to agriculture, the corporations and foundations that are committed to education and agriculture. This one sentence is loaded with resources. The question now is, how do I make it work?

Making it Work

Let me share some information about our program. I work at The Piney Woods School in Piney Woods, MS. The school is one of four historically black, private, boarding schools in the United States. Our enrollment is open to all races. We have 300 students from seventh through twelfth grades. The student population originates from 29 different states, three foreign countries and reside in rural communities to sprawling inner cities. That is diversity! Most of the students don't have any prior knowledge of agriculture. We teach three classes, Introductory AgriScience, AgriScience, and Advanced AgriScience, which we tweaked to provide the appropriate education to our 11-12 grades. Our enrollment in agriculture is about 45 students per year. Our students are engaged in several aspects of agriculture education, CDE's, and work experiences.

We have had as many as 29 students at one time, particularly in the summer, engaged in internships. These range from summer programs at universities, internships in USDA offices, summer work programs, and collaborations with organizations and other schools (Arkansas Land and Farm Development Corporation and the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences).

How have we accomplished this with such a small program? By answering the questions in the pre-test and being honest with ourselves in defining our strengths and weaknesses.

We contact people in the various agencies and ask if there are any internships and possible collaborative efforts. The answer to that question may surprise you. Many agencies, organizations, universities, and corporations as well as private entities are eager to form new partnerships with educational institutions. Many of our students have had the opportunity to work with research scientists at universities as well as learn from mentor farmers and para-professionals in many areas of agriculture.

Agriculture is an area that is difficult to acquire funding—especially at the high school level. However, there are several programs out there that are looking for bright young people to provide educational opportunities. They make the commitment to work with these young people and fulfill their own quest to acquire potential students in their agriculture programs. This is an excellent opportunity for young people to explore new academic adventures and experience college while still in high school. The world is a classroom in itself.

Connecting With Agencies

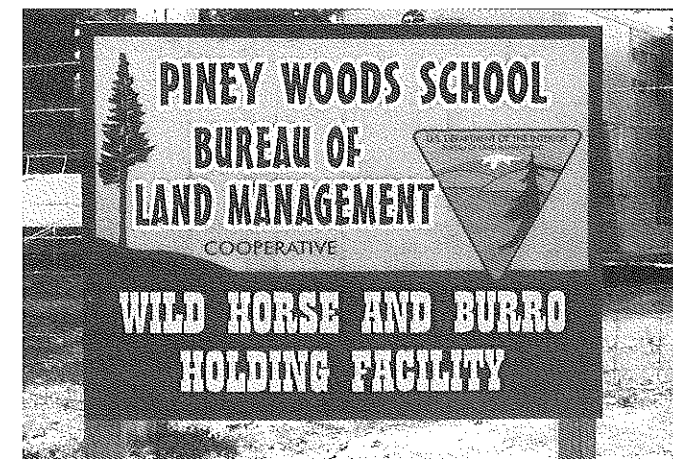
Another area in which we have enjoyed success is in partnerships. One such partnership is with the Bureau of Land Management. This

has evolved from assistance with one of our science classes as resource persons, to a full Environmental Science curriculum for the students. In the Agriculture Department, we have entered into an agreement to serve as a Satellite for the Wild Horse and Burro program.

We feed and maintain some of the animals here on our farm. This allows for the students to experience some environmental issues first hand... the preservation of some of God's most beautiful creatures. It also opens the door to resource people that can teach environmental issues, equine management and provides positive adult role modeling for students. This partnership has afforded many benefits to our program and our students. Probably the greatest benefit is the friendships that have been fostered with our school and students.

Commercial Connections

Our program has been blessed with interested individuals who have helped improve our educational climate. This has ranged from assistance in environmental education with the introduction of an anaerobic digester in our swine lagoon (great public relations and agriscience project) to beginning construction of an aqua-center that will focus on catfish, crawfish, talapia, and fresh water shrimp. These improvements have come about by promoting our program and students. Our doors are open to visitors all the time. Whenever visitors come, our students are allowed and encouraged to show off their hard work and commitment. The student is the best public relations tool

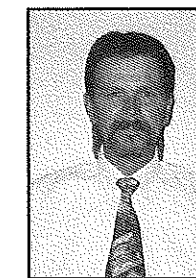


for a program. The student is the heart of what any program is about. The necessity of improving education and supporting the program both academically and financially become very real when students are telling the story.

Wanted

Many of the successes of our program and students could not possibly be carried out without the benefit of partners and collaborative efforts of our supporters. When you consider the benefits of mentors, resource persons, academic programs, financial support, public relations, and friendships, how can you not seek partnerships?

Billy W. Sumrall is with Piney Woods School, Piney Woods, MS



Public and Private Partnerships!

By Lloyd Bell, Dick Fleming, and Richard Katt

What started as two initiatives involving public and private entities in Nebraska has resulted in the development of the Governor's Task Force on Agriculture and Natural Resources Education.

Both initiatives were funded by grants from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Michigan. One went to The Reinventing Agriculture Education for the Year 2020 Project that was coordinated by the Nebraska Department of Education. The other went to the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to establish the Nebraska Network 21 (NN21), a group of people working together to creatively meet the learning needs of Nebraskans in the 21st century.

Among seven action teams appointed by NN21 was the Visionary Food Systems Curricula Action Team. This action team convened a Summit on Reinventing Agriculture and Natural Resources Education on Feb. 10, 1998. More than 100 Nebraskans attended. They represented the interests of agricultural production, secondary education, extension

education, agribusiness, government, and post secondary education.

Those attending the summit recognized the changing social and economic conditions in which agriculture operates and further recommended that such a gathering should continue in order to:

- ◆ Provide continuous and ongoing interaction between those involved and interested in agriculture and natural resources education.
- ◆ Promote collaboration with other disciplines where appropriate and form partnerships for educational delivery with other entities having similar interests and goals.
- ◆ Encourage use of technology to a greater extent and to extend resources and expertise to learners.

In an effort to keep the idea moving forward, 26 participants in the Summit volunteered for follow-up action and formed a Steering Committee. They appointed an Annual Meeting Committee, a Legislative Committee, and a Finance Committee.

Based on recommendations, the Steering Committee adopted the mission and goals below.

Mission

To provide the leadership to integrate agricultural literacy into the lives of all Nebraskans from pre-kindergarten throughout life and to stimulate the preparation of a more diverse, competitive, and productive workforce for our agriculture and natural resources systems to enhance the well-being of the state and its citizens.

Goals

- 1 Facilitate dialogue between diverse stakeholders involved in agriculture and natural resources.
- 2 Gather and disseminate information and provide quality education through a wide variety of delivery methods that are relevant to current and future needs of people as well as agriculture and natural resources.
- 3 Advocate for systems, partnerships, and alliances that enhance educational programs, opportunities, and activities in agriculture and natural resources.

The Annual Meeting Committee organized Summit II which was held Nov. 19, 1998 in Lincoln. Summit II speakers focused on the need for a trained workforce to expedite economic development and demonstration of seamless education programs to take advantage of expertise and technology in agriculture and natural resources education. The more than 100 persons who attended Summit II reaffirmed the mission and purposes of this effort and urged action. Based on a Finance Committee report, those activities would be financed by grants, contributions, state funds, in-kind contributions, and volunteers.

The Legislative Committee proposed a group that would maintain broad-based support for lifelong learning in and about agriculture and

natural resources and set a goal for establishing a state task force for this purpose. The idea was presented to Governor Mike Johanns who subsequently appointed the Governor's Task Force on Agriculture and Natural Resources Education.

The dedication of Task Force members has followed a path of defining vision to address their mission and purposes. This began with a briefing of the background work leading up to the formation and naming of the Task Force. Also included in this briefing was an overview of the current state of agricultural and natural resources education in Nebraska. At each step of the process, interaction between Task Force members occurred and led, through their feedback, to the next step. Through this interaction and feedback procedure, subsequent meetings led the Task Force to develop a public relations plan for agriculture and natural resources education, as well as a plan of action to develop essential learning for K-12 which relate directly to Nebraska Science Standards. This learning would be extensions to the current 7-12 curriculum frameworks developed by the Nebraska Department of Education and the UNL Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication. Presently, plans are being developed to secure funding for these efforts through grants and legislative appropriations.

In his address to the Task Force on May 18, 2000, Governor Johanns said "I see this Task Force being able to play an important role in at least three key areas: (1) Making the general public more aware of agriculture and the importance of sound agricultural policy; (2) Educating children and young people about agriculture and the opportunities for

them in this industry; and (3) Providing correct and complete information to the public about current issues that may be controversial or cause for public concern or confusion."

What Has Been Learned Thus Far?

1 It was critical to the success of this effort to early on select a representative cross section of stakeholders in agriculture and natural resource education.

2 During the process it was very important to allow for stakeholder discussion and interaction to determine subsequent actions.

3 The appointment of a facilitator to coordinate the dissemination of meeting action, follow-up on committee recommendations, set upcoming agendas and generally serve the role of an administrative assistant was critical.

4 Achieving the status of a Governor's Task Force established credibility, which allowed immediate recognition to all audiences.

The Future

The formation of the Governor's Task Force on Agriculture and Natural Resources Education represents the collaboration of many partners interested in the promotion of agricultural literacy and assurance of a diverse, competitive, and productive workforce for our agriculture and natural resource systems. It will serve as a central "clearinghouse" through which emerging information can be efficiently distributed to stakeholder groups as well as the public, and through which stakeholder groups can direct concerns for the improvement of agricultural and natural resource literacy. This collaboration of partners brings together ideas, perspectives, and resources to address issues that obviously would not be possible as single entities.

It is anticipated that in the future the role of the Task Force will become more formalized. Along with the role of information distribution, it will serve as a support mechanism to change in the agricultural and natural resource literacy movement. The support provided through such a partnership will provide a greater degree of confidence in stakeholder groups and individuals and a greater credibility with the general public.

For more information and continuing updates on progress and activities, the Task Force has established a web site at this http://www.unl.edu/aglec_govtfagr/index.html address.

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Governor's Task Force on Agriculture and Natural Resources Education members. (Far left) Barbara Batie, Lexington, Governor Johanns, Lincoln, Gary Bergman, Lancaster County, and Chuck Pohlman, Norfolk.

Maintaining Traditional Partnerships

By Brenda S. Seevers, Jaime X. Castillo, and Robert M. Torres

Establishing partnerships and strategic alliances has long been the cornerstone to developing successful programs at national, state, and local levels. Strategic goal four of *A New Era in Agriculture: Reinventing Agricultural Education for the Year 2020* (1999) identifies this effort as a top priority area. As one of the four goals, establishing partnerships and strategic alliances will ensure our growth and success into the 21st century and beyond. Seeking out and forging new partnerships and strategic alliances will contribute to the planning and delivery of quality instruction and experience students receive in our programs. While new partnerships will strengthen our community ties, we cannot afford to forget our traditional partnerships.

The Cooperative Extension Service (CES) has been a traditional partner of agricultural education since its inception and creation through the Smith Lever Act. Language in the *Strategic Directions of the Cooperative Extension System* (1997) embraces the use of partnerships and alliances for program delivery. Partnering together, public school agricultural education and CES mutually benefit. In light of this, New Mexico secondary agricultural education and 4-H programs have sought to forge partnerships in order to strengthen and enhance educational programs. Moreover, these partnerships are grounded in administrative support.

Jesse Holloway, State Director of 4-H Youth Development in New Mexico stated that "it is imperative for agricultural teachers and 4-H agents

to work together for the betterment of New Mexico's youth." Jack Wylie, principal of Clayton, NM High School suggests that partnerships among public school agricultural education and 4-H youth development efforts influence more effective educational outcomes in both program areas. Evidence of administrative support for partnership and collaboration among public school agricultural education and 4-H youth development is reflected in the philosophies of agricultural education teachers and 4-H agents in New Mexico.

Veteran agricultural education instructor, Dale Mitchell of San Jon High School, suggested that if agricultural education and 4-H maintained a strong partnership a win-win situation for both programs would result. Conversely, lack of strong partnerships would yield a lose-lose situation for youth enrolled in the programs. Mitchell added that in order for agricultural education and 4-H youth development partnerships to be successful, there must be mutual agreement among teachers and agents and respect for one another's programs. Warren Metzger, 4-H Youth Development Agent in Quay County stated that a natural partnership exists among agricultural education and 4-H youth development. Metzger suggested that agricultural education instructors and 4-H agents interact with a lot of the same people. Therefore, working together facilitates the communication of the same message among clientele. Following are some examples of how public school agricultural education and 4-H youth development programs do and

or could do to align their programs to enhance educational opportunities for youth.

Sharing a Common Vision

The FFA Mission states "FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education" (National FFA Organization, 2000). The 4-H vision statement indicates that "4-H is a world leader in developing youth to become productive citizens and catalysts for positive change to meet the needs of a diverse and changing society" (National 4-H Council, 1991).

Both organizations share the vision that through the positive growth and development of youth, both the world today and tomorrow will be a better place. Recognizing that common strengths and a shared vision exist maximizes the potential for agricultural education and Extension to be natural partners. The following are some suggestions for building and maintaining healthy partnerships.

Get Acquainted

Make the time to get to know who your potential partners are. Agricultural education teachers and Extension professionals can begin by making the effort to understand each other's program. Suggestions include:

- ♦ If you do not know the agent(s) in your county, introduce yourself.
- ♦ Visit the county CES office.
- ♦ Extend your resources by using publications and materials

developed by the CES and Agricultural Experiment Stations.

- ♦ Attend programs and activities sponsored by one another.
- ♦ Identify shared participants, alumni, and sponsors (collaborate on needs rather than compete and exhaust local resources).
- ♦ Identify personal and program strengths and resources for collaboration.

Working Together

For successful collaboration and partnerships to exist, trust and mutual respect must be fostered. Trust and respect can only occur once the effort has been made to understand and value the programs and people involved in the potential partnership. Once this commitment has been made there are many ways for collaborations to occur. A few possible suggestions are:

- Invite one another to be a guest speaker in class/lab or a scheduled program.
- Share common tasks based on strengths and interests (i.e., coaching CDE events, or livestock buying trips).
- Serve on each other's advisory committee.
- Maximize resources: skills, expertise, finance.
- Coordinate travel and chaperones (fairs, contests, etc.).
- Attend professional meetings and conferences.
- Share training and education of members (Extension Livestock Schools, Fitting and Showing Clinics).
- Provide a supportive and unified appearance on public issues and legislative issues.
- Establish a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) as a model between the two programs that illustrates not only supports but also the shared vision for the future.

Build the Future

Today's success and tomorrow's future depends on the support and collaboration of the entire community. Many who share the vision and are committed to the goal of successful partnerships have already demonstrated how successfully collaboration and cooperation can work. Those who are willing to take the partnership to another level can still do more.

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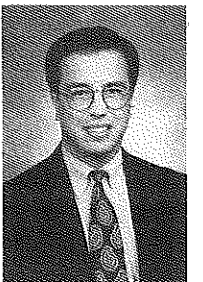
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A Partnership for a Better Preservice Teacher Education Experience

By Robert M. Torres and Jennifer Hopper

As we strive toward preparing students for successful careers in teaching agricultural education, forging new partnerships and strategic alliances in preservice teacher education units has never been more important. Developing partnerships and strategic alliances with others to prepare highly motivated and well-educated teachers is not a new belief in agricultural education. However, as a stated goal in *A New Era in Agriculture: Reinventing Agricultural Education for the Year 2020* (1999) we, as a profession, reaffirm the importance of this endeavor.

Three's Company

One partnership that has proven to be highly effective in addressing this and other 2020 goals was initiated four years ago. The partnership consists of the agricultural education teacher education unit at New Mexico State University (NMSU), the New Mexico Ag in the Classroom program, and Fairacres Elementary School in Las Cruces, New Mexico. The symbiotic partnership provides



preservice teachers an opportunity to plan and present a short agriculture literacy lesson to Kindergarten through fifth grade students. This activity is coordinated with NMSU and Fairacres Elementary School personnel by the Ag in the Classroom Director.

What once started with a simple idea has now grown into a popular annual event. The primary goal of this activity is to address agriculture literacy issues at the primary school level. In addition, this event provides preservice teachers with positive and real world teaching experiences early in their education. The event also addresses Ag in the Classroom literacy initiatives, and delivers creative lessons to K-5 students and teachers.

The Activity

An entire week is designated "Ag Week" by Fairacres Elementary School. As part of a coordinated effort, the Ag in the Classroom Director provides the preservice teachers with a brief overview of agriculture literacy issues in New Mexico and the county, then serves as a resource person for curriculum and materials in lesson development.

After preservice teachers receive the full description and expectation of the assignment, they select an agriculture literacy topic and the date and time they will commit to teach their lesson within the designated Ag Week. This information is shared with the elementary teachers

who select among the various topics they would like their students to learn. In the meantime, and prior to Ag Week, preservice teachers learn lesson plan development and delivery methods. During one morning of Ag Week, preservice teachers present a single 25- to 30-minute lesson four to five times to various grade levels of 25 to 30 students.

Win-Win Situation

This partnership activity creates unique opportunities to meet the needs of the three organizations involved. From the perspective of the preservice teachers, students are presented with an actual teaching opportunity. Students who are enrolled in a methods of teaching course are selected to participate in this learning activity. Early in the semester, students are informed of the teaching activity and given ample opportunity to prepare for the lesson through a series of classroom learning activities. Knowing they will be required to apply the pedagogical knowledge and skills by developing and presenting a lesson to elementary students creates in preservice teachers a greater felt need to learn planning and delivery methods. As in most observations, students are excited to apply their knowledge and skills, yet they are apprehensive about teaching for the first time to real students. The nature of this assignment elicits in the preservice teachers a desire to succeed. Consequently, they do more to ensure their own success.

The safety net for preservice teachers is the grade level of elemen-

tary students. At this age, elementary students are very forgiving and appreciative of any presentation. They are inquisitive and provide preservice teachers with opportunities to apply the principles of teaching and learning.

The results of this experience make a lasting impact on preservice teachers. Each preservice teacher gains valuable perspectives on the teaching and learning processes. Some notable preservice teacher benefits are: 1) application of a lesson to real students, 2) interaction with elementary students, 3) developing an inherent need for flexibility when teaching, and perhaps the most valuable benefit offered to preservice teachers is 4) the boost in confidence and motivation toward teaching.

It is the goal of the Agriculture in the Classroom program to help create in elementary students an awareness of and appreciation for agriculture. Today's students will become tomorrow's leaders, and they must be agriculturally literate. Ag in the Classroom benefits from this Ag Week partnership and activity in several ways. First, it increases the numbers of students who are reached. The Ag in the Classroom Director's time is limited, so this project helps the program reach more elementary students than would be possible from the Director's efforts alone. Preservice teachers also learn about the importance of agricultural literacy, again making it possible to reach more people with the Ag in the Classroom program. Second, preservice teachers learn about a valuable resource they can use when they become professionals, regardless of their careers. Those who become aware of the available resources are more likely to want to use them in the future. Therefore, the number of people reached is multiplied through the years and a long-term effect is possible. Finally, these outcomes and

the activity itself serve as public relations opportunities and create support for the Ag in the Classroom program. Support is essential to the survival of the Ag in the Classroom program.

Fairacres Elementary School also benefits from the Ag Week program and partnership in many ways. Primarily, preservice teachers serve as positive role models for the elementary students. Fairacres' students can relate to preservice teachers when they learn that preservice teachers are providing a presentation as part of their learning experience. In addition, because there are new presenters each year, demands are not placed on the same limited number of professionals in the agriculture industry to present year after year. Therefore, the school has the opportunity to have an Ag week each year. Also, because the presenters are different each year, elementary students receive new presentations and topics and do not become disinterested in agriculture. Even if the same topic is selected as in a previous year, it is presented in a different manner. Most important to the public school is the fact that Ag Week creates partnerships and interaction with the community. Parents, school officials, and others can visit the school and see the connection between the outside community and their own school.

Summary

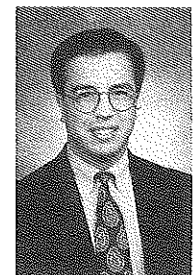
Limited by time, resources, and agricultural education experiential



sites, preservice teachers often get their introduction to teaching in a contrived setting, generally in the teaching laboratory. Using partnerships and strategic alliances, teacher education programs can and should capitalize on opportunities that will enhance the quality and type of learning experiences preservice teachers receive.

Reference

Council for Agricultural Education. (1999). *A New Era in Agriculture: Reinventing Agricultural Education for the Year 2020*. Alexandria, VA.



Robert M. Torres is Associate Professor in Dept. of Agricultural and Extension Education at New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM.

Jennifer Hopper is New Mexico Director of Agriculture in the Classroom.



Strategic Alliances for Agriscience Programs in the Technical College

By Joy A. McMillan

Agriculture, agribusiness, agriculture.... What is the term used to label the ag-based programs in our technical colleges? We have modified the name of our division to better identify the range of activities of our programs and make them more recognizable by potential students and the general public. The number of students who come from active farms is decreasing and so is the number of programs serving them. Thirty years ago, the primary agriculture-based program at Madison Area Technical College (MATC) was the "Farm Training" program. It was a multi-year diploma program that provided a mix of classroom instruction with hands-on instruction for students at their farm.

Fast forward to the year 2000 and we have a range of programs classified under "Agriscience" that include biotechnology and agricultural mechanics as well as farm business and production management. Students in the Farm Training program did not need a site for their work-based learning; they were on the farm! Today, many students need to be linked with an employer to insure they have a site for work-based learning and a mentor. These linkages have evolved from loosely tied community relationships to partners who actively promote the program as part of their employee professional development and who have some written commitment to the partnerships. These alliances are part of the strategic plans for the programs and must be considered and evaluated in both short term and long term planning. How do these alliances start

and what makes the alliance beneficial to the college and the students?

Programs under the vast umbrella of agriculture include those programs that directly serve persons who are engaged in production agriculture as well as the programs designed for the support businesses and industries surrounding production agriculture. At MATC, these supportive programs include the agriculture equipment program, the biotechnology laboratory technician program, the veterinary technician program, and the horticulture courses. Unlike some of Wisconsin's technical colleges, we do not offer an agribusiness/agriscience technician, crop management, or similar programs.

Agricultural Mechanics

The agricultural mechanics programming at MATC has changed over the years. The initial program was a two-year technical diploma program and we tried to offer something for everyone. All makes and models of farm equipment and implements were taught with shop classes providing simulated work experiences for students. The enrollment was low, students were admitted via the general application process, and the range of equipment and implements were supplemented by donations made to the college. The result was an underutilized high cost program that was draining faculty enthusiasm and energy. Low student numbers meant only one full-time faculty position to teach all and coordinate all. Relationships with business and industry were dependent on the free time of the faculty mem-

ber and good relationships with high school vocational agriculture programs and their alumni. By all measures, the agriculture mechanics program was on the decline and it looked like a free fall ride!

The John Deere Partnership

John Deere was seeking partners for their educational programs. They needed two-year colleges to participate in a national effort to standardize the educational programs from which their next generation of dealership technicians was going to come. MATC needed a partner to help define and refine their agriculture mechanics program. The strategic alliance is a formal partnership in which the college and the John Deere Corporation have agreed to recruit and educate students for employment in John Deere dealerships.

This alliance has strengthened the curriculum, provided sites for the three work-based learning internships throughout the twenty-seven month program. Enrollment procedures for the John Deere Agricultural Technician program include all of the college procedures and a screening and interview with the potential sponsor. Potential students interested in enrolling in the program must complete a program readiness screening via the ASSET test. They must also complete a mechanical reasoning test. Dealers within Wisconsin interview the potential students and find the best match. Not all dealers will sponsor a student every year but most actively recruit students from the local high schools on behalf of the John Deere program. John Deere supplies the college with equipment for the shops and laboratories as well as computer hardware and software, reference, and support materials. Classes are organized on a quarter basis with two quarters offered in the traditional semester and a fifth quarter offered between mid-May and mid-August.

Their John Deere sponsors as well as MATC monitor students for course completion and success. MATC also partners with John Deere to offer continuing education for the employed technicians through the John Deere Pro-Tech program. These workshops are offered to technicians throughout the Midwest. This also enables MATC faculty to participate in industry updates and have access to the newest technologies of John Deere.

The close alignment of the Ag Equipment department with the diesel and heavy equipment department allows for cross-utilization of faculty and other resources. Our experience with the John Deere partnership gave MATC the courage to seek alliances with other partners and develop an associate degree program in diesel equipment technology. The large number of equipment dealers and service shops resulted in a multi-partner alliance known as Top Tech.

Top Tech

The Top Tech students, like the John Deere Agriculture Equipment students, are sponsored by a dealership or shop while enrolled at MATC. The Top Tech students are assessed via the ASSET tests and are interviewed by their potential employer-sponsors while in school. Each employer-sponsor must identify a work-site mentor who will communicate with MATC during the student's enrollment period. Work-based learning is highlighted through two weeklong simulated shop experiences at the end of the second semester and the fourth semester and one 432-hour internship during the summer between the first and second years of the program.

The number of partners has expanded considerably beyond the original dozen and the partners have actively worked with college faculty to define curriculum, reinforce

employability skills, promote the program, recruit new students, place graduates, and secure new equipment through donations and matching funds. The conscious effort to enhance employment and advancement opportunities for individuals in these areas has expanded the relationships with the partners. Jointly and individually, the partners have made other investments in the diesel programs at MATC.

New Initiatives

Many of the partners have requested additional courses or skill building workshops through the college. Requests have been made to enhance the stature and skills of individuals who have been promoted to lead technician, shift manager, or even service manager. These technically competent individuals often lack the background in budget or personnel management and similar managerial functions. Discussions with the partners led MATC to seek funding from the Wisconsin Technical College System to develop an Advanced Technical Certificate for Service Management. The 12-credit certificate will be available as mostly web-based courses with a general Supervisory Management course as the first course in the certificate. Top Tech partners and John Deere have responded enthusiastically to surveys and requests for information. They have monitored the progress on certificate development and are awaiting the first courses.

Other Alliances

Alliances with business and industry are the strength of the occupational programming in the Agriscience, Apprenticeship, Technical and Industrial Division at MATC. The partnerships with biotechnology companies have strengthened the curriculum in the Biotechnology Laboratory Technician Program. The

high school Youth Apprenticeship Program in Biotechnology offers high school students the opportunity to participate in work-based learning as juniors and seniors. This experience translates to college credits for the successful student who opts to continue in the MATC biotechnology program. The model for articulation with the MATC program and the work-based learning is the basis for a model to extend the work-based learning to other programs. Since MATC does not offer a two-year associate degree program in production agriculture, the current high school Youth Apprenticeship Program in Agriculture does not articulate with any of our other MATC programs. A model to continue the work-based learning model at MATC is being designed to enable the youth in this new Youth Apprenticeship to attach their work experience to the programs that are available at MATC. Partnerships with local employers enable MATC to try new ways of offering programs to students. These strategic alliances help MATC to maintain programming that is supportive of agriculture in the many businesses and industries that are a significant part of Wisconsin.

Joy A. McMillan is Associate Dean of Agriscience, Apprenticeship, Technical and Industrial Division at Madison Area Technical College, Madison, WI (no photo)

Learning Takes Center Stage for 2001



by Robert A. Martin

With all the emphasis being placed on "learning" by various commissions, foundations, universities, and government agencies, perhaps the year 2001 should be declared the year for learning more about "Learning." The 2001 theme for The Agricultural Education Magazine focuses on the question "What's new about learning?" The six major topic areas capture the essence of our concerns about learning.

Communication Technology for Learning
Evaluating Learning in and about Technical Agriculture
New Dimensions for Experiential Learning
Service Learning
The Role of FFA in Learning How to Learn
Lessons from the Classroom & Research on Learning
Theory & Practice

Please review the list of topics and key questions and develop an article for publication in The Agricultural Education Magazine during 2001. The theme editors are eager to receive your contribution. We need your ideas, suggestions, and comments regarding practices and tools that work. As the new editor of The Agricultural Education Magazine, I hope that I can continue the fine work of previous editors. My goal is to help share the knowledge and skills developed and used by agricultural education professionals in a variety of settings. With your help The Agricultural Education Magazine will have a very successful year.

Themes for 2001

January/February

Communication Technology for Learning: Teachers have learned to use the latest technologies for delivery of information but have we learned to go beyond mere information delivery? What about learning? What are agricultural educators doing with technology to foster learning? How can agricultural educators evaluate the effectiveness of the communication technologies they use? Does the use of the latest communication technologies

make a difference in the agriculture classroom?

Theme Editor - Glenn Shinn:
Dept. of Ag Education, 107 Scoates Hall,
Texas A&M University,
College Station, TX 77843-3012

March/April

Evaluating Learning in Technical Agriculture: Teachers observe the results of learning and in this way learning is a lot like the wind. We see the result but not the actual thing. How do teachers evaluate learning? How do we document learning? How do we know learning has occurred? What evaluation tools work for teachers?

Theme Editor - Kathleen Kelsey;
Dept. of Ag Education, 448 Agricultural Hall,
Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078-0484

May/June

New Dimensions for Experiential Learning: What is the status of experiential learning in Agricultural Education? Has experience programs in agriculture kept pace with the changing clientele? Does supervised agricultural experience need revision; a new image? What are teachers doing to enhance and expand SAE?

Theme Editor - Lou Riesenber:
Dept. of Ag & Extension Education,
117 AEEB, 1134 West 6th St.,
University of Idaho, Moscow, ID 83844-2040

July/August

Service Learning: What is service learning? Is service learning a passing fad or is it a tool worth using in agricultural education? How are agricultural educators using service learning in their programs? Does service learning make a difference?

Theme Editor - Cary Trexler:
Dept. of Ag Education & Studies,
217 Curtiss Hall,
Iowa State University, Ames, IA 70011

September/October

The Role of FFA in Learning How to Learn: What role does FFA have in learning how to learn? Does FFA make a difference in helping students transfer learning to new situations? What do teachers do specifically with the FFA that help students learn skills that transfer into career development?

Theme Editor - David Doerfert:
National FFA Organization, National FFA Center,
6060 FFA Drive, PO Box 68960,
Indianapolis, IN 46268-0960

November/December

Lessons from the Classroom and Research on Learning: Theory and Practice: How has research on learning affected the classroom? Has theory been translated into practice? Has our practice of teaching and learning been transformed? How do teachers experiment with different approaches to learning? What have teachers learned about learning as practiced in their classrooms, laboratories, and at job sites?

Theme Editor: Susie Whittington,
The Ohio State University, Agricultural Education,
208 Agricultural Administration Building,
2120 Fyffe Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1067

Robert A. Martin is a Professor in Agricultural Education and Studies at Iowa State University, Ames, IA. (No Photo)

Joe Scatterscrew...

(continued from back cover)

who could be used in voc. ag.?"

"We-e-e-I, yes. I believe I did get something like that from the agency a while back but ..."

"No buts about it. And I'll bet you stuck it in a file and said 'good poop' and never looked at it again!"

"W-e-e-I — now I wouldn't say that, dad gum it!"
"Don't dad gum me! The whole problem is — are you as smart as a multiplying onion, or not."

Joe tiptoed over to the door for his hat and put it on. "Now Myrt, I done planned on doing something like that. I just..." "Okay, I know. Those onions had to be set out before they multiplied."

Joe hastily turned to the door.

"Well, Myrt honey, I'll be a little late ..."

"Don't wake me up" Myrt said as she slammed the dishes into the pan.

Editors Note: The Joe Scatterscrew stories were written by Prof. E. W. Walton at Texas A&M in the 1950's. These stories were originally meant to entertain and to provide subtle hints for those teachers who needed them. These stories do not portray agricultural education today. The behavior and teaching practices of Joe Scatterscrew are not recommended practices. The purpose of publishing these stories is to simply provide agriculture teachers with a little humorous relief from the stress and strain of teaching today.

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Myrt Flies Off the Handle

Joe Scatterscrew stuck his aching feet in the dishpan of warm water and sighed with relief.

"Can you stand it a little hotter?" Myrt asked as she tilted the teakettle again.

"Nope. Its just right. Dad burn them dad gummed tight boots! My feet have got to where they kill me standing and running around all day. Dad burned if teaching vocational agriculture ain't getting to be a rat race! Too much to do and not enough hours in the day! A mans got to run his head and feet both off just trying to get enough poop to teach on.

Myrt, hand me a match. I'll light up this here cigar I ain't hardly had time to puff on but twice today."

Myrt turned the ham sizzling in the skillet and took two marbles out of the babies mouth and then handed Joe a box of matches. He lit up and wiggled his red toes in the warm water with relief.

"I had to run down to the bank before ten to get a little poop on farm loans for VA III and then dash over to Homer Holcomb in S.C.S. and borrow some pictures for VA II and then in between them classes I tore out to Lon Samuels farm to get his method of improving his beef cattle breeding for VA I. Then after eating one of them dang lunch room dinners I rushed off like a mad dog to George Hurt's place to get some poop on how to decide what machinery a man can afford for my Young Farmers Meeting at 4:00 today and then I barely had time to doctor a sick cow and prune old Lady Wobble's rose bushes before supper and if I can get my boots back on these swole feet I'll have to tear out to the Agriculture Club Meeting."

He leaned back and groaned aloud. Myrt wiped the baby's nose and

put the pup out on the back porch before she dished up supper.

Joe ate hastily and then felt like he ought to take some bicarbonate of soda.

Myrt started on the dishes and then dried her hands and sat down firmly.

"Joe, you listen to me! I am getting tired of all this scramble jumble. You know what your trouble is?"

Joe looked surprised and quit sloshing his feet in the pan. "Whats my trouble? It ain't me, its the dad gummed job!" "No its not the job, either. You remember those old time multiplying onions we used to have?"

"Why sure. Dang good onions. Plant one and you get a dozen. Whats that got to do"

Myrt turned the baby over and took a safety pin out of her mouth. "Well, a good Ag teacher ought to be more like a multiplying onion, thats all!"

Joe looked at her with his mouth open. 'Dad gum if she ain't finally gone nuts', he thought.

Myrt shook her finger at him.

"No, Joe I am not batty though I don't know why not, living with you. The point is, why not multiply yourself! If you would ever sit down and plan a little you could get a lot of assistant vocational agriculture teachers."

Joe spluttered. "Why dad gummit with my enrollment I do well to stay on full time much less"

Myrt shook her head in exasperation.

"You don't get the point! Why don't you sit down and outline your VA I, II, and III units and then ask yourself 'Who in this community is

qualified to teach some of these??' Soil conservation, use Homer Holcomb; managing the farm business, Mr. Gotwell, the banker or Mr. Leiber in P.C.A.; selecting and using farm machinery, George Hurt, farm machinery man and get Lon Samuel to teach a unit on how he built up his little beef herd and how he feeds."

Joe stared at her goggle eyed and tried to light his cigar again. Myrt stood up and looked him in the eye.

"The way I figure it, you could have had some expert help in the classroom today, rested your feet, and by golly learned something yourself."

She turned and picked up a notebook.

"I made a list today of people who would be glad to teach some of your work and feel honored to be asked."

She read slowly:

1. The Banker
2. The P.C.A. Man
3. Power and Light Man
4. S.C.S. Personnel
5. County Agent
6. Breeder
7. Feeder
8. Leading Farmer
9. Implement Dealer
10. Seed and Fertilizer Distributor
11. Veterinarian
12. Auction Man
13. Dairyman and Poultryman

Joe dried his other foot and reached for his boot. He did not know what to say when Myrt got on a tear.

"And another thing!" She said while she gave the baby his cereal, "Didn't I see a list of resource people