

# NEWS & VIEWS

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NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATORS, INC.

WWW.NAAE.ORG

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Members visit KMT Waterjet Cutting Mfg. during the Region II summer meeting held in Pittsburg, KS this summer

## Investing in the Future

# NAAE Convention 2007

Invest in your future! Attend the 2007 NAAE Convention, December 11-15, at the Riviera Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas. This year's convention will feature even more professional development opportunities, a bigger Organizational Members and Business Partners Reception, and as always, plenty of chances to network with your peers from across the nation. Where else can you get so much return on an investment?

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

Many of this year's workshop offerings are focused on Agriscience – with special sessions from the DuPont and Lab-Aids National Agriscience Teacher Ambassadors, a group of teachers who have been trained to bring this important topic to their peers. There are plenty of other topics to choose from besides agriscience, ranging from how to market your program to alternative energy sources. Visit [naae.org/convention/profdevworkshops](http://naae.org/convention/profdevworkshops) for a complete listing.

### ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS AND BUSINESS PARTNERS RECEPTION

This is your annual opportunity to see the latest offerings from companies who specialize in products specifically for the

agriculture classroom. This year we have over 40 agricultural education vendors who are anxious to show you how their products can make your lessons more effective.

### CONVENTION REGISTRATION

Register before November 9th to save \$80. You can register two ways:

1. Download the convention registration form by clicking [HERE](#), or visiting [naae.org/convention/registration](http://naae.org/convention/registration)

2. Register online at [acteonline.org](http://acteonline.org)

### BOOKING YOUR HOTEL

Reserving your room is easier than ever this year! The Riviera has created a special web page just for NAAE Convention attendees. Click [HERE](#) or visit [naae.org/convention/housing](http://naae.org/convention/housing) for a link that will take you directly to the NAAE

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## President's Message Convention has something for everyone



*Lee James, Mississippi  
2006-07  
NAAE President*

### ON YOUR MARK.....GET SET.....

As this issue reaches you fall is in the air, and we should be well into the school year. You have been focused on the rigor and relevance of your programs and impacting student achievement through sound curriculum and leadership skills. We as agricultural educators take pride in making every effort to keep abreast of the most current technology and teaching available to us. We continuously seek professional development opportunities to achieve success.

On December 11-15, one of the best opportunities for development will take place in Las Vegas during our 2007 NAAE Convention. Your board of directors and NAAE staff have been hard at work in planning an outstanding convention for all members.

Our theme this year, "Investing in the Future," has multiple meanings for me. I am investing in my students by attending the many outstanding professional development workshops provided by NAAE and ACTE. There are workshops that will fit anyone's

needs to improve your programs and teaching techniques. There will be guest speakers that will inform, motivate and challenge us as teachers.

We will meet and recognize award winners that have gone an extra step in investing in the future of agricultural education. I hope I have the opportunity to meet each award winner and personally congratulate them for their excellent work. If you have the chance to spend some time with these winners, sit down and discuss ideas.

Convention attendees will also have the opportunity to be involved in regional meetings and NAAE committee work. This is your chance to have a direct impact on your organization. NAAE, along with Dodge, will be investing in our young teachers by involving some 50 teachers in the Teachers Turn the Key program. These young teachers will come from across the nation to learn from us and one another.

Be sure to get to the sessions a little early this year. Our board and staff have been busy with the camera this summer at NAAE functions. Before and after each session we will be showing a presentation of regional meetings and other events that took place this year.

Well it sounds like I have you pretty busy during convention, so come be a part and help all of us make it a very successful convention. You'll take home motivation, instructional techniques, and a renewed determination to help our students and programs be a success.

**Now.....GO!!**

## 2007 NAAE July Board Meeting

*Amanda Fickes  
2007 NAAE Communications Intern*

NAAE held its annual board meeting July 16-18 in Washington, D.C. at the national office for the Association for Career and Technical Education. Top priorities included regional membership reports by board members, final decision making for the national convention, and a review of NAAE's strategic plan.

This year the overall strategic plan was evaluated by states and the NAAE board. The results were used to prioritize objectives and the board began working on a strategy to increase productiveness for the top objectives.

The 2006-2007 NAAE membership figures were reported, showing an overall decrease of less than one percent. Current membership recruitment strategies were discussed, and the board

made suggestions for improving membership numbers.

During their stay in D.C., board members also made time to visit with legislators to advocate for agricultural education.

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*NAAE Region IV Vice President Greg Curlin reviews information at the July board meeting in Washington, D.C.*

# From NAAE

## What's In a Name? Everything!!



*Alissa F. Smith  
NAAE Associate  
Executive Director*

Agriscience -- this term has been used by ag teachers, state staff, administrators, and everyone in between. The National Council for Agricultural Education's 10X15 goals state that we want to "have in operation 10,000 quality agricultural education programs by 2015." So is agriscience the way to reaching this goal? It is certainly a word that has been creating quite a buzz in agricultural education across the nation. But how does it differ from what you are doing in your ag classroom right now? Are we just changing our name without changing our program?

Many agricultural programs across the U.S. have adopted the new name of agriscience in an effort to gain respect from administration and fellow teachers as well as to attract new students. But is changing the name enough to make a difference? With the push to meet state mandated testing scores in science and math, a name change only is definitely not the full solution to the problem.

Changing the name of your course to describe it as agriscience brings along the responsibility of developing a curriculum based on the principles of agricultural science. If you say you are teaching agriscience, you must be teaching concepts related to agriscience. Your course has to take on a new direction that will include concepts that may challenge you as a teacher.

This becomes especially important when your agriscience course is given science credit in your school. You not only are responsible for making sure your students understand the concepts presented, you must ensure that they perform well on the science portion of state tests. And yes, administration will evaluate if your students are performing at the same level as all the other students in the school. You have to be ready to face the music if your students' scores are not up to par.

### HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM TEACHING THE RIGHT STUFF?

As an ag teacher, you offer a way to make science real and meaningful. Students have an easier time grasping the science that you teach in class because it makes sense to them. You have the upper hand in seriously influencing your school's science test scores. Your job as a quality agriscience teacher is of the utmost importance to your school. So as you begin your year, start by asking yourself, "Does my class include strong agriculturally

related science concepts that are inquiry-based, aligned with state science standards and state agricultural education standards? Does it include practical hands-on applications that are synonymous with agricultural education?"

If you answer yes, then your class is truly living up to the agriscience name. If you answered no or are not even familiar with what the question is asking, you definitely need to reevaluate your class and look for some guidance to help you develop a more pertinent course before your administration begins to question you and your program's relevance to state mandated testing.

### HOW CAN I "BEEF" UP MY AGRISCIENCE COURSE?

One frustrating reason many agriculture teachers shy away from agriscience is because they don't feel comfortable with the labs and activities related to a true agriscience course. There are several resources available to help reduce the stress that comes with an overhaul of your course. You can find many different summer workshops through agricultural education partners each year relating to biotechnology, alternative/renewable energy, and

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## IML Agricultural Education Online Curriculum

### Online Instructional Materials for the Future

IML introduces its new online curriculum for agricultural education, including:

- Lesson plans
- Student reference
- Online assessments and grading, as well as printable assessments
- PowerPoint slides and image libraries
- Unit assessments and activities
- Downloadable files
- Password-protected access

New features are being added regularly.



For a free trial offer, call (800) 669-2465, e-mail [iml@missouri.edu](mailto:iml@missouri.edu), or visit IML's agricultural education Web site at <http://www.iml-ag.missouri.edu>. IML looks forward to bringing you the next generation of instructional materials.

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THE NEW COMMERCIAL STANDARD



GRAB LIFE



DODGE



## INSTEAD OF AN APPLE, TEACHERS NOW GET A \$500 FFA BONUS ON ANY NEW DODGE TRUCK.

Dodge has been a proud sponsor of the FFA for over half a century. And we're now offering FFA member families, active alumni members, and NAAE teachers an extra \$500 cash allowance on any new Dodge truck.\* Contact your local Dodge dealer to take advantage of this limited-time offer on the Dodge truck of your choice — like the hardworking Ram Heavy Duty with the available legendary 6.7L Cummins® Turbo Diesel, part of the longest-lasting,† most durable‡ line of full-size pickups. For more info, visit [dodge.com](http://dodge.com) or call 800-4ADODGE.

\*Offer good 5/1/07–1/2/08 on '07 MY (8/1/07 – 1/2/08 on '08 MY) Dodge Ram 1500, 2500, 3500, Ram Chassis Cab, Magnum, Caravan, Grand Caravan, Dakota, Durango and Nitro. Excludes SRT models. See your dealer for details. †Based on R.L. Polk & Co. Vehicles in Operation registration statistics 1987–2006. ‡Durability based on longevity. Properly secure all cargo. Chrysler Financial is a business unit of Chrysler Financial Services. Cummins is a registered trademark of Cummins, Inc.

Chrysler Financial



# Reaching Your Students

## But I Teach Agriculture!



**Colleen Griswold**  
*Agriscience Instructor & NAAE Member*  
*Tuscumbia High School, Tuscumbia, MO*

"I am an ag teacher, not a science/math/English teacher!" This is the phrase I have often heard, or at least the look I have seen, from my fellow teachers as I start on my soapbox, I mean workshop, about incorporating agriscience and inquiry-based learning into the agriculture classroom.

While most of us are solely certified in agricultural education, we are all teachers and it is our job (and privilege) to educate students in the most effective way possible. This is holistically, meaning that we teach language, history, math, and science as a part of agriculture.

Now before you turn the page or skim to the next article, hear me out. I understand that we have limited time, resources, and knowledge about all these subjects, but we must make the effort because it is what is best for our students. As a part of the National Agriscience Teacher Ambassador Academy (NATAA), I learned many different ways to incorporate science, literacy, cultural discussion and critical thinking skills into my classroom, all through inquiry-based learning.

I was not completely sold on the ideas presented at NATAA until I experienced the change in my own classroom. I decided to try one of the literacy strategies -- the composition notebooks.

I used them to start class with a question/response, collect data during lab activities, and brainstorm knowledge/ideas about a given topic. The students groaned some at first, but these notebooks assisted me with classroom discipline, getting started at the bell, identifying when students grasp or miss the key concepts, and the previous knowledge of the subject. What I found is that I had a wealth of knowledge sitting in those chairs. By empowering the students to discuss their ideas and teach the other students what they knew of the subject, I engaged many more students in the class and encouraged a positive classroom environment that was conducive to students' questions.

Teaching at a very small and sheltered high school, it is sometimes difficult to get my students to understand, let alone appreciate, cultural diversity. The main sponsors of NATAA are

DuPont and Lab-Aids. I mention this because one of the Lab-Aids texts in their SEPUP Science and Sustainability curriculum is the *Material World* (Menzel, 1994). This book brings the world into my rural Missouri classroom. It has photos of 30 families all from different countries with all of their worldly possessions out in front of them. This is followed by information on the countries and about the family. I have used this book in many different classes to make a variety of points including discussions on world hunger, what it means to be successful, and how religion or government issues can impact agriculture. These are some of the best discussions we have all year. Most students start with their minds made up and then come to the conclusion that we are all connected and there are not any easy solutions to



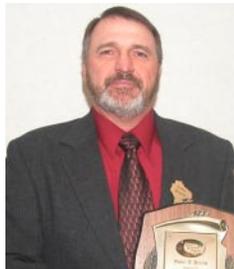
*Colleen testing for Nitrogen as part of a lab exercise at NATAA*

many of the problems we and the rest of the world face. It also ignites a gratitude for the life we have in the US as they see that not everyone gets a free education, or has enough food or clean water, all of which we take for granted.

These are just a couple of the lessons I learned at NATAA for including language, culture, and history/politics into the agriculture classroom. Many of the science and math concepts came as a part of the lab activities experienced there. Most of these activities came from the Science and Sustainability texts, but were also many activities we do in the agriculture classroom with a little more thinking involved. The focus of inquiry-based learning is to be student focused instead of teacher focused –

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## Outstanding Teacher



*Peter Drone  
2006 Outstanding Agriculture  
Education Teacher Award Winner  
Region III*

Peter Drone has spent the last 30 years working with agriculture students at River Ridge High School in Wisconsin. River Ridge is located in a community that holds strong roots in agriculture. Three seed companies, two greenhouses, a processing plant, two feed mills, countless equipment dealerships, two cooperatives and an agronomy center are all based in the community. Consequently, 72 out of the high school's 238 students are enrolled in agriculture courses. Drone has an ag mechanics shop, 18 acres used for crop production, three acres of forested land, and a greenhouse available to provide interactive learning opportunities for his students.

The curriculum offered by Drone reflects the needs of the ag production based community that surrounds him. Having areas

for crop production has assisted Drone in his teaching methods; he is able to apply concepts taught in the classroom to practical situations. In his marketing class students are assigned commodities to monitor over a six week period. During this time they watch prices and earn points through the use of various marketing strategies. When designing new curriculum, Drone ensures that the lesson will involve students both physically and mentally. All areas of his units include hands on activities that stimulate and encourage the students to learn.

"Involving the students and stressing the importance of a well rounded education means graduates are better able to be successful at achieving their higher education and future career goals and become meaningful, productive citizens in our society," said Drone.

Peter Drone is the 2006 Region III Outstanding Agricultural Education Teacher Award Winner. The NAAE Agricultural Education Teacher Award is sponsored by Syngenta. For more information about this and other NAAE Awards programs, visit [naae.org/awards/applications](http://naae.org/awards/applications).



## Outstanding Postsecondary/Adult Program



*Mindy Sandifer  
Barnwell County Career Center  
2006 Outstanding Postsecondary/Adult  
Program Award Winner  
Region V*

The Barnwell County Career Center in Blackville, SC, offers courses in small engines, animal science, horticulture, and wildlife. The program also includes an FFA chapter, a professional leadership organization and a Young Farmer's chapter, a professional association focused on increasing agricultural awareness. In 2005, NAAE member Mindy Sandifer and the Young Farmers' chapter worked vigorously with two other nearby chapters to host the South Carolina Young Farmer and Agribusiness Association (SCYFAA) Summer Tour.

The tour lasted two days and boasted an attendance of nearly 200 members. Sandifer wanted the tour to be free of charge to all SCYFAA members and helped raise over \$7,000 to cover the cost of meals, transportation, and entertainment. The tour participants visited various agricultural businesses and were able

to exchange ideas and activities with other SCYFAA members.

Sandifer understands the local community's needs and is constantly striving to improve her program and increase opportunities for her students.

"Technology is constantly changing, especially in the agricultural field, and I am excited about learning more to help my program continue to graduate high quality students who will hopefully become members of the expansive agricultural industry," she said. Sandifer attends many workshops, trainings, and conferences to improve her comprehensive curriculum and her relationship with the local agriculture community.

The Barnwell County Career Center is the 2006 Region V Outstanding Postsecondary/Adult Program Award Winner. The NAAE Outstanding Postsecondary/Adult Program Award is sponsored by Syngenta. For more information about this and other NAAE Awards programs, visit [naae.org/awards/applications](http://naae.org/awards/applications).



## Metal Rose Project Combines Creativity and Shop Skills



*Kevin Amsden  
2006 Ideas Unlimited  
Winner Region I*

Kevin Amsden, an agricultural sciences teacher at Manson High School, in Manson, WA, created the Metal Rose Project as a unique way for his students to apply a variety of skills

learned in his metalworking class. During the course of his class, Amsden taught MIG welding, gas brazing, cutting and metal shaping. As a way to show students how to bring all those skills together, Amsden created a lesson in which students used sheet metal to construct a rose. Additional subjects came into play as students applied math to find the area or amount of metal that was used to complete the project, and figure the angles that needed to be cut. Students also got to add their own creative flair by painting or decorating their rose to make it unique.

Students used a pre-made pattern to trace the rose shapes

onto sheet metal, and then cut them out using a plasma cutter or metal shears. Once the pieces were cut, the students stacked and welded them together, attaching the entire thing to a piece of round stock. After cooling, students bent and folded the metal to create the rose. For a copy of Amsden's Steel Rose Assignment Sheets, go to [naae.org/links/resources](http://naae.org/links/resources) and click on Lesson Plans.



Amsden is the 2006 Ideas Unlimited Award winner for Region I. This award, sponsored by Thomson Delmar Learning, is granted for originality, practicality, adaptability of instruction, instructional value, and comprehensiveness

of presentation of a unique instructional method or idea. For more information about this and other NAAE awards programs, visit [naae.org/awards/applications](http://naae.org/awards/applications).

**THOMSON**  
DELMAR LEARNING  
[www.delmarlearning.com](http://www.delmarlearning.com)

## But I Teach Agriculture!

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students think of the answers through questions posed by the teacher.

For instance, I love soil science, but it is very difficult to get sophomores to find the same love for it. I knew I had to change something in my unit because it was as boring, as, well, dirt!

Using an inquiry based approach, I no longer define sand, silt, and clay as particles ranging in size and feeling like flour and sugar and so on. Instead, every student has a bag of soil they have brought from home. We start by describing what it feels like and those words all go on the board. Then we categorize the words of like properties, and then name them sand, silt, and clay. To understand the various properties of different textures, we use a pan on a slant (an old cookie sheet propped up, a paint pan, or the kits from Lab-Aids all work well) and mix the soil with some water so the soil stays on the slant. Then we let it rain and see what happens. You can measure the rate the water flowed down (this would be a great math component involving time and volume and graphing!), how much soil washed away, and what the run off water has in it. From this point, you can texture the soil (don't let it rain too much) or you can set up a pond, lagoon,

or septic tank demonstration using a bowl-type strainer. All of these demonstrations allow the students to participate in the lesson and see the properties of soil in action. It is good to follow up with the textural triangle and give the important definitions, but this inquiry method will result in better understanding and retention for your students because they saw it in action.

There are many more methods to involve inquiry-based learning and core subject areas in the agriculture classroom, but I hope to become rich writing them in a book, so I must end here. The challenge is to look at the lessons you currently teach and see what you can tweak.

Start with the lessons you know students have a hard time grasping or that are a bit dull (it is okay, we all have some!). Incorporate math into your landscaping or mechanics labs. Have students keep data on your greenhouse propagation plan and graph the information.

Just try something new this school year. And finally, if you are interested in attending NATAA, contact Larry Gossen, National FFA LPS Specialist, [lgossen@ffa.org](mailto:lgossen@ffa.org). NATAA is a great opportunity to learn, and then teach other teachers so that we will all be more than just ag teachers – we will be exceptional ag teachers!

# Regional Update

## Region I



**Kevin Fochs, Region I VP**  
Email: [kfochs@livingston.k12.mt.us](mailto:kfochs@livingston.k12.mt.us)

Just wanted to send a big thank you out to Oregon and Utah for the fine hospitality you provided at you teacher conferences. I had a fantastic time and learned some new tricks of the trade to take back to my classroom. Utah, I really enjoyed the initiation into trap shooting, it was great.

Here are just a few quick reminders for your to-do lists.

\* Professional State Award applications are due in my office by September 1st. The application can be found online at [naae.org](http://naae.org). While you are there, take a few minutes to look at the NAAE website. I think you will be pleased with the progressive design and hard work that Julie Fritsch has put into it.

\* Congratulations go out to all the award winners. You represent your schools and your profession well! See a complete list of the 2007 award winners at [naae.org/awards/currentwinners](http://naae.org/awards/currentwinners).

\* Start making plans now to attend the National NAAE Convention at the Riviera in Las Vegas on December 11-15

I will be finishing my three year term as Region I vice president this December and wanted to invite anyone interested in running for this position to be sure and complete the Memorandum of Understanding found in the leadership handbook (section 4.9) by September 15. Serving in this capacity is a great opportunity to meet those outstanding agricultural professionals across the U.S. and to help advance our profession. I would be happy to talk with any of you about this position

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## Region II



**Kathy Conerly, Region II VP**  
Email: [kconerly1@bellsouth.net](mailto:kconerly1@bellsouth.net)

It's mid-semester, things are in full swing again. We're learning more of our students, and them of us. Classroom routines are set. Lessons and activities are in full swing. We're busy coaching fall CDE teams and preparing our student leaders for national convention.

How easy it is to fall into the same old routine. Let's take a breath and think about ourselves for a moment. Are you really as energized and effective as you know you can be? Do you feel isolated and long for adult conversation with others who can empathize, and know what you go through each day? Are you new to ag education and would love to find new lessons to inspire your students? Would you just love to get more involved with your professional association? If you can say "yes" to any of these questions, mark your calendars for Dec. 11-15.

"Investing in the Future" is the NAAE convention theme this year. What better way to invest in the future of our students than to provide them with motivated, knowledgeable instructors, armed with new, interesting lesson and ideas!

Join us at the Riviera Hotel in Las Vegas, from Dec. 11-15, and for the ACTE conference Dec. 13-15. To register for NAAE, call the hotel at (800) 634-6753, or register on the NAAE website at [naae.org/convention/registration](http://naae.org/convention/registration). See the Convention, Housing, and Travel page to find discounts on airline tickets and rental cars.

Hope to see you there!

## Region III



**Tom Hofmann, Region III VP**  
Email: [thofmann@spsne.org](mailto:thofmann@spsne.org)

Knock Knock! Who's there? C's!  
C's who? C's the Day!

I hope everyone has had time to recharge your batteries for the 2007-08 school year. I would like to thank all the teachers from Wisconsin who took care of me during my summer visit. I really enjoyed your conference. Remember; what happens at the bowling alley, stays at the bowling alley.

Congratulations to all the Region III award winners. I hope to see all of you in Las Vegas during the NAAE convention. Speaking of the convention, it is time for each state to make reservations. More information on the convention can be found at [naae.org](http://naae.org). Let's have a great turnout from Region III.

Make sure to stop by the NAAE booth during the National FFA Convention. Meet the NAAE staff and board members. This is a great way to pass along ideas to improve our organization.

It is never too early to start pondering the thought of being a Region III officer. My reign as your commander in chief is just about over, and while I have enjoyed this role, I don't plan to re-up for another term. We have some outstanding individuals that would make excellent candidates.

In closing, I have been attending several in-service activities over the past few days before students return. The two quotes that I would share to motivate you for next year are: It's not about students being ready for us; it's about us being ready for students, and SHIFT HAPPENS. Have a great year.

# Regional Update

## Region IV



**Greg Curlin, Region IV VP**  
Email: [gcurlin@switzerland.k12.in.us](mailto:gcurlin@switzerland.k12.in.us)

First, congratulations to all the Region IV winners of the NAAE Awards programs. I will be honored to read your biographies and names at the national conference. Also, welcome all the new teachers to our profession as well as the new leaders of the Region IV states.

It was a pleasure to spend time in Ohio for their state conference. As the national convention of NAAE approaches, it is time to sort all the information we received throughout the summer and fall. Once you find the materials, put them to use. The neatest part of being in NAAE is the opportunity to continually develop our curriculum.

Visit the NAAE booth at national FFA convention, as well as the learning labs at the career show. You may find yourself reconnecting previous lessons to reviving your current lesson plans. Send your students by the NAAE booth to learn about becoming an agricultural educator. First year teachers attending convention should come by the booth to connect with veteran teachers. We can be a great help in finding wisdom concerning the convention as well as do's and don'ts in the classroom. I hope all educators can assist all young teachers with their new adventures in the career of agricultural education.

Regardless of the number of years each of us have been involved in agricultural education, we become creatures of solving any problem that comes our way; this is part of the reason we are great at helping each other. As John Maxwell

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## Region V



**Ray Nash, Region V VP**  
Email: [rnash@alcorn.k12.ms.us](mailto:rnash@alcorn.k12.ms.us)

“Look there’s a car, a bus, a plane! No, it’s an agriculture teacher off to another meeting, convention or something like that,” says one teacher to another.

Seems as if we are always on the move, prompting our associates to wonder, “How can he or she be a good teacher and be gone so much?” Well, usually our students are along for the trip with their agendas full of contests, leadership workshops, etc. To help answer your colleagues’ questions, I would begin with how we in agriculture education are different. The other day I was at a meeting where the president of a local community college said the most influential person in his life was his agriculture teacher. Agriculture education opened the world to him. That’s what each of you do for your students. You prepare them in the classroom, but you take it one step further, you make it real to them, and that is what creates a lasting effect.

Whether you come by car, bus or plane, I hope to see most of you at either the National FFA or NAAE Conventions. It is an excellent time to recharge before the spring semester. The conventions offer many opportunities for you to keep pace with agriculture and to discover new technologies and techniques that bring the industry to life for your students. Take time to check out the professional development activities at the conventions — you will be glad you did. Your students and communities will be the big winners when you take what you learn back to your schools.

See you in Indy and Vegas!

## Region VI



**Sally Shomo, Region VI VP**  
Email: [sshomo@augusta.k12.va.us](mailto:sshomo@augusta.k12.va.us)

Greetings! I hope everyone is off to a good start for the 07-08 school year. It didn’t take long to get back into the swing of things. It’s an exciting but busy time of the year. Gearing up for the national FFA convention, and then we are on to Las Vegas for an exciting NAAE convention.

I wonder, as you started a new year, did you look for changes in your students? I wonder if they looked for changes in you? Are you more excited this year? Do you still enjoy what you do? Is there still a fire burning in your heart for agricultural education? Did you attend your state and regional conferences and learn different, more effective ways to instruct your students, or are you just doing the same old thing?

You are not being fair with yourself or with your students if you are giving them the same thing that they got last year. The 10 x 15 Agricultural Education Initiative wants to have 10,000 quality Ag Ed programs in place by 2015. Is your program a quality program? Are you offering skills and education that will place your students in the workforce, supplying them with math and science skills or are you just meeting the status quo?

I think that it is time that we all look in the mirror and say, “Can I do better?” And we can. Agricultural Education is the only profession where you have an invaluable network of associates ready and able to help. You are one email away, one question away from finding resources. And what better way to start exploring

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## Host a Site Visit for Your Elected Officials



### Ten steps to an effective visit

Wm. Jay Jackman  
NAAE Executive Director

You have a great agricultural education program — right? But do your elected officials and other decision makers know about it? It's time to show off your program for your local, state, and national legislators. Your legislators' understanding will go a long way with an up-close and personal tour of programs. These are the people who can help you EXPAND and IMPROVE your program by ensuring funding and effective policies. A successful tour needs meticulous planning.

Here are 10 steps to help you conduct a successful legislative tour of your agricultural education program.

#### 1. GET PERMISSION

Before you begin any planning, get permission from school officials. Keep everyone informed.

#### 2. DETERMINE GOALS

What type of impression do you want the legislator to have of your school? What programs do you want to highlight to the legislator? Brainstorm and select the most important features you want to show off.

#### 3. DEVELOP AN AGENDA

Most importantly, make sure school is in session for the tour. Plan a short introductory presentation about the school and programs the legislator will see. Following the brief presentation, schedule an organized tour.

#### 4. INVITE YOUR LEGISLATORS

Fax or mail a brief letter to your legislators' local office at least *six weeks* before the scheduled date (you can find your state and national legislators' contact information by visiting NAAE's Legislative Action Center at <http://capwiz.com/naae/home/>). Introduce yourself, your program, and explain why you would like the legislator to visit your program. Include specific information about the visit (date, time, location, others who may be invited, whether the media will be invited, what activities are planned for the visit). Legislators have very busy schedules, so you'll need to be as flexible and accommodating as possible.

#### 5. FOLLOW UP WITH THE SCHEDULER

Contact the legislator's scheduler seven to 10 days after you have mailed the letter. You should take every step to accommo-

date the legislator. **Federal legislators will most likely be in their home districts Mondays, Fridays, and on the weekends.**

#### 6. DETERMINE PRESS ACTIVITIES

Work with the legislator's press secretary to determine appropriate press activities. Send a press release to the local media inviting them to attend the tour. You can use the NAAE Legislative Action Center to contact your local media. In addition to giving your legislator publicity, it will increase the community's interest in your program. Be sure to follow up with the media to make sure that they attend, since the legislator will be expecting them! Take plenty of photographs. If you are unable to have the media present during the tour, send the local reporters a follow-up summary and a photograph for their use.

#### 7. CONDUCT THE TOUR

The day has finally arrived! When the legislator and his or her staff arrive, distribute descriptions of your programs, success stories about students and any other relevant information you feel promotes your program. Make sure that your name, address and phone number are on every document so staff can contact you later. Let the legislator know the scope of the program: how many people you serve, what impact the program has on families, the community, local businesses, and the local economy. Explain why continued funding for career and technical education is important.

Encourage interaction between the legislator and students.

#### 8. INCLUDE SUPPORTERS

Have a few supporters present, such as parents, students and business partners, to help you make the case.

#### 9. MAKE YOUR PITCH

Emphasize how additional resources could benefit students. While you have the legislator's undivided attention, make a pitch for support. Ask the legislator to support your programs through increased funding and effective legislation. (Remember to be specific if current legislation is pending.)

#### 10. FOLLOW UP

Send thank you letters to the legislator and any staff who attended, reiterating the need for additional funding and more effective policies for your program. Include copies of press coverage and a photo of the legislator with your students. This will remind the legislator how important agricultural education is to your community.

*These are the people who can help you EXPAND and IMPROVE your program...*

# NAAE In Washington

## NAAE Board Meets with U.S. Legislators

*Jessica Slone*  
2007 NAAE Communications Intern

As part of the ongoing effort to keep agricultural education in the forefront with our nation's decision makers, the board of the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) met in Washington, D.C. in July to visit with members of the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate.

During their three-day meeting, board members talked with legislators about the importance of both agricultural and career and technical education, as well as how legislators can help agricultural education continue to grow toward its goals.

The board also encouraged House members to join the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Caucus, formed by U.S. Representatives Brian Baird (WA) and Phil English (PA). This bipartisan caucus seeks out ways to continually to expand CTE opportunities throughout the country, working to highlight the

importance of CTE in preparing a well-educated and skilled workforce in America. Because school-based agricultural education is a substantial part of the CTE system, NAAE supports the CTE Caucus.

As a whole, legislators were very receptive to the visits, and expressed their eagerness to assist in the growth of agricultural education. The efforts made by the NAAE board of directors to educate their legislators about the importance of agricultural education are ongoing, and critical to the continued growth of the profession.



*Ray Nash, NAAE Region V Vice President, discusses ag education with Rep. Roger Wicker (R-MS)*

## NAAE Advocacy Intern: Summer Wrap-Up



*Bill Munns*  
2007 NAAE Advocacy Intern

Somewhere between meeting members of Congress and the Fourth of July fireworks, I surely lost myself in the service of the NAAE this summer. What an amazing experience I have had in Washington, DC. I want to thank the NAAE board and Jay Jackman for allowing me to have such a wonderful summer.

In a typical week, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday were spent in the NAAE office in Alexandria, VA, where I made appointments with congressional offices. Tuesdays I spent meeting with members of the House of Representatives and staffers. Thursdays I was in the Senate doing the same. Overall I met with 75 Senate and just fewer than 70 House offices. What an amazing experience it was to be able to share with these individuals my passion for agricultural education. I helped legislators understand that agricultural education's authorization and funding comes directly through Carl D. Perkins legislation. I also explained agricultural education's part in career and techni-

cal education, and discussed our long-range goals and the meaning of 10x15.

I had the opportunity to work with Steve Dewitt and the public policy staff of ACTE. At their weekly meetings I shared the important part ag ed plays in career and technical education. Also housed in the ACTE building are the headquarters of the National FFA Organization, so I was able to rub shoulders with Dr. Larry Case, Coleman Harris, and Kent Scheske. I worked with Kent on several occasions, for instance arranging for a member of congress to address the WLC group each week.

The opportunity to meet Dr. Troy Justesen was one of the many highlights of my summer. Troy is the Assistant Secretary for Vocational and Adult Education and a past FFA member from southeastern Utah. Thank you Troy, for your inspiring story and your support of agricultural education.

I want remind you that you have the most power to influence your lawmakers. I encourage you each to contact at least the representative in your district and tell them about your program. Invite them to your local county fair, chapter banquet, state convention — anything to expose them to the students. The continued support of agricultural education lies in your hands. To quote E.M. Tiffany, "I believe that American agriculture can and will hold true to the best traditions of our national life and that I can exert an influence in my home and community which will stand solid for my part in that inspiring task." Let's all do our part.

## Web Resources

### Livestock and Poultry Environmental Learning Center

*Jill Heemstra & Rick Koelsch, University of Nebraska, Joe Harrison, Washington State University, & Mark Risse, University of Georgia*

Do you like to keep your curriculum up to date with the newest science-based information? The Livestock and Poultry Environmental (LPE) Learning Center offers many opportunities for agricultural instructors looking for professional development or for resources to enrich their classroom.

#### WHAT SERVICES DOES THE LEARNING CENTER PROVIDE?

One product is a monthly webcast seminar delivered to your computer. You can connect to this free one-hour seminar using Real Player (also free). These occur on the third Friday of each month at 2:30 p.m. Eastern Time. Each webcast is recorded and archived for on-demand viewing at your convenience. The archive also offers links to individual segments (generally 20 minutes or less) that can be incorporated into classroom presentations. The archive is available at: <http://lpe.unl.edu/archive2.html>. The Learning Center web site also provides a connection to the "Best of the Best" national resources on many animal manure topics and a free monthly newsletter.

#### WHAT WEBCAST SEMINARS HAVE BEEN HELD TO DATE?

The Learning Center's customer advisory team helps set the agenda. At its request, initial seminars have addressed Value of Manure, Alternative Technologies, and Nutrient Issues from a national perspective. With the emergence of hot news topics, we have added presentations on Changing Concentrated Animal

*continued on pg. 13*

### SARE's 20th Anniversary Conference Photo Contest

The Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program is excited to announce SARE's first-ever national photo competition.

They're looking for photos from all corners of the nation that depict groundbreaking innovations, people and partnerships advancing the frontier of sustainable agriculture in America. The top four photos, one from each of SARE's regions in the United States, will receive grand prizes of free attendance and accommodations at SARE's 20th Anniversary conference, to be held March 25-27, 2008 in Kansas City, Missouri.

Visit [www.sare.org/2008Conference/photo\\_contest.htm](http://www.sare.org/2008Conference/photo_contest.htm) for official rules and submission guidelines.

### Are You Current?

*by Davida Molina*

*Agriscience Instructor & NAAE member  
Flowing Wells High School, Tuscon, AZ*



In the educational world of "No Child Left Behind," teachers are expected to remain "highly qualified" by continuing their education through college courses, professional development workshops, and career ladder programs. As we focus our efforts on teaching students, maintaining facilities, and enhancing our professional standing, we may overlook the importance of keeping in step with the world around us. The agricultural content we provide our students is continuously changing and improving. To better prepare them for their future, it is imperative that we know what is going on within the industry, despite our busy, unforgiving schedules. By visiting the site below, you will be able to find up-to-date information in any agricultural area:

#### ARS (AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE) NEWS SERVICE

[www.ars.usda.gov/is/pr/lists.htm](http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/pr/lists.htm)

#### When you visit this website, you will be able to:

- \* Find educational on-line videos such as "Help for Mastitis" and "Leadership in Bio-Oil"
- \* Read, save, and print current agriculture news articles
- \* Sign up to a free list serve which provides links to current agriculture articles

#### Send STUDENTS to the website for:

- \* Research related extemporaneous speaking topics
- \* Agriscience fair topic ideas and review of literature
- \* Information for ag issues CDE
- \* Biotechnology current affairs
- \* Agricultural ethical issues

It is important that we continually expand our knowledge of the agricultural industry and provide our students with current information. When you welcome your students into your classroom next semester, will your discussion topics be current?

### New Payment Option for Lifetime Membership Dues

At the July 2007 Board of Directors meeting, the board voted to allow the following payment options for life membership: 1. One payment of \$720.00

2. Two equal payments of \$360 in consecutive years.

These payments must be made in two consecutive years, or life membership will be forfeited.



## 1000 Weeds of North America CD

The most comprehensive weed identification reference ever published for North America

Have you ever needed a quick reference to identify an unfamiliar weed?  
Have you ever needed pictures of a weed for a lecture, seminar, or discussion?  
Have students asked for a simple way to learn weed identification?

This new, computer driven, interactive CD developed by The Weed Science Society of America and XID Services, Inc. may be just the item you have been looking for. The 860 broadleaf and 140 grass species selected from the major weeds of the North America on this CD are well illustrated with color photos, easily identified and selected via the unique identification system, and referenced to over 40 commonly used weed identification book. Teachers and students alike will find this CD useful in classes, labs, and practical weed identification situations. The CD includes a tutorial that will familiarize you with the identification system used to quickly identify weeds of interest. An on-line training video is also available at the WSSA web site.

Cost: A single CD is \$49.95 plus \$5.00 shipping and handling.  
Discounts are available for bulk orders and site licenses.  
To order your copy call WSSA (1-800-627-0629 Ext. 297)  
or go to the WSSA web site: <http://www.wssa.org>

## What's in a Name?

*continued from pg. 3*

basic agriscience concepts at [naae.org](http://naae.org). Announcements for summer workshops begin posting in January.

Also, you may find the NAAE convention, held each December, would be a perfect fit for your schedule. Once again, we will be hosting the DuPont Agriscience Institute, sponsored by DuPont and Lab-Aids. This year's agriscience workshop topics include soil nutrients, food science, biofuels, biotechnology, natural selection, water quality and soil erosion, just to name a few. These workshops will allow you to come away with a greater understanding of an agriscience class as well as some great lab activities to use. This year's convention will be in Las Vegas, December 11-15. Check out [naae.org/convention/schedule](http://naae.org/convention/schedule) to find out more about the exciting opportunities available to you in Vegas.

As you begin the year with your agriscience course, evaluate your curriculum, instructional materials and yourself as a teacher. Reflect on the purpose of your course in your school and remember that a name doesn't make the difference; it is everything else that goes with it! Good luck with your new year, and I hope to see you in Vegas!

## NAAE Convention

*continued from pg. 1*

on Riviera's website.

### SCHEDULE

Access the 2007 Convention schedule and more at [naae.org/convention/schedule](http://naae.org/convention/schedule). The schedule will be updated as we get closer to convention, so check back for updates!

### HOW DO I STAY AWARE OF UPCOMING WEBCASTS?

The LPE Learning Center provides subscribers with a free monthly two-page newsletter introducing upcoming web casts and highlighting national resources. Join the 950 current subscribers by going to <http://lpe.unl.edu/subscribe.html>.

### WHAT IS PLANNED FOR THE LPE LEARNING CENTER'S FUTURE?

The biggest current project is to substantially expand the web content of the LPE Learning Center. A team of 70+ university and public agency representatives, are assembling web content that will provide you with access to the "Best of the Best" educational resources and decision tools on nine animal manure management topics. Look for this expanded web resource in early 2008.

If you work with the livestock and poultry industry on environmental issues, we invite you to become familiar with the Livestock and Poultry Environmental Learning Center.

## LPE Learning Center

*continued from pg. 12*

Feeding Operations (CAFO) Regulations and Pathogens.

### WHAT SEMINARS ARE PLANNED?

Scheduled webcast seminars will address The Value of Manure in Energy Production; Alternative Treatments-Matching the Treatment System to the Environmental Concern; and Vegetative Treatment Systems for Open Lot Runoff. Plans are being developed to address final US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) CAFO regulatory changes, impact of ethanol industry distiller's grain use on nutrient plans, pharmaceuticals use and risk to environment, manure management for small farms, and animal housing options for handling dry manure, just to name a few.

### HOW DO I ACCESS THE LPE LEARNING CENTER?

Seminars and web resources can be accessed through our web site, <http://lpe.unl.edu>.

### CAN I RECEIVE CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS FOR SEMINARS?

Yes, all seminars since November 2006 are approved for continuing education units from both Certified Crop Advisors and Animal Registry for Professional Animal Scientist. Instructions on receiving credit are found at <http://lpe.unl.edu/ceu.html>.

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# Dates & Events

**NASAE Annual Meeting** -- October 22-24, 2007, Indianapolis, IN

**National FFA Convention** -- October 24-27, 2007, Indianapolis, IN

**NAAE Convention** -- December 11-15, 2007, Las Vegas, NV

**NAAE Region I Conference** -- April 16-19, 2008, Park City, UT

**NAAE Region II Conference** -- June 15-18, 2008, Jonesboro, AR

**NAAE Region III Conference** -- June 17-19, 2008, Lacrosse, WI

**NAAE Region IV Conference** -- June 23-25, 2008, Bowling Green, KY

**NAAE Region V Conference** -- June 30-July 2, 2008, Daytona, FL

**NAAE Region VI Conference** -- June 17-19, 2008, West Virginia

## Regional Updates

### Region I

from pg. 8

if you are interested. Feel free to call (406) 223-0760 with any questions you might have about the position or general questions about the NAAE.

### Region IV

from pg. 9

wrote, "We live in an imperfect world where problems always occur. And believe it or not, he/she should welcome them. Problems almost always create opportunities- to learn, grow, and improve."

As the year progresses and we begin and continue to prepare for competitions and enhancing our curriculum, take the time to think about the good you have done through the profession that reflects current students and graduates now in the workforce. We can make a difference! I realize, at times, it can be frustrating, but the results are priceless. As we continue to make a positive difference, remember the influences you have made.

### Region VI

from pg. 9

these resources than by attending our national conventions? Plan on attending workshops both at the national FFA and NAAE conventions. These workshops are being presented with you in mind – learn, explore and have fun. Also, so don't forget to check out the new additions to [naae.org](http://naae.org)!

If you are passionate about your job, it shows. If you are passionate about your job, you will make a difference in the lives of others, not only your students, but your community and school. Have fun this year, get passionate, and "Invest in Our Future." Looking forward to seeing you in Indianapolis and Las Vegas!

## July Board Meeting

continued from pg. 2

Members met with elected officials from their respective regions and discussed topics ranging from the Farm Bill to agricultural education's 10x15 initiative to their own local programs. *For more about the board's visits, see pg. 12*

"NAAE continues to be at the forefront of issues affecting agricultural education," said Alissa Smith, NAAE Associate Executive Director. "Goals as far-reaching as ours can't be accomplished overnight, but we will keep working to serve our members in the best possible way."