Collaborative Relationships
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EDITOR’S COMMENTS

No More Lone Rangers

By Ed Osborne, Editor

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I

n years past agriculture teachers could often be described as isolated, independent, and entrepreneurial. They could afford to manage their agriculture programs with much regard for other curriculums activated within the school, because the 90s were much different scene — one of integration, collaboration, and increased interaction between both school and non-school groups and individuals. Being sole owner and proprietor of an agriculture program no longer translates into a high-quality program.

While agriculture teachers are primarily responsible for the success and welfare of their programs, the time has come for them to open their doors wide and invite others to enjoy a panoramic view of the innovative and effective components of their programs. As they invite others to look into the program, agriculture teachers must become more outward looking as they consider opportunities for expanding into more comprehensive programs of agriculture. Meaningful collaboration will be a prerequisite for program expansion (and in some cases maintenance) in the years ahead.

Collaborative relationships differ somewhat from mere working relationships that are positive in nature. Collaboration implies more than friendliness, cooperation, and professional courtesy; collaboration involves working together on a jointly identified venture. Genuine collaboration occurs when individuals and groups come together as a result of some potential or already evident problem of mutual interest. Thus, the initial stages of collaboration focus upon problem identification and resolution. When agriculture teachers work with others or groups — individuals or groups, trust building and goal/goal clarification become the focal point in the collaborative relationship. The next stages of team performance include development of a problem solution plan and shared implementation. Finally, joint evaluation of the solution and continued renewal of the collaborative relationship occur. Collaborative relationships are maintained as long-term programs are jointly provided and new initiatives are developed in response to changing problems. There are a number of major areas where effective and productive collaboration can occur.

With science colleagues - The growing momentum in teaching more science in agriculture provides the perfect starting point for seeking collaborative relationships with other teachers in the school. Areas of mutual concern might include science credit for agriculture courses, need for shared laboratory materials and equipment, team teaching, science fairs, shared facilities and teaching resources, and similar areas.

With other teachers - Elementary and junior high school teachers play a key role in expanding agricultural education to include career awareness and agricultural literacy objectives. Once again, identifying a problem or situation of mutual concern is the best way to initiate collaborative relationships with these other teachers. An implementation plan jointly developed by the agriculture teacher and other teachers which contains a variety of activities could greatly enhance long-term collaborative relationships.

With other agriculture teachers - Agriculture teachers often feel a need to be self-sufficient — to want to do everything themselves. This pattern has been especially harmful to beginning teachers, who need an effective support network to ease their transition into teaching. Agriculture teachers can share teaching plans, program ideas and information, and many other materials. For schools that are close in proximity, a shared land laboratory offers excellent potential for saving time and cost effective instruction in outdoor laboratory settings. We need to replace competition among agriculture teachers with collaboration and professional teamwork.

With community groups - Representatives from various segments of the food and agricultural system are increasingly involved in classes, SAE programs, advisory councils, laboratory experiences, FFA activities, and other aspects of the agriculture program. Historically, relationships with Cooperative Extension Service personnel have been weak in many instances. CES reorganization as it is
Collaboration Not Competition

W. Lancaetor, in his book "Permanent Learning," wrote that one principle of interest involves our natural impulses. And among those natural impulses is our desire to compete. So, as agricultural educators, compete we do! Judging contests, leadership contests, star awards, national chapter ratings, and on and on. The success of our students and FFA members in these events is a mark of our own success as teachers. We even compete for students. Sometimes, we "fight" band, sports, 4-H, insurance, foreign language classes, honors tracks, other vocational programs and vocational student organizations, boyfriends and girlfriends, cars and pickups, after-school jobs, and perhaps even religious studies and services. Maybe I shouldn't involve you; should the pronoun be "I" and not "we"? Surely only I was guilty of competing for students — not you. If the preceding list doesn't apply to you, then skip the rest of my editorial and read all of the other articles in this issue — all about articles about how you and others are collaborating with groups to further the causes of agricultural education.

On the other hand, if you are even a little guilty of competing rather than collaborating, then let's push on. Perhaps your ideas and my motives were always pure. That is, do we always have the best interests of the individual student at heart when we compete for his or her time and talents? Again, if you answer "yes," then you can move on. Otherwise, hang with me and let's try to rid ourselves of our transgressions.

In most instances, the line between cooperation and collaboration is a fine one.

Both words begin with "co," and this "co" is often used as a prefix; it denotes togetherness or a duo or some kind of shared experience. Yet, competition and collaboration — though my meager knowledge of grammar tells me the "co" is not a prefix — implies a sharing, a kind of dual relationship. But there the similarity seems to end. Competition appears to involve opposing forces — resulting in a "we-you" or "you-we" situation. Collaboration, on the other hand, results in a "we-win" situation. Doesn't collaboration seem to yield superior results when compared to competition?

As agricultural educators, we must support our natural impulse to compete and instead capitalize on another of Lancaetor's natural impulses — the natural impulse to be altruistic. Now, I don't know about you, but when I first studied agriculture, I wasn't sure that I even had that natural impulse. In fact, I didn't even know what altruism was! (Did you mean that one?) Anyway, the dictionary taught me that altruism was "an unselfish regard for or devotion to the welfare of others." Ah, yes, this sounds like what we at teachers should practice.

So, if two forces (agricultural educator and drama coach) compete for the same resource (a student), then collaboration could result from our both being altruistic. What is truly best for that student? How can both forces win? If, as the agricultural science teacher, yield to the one-act play this time, will the student be a better public speaker or member of a parliament team next time? This is one side of (continued on page 12).

The Model for Industry/Education Collaboration

Forestry is big business in Georgia. Forest land comprises 65% of the State's total land area. Including its related activities, forestry comprises a $12 billion industry employing more than 8,000 people. These activities include forest management, timber cutting and transportation, and product manufacturing and marketing.

One of every five factory workers in the Atlanta metropolitan area is employed in a forest-related industry. There are more than 1,700 primary and secondary processors of forest products in Georgia and a total of 179 sawmills and 14 pulp and paper mills. Georgia leads the nation in pulp and paper production (Georgia Forestry Commission, 1990).

Union Camp Corporation is one of many forest-related businesses striving to make forestry in Georgia the best in the nation. A multinational corporation based in Wayne, New Jersey, Union Camp produces paper, packaging, building products, and chemicals. Its Savannah mill is one of the largest of its kind in the world. Long before the current push for industry involvement in education, Union Camp saw the need to be involved in forestry education in Georgia.

In 1953 Union Camp and the Georgia Department of Education established a cooperative program to promote and advance forestry education for high school students within the company's operating area of Georgia. Called "The Union Camp School Forest Program," it is jointly administered by foresters from the Corporation's Woodlands Division and teaching and supervisory personnel within agricultural education in the State. It consists of Corporate involvement in essentially three areas: 1) the establishment and operation of a school forest at each participating school, 2) the incorporation of Union Camp lesson guides into the curriculum, and 3) Union Camp sponsorship of forestry competition, both FFA and among agriculture departments based on forestry instruction.

The School Forest

A major aspect of the program is the establishment and development of a school forest. Much like a land laboratory component for an agricultural education, the school forest serves as a hands-on laboratory where forestry students learn and practice forest management skills. Union Camp personnel, supervisory personnel from the State Department of Education, teachers, and community members are all involved in the process of locating and developing the plot.

It generally consists of 7 to 20 acres of forest land well suited for a variety of forestry practices including tree planting, hardwood control, timber measurement, controlled burning, and tree identification. Once the forest is secured, it is divided into smaller plots by plowed firebreak management plan is then developed based on the curriculum, sound forestry practices, and the unique characteristics of each school forest.

No More Lone Rangers... (continued from page 3)

occurring in many states provides an excellent opportunity to join with these fellow agricultural educators in providing comprehensive agricultural education to the youth and adults of the community.

Collaborative relationships require substantive joint ventures of mutual concern and benefit. As secondary agriculture programs strive to reconsider their purposes and expand into new areas, meaningful collaborative relationships will be crucial. The local program development work that needs to be done in agricultural education today cannot be accomplished by an agriculture teacher working in isolation. The challenge for the 90s is effective team building to support growth and expansion of agricultural education in the secondary schools.
The Competition
The competition among schools falls into two categories: 1) FFA forestry contests and 2) competition among the schools involved in the school forest program regarding the total instructional program.

The district and state FFA forestry field days are held in the spring of each year. Several of these contests are sponsored by Union Camp. FFA members compete in ten areas representing various forestry skill areas. First through fourth place winners at the district level receive awards, and the first and second place teams are invited to compete in the state contest, which is cosponsored by Union Camp.

The fact that Union Camp personnel are intricately involved in developing and updating these lesson guides is perhaps one of the greatest strengths of the program.

The winner of the state contest then competes in the national forestry contest held in Kansas City. Any agriculture program in the State is eligible to participate in these contests, regardless of whether or not it is involved in the school forest program.

Again, although Union Camp sponsors or co-sponsors these contests, other organizations contribute significantly to their success. Personnel from the Georgia Forestry Commission and other forest-based businesses in Georgia assist in training and conducting the forestry field days.

Each of the 38 agriculture departments in the State involved in the Union Camp program also competes against one another regarding the instructional program. The preliminary judging is conducted by Union Camp foresters and supervisors within agricultural education. After the top six schools are selected, a panel of impartial judges selects the top three programs in FFA Districts 1 and 11.

The student's class notebook and leaf collection notebook account for about 14% of the total score (90 out of 700 points). Another 100 points come from the school forestry exam. All forestry students in each program are tested by industry personnel twice a year to evaluate their knowledge of forestry; once at the end of the first semester and once at the end of the year. The scores are sent to Mr. CONNORS, TAMMY O'CONNELL, AND EDWARD WILLIAM.

Webster's Dictionary (1984) defined "synergism" as the "interaction of discrete agencies or agents such that the total effect is greater than the sum of the individual effects." To produce the greatest synergistic effect, the talents and expertise of Michigan agriscience and natural resource teachers, Michigan State University Extension Specialists, and Michigan Cooperative Extension Service Agents were brought together.

To foster better working relationships Operation Synergism proposed to improve communication between CES agents and agriscience and natural resource teachers, provide in-service to agriscience teachers on technical agriculture information related to the Michigan Agriscience and Natural Resources (ANR) Curriculum, and increase the use of CES agents as resource persons in agriscience classrooms.

One hundred and nine Michigan agriscience and natural resource teachers attended the first Operation Synergism in September 1989. Teachers attended approximately 16 hours of technical in-service training taught by Michigan State University professors and extension specialists. Course topics ranged from agricultural economics to plant tissue culture. All classes stressed hands-on activities that could be utilized in secondary agriscience and natural resource classrooms. Attending teachers were provided with over $400 worth of resource material supplementing the inservice instruction. These materials included books, computer programs, and videotapes focusing on agriculture's scientific and technical nature.

Probably the most unique aspect of Operation Synergism was that while teachers were attending inservice classes, CES agents were teaching high school classes.

The Michigan Department of Education technical certification requires 86 hours of advanced technical updating for approval to teach the ANR curriculum. The new ANR curriculum includes four basic core units: Natural Resources and Michigan Agriculture, Plant Science, Animal Science, and Business Management and Marketing. Each class at Operation Synergism directly related to one of these basic core units. Hence, teachers attending a class in tissue culture might spend approximately four hours towards re-certification as Michigan agriscience and...
natural resources teachers.

Probably the most unique aspect of Operation Synergism was that while teachers were conducting in-service classes, CES agents were teaching high school classes. Agriscience classes were taught by 122 Cooperative Extension personnel during Operation Synergism. This exposed Michigan agriscience and natural resources students to the expertise of Cooperative Extension Service agents. CES agents who taught agriscience and natural resources classes treated Operation Synergism described teaching as an enlightening and exciting experience.

After Operation Synergism, agriscience teachers met with their CES agents to discuss their classroom teaching experience. Further cooperative ventures were planned to better utilize the knowledge and skills of the CES agents. Plans were made to use CES agents as resource persons for classroom instruction, to assist with supervised experience (SIE) projects, and to serve as FFA contest judges and team coaches.

Evaluation of Operation Synergism found that both agriscience teachers and CES agents valued the experience. After Operation Synergism, 89% of the agriscience teachers stated that they planned to interact with their local Cooperative Extension agent in the future.

A Model For Industry...

A Model For Industry... (continued from page 6) test are tallied and used in the judging. This year, that over 25% of the score (190 out of 700 points) in the competition comes directly from student performance. More than half of the school forest also accounts for nearly 25% of the total points (160 out of 700 points).

Program Benefits

The program is not mandatory. A teacher can teach forestry and not participate in the Union Camp program. However, what value does it hold for those who do? Teachers in the program recently responded to a survey asking them to list the five most valuable benefits of the program. Very high on the list was the interaction of students and teachers with industry personnel. Union Camp foresters frequently visit participating schools to teach certain forestry topics, to help with the forestry team practice, or just to see how things are going. Teachers and students benefit from this kind of interaction by having an easily accessible source of technical expertise.

Another major advantage mentioned by several teachers was the availability of an updated, organized, and localized curriculum for forestry instruction. Other benefits included the availability of the school forest for demonstrations and student practice of forestry skills, opportunity for student participation in forestry field days, the visibility and public relations aspects of the program, and the donation of tree seedlings by Union Camp.

The heart of these advantages seems to be student and teacher motivation. The contact with industry personnel in the classroom and in FFA programs, the hands-on activities of the school forest, the fact that student notebooks are going to be judged by someone outside the school, and testing students by industry personnel gives students additional motivation. For these same reasons, some teachers find extra motivation to deliver instruction in a more organized manner, to keep facilities and equipment updated in order, and to make sure that every student succeeds. As one teacher stated, "The school forest test given by Union Camp personnel helps motivate teachers to teach lessons in more detail and review with students who have difficulty."

At all levels, relationships with industry can contribute to the health and success of education. Whether it is President Bush's America 2000 strategy or as just this one at the state level, or the relationship of local businesses with local schools, all play an important role in guaranteeing that our schools and educational programs reach their maximum potential.

Vocational education has a rich history of involvement with industry through curriculum and skill development, advisory committees, and content sponsorship. Likewise, agriculture education shares that same rich history of involvement with the agricultural industry. As we move toward the 21st century and into new and exciting areas of our profession, we must nurture and appreciate these collaborative relationships that can help us achieve our highest goal: the success and well-being of our students.

Acknowledgements

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References


Association of Teacher Educators in Agriculture, 27, 7-12.
Agribusiness and Agricultural Education:
An Old Idea Has Come of Age!

Recent and continuous advances in technology within the agribusiness world have transformed nearly every aspect of related careers into more fast-paced, highly specialized workforces. Those involved or affected will undoubtedly become more reliant on available resources and their ongoing educational training. This trend unmistakably applies to the realm of vocational and technical education.

As agricultural educators, we have the distinct opportunity, and thus a responsibility, to guide and allow our graduates to pursue the most relevant avenue for their future employment and career goals. All stakeholders—agribusiness, employers, and educators—have an interest in ensuring students are prepared for the workforce. Learning experiences must be carefully designed to meet the needs of the students and the business community. The need for lifelong learning is becoming ever more pressing, requiring educational institutions to plan and deliver programs that meet the changing needs of the workforce.

Foundation of a Partnership

Students enrolled in the East Agri-Business and Environmental Science Magnet High School program benefit from partnerships with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and other entities. These partnerships provide students with real-world experiences and work-based learning opportunities that complement their academic studies.

The partnership with the USDA includes opportunities for students to engage in agricultural research, work on farms, and gain hands-on experience in various agricultural fields. Students also have the chance to participate in the Cooperative Extension Service, which provides educational programs and resources to the public.

In addition, partnerships with local businesses and organizations offer students internships and job opportunities, allowing them to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world settings. These experiences not only enhance students' resumes but also provide valuable networking opportunities.

Implementation of a Partnership Plan

The partnership model includes several key elements to ensure its success. These include:

1. Regular meetings between school administrators and representatives of the business community to discuss the needs of both parties.
2. A structured curriculum that integrates coursework with workplace skills.
3. Internship opportunities for students to gain practical experience.
4. A mentorship program that pairs students with industry professionals.
5. Regular evaluation of the partnership's effectiveness to ensure alignment with the needs of both parties.

For all parties concerned, the greatest amount of mutual benefit is received from the type of partnership in which the industry partner takes an active role with the education provider. This will assure a successful and rewarding opportunity for both parties. Activities include speaking to classes, being involved in an advisory committee, granting use of agribusiness facilities for faculty training/staff development, and offering employment for qualified students. Such partnerships are in demand for a variety of reasons. In support of this concept, Clark (1992) stated, "To meet employer demands, competitive workers need a state-of-the-art vocational education delivery system that helps students acquire the workplace skills of the '90s and beyond."

To achieve this system, industry and vocational education will have to link more closely with one another and become more accountable to each other (p. 32).

Evaluation of Partnerships

All parties concerned need to be held accountable for the benefits received in the type of partnership implemented. Presently a pilot program has been established for the first year of business/community and school partnerships in the Agri-Business Magnet High School.

The evaluation of the program includes regular meetings between the school and industry partners to discuss progress and address any issues. The program's success is measured by the satisfaction of both partners and the achievement of the goals set for the program. Feedback from the students, teachers, and industry partners is also considered in the program's evaluation. Continuous improvement is a key principle, ensuring the program remains relevant and effective.

Conclusion

Like it or not, changes are now a matter of fact. In this field of agricultural education, as in all other industries, those who adapt to the changing landscape will be the ones who succeed. The partnerships discussed in this article are just one example of how educators and industry can work together to provide students with the skills and experiences they need to succeed in today's workforce.

"There are active partnerships with the goal of assisting the school with activities and projects that can only be accomplished through outside resources. An ongoing line of communication should be developed to keep partnerships informed of needs of the programs, the results of the assistance provided by the partnerships."
Collaboration Begs Collaboration

W hat started out as a four-acre project contracted between the North Pole High School FFA and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has evolved over the past 12 years into a multifaceted collaborative effort. As the old saying goes, "one thing led to another." Currently, the North Pole agriculture program is extensively involved with several agencies and organizations in the overall management of approximately 200 acres on the Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge.

By CARLA KIRTS and MICHAEL BEHNER

The Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge is located in the heart of Fairbanks in interior Alaska (see figure 1). The 1790-acre refuge was originally Creamer's dairy, which served Fairbanks and the Interior from 1929 to 1966. The grain fields on the dairy attracted significant numbers of migrating waterfowl and became local residents' favorite place to view the waterfowl as they made their way north in the spring. When the dairy was offered for sale in 1967, residents wanted to protect the site for waterfowl, convinced the state to purchase the dairy. This became the first step in a sequence of events which ultimately established the refuge as it is known today. Since 1977, the original dairy facilities have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has maintained jurisdiction over the refuge. The statutory purposes of the refuge revolve around the concerns of the Fairbanks/Fairbanks area. The refuge provides protection and enhancement of habitat for migratory birds with special emphasis on waterfowl; and provides opportunities to view, photograph, and study various species of plants, wildlife, and geological features typical of interior Alaska.

Canadian geese and sandhill cranes are the premiere wildlife species local citizens enjoy viewing. However, cultivated fields, natural and constructed ponds, shrub thickets, and forests located on the refuge provide habitat and public viewing opportunities. The waterfowl for a variety of birds and mammals, including ducks, geese, moose, caribou, and fox. The refuge also accommodates number of land uses, including dog mushing, trapping, skiing, snow machining, and various natural resource interpretation and education programs.

Collaborative Project Development

In the summer of 1981, the North Pole FFA Chapter received permission from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to manage four acres of the refuge. The FFA was responsible for fertilizing, controlling weeds, and harvesting hay. The hay obtained from the section was sold to FFA members who had participated in supervised experience programs. Some hay was also sold to the public. All proceeds were "plowed back into" the agricultural program to purchase instructional supplies and equipment.

Today, the original four-acre allotment has grown to approximately 200 acres. Part of this expansion is the result of the faith the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has in the FFA.

In 1982-83, the Borealis Kiwanis donated a $10,000 tractor to the North Pole High School agriculture program. With this tractor and an assortment of borrowed equipment, the FFA continued to manage their allotment. In the fall of 1985, a number of the borrowed equipment and implements, the FFA provided for their maintenance and replacement. The FFA members benefited by learning about equipment management and operation, in addition to the access to the skills which they were already practicing.

The FFA was the first to use fertilizer on their allotment. They began setting the pace for local producers in the application of efficient and effective practices. Essentially, their allotment became a demonstration site — the standard upon which local land management practices were measured. In 1985-86, the Alaska State Legislature recognized the contribution of the North Pole FFA by awarding them a $125,000 grant for the purchase of additional equipment. The FFA provided 21 new pieces of equipment for first use during the summer of 1986. The FFA no longer had to rely on

References


borrowed equipment.

Now that the operation could be larger and more efficient, the Department of Fish and Game allotted the FFA additional land. In both 1987 and 1988, the agency and the FFA began to arrange facilities so that the FFA's equipment could be stored on the refuge instead of being trucked 40 miles round-trip between the refuge and the school. Also, by this time the department had purchased a tractor, disk, and mower. Thus, the equipment was available for use by the agency as well as for the FFA.

At this point in the project the FFA was responsible for some building construction and maintenance, in addition to the ongoing management practices and the equipment maintenance and repair.

At about the same time, a pond construction project, funded by Ducks Unlimited, was initiated on the refuge (see Figure 1). The FFA was invited to participate. FFA members fertilized the riparian zones and seeded them with native grasses. The purpose of the project was to attract the waterfowl to potential nesting sites. Studies conducted by game biologists have shown that ponds and adjacent acres are being used for nesting by several species of migrating waterfowl.

Today, the original four-acre allotment has grown to approximately 200 acres. Part of this expansion is the result of the many-forty eight acres have been added since the FFA began to manage the project. These acres have been established as wetlands. The wetlands provide habitat for a variety of wildlife, including waterfowl, shorebirds, and upland game birds.

The major flyway migratory waterfowl use to reach arctic nesting sites, the Fairbanks International Airport is in a continuous land-use battle with the birds (see Figure 1). The waterfowl find the grasslands around the airport quite attractive for nesting and foraging, while airport officials find the accumulation of birds hazardous to aircraft and their passengers. Cranes are a particular problem because many of them stay in Fairbanks for the entire season.

As a result, the Army Corps of Engineers developed a plan for making the fields near the airport less attractive to the birds. Again, the North Pole FFA was invited to participate. Noise makers, such as boomers guns, were installed near the airport to scare birds away. To divert the birds from the airport, a highly visible and accessible pond is being constructed at Creamer's by the FFA (see Figure 1). The pond is planned to be a diversion pond. Subsequently, the ponds near the airport will be filled by the Corp of Engineers. Also, the FFA will be planting a small field of millet with which to keep birds off the pond later in the season. The birds cannot nest on the fields, which is particularly beneficial to the cranes, who eat from the pond.

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silver and bronze placement in the Building Our American Communities program.

Other Advantages

FFA members involved in these collaborative efforts are not the only ones who benefit. The cooperative agencies and organizations benefit by getting projects accomplished that otherwise might not get done due to time and budgetary constraints.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, the Soil Conservation Service, and the Corp of Engineers are public agencies. They receive public money to carry out their mission. It is an advantage when one can cooperate with another. In this case, they cooperated with the Fairbanks North State Borough School District, another public agency. Collaborative efforts such as this where the mission of one public agency supports the mission of another public agency are signs to the public that their tax dollars are providing effective returns.

As the FFA established a good reputation for involvement in these projects, other opportunities became available.

In this case, one collaborative project led to another. What started out as a project with the Department of Fish and Game also led to projects with the U.S. Soil Conservation Service; U.S. Corp of Engineers, and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. It is obvious that the first collaborative program with the Department of Fish and Game provided an avenue for effective public relations for the agriculture program, leading to additional projects with other agencies.

Cautions and Concerns

Realistically, a collaborative effort of this magnitude is not without its risks. Liability is a major concern. The instructor must take all reasonable measures to prepare students to operate equipment and be responsible while working on site. This includes giving and recording safety tests, supervising work activities, and being on an official school district contract during the summer.

In some instances, competition with local private enterprise is a problem. When the North Pole FFA first began managing allotments for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, it just so happened that a large amount of hay was produced in the Fairbanks area that year. Because the FFA had hay for sale, the school program was perceived to be in direct competition with local enterprises. However, this situation has been resolved somewhat by the fact that local hay production has never been that high since, and the FFA has built a reputation for producing high quality hay. Furthermore, all FFA receipts have gone back into the agriculture program. At the present time, business competition is not a problem.

Maintaining instructional integrity must always be a primary goal. Allowing projects to become bigger than the students can handle is a danger.

Maintaining instructional integrity must always be a primary goal. Allowing projects to become bigger than the students can handle is a danger. The better job the students do of completing projects like this and attending a good reputation for their work, the greater the potential to be pulled into more work. The interviewed with the only person in a position to determine whether the collaborative efforts are within the realm of reality, “Having more than one can chew” and not being able to produce success could damage the reputation of the agriculture program. In fact, just recently, the Corp of Engineers approached the North Pole FFA about managing 500 acres on the local flood control project. This project would be a major expansion of current operations and can only be accepted after careful consideration of the consequences.

In Conclusion

According to the dictionary, collaboration means “to work jointly with others, especially in an intellectual endeavor.” The North Pole FFA has established such a relationship with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in managing Creamer’s Refuge for the enhancement of wildlife habitat and public education and recreation opportunities. A project that started with Fish and Game rapidly expanded into several projects with several entities. As a result, the community benefits and the students in the North Pole FFA Program acquire experiences outside of the traditional classroom and textbooks.

Overcoming . . .

(From page 23)

build the abilities of others, and it can be used to stop procrastination. If you have been putting off doing some task, look around; you may find someone else who would like to do it. This is especially useful when you are overcommitted.

In conclusion, the FFA can overcommit and the FFA may find someone else who would like to do it. This is especially useful when you are overcommitted.


Collaborator — (verb) to work together, especially in reference to literary, artistic or scientific work. Collaborator — (adjetive) tending to collaborate; resulting from collaboration. Collaborator - (noun) a person who works with others.

WEBSTER’S NEW WORLD DICTIONARY

During a recent state-sponsored workshop on cooperative education programs, a group of agriculture teachers, teacher educators, and state staff members interviewed the managers of three typical agribusinesses. The farms were located along a major highway in a mid-sized metropolitan statistical area of approximately 100,000 people. The three agribusinesses dealt with unrelated products/services — farm supply, nursery sales, and farm/lawn implements. The group conducted one-hour interviews using an interview schedule that had been developed to guide the questioning toward policies affecting the cooperative education programs of the teachers involved. Even though the interviews were structured, the workshop facilitators interviewed with the only person in a position to determine whether the collaborative efforts are within the realm of reality, “Having more than one can chew” and not being able to produce success could damage the reputation of the agriculture program. In fact, just recently, the Corp of Engineers approached the North Pole FFA about managing 500 acres on the local flood control project. This project would be a major expansion of current operations and can only be accepted after careful consideration of the consequences.

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On the industry side, a downturn in agricultural markets during the 1980's, regional weather extremes, and the recession have severely affected agribusiness.

Many have gone out of business; others have had to cut back or diversify in order to survive. To illustrate the problem, a teacher of agriculture in south Georgia recently initiated a study of farm implement dealers in order to project employment needs, and thus determine the emphasis of his agricultural economics program. He initially targeted a 50-mile radius of this town as the area to be included in the study. The area he covered was a 108-mile radius in order to have sufficient implement dealers to study. (Avery, 1990) What was once a common name-place in every rural town — the implement dealer — has become a rarity. Effective collaboration in the future must reflect the realities of the stressed business climate.

The above problems notwithstanding, progress is being made to improve collaborative relationships with agribusiness. In Georgia, internships in agribusiness have been utilized by many teachers to upgrade their skills and knowledge. Some have arranged paid employment, and over 30 teachers have received graduate credit. These internships have resulted in placement opportunities for students, location/ acquisition of resources, and closer ties to the work of agribusiness. As communication and collaboration grows, we will see an increase in the number of students, teachers, schools, and the industries involved.

Collaboration in the Future

Most of one see the future, as the poet proclaimed, "through darkling glass" (i.e., unclearly). If the recent past is any indicator of changes to come, agricultural educators must move expeditiously in federal, state, and local partnerships, and think in terms of long-term commitments. They must cultivate, as never before, mutually rewarding relationships with agribusinesses. This will entail getting closer and on a more comfortable basis with agribusiness persons in the past. In order to work closely with business partners, their values must be understood and accepted; for instance, the importance of time and contracts (Gustafson, 1992).

Responsiveness is the key to the establishment of good relationships with modern agribusinesses. Logically, the agricultural educator should be familiar with the workplace environment in order to deal effectively with its personnel. In addition to improving agribusiness in two areas of major need: (1) to provide a source of well-trained new employees; and (2) to provide for the training of existing employees.

In the past advisory groups gave advice which may or may not have been heeded. In a partnership model the advisory committee become more of a board of directors. Under this model the school/program/trainer will be obligated not only to listen, but also to act on the advice.

Can a partnership mode of collaboration be widely implemented in agricultural education? The opportunities are extraordinary, the potential rewards are great, but the skills of agricultural educators will have to be better than ever. Certainly, improved preserve, inservice and graduate education will be necessary.

Activism with agribusiness will benefit the program, the teacher of agriculture and the school in ways unheard of in the past. Will we rise to the challenge? For the sake of the program, I believe that we must.

References


**Coming in August...**

**Advising FFA Chapters**

- Meeting your customers
- Managing your time
- Middle School FFA Programs
- Planning Programs

**Plus Feature Columns on laboratory and classroom teaching techniques.**
Agricultural Education and the Political Process

He time has come for politicians to begin campaigning again. All across the country the air waves will be filled with paid political advertisements. Americans don't think that makes a difference. Can we as agricultural educators afford to make the assumption that our vote doesn't count? Before we make that assumption we need to ask ourselves some questions. Is the future of agricultural education in jeopardy? Has the implementation of newly developed strategic and tactical plans by the various agricultural education organizations at both the state and national levels had an impact on local programs?

Where Are We Now?

At this point in time we would all like to believe that the future of agricultural education is safe, because of the foresight of our leaders. Summit I, Summit II, and the two national video teleconferences provided opportunities for the agricultural education community to demonstrate the changes that are occurring, as well as the design for the future. Can we expect funding for agricultural education to be increased? Will any of these activities result in graduation requirements being changed to include agricultural education?

The answers to these rhetorical questions are evident. The strategic and tactical plans are in place, but what should be done next? One course of action seems apparent. The time has come for agriculture instructors to become politically active and public relations conscious so that the profession can grow and prosper into the next century.

There are many reasons for not wanting to be involved. These reasons may have appeared valid in the past, but instructors can no longer sit back and allow their friends to take care of them. "Too many of our friends' of the 1960s and 70s are no longer available. If the individual directly impacted by such reforms can't maintain the enthusiasm to save their jobs, why should 'traditional friends get involved' (Engelske, 1986, p. 7)?

Eldon Witt (1987, p. 9) may have best summarized the necessity for political involvement by agriculture instructors when he wrote, "The individual teacher has the most gain or loss from the political process, be it local, state, or national." If we accept the fact that we must change our attitudes towards political activity, the next question we must answer is, "What can we do to change?" Let us explore this issue from the local agriculture instructors' perspective.

What Can We Do To Change?

Teachers must first develop a positive mind set toward politics and politicians. It sometimes appears that legislators are opposed to agricultural education. The importance of public relations in the political process was emphasized by Rushi (1987, p. 6) when he stated, "The key to the political process is simply providing the right kind of information from enough of the right people to those who make the decisions." If political support is our goal, then politicians need to know what we do, in school and the community. This point was confirmed by Hovis (1978, p. 18) when he stated, "An important step in establishing a rock-like political foundation for vocational education involves keeping the legislature informed and conscious of your existence." This step must start at the local level.

Advisory Councils.

The local advisory council should be one of the key components of a strong public relations program. Two-way communication through advisory committees keeps the school appraised of community preferences for agricultural education and the community updated on local programs and opportunities (Whaley and Sutphin, 1988, p. 16). The local advisory council should develop a separate public relations plan to inform the community about the program. This would serve two purposes. First, it would provide advisory council exposure within the community, as well as supporting the program. Secondly, it would provide another source of value to the program. The local council would be able to bring about the same information, these voices would be reduced.

Community Involvement

Other groups in the community which should be utilized in a complete public relations program include, but are not limited to, FFA Alumni chapters and/or program alumni, Young Farmer chapters, parents, and concerned citizens. Witt (1987, p. 9) observed, "Lying within each community across this nation is a sleeping giant - a giant comprised of alumni and concerned citizens that can be awakened by the concerned teacher." How can this sleeping giant be awakened? It starts with a strong public relations program and then letting the community know what is happening and what needs to be done. A telephone network starting with the advisory council and spreading into the community is one way to inform the people. Some may be skeptical that people in the community would be willing to become involved in something for the agriculture program. According to Eudy (1987, p. 11), "Former students and parents seem more ready to accept these programs working this pyramidal-type organization."

Effects of Public Relations

A strong public relations program will help to cultivate grassroots support for the local program, and agriculture instructors should consider cultivating this support. Eudy (1987, p. 11) echoed this thought when he wrote, "Probably our greatest strength in the grassroots is support for our program." This places a lot of responsibility on the local instructor. The instructor must only seek the amount of funding for the community when necessary. Moreover, the instructor must avoid becoming emotionally involved in the issue and support the program or school. On political matters, the instructor must be objective in seeking the support of the community.
Overcoming Procrastination

By Gary E. Moore
Dr. Moore is professor of agricultural education at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, NC.

Webster’s defines procrastination as “the action of putting off or postponing some activity until a future time; postpone or defer action.” My definition is “doing anything other than your highest priority task.”

It is wise - We think conditions are going to change soon (price will drop, interest rates will change, etc.), it may be wise to procrastinate.

Overwhelmed - The task is too big and we are overwhelmed.

Techniques for Overcoming Procrastination

After we determine why we have been procrastinating the next step is to select a technique that can be used to overcome the problem. Following is a list of techniques that may be helpful.

Five Minute Promise - Promise to work for just five minutes on the task. After five minutes you will probably continue but it is okay to quit; you have kept your promise. This is good for those boring tasks or "not really a goal" type task.

Salami Technique - Take those overwhelming tasks and break them down into smaller, manageable tasks. Do one task at a time.

Worst Case Scenario - Identify the worst thing that can happen if you went ahead and did the task you have been procrastinating on because you were afraid of failure. In nearly all instances, you will be no worse off than you currently are.

Visualize Positive Results - Imagine all the benefits that will accrue to you if you stop procrastinating. Most of the time you will feel better and realize a financial advantage by not waiting.

Balance Sheet - Get a sheet of paper and draw a line down the middle of it. On one side list all the reasons why you should not procrastinate and on the other side list all the reasons why you should complete the job now. When you see the pros and cons of procrastinating in writing, you should realize it will be to your advantage to proceed now.

Rewards Yourself - Promise yourself a special treat (going to the movies, etc.) only after you have finished the task on which you have been procrastinating.

Self Exposure - Critically challenge the excuses you have been giving for procrastinating. Do diets really have to start on Monday? Why not try a color-coordinated exercise suit to start an exercise program?

Delegation - Delegation is a tool to help (continued on page 17)
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