Agricultural Education

The Profession's View  The Public's View

Agricultural Education

The Participant's View

Agricultural Education. . .

How is it viewed?
Whose perspective?
In what context?
Is Agricultural Education Part of the Solution? We Could Be, But...
The Profession’s View of Agricultural Education

We are professionals in agricultural education, especially that area of agricultural education concerned in some way with formal instruction in agriculture at the secondary level. Some of us teach, some work with those who do so. How do we view ourselves? How do we view our professionalism? How do we view the clients? How do we view our mission? We work with different clientele. How do we view them? How do we think that they view us? Our clients in agricultural education have been changing. How do we view them? Professional agricultural education has been changing. How do we view those changes? Have we contributed actively to those changes or have we accepted them passively? Is agricultural education changing too rapidly? We know or perceive that we know from whence agricultural education came. But do we know where agricultural education is going? Where do we perceive that agricultural education is going?

It is appropriate that this February issue of The Agricultural Education Magazine is dedicated to the theme, "The Profession’s View of Agricultural Education," especially since the January issue was dedicated to "The Public’s View of Agricultural Education" and next month’s issue is on the theme of "The Participant’s View of Agricultural Education." In this issue, we present views from secondary level classroom teachers, state level supervision personnel, and people in teacher education. As you read their articles, please note that while they present viewpoints based on their different experiences, observations, and studies, and in the context of the settings in which they work, some common threads or themes emerge. For example, in several of the articles you will see addressed the changing and expanding mission in agricultural education, the emphasis on leadership development in the curriculum, the presence of diverse audiences or stakeholders, a reemphasis on experiential learning, and changing instructional technologies.

Gary Lisko pointed out in the September 1994 issue of this magazine (p. 4) that we talk to ourselves too much, that we do not question very often what we do from the perspective of professional people in other fields. We agree wholeheartedly. We believe also that drawing together the viewpoints of people in our profession, such as those that appear in this issue, helps provide a composite view that can serve partially as a basis for comparison, questioning, and examination as we seek information and perspectives from people in other fields. Engaging in such activity becomes increasingly important as we enter more frequently and more broadly into collaborative arrangements with other disciplines and organizations, another thread that appears in the articles in this issue.

As we look at ourselves, what good might we see? Emphasis on experiential learning, practical applications of knowledge, public involvement and the need for solving and decision making, and youth development are positive things that we see when we look inward. But all is not rosy. Lack of ethnic diversity, often-encountered resistance to change, overemphasis on production agriculture, and too much emphasis on competition are "blemishes" on our programs. Finally, our insistence on trying to convince ourselves and others that agriculture is more than farming—more than "sows, plows, and cows" is counterproductive. Perhaps it is time for us to reexamine our stance. Don’t the word, “agriculture,” trace its roots (pedernal the past) back to Latin for “tilting the soil?” Thus, perhaps people outside our profession see clearly what “agri” = “culture” means: cultivating, cultivating, or till the soil. Perhaps we need to redefine ourselves as "agriculture and agribusiness" or "agricultural industry." Simply put, how can we portray to others just what it is that we endeavor to do? As we look forward with one eye, we need to look outward with the other eye to ensure that others view us as we want to be, and should be seen.

About the Cover
Agricultural Education is practiced by the Profession, supported by the Public and served by the Participants. Each view has a perspective, a context and an influence. An understanding of each is a must.

Graphic courtesy of Agricultural Education, Texas A&M University College Station.

Agricultural Education: A View from Inside the Classroom

You people in agriculture education really run a "class act" is a comment often heard from a fellow Career and Technology Education teacher as he sees the excitement on the faces of the youngsters leaving the agriscience classroom with satisfaction from learning a new skill, or after succeeding in contests, or even upon returning from camps or conventions with more self-confidence. Unfortunately, while our vocational colleagues look at us with envy, others see us as a dinosaur. We may hear comments from fellow educators and community members such as, "You teach what?" and "How are we teaching agriculture here in the center of NASA?" Although our program is second only to athletics in terms of publicity, it is amazing how many people in the community and even within the school are still unaware of the outstanding program we have in agricultural education.

Essential Ingredients of a Successful Program
We have taught in this suburban area of Houston for more than six years and have watched our agriscience programs grow and prosper as it is the case with most agriscience programs in Texas. At the same time we have had set-backs of our own and have watched other programs that were once prosperous now falter in enrollment. We believe that commitment of the teachers, administrative support, and community backing are essential to successful programs. At the core of the agricultural education program are the curriculum, the FFA organization, and the SAE program. Successful agricultural science teachers use these essential tools to prepare students with practical knowledge and transferable skills, to foster self-confidence in students, and to gain respect for their program.

The New Agriscience Curriculum
For nearly a decade, agricultural science teachers in Texas have been teaching a curriculum that is based primarily on semester course work in a number of separate subject areas, such as Animal Science, Floral Design and Interiorscaping, and Wildlife and Recreation Management. Initially many teachers met this new curriculum with resistance, but now most attribute the growth of our program to this curriculum change because it reflects current trends in agriculture, is appealing to non-traditional students, and is more respected by administrators, parents, and community members. Students like the freedom they have to enroll in agricultural subject areas that appeal to their interests. With the diversity of course opportunities, it serves as an opportunity for a wide variety of students to enroll in agricultural education. Guidance counselors like the flexibility the curriculum offers in scheduling, and parents see the curriculum as more practical and applicable to local career opportunities. The agricultural science program allows the instructor to focus on a subject per semester, rather than a subject per grading period as with the old curriculum. This enables more efficient planning and time can be spent on units more pertinent to local student needs. Also, as agriculture goes through technological changes, the curriculum can be easily adapted to meet those changes.

As with most educational concepts, the semester curriculum concept has its share of negatives. Students often enter and exit various agricultural science classes without even knowing that they are in an agricultural education program. They might have taken the course for "fun" or were scheduled into the class because the semester course fit easily into their graduation plan. Also, students who intentionally enroll in a fall course may be inadvertently
Managing Change in Agricultural Education

I like to think of agricultural education as being “under construction.” This implies that we are in process, that we don’t have a finished product yet. But it also implies that we have a program; we aren’t starting from scratch. And that is important to keep in mind, because we have a fine program that merits our pride, that there is little part of our problem because we can be hiked into complacency. All of us are familiar with the old adage, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” Perhaps we should develop a new adage, “If it ain’t broke, fix it anyway!” Some people don’t like this statement, and admit it does sound a little ridiculous at first hearing. Closer inspection, however, reveals that it has merit. It is building a case for continuous evaluation, continuous renewal, and continuous change—change that is responsive to needs—societal needs and needs of our clientele.

Challenges We Face

What would you identify as the five greatest challenges facing agricultural education in the next 5-10 years? My list would include the following questions:

What should be the mission and content of agricultural education?
What clientele should we serve?
What should be the delivery system for agricultural education?
How do we modernize supervised experience programs (experiential learning) to accommodate our changing program and our changing clientele?
How will teacher education programs provide knowledge, innovative, and forward-thinking teachers?
How will we provide effective in-service education programs to keep teachers abreast of the dynamic changes they face?
How can the mission of Departments of Agricultural Education in universities be expanded (international agricultural development, extension education, agricultural communications, etc.) and still fulfill our unique mission (preparing agricultural science teachers) in an effective manner?

How do we reform agricultural mechanics instruction to keep it a visible part of agricultural education?
How do we embrace the concept of Tech Prep in agricultural education?

By Don R. Herring
Director, professor of agricultural education at Texas A&M University, College Station

Responding to Change

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus said, “There is nothing permanent except change.” In a dynamic, ever-changing world, I believe that perhaps the greatest challenge we face in agricultural education is that of anticipating and managing change. The Strategic Plan for Agricultural Education (1989) reflects the serious nature of this task: “Change is rampant in agriculture, and agricultural education must keep pace with the awareness, momentum, and general education of the past” (p.1). Herbert London (1988), Dean at New York University, says that four conditions must be present if we are to deal with change properly: (1) respect for the past, (2) ability to adapt, (3) confidence in the future, and (4) recognition of the inevitability of change itself. He says that without these conditions, change can be disabling. With them, change can be invigorating and even enabling.

Robert Tucker (1991), in his excellent book, Managing the Future, stated:

Businesses that do not know how to change with change, that do not adapt and respond, do not survive. They become takeover targets, or are merged, purged and subsumed out of existence. They go bankrupt. What is it that prevents businesses from going into oblivion? The reality is, being devastated by change can happen to any business that isn’t taking positive steps positively affect its future by the attitudes and actions it exhibits today. (p.10)
I realize that Tucker was talking about the business world here, but what about us? Is it possible that we don't anticipate and manage change as well as we might become takeover targets, or might we be merged, purged, or submerged out of existence? We too might go bankrupt and disappear into oblivion.

Managing the Future Instead of the Past

Tucker (1991) said that to meet the challenge of change, we must have two crucial skills. First, we must know how to manage the future instead of the past. Managing the future means riding the forces of change in the direction in which they are already headed. And it means paying attention to all kinds of changes—social, economic, cultural, demographic, lifestyle, technological, environmental, and global—and trying to see patterns in the changes taking place. It also means responding to change through constant innovation and making constant improvements. Perhaps we should spend just as much time reading books like Megatrends 2000 (Naisbitt & Aburdene, 1990) and journals like "The Futurist" as we do reading our own professional books and journals.

Attackers Rather Than Defenders

The second skill Tucker suggested is that we must be attackers rather than defenders. This skill says that we should be on the offensive rather than the defensive. We must be proactive, and concentrate on those things we can influence rather than those we can't. We can't control the weather, but how many of us let it control our emotions? If we do place budget cuts, we must look for possibilities rather than limitations. We must use it as a challenge to focus on quality and look for ways to be more efficient. The possibilists look at a glass of water and see it as half full. An optimist looks at the same glass and sees it as half full.

We must always be looking for a better way. How many changes in education (or agricultural education) have been mandated rather than the result of proactive changes initiated by those of us in the profession? If we were managing the future effectively, wouldn't it take us a study and a report from the National Academy of Sciences to spur us into action? Would we need mandates from state boards of education to get us to make significant programmatic changes? Would we have provosts and deans insisting on departmental reorganization or mergers and insisting on new initiatives? Wouldn't we be the shapers of our own destiny more often?

Paradigm Shifting

What is a paradigm? The word paradigm was a scientific term originally and today is used most often to mean a model, theory, perception, assumption, or frame of reference. It's the way we see our world—how we perceive it, interpret it, and interpret ourselves. It's the problem that we see the world, not as it necessarily is, but as we are conditioned to see it from a lifetime of influences—from our family, schools, church, work environment, friends, associates, and current social paradigms (Covoy, 1989).

Most every significant scientific breakthrough has resulted from a break with tradition, with old ways of thinking, with old paradigms. Copernicus, Newton, and Einstein revolutionized the scientific world of our day by breaking with tradition, breaking with old paradigms. I suggest the same thing can be said of agricultural education. And the same thing can probably be said of agricultural science. For too long, significant changes have resulted from paradigm shifts—by the way we began to see ourselves differently, by the way we began to see God differently, or by the way we began to see certain other people differently.

Several years ago, one of my favorite colleagues in the profession, Bill Drake, presented the distinguished lecture at our annual AAAE awards breakfast at your personal expense. I was amused by this comment in his summary statement: "We must say please, thank you, and be humble."

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server applications such as Mosaic provide collaborative opportunities to access and share information through a world-wide-web with small costs to users. Distance education technologies, including satellites, telephones, and compact discs encourage collaboration.

Capitalize on Sustainable Strengths
- Sense of communities and community needs
- Focus on interdisciplinary subjects within the curriculum
- Methods based on experiential learning
- Integrated leadership into all aspects of the program

Roots of early agricultural education programs were in the local community. Although the philosophy and structure of the curriculums were prescribed, the nature of the subject matter was largely deregulated. Instruction was organized for "district students" and "farmer students" based on community needs. In many cases, advisory committees championed local initiatives and made recommendations for local school board action. There was a pride in ownership that promoted a strong sense of community. As the communities became more urban, they also began to see themselves as being asked to serve a more diverse clientele and provide a more specialized curriculum. Community ownership of the agricultural education program is a sustaining strength in contemporary corporate-type school organizations. Strengthening the ability of key groups such as program advisory councils, booster clubs, and the FFA Alumni have impact on the quality, vitality, and effectiveness of the program. Yet, we must not allow ourselves the luxury of planning in isolation from the total school.

The impact of agricultural education traditionally promoted a broad cross-section of subject matter including animal science, plant science, recreational agriculture, farm business management, and leadership delivered through classroom instruction, laboratories, and individually supervised experiential education. The interdisciplinary nature of the curriculum communicated utility and purpose, enhanced the understanding of connections, perceptions, connected cause and effect, and developed a sense of values. Because of the interdisciplinary nature, there was seldom a single textbook or a collection of reference materials gathered from diverse sources. The use of these sources promoted individual responses to learning and strategies to develop generalized solutions. A cookbook curriculum was avoided in favor of problem and community-based learning using the rich resources in the community as the learning laboratory.

The motto of the FFA — Learning to do, doing to learn, living to serve — is fundamental to experiential learning.

Learning by its very nature is an active process of helping the learner. Shinn (1993) stated that a spiral experiential model begins with a reason for knowing (purpose), develops an understanding of relationships (application), discovers causes and effect (explanation), and ultimately forms a new understanding of ethics and values (philosophy). Established psychological principles, such as self-activity, and readiness for learning and experience, are fundamental to effective learning. Postman (1992) suggested that John Dewey's aim was to help the learner function in a world of constant change and purpose. Many of these ideas infer that agriculture is one of the "most shared" values contributing to educational diversity. Conservation, environment, renewable resources and sustainable agriculture are the battle cries of the '90s. Funding for low-input sustainable agriculture has increased substantially over the last decade. Researchers have consistently shown that agriculture and the environment are compatible. Davis and Otter (1992), in Ecological Literacy, suggested several compatibility models. There is increasing demand for education about environmental issues and improved public information about cause and effect relationships. Although many agriculture teachers understand the issues, most students do not. While students have trouble connecting and valuing the agricultural society's interest in the environment, nutrition, world hunger and a safe food supply. We must develop a vocabulary and teaching approaches that will connect with contemporary issues valued by students and society.

Technology and the "information highway" are entering into the way business is conducted. With the increased use of technology in both agriculture and education. New knowledge — information — is doubling every 17 months and is available quickly through electronic technologies. AT&T, Microsoft, Turner Broadcasting, and Monsanto are using micro chips as well as smaller companies are increasingly interested in education and training. Thousands of children spend 20-30 minutes each school day tuned to "Channel 1" for an edited version of the news. The Internet system provides "information communities" for opportunities in networking and world-wide access to data bases and information. Mike Powers (1994) observed that "From teaching reprographic management of dairy cows to modeling the complicated numerical formulas used in genetics studies, computers are finding many uses in the college classroom of the '90s. They are providing increased flexibility for learning and allowing students to ask questions their subjects more thoroughly than ever before" (p. 15). These technologies may be the catalyst for a major revolution in how we teach.

The workplace has forever changed during the past two decades. Edward Deming's teaching on quality and system relationships has had tremendous influence, first in Japan and then worldwide. Cyrsow, a giant in agricultural industry, has restructured their organizational chart. The number of upper-level administrators has been dramatically reduced while the number of technical workers has increased. In doing so, new responsibilities and authority have been transferred to individual workers. As a team, Cyrsow workers are solving cooperative leadership to improve product quality, solve production problems, and reduce costs. Jack Wilson, manager for Cyrsow's North American R&D operations in Greenville, SC, actively seeks former students of agricultural education and members of FFA because of their commitment to leadership, cooperation, and supervised experience.

Charting our Collective Future
- Design the curriculum around good student systems and environmental stewardship
- Select teaching methods that foster experiential learning
- Integrate leadership into all aspects of the program
- Increase collaboration among allied groups and agencies

Food is intrinsically linked to natural resources and environmental issues. There is widespread concern about agricultural practices that sustain the delicate balance of the ecosystem. The purpose of the curriculum must be compassionately interrelated in such a way that young people may come to care about the environment. The curriculum must convey a reason for being and communicate value. The program should be a system approach to education and training that produces purpose, application, experimentation, and philosophy while training a broad clientele group. Collectively, we must communicate national and state quality standards for programs and professionals tied to strong, dynamic discipline. Learning to do, learning to do is a psychological and educational strategy. Research suggests that teaching should be student-centered and that the learner must actively participate in the learning process. Teaching methods should focus on learner outcomes and self-actualization where the learner gathers information and acquires knowledge in complex experiments and interactions. However, information is not knowledge. Practical solutions are the results of the application of knowledge to specific issues. The connection of cause and effect is fundamental to the selection of appropriate strategies. Cognitive learning coupled with practice and corrected feedback promotes a solid set of values and beliefs.

Max DePree (1989) described leadership as the ability to serve others while meeting your goals. L. H. Newcomb's list of what he said students "... would be well served to participate in courses and non-course experiences that develop and enhance their personal and social capacity. No area of the campus is better equipped to meet this need than the "natural education departments" (p.5). Recent National Academy of Science recommendations hinge on innova-
The Agricultural Education Profession: Becoming a Champion for the Future

What Does Agricultural Education Hold for the Future?

The future of agricultural education in Oklahoma is to secure the economic and social well-being of Oklahomans by delivering quality experiential and educational experiences and opportunities in and about agriculture. We must seize the opportunities we seek to meet the personal, professional, community, and economic needs of our clients. It is our responsibility to lead the way for America's farmers and agriculturalists. Agriculture is not only an important part of our economic and social fabric, but it is also a source of pride for all Americans.

The name change from vocational agriculture to agricultural education has been very progressive in Oklahoma in that we have experienced greater than a 20% increase in enrollment over the past five years. We have experienced more collaboration and developed partnerships with academic teachers and business and industry. This has resulted in not only improved efforts, but improved teaching methods as well. It has also allowed agricultural education to be more practical and less theoretical. As we chart our course for the next century we must continue to build systems for managing our future, rather than preparing our present in defense of the past.

As we recall the late 1980s, we remember the national study on agricultural education in secondary schools. This report, Understanding Agriculture: New Directions for Education, certainly has had an impact. The national commission's findings pointed to two basic challenges: First, agricultural education must become more than vocational agriculture. Second, major revisions are needed within vocational agriculture (National Research Council, 1988). In working toward both goals, educators should borrow from the best current programs, while creating new ways to deliver to more students educational opportunities in the agricultural sciences, agribusiness, nutrition, and human resource stewardship. Modernization of our curriculum and the development of new programs and projects are two of the positive results of this study. We have moved away from traditional agriculture and moved into the agri-science, agricultural business, and agricultural technology areas. Since that time we have experienced increased enrollments and FFA memberships.

Where is Agricultural Education Today?

The agricultural education profession has changed and continues to improve. Naturally, some of these changes are disconcerting. However, great strides have been made by modernizing the curriculum to meet the needs of our students more effectively. We have better aligned our curricula and enhanced our instructional materials. Perhaps the most encouraging thing that we see today is a change in philosophy of what agricultural education is at the secondary level. The name change from vocational agriculture to agricultural education has been very positive in Oklahoma in that we have experienced a significant increase in enrollment over the past five years. We have experienced more collaboration and developed partnerships with academic teachers and business and industry. This has resulted not only in increased efforts, but improved teaching methods as well. It has also allowed agricultural education to be more practical and less theoretical. As we chart our course for the next century we must continue to build systems for managing our future, rather than preparing our future in defense of the past.

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Where is Agricultural Education Going?

We believe it is an exciting time to be involved in agricultural education. There are many agricultural-related jobs available for our students after graduation. To prepare them for future employment we must deliver and promote a more rigorous curriculum. We must develop high expectations, better use of instructional time, more emphasis on classroom attendance, more emphasis on agricultural literacy, and more emphasis on the promotion of basic skills and academics. As we chart our course for the next century, we must continue to build systems for managing our future, rather than preparing our present in defense of the past.

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Expanded Mission, Expanded Challenges for Preservice Agricultural Education

We begin with a simple question: How do we recruit preservice agricultural educators? To answer this question, it is best to follow the advice of Stephen Covey (1991) and "begin with the end in mind." In other words, what is our mission, and how well are we accomplishing it?

Within our department at New Mexico State University, we have written a new mission statement by hybridizing Covey's (1991) universal mission statement with the university mission statement. Our mission is "to improve the economic well-being and quality of life of all stakeholders in agricultural, extension, and technology education through needs-based, high-quality, and dynamic teaching, research, service, and extension programs." The mission statement is general enough to relate, at least in part, to other preservice agricultural education programs in the country, and provides us with a reference point for our discussion.

Who are Our Stakeholders?

Covey (1991) outlined stakeholders as those "who will suffer if the enterprise fails." Who consider stakeholders determines our preservice education programming. By expanding our mission, we also expanded our list of stakeholders, who belong to three groups. Stakeholders within the department include our undergraduate, graduate, and non-degree students; faculty; and staff. Our clientele-based stakeholders are our graduates placed in formal and non-formal, domestic and international, agricultural and technology education professions, and the adults and youth they serve. The third group of stakeholders includes others with a stake in educating people in and about agriculture and technology, such as other department and college colleagues; state supervising agencies; and business and industry, civic, commodity, and governmental organizations.

What are Some Challenges?

With the adoption of an expanded mission statement, our department is experiencing five new challenges for preservice education.

Expanded Options

Economic principles suggest that product diversification is key to a successful enterprise. With changing American demographics, many in the profession are calling for the re-examination and diversification of preservice programming in agricultural education. The goal of diversification is to develop a more viable and marketable product; our programs should appeal to a larger and broader base of students. The results of diversification are yet to be witnessed; nevertheless, agricultural education departments seem to be moving toward program diversification, preparing students for employment in traditional and emerging areas of agricultural education.

In addition to preparing secondary school agriculture educators, teachers and extension agents, departments are beginning to offer degree options in agricultural communications, agri/industry, education, and technology education. Like many other programs nationwide, our department is adding these options not by adding faculty or resources, but by tapping resources in other departments. Other departments within the university provide the technical preparation for preservice students, while we in agricultural education provide the professional education courses that are common to all preservice students. For example, the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication provides the communication courses (and a minor) for agricultural communication majors. Our "expanded" faculty makes it possible to provide new options for our students.

Advising

Expanded degree options make student advising more complicated. No longer do advisors have the convenience of advising only agricultural education and extension education students. Advisors must be either experts on all degree options or specialists in one or a few options, advising students in those options only. Advising has become a monthly agenda item for our faculty, with much time spent determining which students major in agricultural education.

With multiple degree options, faculty must prepare a core of professionals who are conversant in the experiences and competencies common to all options as well as professional courses and experiences specific to each option. For example, the Department of Technology, one faculty member has been assigned to coordinate all internships in communications, agencies, and industry, while other faculty specialize in coordinating communication internships or student teaching.

Technical experts provide our students with competencies needed to enter the workforce.

Recruiting Diverse Audiences

The June, 1994 issue of The Agricultural Education Magazine, dedicated to "Supporting Professional Diversity," expressed a common concern for recruiting and retaining women and minority students into preservice programs in agricultural education. One source estimates that more females are enrolling in secondary agricultural education, but "minority enrollment remains disproportionately low" (National Research Council, 1988, p. 29).

If membership of the National FFA Organization (1993) can be extrapolated to enrollments in agricultural education, then only 27% of students are female and only 12% are minority students. Yet the number of minority students in the U.S. continues to increase. By the year 2000, minority students will comprise an estimated 33 percent of the school population, increasing to 39 percent by the year 2020 (Johnson, 1991).

Although the call has been initiated, teacher educators are still having difficulty recruiting a diverse group of students into agricultural education. Successful recruiting will depend on our ability to build an environment that attracts diversity, beginning with faculty and staff who welcome and celebrate differences. Through class, student organizations, and departmental social activities and trips, students will become comfortable with each other and with their individual differences.

Integrating Academic and Vocational Education

Teachers' roles are continuously evolving. With the amendments to the most recent vocational education legislation, secondary agricultural education teachers were presented with the challenge of integrating academic skills across their curriculum and relating these skills to the real world. The 1990 Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act provides federal dollars for improving vocational educational programs by integrating both academic and occupational skills that students will need to work in a technologically advanced society.

Being able to integrate both academic and occupational skills will place new professional requirements on our preservice students. Additionally, one source suggests preservice students should be competent in team building, cooperative learning, joint planning, and interpersonal skills (Cobb, 1992). As the role of the teacher changes, so must teacher preparation. New education programs should instil in preservice students the commitment to integrated teaching by addressing multiple approaches to teaching (e.g., problem-solving approach) and teaching methods (e.g., case studies).

Process vs. Content

Grades from our programs educated in three content areas: general education, technical education, and professional education. Universities and colleges establish a reputation of core general education courses to develop graduates who are "generally well-educated." The principal function performed by preservice agricultural education programs is teaching "process" knowledge, attitudes, and skills, that is, how to teach and learn in the content of agriculture.

Much too often, however, our clients perceive themselves as lacking in technical content in addition to being experts in the educational process. However, our students learn technical competencies from the content experts—teaching faculty in agricultural disciplines such as agricultural economics, animal science, horticulture, and entomology. In the case of our technology education degree option, students learn technical competencies from our extended teaching faculty in engineering technology and related areas. Teacher educators, in contrast, prepare technically competent graduates by outlining the core curriculum in the technical areas of agriculture and technology.

We have discovered we must continuously "sell" the concept of being "process" experts to our students and traditional stakeholders. Only through consistent in the different areas of effort are we able to teach them to value "process" as a skill for improving their ability to educate others.

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Is Agricultural Education Changing Too Fast?

Education functions like a pendulum — swinging back and forth — bringing in new ideas and replacing the old, only to later replace the now "old" new ideas with the former old ideas. It might even be said that like fashion, if we hang on to educational materials long enough, they will become useful again. Agricultural education, however, has always followed its own drum. While it is true that changes have occurred, over the years those changes have been more in line with changes in agriculture than in education. Over the last decade agricultural education has experienced some significant and unprecedented change.

The secondary student organization changed its name, degrees, and creed; curriculum has been completely redefined; and student "projects" are anything from working in a grocery store to giving a speech. All of this change has some people in agricultural education asking the question, "Are we changing too fast?"

"Don't throw the baby out with the bath water," says God. "It's just if it ain't broke!" and "You can't come back from where you ain't never been!" are all clichés that beg for those who were involved in the old system. But surely it is a question worthy of debate: "Are we changing too fast?" Are we changing so fast that our state and national organizations don't recognize us? Will trying to be "all things to all people" leave agricultural education without an identity? Maybe some answers lie in the changes agricultural education has already endured.

Agricultural Education Before 1917 — An emphasis on science would describe most programs. Agriculture was primarily taught as a science or nature study. We know that some of that instruction was truly vocational, as some schools actually taught around school farms and were, in fact, boarding houses for agricultural education. In the early 1900s agricultural education was certainly growing, expanding from 400 schools in 1900 to nearly 4,500 schools by 1915. Farm boys were being taught agriculture through "corn clubs." One thing was for certain, and that was that there was nothing for certain. Agricultural education was taught in many directions. That is, until the federal government became involved.

Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 — The follow-up to the law that defined what the federal government thought agricultural education should be. In one motion vocational agriculture replaced any and all other agricultural education being taught in the public schools. The "Smith-Hughes teachers," as they were often called, had the mission of educating boys who wanted to be farmers. Vocational education was also seen as a way to not only advance technology and introduce new agricultural concepts to future producers, but also as an income, much as athletics is sometimes used, to keep rural boys in high school. Vocational agriculture created an environment that was both natural and secure while at the same time providing unique and exciting experiences.

The Golden Years — It has been said that life is change, and no person can escape it. But vocational agriculture managed to hold change at bay for nearly 50 years. While enrollment grew in the '30s and '40s, the FFA increased in reputation and influence. Awards and prestige degrees became goals that helped drive the excitement in the classroom. Although numbers increased, the basic concepts that produced vocational agriculture changed little throughout the '50s and '60s. The Vocational Education Act of 1963 opened a new era of teaching agriculture. The gate was opened, and decades of overdue change flooded our profession. The book put in writing what many of us have felt for years, minorities are disappearing, and only recently did vocational agriculture remain a conservative, production-based vocational program, the same as of yore.

Cosmetic Changes — In 1965, the Future Farmers of America voted to allow former members of the all-black New Farmers of America to join their ranks. No real merger took place between the organizations; it could be better described as an absorption. There was no plan to recruit minorities to vocational agriculture; they could simply enroll in an already existing program. In 1969, the same process provided the admission of females to the organization. Many years later the National FFA supervisor began carrying a boy's jacket — convinced that the boy's jacket just wasn't fitting girls right. Future Farmers of America, and likely to vocational agriculture classroom was still a white, rural, male social club, with a few subtle changes. The world may be changing around us, but we can still count on it.

The Hard Years — With fewer and fewer of the original group for which vocational agriculture was developed, available educators were also faced with the plight of maintaining student numbers. And so an additional need for change arose — how to tap the unused resource of non-farm students. While the '70s and '80s saw an increase in the number of girls enrolling in agriculture classes, minorities were still limited in numbers. As society began to call for students to look more to higher education in planning their futures, vocational education in any form began to lose some of the luster and prospect it once had held. Students became wary of any classes that weren't traditional "college prep." Everything in the world is changing; at least anything stays the same.

The Floodgates Open — In 1988, the publication titled Understanding Agriculture: New Directions for Education opened a floodgate of changes into agricultural education. The gate was opened, and decades of overdue change flooded our profession. The book put in writing what many of us have felt for years, minorities are disappearing, and only recently did vocational agriculture remain a conservative, production-based vocational program, the same as of yore.

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Bill Boldt and Ken Kingsley (1992) have studied strategic marketing programs. They concluded that marketing must begin immediately and be infused throughout the organization. Boldt and Kingsley recognize that the program must strive to meet the needs of the clientele by creating a consistent, highly visible and top-quality organizational image, mission, and identity. Positive relationships must be developed, maintained, and expanded with key school officials, community leaders, clientele, and media representatives. Boldt and Kingsley developed a marketing framework which involves an eight-step process:

1. developing a clear statement of need,
2. writing measurable goals and objectives,
3. identifying the specific audiences,
4. analyzing competition for time and resources,
5. positioning the program in the educational marketplace,
6. designing a marketing strategy,
7. developing the program delivery system,
8. maintaining continuous evaluation.

Because agricultural education courses are elective, some student recruitment strategies may appear to be self-serving. If agricultural educators are to enhance our credibility in the educational community, we must show that we speak and what should be our approach; marketing a product or developing a value? Perhaps this is not an either-or situation. Marketing without reform will be problematic for our long-term future. Reexamination of our

(Continued to page 23)
Agricultural Science & Technology instructor, Donald Bird, knows how to create student interest and zeal for learning. He teaches in a rural community in central Idaho where cattle, hogs, and potatoes are “King of the Road.” What do you do in cowtown country to sit students to action? You win the state “Envirothon” contest and take your country kids to Niagara Falls, NY to the national Envirothon competition.

And how does a busy agriculture instructor find time to gather materials and coach the fourth place winner in the national contest? He teams up with a science instructor whose talents complement his own, and they share the experience of a lifetime with their students. Have you ever heard of “integration of vocational and academic education?” This is integration in its finest form. And who benefited the most? The students who were fortunate enough to have a coach who could see beyond his own program.

Agricultural Science & Technology students at West Jefferson High School are learning what it means to integrate academic and vocational education. Their agriculture instructor, Donald Bird, has taken advantage of opportunities to team up with other instructors at the school to strengthen academic skills in agriculture. His students are taught to use common sense skills and modern science to solve problems.

Mathematics is a common component of agricultural courses. The planning and layout of even the most simple projects involves algebra, geometry, and trigonometry. Applications for mathematics are emphasized in every agriculture course. English is the base for communication and communication skills utilizing the written and spoken word are reinforced in agriculture courses. In addition, students who complete a semester-length specialized course entitled Farm Business Management receive credit for Consumer Economics, a required class for high school graduation.

Mr. Bird has been an agriculture instructor in the same high school for the past fourteen years. The traditional production agriculture program has evolved in that time into a modern program featuring a number of nontraditional initiatives. Students still learn basic mechanical skills, but they also learn the principles of physics and chemistry that they are applying in their work. They still learn plant propagation in the horticulture laboratory/greenhouse, but they also learn principles of botany. Students continue to study the culture of crops and livestock, but they are exposed also to such “high tech” procedures as embryo transfer, and science experiments using Wisconsin “fast plants” and “bottle biology.” They still measure, cut and fasten as they build projects, but in these projects, they also learn applications for the principles they learned in algebra, geometry and trigonometry. They still learn public speaking skills and prepare award applications, but they depend on the English instructor to critique their manuscripts and applications for correct word usage and grammar. This is the modern way to educate young people using all of the resources that can be brought to bear on the activity.

Instruction is enhanced through the use of “bottle biology” and Wisconsin “fast plants,” and through the use of the greenhouse which provides a laboratory for instruction in botany. Science in agriculture tends to reinforce the academic science classes, and future plans include offering science credit for specific agriculture courses. The agriculture science classes are demanding, and the hands-on aspect makes them relevant and understandable.

Recently, the instructional program incorporates environmental science into the curriculum to help educate the students about the environment, and to help them understand the importance of becoming better stewards of land and water resources. Botany and chemistry are utilized in course work as they apply to agricultural subject matter. Science instructors are involved in the program as consultants, and as active participants in preparing students to participate in a state and national competitive event known as the “Envirothon.”

While many agriculture instructors were worrying about how school reforms such as School-To-Work Transition could restrict their programs, Mr. Bird was figuring out ways to take advantage of the changes that were taking place. He pioneered an effort to develop student competencies associated with the FFA award program. At West Jefferson High School, you will find students who earn up to two high school semester credits toward their high school graduation requirements outside of school time for completing their Supervised Agriculture Experience (SAE) programs in which work-based competencies associated with FFA proficiency awards are recorded in student record books. This credit is awarded to students for the time they spend outside of class throughout the year working with their SAE programs. An exciting part of this initiative is that this activity meshes with the goals for the School-To-Work Transition Initiative. Part of the agriculture instructor’s summer salary to supervise these programs was paid through the regional Tech Prep consortium.

This agriculture program has evolved from a traditional production agriculture program to one that consists of semester-length courses encompassing a much expanded vision of the total industry of agriculture. Modern technology in many forms is evident in the facility with applications ranging from computerized accounting systems to high-tech shop and mechanical equipment. All of this has occurred in a very rural farming and ranching community whose economy depends on the production of range cattle, sheep, and short-season crops such as small grains, seed peas, potatoes, and alfalfa hay. Students are exposed to modern agricultural techniques that portray agriculture as a modern and dynamic industry.

The agricultural science and technology program at West Jefferson High School serves approximately one-third of the students who are enrolled at the school. The students and instructor are highly motivated, and learning is an exciting experience. The students in this agriculture program are also the student leaders in the school, and they excel in FFA leadership activities as well. They have been particularly successful in competitive events such as land judging, the Envirothon competition, and the FFA leadership events.

How can an agriculture instructor find time to engage in, and benefit from new educational reform activities? He or she must first believe that such changes can provide benefits to students, and that they can be assimilated into agriculture programs. Innovative agriculture instructors can always find willing partners to share the workload and the rewards of creative effort.

For more information, Mr. Bird can be reached at: Donald Bird, Agricultural Science and Technology Instructor, West Jefferson High School, 1260 East 1500 North, Terreton, ID 83450, (208) 663-4390.
The Transition of Individuals with Disabilities from School into the Horticulture Industry

By Lillian H. Daughtry and P. Diane Relf

Mr. Daughtry is a graduate student of vocational and technical education and Mrs. Relf is an associate professor of horticulture education at North Carolina State University, Raleigh.

In today's society, horticulture is a potential career path for those who desire to work outside or have an interest in plants and the environment. The American Horticultural Therapy Association has taken a leadership role in the development of model programs and has found horticulture to be receptive to hiring individuals with disabilities. Likewise, the model programs have found individuals with various disabilities to be effective workers. Enhanced communication between schools and the horticulture industry essential to utilize the available employment opportunities.

Transition

In the public schools, students with disabilities are mandated to receive assistance in planning for their future upon exiting school (PL 101-476, 300.18(A)); PL 101-492). To aid in the transition, plans are developed to reflect the interests and abilities of the individual student as well as the employment opportunities available in the local area. Horticulture is a fast-growing, expanding segment of the agriculture industry (Davis & DeRiso, 1992). Many workers are needed with varying levels of skills (Dehart-Bennett & Relf, JSVEE, 1990). Horticulture jobs include landscape installation and maintenance, greenhouse- or field plant production (including vegetable and fruit production or harvesting), interior landscape maintenance in shopping malls or office buildings, and wholesale and retail firms.

The horticulture industry is labor intensive, requiring minimum skilled, manual labor. The industry needs additional workers. Making it receptive to hiring the disabled. Dehart-Bennett and Relf found that horticulture employers in Virginia who do not hire individuals with disabilities, specifically mental retardation, have very positive perceptions of workers with disabilities (Horticulture, 1990). They reported that many horticulture employers are willing to hire individuals with disabilities, but desire more knowledge on the potential of workers with special needs (JSVEE, 1990). Employers feel unprepared to train an individual with a disability. Increased communication and cooperation between educators or vocational rehabilitation specialists and the horticulture community regarding opportunities implemented thus far have increased the placement of individuals with disabilities within this industry. By establishing the communication early in career planning and employers can provide valuable input to aid in transition planning and future employment opportunities.

Career Options

As populations become more urban, more suburban, and the suburban high school vocational programs shift toward horticulture from traditional agriculture. Some high school students with disabilities are involved in horticulture classes and are very likely candidates for post-school opportunities in horticulture. However, other students with disabilities may not have an opportunity to participate in horticulture classes, but would also benefit from transition options in the field.

Transitional activities that would be provided to both student and employer are work-co-op, youth apprenticeships, job counseling, and on-the-job training. The vocational teacher, the special education teacher, and the horticulture specialist at the school will collaborate to implement one of these strategies even if the student is not enrolled in a high school horticulture class. Through work-co-op, the student gains work experience while still enrolled in high school courses. For example, a student may spend the morning in school and the afternoon or weekend working in a local nursery. As a youth apprentice, a formalized program is arranged in which a student is assigned a mentor at a horticulture business who assists in the training which usually begins while the student is still in high school or immediately following school. Job coaching might be an option for an individual with a more severe disability, and the job coach would work on site with the individual for a limited time to help with adaptations or modifications and provide individualized training.

Another opportunity available for individuals with disabilities is supported employment. A successful program is the Virgina Tech garden maintenance department contract with a local sheltered workshop to employ two enclaves of individuals (Doebbs & Relf, 1993). These individuals work as a team under the supervision of a team leader provided by the workshop and make a valuable contribution to the campus environment.

American Horticultural Therapy Association Transition Programs

Based on the philosophy that today's education consists "not only of schools, teachers, students and parents but also the community" (American Horticultural Therapy Association [AHTA], P. 3), the federal government has provided incentive programs for the horticulture industry through demonstration or model sites to develop transition programs for the disabled that may be replicated. The transition programs in the horticulture industry, the AHTA responded by developing Project HIRE (Horticulture Industry Rehabilitation and Employment) which was funded by eight Projects with Industry (PWI) grants from October 1983 to November 1991 (Davis, 1991). Three other projects coordinated by AHTA during the same time were Project Plantwork, Horticulture Hiring the Disabled (Transitions) Project (HID-Transitions), and Project MCCSS. The mission of Project HIRE was to involve representatives from the horticulture businesses in the "training and employment of workers with mental and physical disabilities." "Increase employment opportunities for workers with disabilities in the horticultural industry." (Davis, 1991, p. 1). Four segments of the horticultural industry were targeted: "landscape and horticulture services; retail nurseries and lawn and garden supply stores; retail and wholesale florists; and nurseries and greenhouse product suppliers." (Davis, 1991). The participants' teaching jobs in horticulture through Project Hire in horticulture almost 98 percent were services companies, such as landscaping, grounds maintenance or greenhouse/nursery operations. According to DeRiso and Matthais (1994), AHTA presently coordinates two employer incentive programs as part of the National PWI Program. These programs, Horticulture Hiring People with Disabilities (HIDPWI) and Rural Horticultural Employment Incentives (RHEI), are available for employers on a first-come, first-served basis as long as the funds are available. Programs are chosen for qualification are certification of a disability by vocational rehabilitation and successful employment for at least 60 days. The HID PWI grants offer placement incentives of:

- $200 for a full-time placement at least 30 hours a week for the first 60 days
- $100 for a part-time placement at least 20 hours a week

In rural areas, the RHEI grants are higher to encourage involvement. The individual with the disability and the employer must be in a "rural" area. The grants are:

- for a full-time placement, or
- for a part-time placement.

AHTA assists in this effort by offering a National Referral Network. Employers seeking employees with disabilities may contact the network listing a job, and placement or transition coordinators may contact the network to find out about available jobs. There is no charge for using the network. For more information, contact AHTA at 1-800-634-1603 or write to 362A Christopher Avenue, Guilderland, NY 12089.

The response to the programs coordinated by AHTA are indicative of the industry's interest and willingness to integrate individuals with disabilities into the horticulture workplace. "Since 1982, over 2,500 people have been placed in a variety of horticultural jobs paying salaries from $3.35 to $10 per hour through various programs of AHTA." (DeRiso & Mathais, 1994).

While economic incentives for companies to hire the disabled are appealing, there are long-term and lasting benefits for employers as well. Individuals with disabilities make reliable workers who desire to do a good job and can work long hours or much repetition. They are enthusiastic about work and have low absenteeism while maintaining a positive attitude (Doebbs & Relf, 1991).

Beyond the direct benefits of employment, individuals with disabilities benefit in an individual's mental health in ways other. According to Relf (1981), individuals with disabilities who work in horticulture environments benefit emotionally, intellectually, physically, and socially and develop positive work habits. The benefits realized from the horticulture industry aids in the improved personal lives as well as to other jobs settings.

Conclusion

Through the coordinated efforts of school and community agencies, the connection between students with disabilities and the horticulture industry can be expanded. The field of horticulture may be realized. The link benefits both employer and employee through a job that allows individuals with disabilities through seeing tangible evidence of their contributions to society.

References


(Continued to page 24)
Managing Change . . .
(Continued from page 8)

dive at every level. The sorest boil on the bub-
bocks of education is probably the idea that what
 ought to be. If we were ever to have the oppor-
tunity to draw others through a compelling vision.
A simple definition of a leader is one who knows where he/she is going and is able to articulate to
people others to go with him/her. Not everyone can or should be a leader in the strictest sense of the
term, but remember, like a team of dogs pulling a sled, unless you are the lead dog, the scenery never
changes.
Kotter (1985), in describing the leadership
skills of Leciacocca in the transformation of the
Chrysler Corporation, noted that Leciacocca
developed an agenda that included a bold new
vision of what Chrysler could and should be. It
was a vision that valved all the important
groups with a stake in the business—customers,
employees, stockholders, and others. Tischy and
Deveraux (1990), in their book The Transformation
Leader, described the kind of visionary leadership
required. "The challenge for transformational leaders is to both find and create a vision of an organization that is in some way
to the old one and to encourage others to share that
dream. They must provide people with an image of what can and motivate them to move ahead into the future they envision" (p. 122).

Needed: Synergism
What is synergy? Basically, it means that the
whole is greater than the sum of its parts, that
the relationship which the parts have to each other is itself. It is not a
part, but it is the most catalytic, the most
empowering, and the most fulfilling. In mathe-
matics, you can divide a gross one equals three or
more (Covey, 1989). In an organization, syn-
ergism releases creative energy. It means there is
a flow of information and communication.
Differences are valued rather than being perceived
as a threat (Covey, 1989).

Sharpen the Saw
As individuals, all of us need to build more
time into our schedules for quality thinking,
meditation, and reflection. We live in an action-
based society where the emphasis is on contin-
uous activity. Give us some time to sit down,
calm down, and reflect. Do we want more
innovations? Of course. But we would all be better off if we would reverse the
process occasionally. "Don't just do something, stand there" would serve us better now and
then.

1-2-4-6,
MacDonald (1985), in his book, Order Your
Private World, wrote about a pheno-
momenon in Florida called sinkholes. Sinkholes
crater when underground springs dry up again, any topic
during times of drought, causing the ground at
the surface to lose its underlying support and
suddenly cave in. MacDonald (1985) can
experience the sinkhole syndrome in our lives if
we ignore our inner, private, world. If we
become too publicly orientated or outward
focused, our neglected private or inner world can
not hold the weight, resulting in fatigue, dis-
illusionment, failure, or death. I dare say I am a
great believer in living life in balance. Areas
that need our attention include the intellectual,
spiritual, physical, family, and social dimensions of life. All five dimensions need constant renewal.

It is what Covey (1989) called "sharpening the
saw". He makes a case for balanced renewal in all the dimensions because it results in optimistic
synergism. The things we do to sharpen the saw in any one dimension impact the other dimensions because they are so highly interrelated. To neglect any one area impacts the others negatively.

Summary
Let's summarize the above points:

1. Change is inevitable.
2. We face great challenges in agricultural
education as we attempt to respond to
change.
3. We must respond to change in a positive
manner:
   a. learning to manage the future,
   b. being attackers rather than defenders,
   c. shifting our paradigm,
   d. having a vision for the future,
   e. practicing synergism, and
   f. sharpening the saw.

Conclusion
We know from studying the change process that the greatest single inhibitor to change is
satisfaction with the status quo. It has been
dated the greatest enemy of the best in the good. We can be content with "good" and miss the best that students deserve. Not only
that, we will miss the best that we deserve. As
Chuck Swindoll (1987) pointed out, "The more individuals aware of the
validness of agriculture teaching. Teachers
about animal and plant production will always
be a part of the agricultural education program;
but we have to focus on the opportunities
outside of production agriculture. Many agricul-
tural education are doing just that. Thousands
of jobs are available in new and growing areas
outside of the normal realm of agriculture.

A View from Inside the Classroom
(Continued from page 6)
says, "Doing to Learn," very few of the academ-
ica regions in our schools have a way of putting the
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mum has changed, so has the focus of our con-
tents. With the development of the curriculum-
based student achievement contests in Texas, we have
a new way to allow the academic prowess of our students to be tested. Some schools such as ours in rural areas find it hard to compete in
content areas. Now some of these students to a test. As our curricu-
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activity. Give us some time to sit down,
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Image vs. Substance...


Transition of Individuals...

HortTechnology. 2 (2), 183-189.

Becoming a Champion...

(Continued from page 13)

Through the leadership provided by the agricultural education profession, we will continue to meet the challenges necessary to keep our profession moving in a positive direction. We have an excellent record of producing top-notch individuals who become productive, responsible, and successful citizens. To compete and survive in this competitive, global marketplace, America's businesses and factories must have workers who can communicate and work in teams, who have good math and critical thinking skills, as well as strong technical skills. We are confident that our profession will rise to the challenge and that we will continue to expand our presence in the nation and in the world.

Reference

Expanded Mission...

(Continued from page 11)

So, How Are We Doing?
Preservice programs in agricultural education cannot meet these challenges alone. Some would suggest we are taking on additional responsibilities, and warn us not to "spread ourselves too thin." Indeed, our roles need to be more clearly defined. Partnerships and networking with faculty in other departments will be key to accomplishing our expanded mission.

With a broader mission in preservice agricultural education, we are more likely to attract a broader student clientele. With a broader student clientele we hope to begin to see more diverse students in our programs and programs.

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