Rural Education
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## Rural Education

The theme of this issue of The Agricultural Education Magazine is "Rural Education." In thinking about what to write for these comments, a situation from a few years ago came to mind. The Department had a young assistant professor from a large eastern state, and it was time for the assistant professor to see the rural part of Idaho. The occasion was an upcoming ten year accreditation evaluation of a school system in the eastern part of Idaho. Since the school being evaluated had an agricultural education program, the Department was asked to provide a member of the outside review team.

The accreditation review was to take place in late spring of that year and an up to date on the accelerated classes of the professional students were completed by the end of February, the Department decided this would be an opportune time for the young assistant professor to make the trip and become more acquainted with the state and its secondary agriculture programs. Another factor, if memory serves, was that the assistant professor was of the same gender as the agriculture instructor at the school, and it seemed like an ideal time for some networking.

In order to reach the school in question, the assistant professor would have to fly 660 miles, by changing planes once; it was estimated to take about 3 hours and a half for just the plane trip. The assistant professor would arrive at the closest commercial airport to the school but would still have to drive about 70 miles to arrive. Approximately 150 miles to reach the school, and then another 50 to 60 miles in order to reach the closest motel at which the review team had headquartered.

In discussing travel plans with the departmental secretary, the assistant professor indicated an understanding of the time allotted for flying and the time for driving. The assistant professor, however, wondered what to do about eating a room meal. The secretary suggested stopping at a fast-food restaurant would be the best way to save valuable travel time, insuring the assistant professor would be on time for the opening meeting of the review committee. The assistant professor indicated plans and contingencies had been made.

However, there obviously were some small glitches in those plans and how those plans were carried out. The Department was not to hear about those glitches until the ensuing summer conference meeting of agriculture instructors when the subject of travel in Idaho became a topic of discussion. The agriculture instructor from the school that had been evaluated shared with the rest of the group the fact that the assistant professor not only drove right through the town where the school was located, but also drove right past the school that was to be evaluated. In addition, the assistant professor did not have anything that would approximate a midday snack. As the story goes, the assistant professor had decided to catch a McDonald's on the way. Little did the assistant professor realize that fast-food establishments did not populate such Idaho towns as Tetonia, Mud Lake, Leardor, Lemhi, Tendoy, etc.

Needless to say, the assistant professor was the recipient of some informal teaching about travel in rural Idaho by the agriculture instructors attending the meeting.

Idaho, like many other states, has to contend with rural education. Idaho has 45 high schools with total enrollments of below 112 students. Twenty of those Idaho high schools have secondary agriculture programs. In many of those 20 secondary agriculture programs, each and every student in the high school enrolls in the agriculture program sometime during their high school careers. These schools offer a very unique perspective and environment for teaching agricultural education. Many of these small schools still provide the agriculture instructor with an 11 or 12 month contract and facilities that are very comparable to the larger schools. Although agriculture programs in these small schools are just as costly as providing a secondary agriculture program in the larger schools. While many of the larger schools have smaller less individual units in their facilities, much of the other spatial requirements are similar whether the enrollment is in the 500 or 1,000s. Additionally, these schools exist in very small, rural communities and, in most cases, quite possibly provide the core, or center, of that community. The school becoming the rallying point for the community and the agriculture program becomes a rallying point for the agricultural community in the area. Many of the teachers in these small programs do so much more, and mean so much more to that school and community than just the teachers of day classes. In many of these communities, the agriculture instructor becomes the extension agricultural educator in addition to their public

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A Perspective on Rural Education

"The rural school presents the most important problem in American education. In it are more than six million children coming from one great industry, agriculture—the most fundamental and important of all industries. Under present conditions, this occupation calls for an unusual degree of intelligence and skill. It demands the highest type of business management and industrial ability. And, with the success of agriculture, is linked the welfare of every American citizen, whatever his status or vocation.

Yet, the rural school, the sole educational opportunity for most of our agricultural population, has been grossly neglected. In the midst of universal progress, it has been allowed to lag behind city and town schools. Abandoned to relative indifference, it has failed to hold the loyalty and support of its constituency. The victim of changing social and industrial conditions, it has dwindled in size, diminished in influence, and lost step with the spirit of the times.

But, the center of emphasis in education is changing—has changed. The focus recently set at work to reorganize and civilize country life has found the condition of the rural school to be one of the chief causes of decay. In it has also been discovered one of the most promising instruments of reclamation and reform. The rural school will come into its own. The great educational agencies of the country—national, state, and private—are organizing to give it every help at their command. Commercial interests are offering cooperation and support. Legislatures are shaping laws to its advantage and placing increased revenues at its disposal. Best of all, this accession of public interest is stimulating the patrons themselves to desire and demand better schools."

When do you think those three paragraphs were written? Were they written in the 1930s, 1950s, 1970s, or even the 1990s? They were written in 1914, and they come from a book, Better Rural Schools, by George Herbert Bots of Mt. Vernon, Iowa and Otis Earle Hall of Crawfordsville, Indiana. Many of the issues are the same today as they were then. With the continued migration of people from the rural areas in many parts of the country, many rural school districts are being forced to consolidate, close down buildings, and eliminate educational programs. Transportation issues, finances, and increasing state requirements were major issues in 1914, and they remain so in 1995. But, in the midst of all this, a new rural school is emerging. There is more at stake than the rural school district with its kindergarten through high school emphasis. The term "Rural Education" is coming to mean more than public schools: it also means community revitalization, community culture and social life, retraining, college classes, adult evening classes, and a number of other forms of education. The rural school is not bound by its building or its location. With technology, it can literally be "linked with the world."

The old-time rural school occupied a large place in the social, as well as in the intellectual, aspect of life for the entire community. It was the center of many truly educational activities besides formal classes. Here, in the rural school, the neighborhood spelling bees were held, attended, and enjoyed by people from miles around. The neighborhood debating society held its meetings here during the long winter months, and discussed the great social and political questions that were igniting a young nation. Schools in rural communities provided an opportunity for training the creative powers of ambitious youth who would later win renown in the legislature or in the halls of Congress. The "singing school" was organized for the lovers of music, and the "ciphering" match was held for those who were anxious to display their mathematical prowess. New acquaintances were made, old friendships renewed, courthouses began, and a thousand other advantages attained, as it is impossible without a common neighborhood meeting place and social center. The "little red schoolhouse" will long be cherished among us as one of our dearest memories.

The challenges and problems facing rural schools are not new. Schools closures and consolidations have been taking place since public schools were established. In many parts of the nation, you can drive through rural areas and find old abandoned school buildings. They range from "one-room school houses" to larger buildings which once housed kindergarten through twelfth grade. The words "consolidated," "independent," "township," "county," "community," and many others are used in the names of many school districts which have merged or consolidated at some time in the past. Should we dream of the way things used to be or the way things could be? The age and conditions that gave birth to the old-time rural school have passed away, never to return. It is evident, then, that schools which served the purpose well during the last 80 years will not suffice today. Times have changed, new standards have arisen, and new demands are in force. The rural school can offer its patrons as good, or better, an education as that available to those who live in more urban areas. In addition, it can provide a focus and a meeting place for citizens to take an active role in addressing, and solving, community problems in rural areas.

In this issue of The Agricultural Education Magazine, you will find a variety of articles describing how several issues in rural schools and rural education are being addressed—in this country as well as in other. These articles are written from a proactive, rather than a reactive, point of view. With the pressures of loss of population, diminishing finances, increasing state standards, and transportation issues, it is easy to view rural education as a victim. However, community leaders, educational leaders, business leaders, and all other citizens need to become involved in shaping their own destiny. There are already too many abandoned buildings in rural areas and all towns! People in rural areas must take charge of their own system of education and shape it to meet their needs. These articles provide some examples and advice on how to make people are addressing these issues.

Rural Education (Continued from page 9)

Much has been written about the fact that as rural areas continue to face difficult economic times, education, funding, and efficiency of resources within school districts will become increasingly important issues for rural schools. Without strong fiscal support for rural education and the improved efficiency in the development and delivery of education programs, rural education will not be able to provide the human capital base needed to sustain communities and economies. It is even predicted by some that students who graduate from these schools will lack the skills and abilities needed to compete for employment in the competitive workforce.

With the continued shift of society to primarily urban settings, the support for the public school systems is continuing to promote the growth of larger, urban-based schools. In light of this continuing change, it becomes more and more important to remain vigilant in our efforts to strive to garner local, state, and national support for the improvement of our rural education system. The students who graduate from these schools will need the same basic skills as those from larger communities, and rural students deserve the chance to be competitive in the workforce. Agricultural education can be a significant player in this scenario.

About the Cover

The building shown on the cover was the Roseville Consolidated School in Roseville, Illinois. The building has since been converted into a museum and city offices.
You Want Them to Learn What? You Gotta be Kidding!

For the sake of argument, let’s look at a figure like 30 to 40%. Now, let’s place an identifier on that 30 to 40% as the amount of Net Farm Income that comes to the average agricultural producer in the form of government payments.

Again, just for the sake of argument, let’s just say that one reasonable definition of Farm Management is the maximization of profits through the wise stewardship of land, labor, and capital. Obviously, there are many other factors that could be utilized, but let’s just hold on to that one for a few minutes. Bear with me now, and allow me to ask a few questions:

1. Would you consider government payments as capital in the farm enterprise?
2. Would you consider the wise stewardship of those resources as a direct form of farm management?
3. Would you consider it a reasonably wise practice to develop a fairly good understanding of the "ins and outs" of how such capital is utilized?
4. Would you agree that an additional facet critical to asset management involves doing what you can to ensure long-term availability of those resources?

Would you agree that if you are to have any influence over the allocation of an asset, you would be wise to develop an understanding of that asset, which controls the distribution of that asset?

It is my contention that our educational system does a very good job of helping students, at any grade level or age, gain an appreciation for or an understanding of government systems and how one might go about influencing the allocations of those systems. When you think about it, doesn’t this seem strange to you? It sure does to me. I am just an old country boy born east of that crack hill, but I do write in that there aren’t too many things I can identify that have a direct influence on over one-third of my income. Somehow, it seems to me that, in turn, I can go on to do the same.

What do you suppose the framers of the constitution meant 200 plus years ago when they talked about "to, by, and for the people"? I kind of believe that, had they expounded, they felt that participation in the process was foundational. But, how can one miss in a process that you know virtually nothing about? The answer is really quite simple: you can’t. And, isn’t that precisely what happens more and more and more each year? We have less and less involvement by the citizenry in the processes that have more and more to do with how we derive our income out of our lives than any other system that we could fathom.

Of what did they mean by the term "representative democracy"? For too many of our public entities interpret this as an opportunity to avoid personal or community responsibility for the input or decision making that happens at the local, state, or national level. It is so much easier, just to say, "well, that’s what we elected councilman so-and-so for", or "that’s why we put such and such for Congress". Well, excuse me, but I don’t think so! Though I strongly support the concept of a representative government, it carries with it a great deal of individual and community responsibility that we simply cannot shun if we expect democratic survival. And again, how can we expect to meaningfully participate if we have a deficit of understanding concerning how the process works? Furthermore, how can we gain that understanding if not through greater emphasis on our management throughout the education process?

"Great", you say, "where does agricultural education fit into all of this? You’re talking about stuff that ought to be taught in high school and local government classes." Well, you are probably correct; government structure and function should be taught in such classes. What I advocate is that the most appropriate and functional places for such knowledge to be "learned" is in application classes like agricultural education. Because, having an instructor on board about the one age has to be to build a specific public office, how a bill becomes a law, lengths of terms, or checks and balances is every bit as boring and uninteresting today as it was when I went to school, and maybe even more so. This is a prime reason for infusing participatory influence and decision making into your agricultural education classes. Along with the plain fact that doing so is about as close to helping students gain a clearer, more useful understanding of farm management that just about anything I can bring to mind.

Does learning about our government and how to have a participatory influence in it really have to be boring? The oft-quoted old educational sage John Dewey talked about "Interest-Based Education". In his writings, he often described how students had to become motivated to learn through practical and applicable experiences. "If a kid is interested in butterflies, but not in reading, get the kid to read about butterflies. The student will learn reading in the process." Dewey’s interest-based concepts are no less relevant today and are certainly applicable to learning about how to influence government decisions that will ultimately have a great effect on each of our bank accounts.

Okay, how about an example? Several years ago, while working in the state 4-H Youth Development Program through Wisconsin Extension, I and several of my co-workers had an idea about citizenship education. We had observed that people just aren’t very interested in doing anything to influence even the decision making that has a profound, and often permanent, effect upon the way they live and work. When we questioned people about the apparent lack of interest, they usually told us that the government and how it operates is far too complicated to understand. "Besides that," they would proclaim, "it’s too boring, and there is nothing I can do about the decisions anyway." Some of us weren’t ready to accept those ideas. As a part of a statewide event, we developed a program that introduced 14-17 year olds to the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of state government, utilizing Dewey’s concept of interest-based learning. We visited at length with officials in each of the government branches, explaining Dewey’s concepts, and asked them to participate with us. The result was a program that separated groups of students by interests in areas like: conservation education, animal science, water quality, family violence prevention, etc., and developed government programs around those areas of interest. It was not that difficult, for example, for a Supreme Court judge to illustrate how the system operates by utilizing an actual case that he had directly involved the dairy industry in the explanation. Likewise, a state senator has no problem at all graphically describing how a bill becomes a law, because presented utilizing actual ground water legislation as descriptors. The students actually paid attention, were interested, and could follow what the officials were trying to illustrate.

There was actual interaction between the sender and the receiver of the educational message. Holy smokes, education was going on! WOW! Not only were the students taking in information they had an interest in, they were retaining it. We did a pre-test/post-test using the same outcome indicators that students in this same age range were expected to attain in state government classes. Students in our 4-hour program scored about 25% higher than the mean of understanding in a standard classroom age group by 1.7%, Not bad, considering that the fact our approach only took four hours.

"Great", you say, "but I teach undergrad and graduate students, and they already know this stuff." Wanna bet? Have you tried asking your students how they would go about developing a campaign to make a positive involvement in the political process have a profound effect upon agriculture? I’m not talking about entering freshmen, I mean many of your doctoral seminar students. Have you asked them to write their name on the Farm Bill, and what process they went through to develop the decisions contained within it? Have you asked them to develop a case study that would frame a positively constructive situation involving rural development and assigned them to develop multiple solutions utilizing higher-order thinking processes like root-cause-analysis? When you mention the idea of agricultural policy development, do your students gruntle and complain that they came to your institution to learn "agricultural subject matter"?

How about your extension and adult learning groups? They are probably right on top of this government, citizenship, and policy stuff, are they not? Yeah, right! Those are the same folks that tell you they don’t need to understand how to use a computer and keep better records. "Reckoning with the farm they do down at the coffee shop. "I’ll just spend more time on the tractor and pay someone else to handle the bookwork." I’m a farmer," I don’t know about you, but I haven’t seen too many that left as I drive through the countryside. Most of the folks I see surviving in the agricultural enterprise today look more like farm managers. They are the ones that understand the "maximizing of profits through the wise stewardship of land, labor, and capital". As agricultural educators, let’s help students see some influence on those entities that have a major influence on those profits. Let’s start with government education.
Rural Education: Serving All Students

The Greenwood system remains one of the smallest public school districts in Pennsylvania, having less than 480 students enrolled in grades 7 through 12. The district encompasses 99 square miles with 97 percent of the student body being bused to school. The entire district administration consists of a superintendent, the high school principal, and the elementary principal. There is no vice principal, curriculum coordinator, or business manager. Furthermore, the district serves as center for community-based athletic teams, birthing classes, boy and girl scouts, adult recreation, and adult-flying farmer classes. Despite the small size, the district has been recognized for many successes, including the high rate of the graduates of the class of 1995 seeking post-secondary education (84 percent).

How does a small rural district successfully compete with wealthier suburban districts? The Greenwood administration and faculty believe it is done on six levels: all students and following four guiding principles of diversity, flexibility, cooperation, and technology affords necessary competitive edge in rural education.

With the belief that a well-rounded student makes a productive citizen, the school offers a diversity of opportunities. Well over three-quarters of the student population participate in one of the many club activities, and more than one-half compete with an athletic team. An active student government also provides educational and leadership development. Last year, the student council sponsored a diversity assembly targeted at enlightening the school population about various ethnic groups (less than one percent of Greenwood students are minorities). Other cultural happenings, like art exhibits and plays, are brought to the school in an effort to provide experiences not ordinarily available to the rural student. Many rural students have limited travel opportunities, and welcome the chance to tour with a school group. In 1994, twelve Greenwood FFA members flew to the national convention in Kansas City. Greenwood's foreign language students travel abroad on a biennial basis, and regular sojourns to New York City and Broadway are sponsored by the music department.

Flexibility in scheduling allows Greenwood students to customize their schedules with a blending of vocational and academic course electives. The result has been the elimination of tracking and the accompanying stereotypes. Curriculum integration naturally followed, and the agriculture and science departments are cooperating in the development of an environmental land lab. Perhaps the most exciting integration was the collaboration of local history and English classes in the publication of a community folklore book. Elders from the town and agriculturnists contribute short stories, and the art department helped with illustration, and the business department assisted with word processing.

Cooperation at Greenwood functions across the board, always focusing on the theme of "serving all students". The faculty and staff adapt to what is best for the student, not what is best for form, but cooperation doesn't stop at the employee level; the board of education, community, and student body also cooperate for the betterment of all. The FFA PALS program, recently instituted with the Greenwood Chapter, may best illustrate this spirit of cooperation. The PALS program team elders mentor young students in order to provide role modeling and mentoring for at-risk elementary students. When more older pals were needed than one group could supply, the FFA and high school peer helpers joined to provide the construction of new technology using the rural Greenwood district's experience with technological developments. (Photo courtesy of Messrs Baker)

BY MARY L. BUCK

In 1994, Montana is the largest state in the nation. In short, the state is big. It is not uncommon for a Western Montana FFA Chapter to leave for the National FFA Convention and stay overnight at a motel within the state after the end of the first day's drive. However, there are benefits to the state's size and the subsequent distance people have to travel to see each other. Sometimes I wonder if the murder rate in Montana is so low because by the time someone gets in their vehicle to commit a crime, they have reconsidered their intentions (cooled off) in the 100 plus miles it took to get to the crime scene. On a more serious note, the size of the state brings with it potential barriers. The apparent geographic distance within the state produces barriers such as isolation, shrinking population bases, shrinking tax bases, and inadequate telecommunications infrastructure and related services between schools which, in turn, affect educational programs. Nothing beats face-to-face communication; however, a new state telecommunications network works toward the state's systems and its respective special interest groups (such as agricultural education) the opportunity to talk with each other on a regular basis without having to turn the ignition key. This advanced computer-based communication system allows for a logical educator to communicate with each other in a practical, inexpensive, and time efficient manner. The METNET system is an advanced conferencing, electronic mail, bulletin board, and on-line communication system that combines superb communications with a graphical user interface. It is not part of internet, but does allow for an internet connection. Every member of the Montana Agricultural Education Family has the opportunity to be connected to this system free of charge. Other Montana educators, as well, are eligible to be connected to METNET. Funds for support of the system are sponsored through Montana's Office of Public Instruction.

How Did METNET Get Started?

In the late 1980's, Montana's Legislature commissioned the Lambda study to look at how the state's schools communicate with each other. The study found that schools play "phone tag" in a big way. There was no collective manner in which even adjacent schools communicated with each other. During this time there was also a burgeoning of satellite technology that furnished new distance education opportunities for Montana schools. The findings of the Lambda study, a report with a spate of new distance education technologies, prompted the state legislature to give funds to the Department of Administration, the Office of Public Instruction, and the Department of Higher Education for establishing a statewide electronic bulletin board and satellite access for schools. The components for establishing the electronic bulletin board became that of Montana's Office of Public Instruction. The first electronic bulletin board was established in 1992 by using a DOS platform. The DOS platform was good for writing a note to someone, but was not a good communication. The platform lacked the ability to perform other functions that should be possible on an electronic bulletin board. The overall response from METNET users to a survey indicated that they desired a bulletin board that provided a Graphic-User Interface. In April of 1994, METNET established a new system that offered users a Graphic-User Interface and the ability to access the bulletin board through Macintosh and Windows platforms while still accepting text-based communications. In addition, the METNET system was much easier to maintain. The final selling point of METNET was its ability to perform multiple tasks such as simultaneously uploading and downloading files. Four thousand Montana school personnel were "on-line" as of January, 1995.

Practical Application of METNET for Agricultural Education

METNET actually consists of two pieces of software: The METNET Server and the METNET Client. The Server is run by an administrator at the Montana Office of Public Instruction. The METNET Client application is run on every individual computer in order to access the services provided by the METNET server. Everyone who desires access to METNET must install the Client application software, and have a Macintosh or IBM Computer and 1440 baud-rate modem. A 1-800 telephone number is provided for METNET. The Client application is Windows-based for IBM users and application
is available for Macintosh computers. The METNET system administrator has established an AGED Conference within the METNET for over 20 agricultural education professionals in the state of Montana. Anyone who is on the AGED Conference can also access messages for agricultural education professionals, other mail directed to them, as well as information databases. To access the AGED Conference, the agricultural education professional would double-click on their mouse pointer on the AGED Conference icon which is located on the first active Window once a connection is made. Other icons are present and allow access to other services and conferences offered by METNET. Once on-line, and individual has 30 minutes to use METNET services.

METNET performs a number of functions for the common user. You can forward a message, indicate who should receive a carbon copy, stay on-line while accessing another program within Windows or the Macintosh environment, and engage in "Chat" with someone else who is online with you. In addition, the METNET system "Message" application provides for attaching all file types to a message. Therefore, software vendors can provide a total software package or a proposal in a ready-to-use form to another person(s) on the network. Because METNET was designed for computers with a graphical user interface, you can find what you are interested in quickly without sifting through reams of unwanted information. You can point and click to read a particular message or open a conference without having to sort manually through all the messages on a particular topic. You can even directly print to your default printer while being on-line. Print format is kept as the monitor displays it. One of the more-used services that METNET provides in concise time is Montana and road weather conditions which is much appreciated during a Montana winter.

This point, the most extensive use of the AGED Conference on METNET has been communication between the members of the agricultural education leadership in Montana. Montana AGED members to first receive METNET accounts and get "on-line" were Montana Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association Officers from across the state, Montana State University Agricultural Education faculty in Bozeman, and the Montana State Supervisor in the state. METNET facilitated communication between these groups. Communication entailed working on the agenda for the state MVA conference, developing agendas for state meetings, and considering other uses for other agricultural education instructors.

METNET was also used by AGED Conference members to access state education information. For example, a teacher can access teacher placement data, school finance information, and current legislative action taken by the Montana General Assembly. There are numerous other special-interest group conferences that members can ACCESS. If someone had an interest in current events that affect high school counselors, that individual would simply double-click on the METNET Conference icon to obtain any posted information on that conference. Conferences represent all kinds of content areas, special interests, and community interest related to public school education in Montana.

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this invaluable program. Administration, guidance, faculty, parents, and both older members and younger students must cooperate to ensure the success of PALS.

According to principal Burns, adoption of new technology is often delayed by rural teachers. At Greenwood, funding for technology occurs partially through the local tax base, as well as government grant monies. Greenwood's recent addition of Access Pennsylvania gives students and community members access to any public library book in the state. A grant written jointly by the agricultural education department and the funded environmental tests, microscopes, varying test kits, and construction of a land lab. In addition, a new satellite system was acquired for distance learning opportunities enabling students to study subjects not available in the small district.

Photo not available.

By Michael R. Swan and El-Fatatia Aly
Dr. Swan is an assistant professor of agricultural education at North Dakota State University, Fargo, and Mr. El-Fatatia Aly is a research scholar at Minia University, Minia, Egypt.

In recent years, Egyptian agricultural performance has seriously declined. Self-sufficiency on food production has fallen from 94.5 percent to current 52 percent. The growth of agricultural output has declined from about 4 percent to 1.5 percent per annum, while population has increased by 2.5 percent in the same period. Import dependence became significant in 1974 when the value of agricultural imports exceeded exports for the first time. Major imports are wheat, flour, maize, sugar, vegetable oil, lentils, red meat, and poultry. Imports of wheat accounted for 75 percent of Egypt's total wheat supply, and imports of other foods accounted for between 26 percent (in the case of red meat) and 94 percent (in the case of lentils). Rice is the only major staple food in which Egypt is self-sufficient, although the amount of rice available for export is limited.

Agricultural production is influenced by the quantity and quality of human resources. The importance of labor availability in agricultural production has long been recognized; it is the people that make land and other resources productive. Many countries have yet to provide adequate training facilities and opportunities to create a skilled agricultural work force. In many of these countries, illiteracy is high, skills training is low, and public schools are inadequate. The adoption of new technology is dependent on the production of quality labor and to command good employment options is severely limited. Studies suggest that the acceptance of new agricultural technology is greater with farmers who have had more education.

There is a pressing need to address illiteracy and provide job skills for large portions of the population. Without these abilities, people's options are narrowed, and their capacity to earn income is restricted. Agricultural production and development is often curtailed by an unskilled labor supply. Strong evidence suggests that improved education results in development of modern agriculture, and at the same time, educated people tend to adopt family planning in a more consistent manner. Agricultural and technical skills will greatly improve the potential for increasing all goods and services in these economies.

The capacity to develop and manage education and technology in a manner consistent with a nation's physical, human, and cultural endowments is the single most important variable accounting for differences in agricultural productivity among nations. The development of such capacity is dependent on many factors, including: the capacity to organize and sustain the institutions that generate and transmit scientific and technical knowledge; the ability to embody new technology in equipment and materials; the level of innovation and the educational accomplishments of rural people; the efficiency of input and product markets; and the effectiveness of social and political institutions.

Agricultural research in Egypt, specifically...
El Minia Governorate, is organized through the Agricultural Research Centers (ARC), a semi-autonomous organization with headquarters at Giza. ARC has eleven research institutes there for cotton, field crops, horticulture, soil and water, crop protection, animal production, animal health, agricultural economics, desert, plant diseases, agricultural extension, and rural development. Each institute is administered by a Director, who reports to the Director General for ARC. In addition to the main research station at Giza, eight research stations are located in different regions in the governorates. Each of those stations works on the main commodity of regional importance, besides coordinating research programs with the headquarters at Giza.

Agricultural research is also being conducted in the agricultural facilities of ten universities. Much of the research at the universities is not oriented toward practical farm problems, and is generally constrained due to limitations of funds. Universities can play an important role in improving the services provided by ministries of agriculture and agricultural extension services. These institutions should become active in providing other agencies to strengthen extension work. The ministries abroad must be the leaders in the task of providing for increased production and income, especially in agriculture.

There is growing recognition that increased food production will come from investment in training and providing incentives for the rural extension educator. Extension educators are the carriers of new agricultural technology, technical know-how, and agricultural credit, organizational services, land reform, and general development information. There are those who argue that if the technology is sound and profitable, it will diffuse without the aid of extension educators. But where farmers are poor and have minimal education, diffusion and adoption cannot take place rapidly without the necessary knowledge to use new technology correctly. The extension educator is the farmer’s link with the scientific world, and often determines which farmers will receive new seeds, credit, and fertilizer. Where the farmer/extension educator ratio is very unfavorable, the extension educator cannot give priority to one sector of the farming community over another. At the local level, the role of the extension educator must be directed toward training farmers as leaders or promoters. This enables the rural educator to serve people in many more communities, but still provide a wide range of up-to-date services.

Egypt is organized into 25 governorates and 165 districts, and the El Minia Governorate has nine districts. Agricultural programs in El Minia are presently administered by an Under Secretary of Agriculture assisted by four Directors General for agriculture, livestock, cooperatives, and administration and finance. The Director General for Agriculture is assisted by a number of directors and section heads for agricultural affairs, past control, horticultural, animal production, mechanization, seeds, cooperatives, and “extension.” Each district is headed by a Director of Agriculture and has section heads for the entire range of activities provided for at the governorate level.

El Minia Governorate has 350 villages along with a number of subsidiary villages and hamlets which are grouped into 60 localities. Each village has a cooperative/agricultural unit, each with a director, an extension agent, and several are supporting technicians (in some cases more than ten). Their work is supervised by an agricultural unit at the local level. The village technicians are each assigned a specific function like post control, horticulture, animal production, mechanization, seed improvement, etc. in line with the division/sections at the governorate/district level, but function in effect as general extension agents covering various functions for groups of farmers in the village. The village technicians are secondary agricultural school graduates, while the supervisory officers at the village and local unit levels hold Bachelor of Science degrees in agriculture.

The Government of Egypt (GOE) has in the recent past been increasingly concerned about effective transfer of sophisticated agricultural technology to farmers for raising farm yields. GOE has in this context been considering steps that may be taken to strengthen the agricultural extension organization, make its agricultural research more purposeful, and establish working linkages between research and extension.

The approach for extending the educational or training programs proposed by the various groups is, in essence, similar to providing for professional extension service exclusively devoted to extension, with strong linkages with research.

The Training and Visit System has been carried out in El Minia Governorate since 1983. Since its inception, there has been little or no evaluation of the received effectiveness of the training and visit system on extension educators.

Primary concerns about the educational or training programs in El Minia are: a) the appropriate methods for providing the educational programs. Halod1 showed an extremely high interest in production agriculture, especially in the area of plant breeding. I was student teaching in the AST program, which had 120 students in six different classes per day. Both Harold and I knew that this would be a short-term assignment due to my eventual return to Oregon State University; however, we agreed to make the best of the situation by having some fun together during this 12-week period.

Herald came from a broken home. His parents had both abused alcohol and hard drugs. Reports say that he was absent from school at times in Harold’s history. He was also experiencing academic difficulty in four of his six classes. When I entered the program, Harold was living alone in a treatment center, and neither of his parents lived in Tillamook.

Introduction
The subject of mentorship has gained considerable attention in both the private and public sectors (Clemson, 1985). A great deal of literature has been generated within the educational arena regarding the role of mentorship programs for students at risk and the possible benefits and/or considerations of these programs. However, many questions remain unanswered when considering the impact of a mentorship program at its most basic level—the interaction of the mentor and protégé.

At-risk students face many extra-curricular problems on a daily basis. Drug addiction, alcoholism, abusive situations, and dysfunctional families are just a few of the problems facing our students. These problems can be exhausting, both emotionally and physically, thereby decreasing the likelihood that learning will occur. In fact, many students find most of the above-mentioned problems occurring in their own homes. Such problems were once believed to be “only in the big city.” However, as Rivkin (1992) concluded from a statewide study of North Carolina youth:

Agricultural and non-agricultural education students shared similar drug and alcohol use patterns. The percentage of agricultural and non-agricultural students in this study that had tried or were current users of tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana as well as other drugs was disturbingly high (p. 95).

How, then, can a mentor make a difference in the protégé’s life? Can the mentor make a real difference? How much time is required before effective communication occurs between mentor and protégé? What role should the mentor take when the protégé is one of many students in an Agricultural Science and Technology (AST) program and the mentor is an agriculture instructor?

Background
While completing my student teaching internship at Tillamook High School in Tillamook, Oregon, I was designated as a mentor for a student at risk in his junior year. We spent approximately 12 weeks together in the classroom.1

THEME ARTICLE

Mentors, Youth at Risk, and Rural Education Programs: A Case Study

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1 The student’s name has been changed to protect the confidential nature of his/her information.
with other teachers or administrators). No tape recordings or written materials were present during these meetings.

I decided to take a passive role in organizing our outings, becoming an active listener for Harold so that a closer relationship could be built in the classroom and later used for control of the direction of our program. As teachers, we have a lot to say about the conditions under which our children find that power, but we must remember that the power itself is theirs (Dulac, 1986).

**Conversations**

Our first meeting occurred in the early part of January, 1993 when Harold was seventeen years old. We went to a Chinese restaurant at his suggestion, and we talked about several things over dinner. At first, he was reluctant to talk about his family life, but after an hour of conversation, he began telling me about his mother. Harold was very concerned about her living in Portland with her abusive male friend. He said his mom's friend had physically abused her on more than one occasion.

Later in the evening, Harold told me about his eventual college education. He said, "After my senior year, I'll go to community college in the fall and continue my education". He said his current school work was "not a problem" and he was just a little behind the rest of his class. I knew Harold was failing four of his six classes at Tillamoos High, and he would actually need an extra year to graduate at his current pace.

Our second meeting was scheduled for the following week, but it was canceled by Harold because his mother had been severely beaten by her friend and had moved. He said he needed to be with her, and I agreed. Consequently, Harold's mother moved to Tillamoos with Harold. The next meeting was also canceled by Harold's mother. So Harold and his mother were being evicted from their apartment, and the following meeting was postponed because Harold was in the hospital from a concussion he had received while playing basketball. At one of our later meetings, he had been the recipient of a very successful legal sweep.

At this point, I had become quite frustrated with the whole program, and I then decided to talk to the counselors at the school. They were surprised to hear that Harold had given me a variety of excuses for not keeping a regular meeting schedule. Harold had told the counselors that we were meeting regularly and were having a great time. They then warned him that if he did not meet with me every week, he would be dropped from the program, and consequently, we made plans for the following week.

We met at the bowling alley since Harold loved to bowl, but he didn't have any money to go with him. Harold didn't say much that night; I suspect that he still didn't feel comfortable talking to me. He did ask about my family back in Corvallis, and he showed a great deal of interest in finding them. I asked him if his mother was feeling better, and he said she was and he didn't really feel like talking about it. I asked Harold what he thought about his mother's co-dependent relationships, and he became agitated at this question. He said, "let's just say I have really bad memories so I could show that guy a thing or two". When I asked him if he had ever physically abused him, he answered, "I think I better go home now, Mr. W.".

Our future meetings fell by the wayside as one unpredictable situation after another arose. One weekend, Harold helped his mother move their belongings to his grandparents' farm in Hebo, Oregon. The next week, his sheep (SAE project) got sick, and he needed to take care of them. Finally, with only one week remaining in my internship, Harold came to my office and told me he would be transferring to Nestucca High School and I wouldn't see him anymore. I sympathized and told him that I wouldn't spend more time together, and he shrugged and replied, "that's the way it goes sometime, Mr. W.".

**Questions**

How can a mentor make a difference in a protégé's life?

Based on my limited contact with Harold, I believe a mentor must take an active role in planning and implementing extra-curricular activities for this program to work effectively. Admittedly, there is a risk involved with the mentor taking on too many responsibilities for planning activities. However, if the mentor is a protégé at a loss for ideas of what to do, it becomes the mentor's responsibility to provide some stimulation for finding activities that both can enjoy. As mentors of learning, we have the opportunity and the responsibility to encourage young people and assist them in their personal development (Peters, 1991).

Can the mentor make a difference in a young person's life?

I feel that, as a mentor, did not create a positive effect in Harold's life. This may have been an impossible task, given the time constraints and lack of regular meetings. Harold's old habits of lying, avoidance of contact, and mistrust prevailed throughout our meetings. By Webster's definition, a regular meetings between counselors and mentors are needed to further understanding of youth development and programming for youth.
Designing Effective Adult Education Programs: Needs and Objectives

"So, what do you do for a living?"

Many of us hear this question regularly from agriculturalists who are trying to determine what we teach agricultural education to junior high and high school students. But, what about the adult programs that many of us teach? Is that really a part of our job, too? It has become obvious that in order to keep up in a changing world, all people, throughout adulthood, must continue to learn. Someone must assist agri-businesses, farmers, and other adults to better understand agriculture and perform their jobs more effectively. The local agriculture teacher could be an ideal person to help organize these learning activities. Some agriculture teachers already are, but are they doing an effective job? To be effective, adult education programs need to have an organizational structure (Bergevin, 1967). Better organization of adult programs will promote greater learning, and hopefully, greater learning is the goal of every agriculture teacher.

The program planning model in Figure 1 was developed by Dr. Jerry Blank and Dr. James Russell of Purdue University (1987). It is a very simple, but effective model that can help agriculture teachers organize their adult classes more effectively. In the center of the model is the adult learner. Around the learner is a circle of five segments of a good program. It is vital that each of these segments is planned, the four statements in the boxes around the outside of the model are included.

For instance, when determining needs of the adults, it is important to: establish what techniques will be used, decide who will administer the needs assessment, conduct the needs assessment research, and evaluate the needs assessment. Although the model is continuous, needs assessment is a logical starting point when first conducting an adult education program.

Needs

OK, I have decided that I am going to offer adult classes this year. What do I teach? When do I teach it? Who do I teach it to? These are important questions to be answered, and a needs assessment is an excellent way of determining the answers. When conducting a needs assessment and also when working with adults, you need to consider special characteristics. Certain characteristics are the same for all learners, but others are especially important when working with adults. Some of these are:

- Adults do not like to waste time.
- Adults have a vast wealth of knowledge from which to draw.
- Adults are especially interested in learning things that can be applied to their lives.
- Adults operate in well-defined social contexts.
- Adults often have special physical needs such as diminished eyesight and hearing (Bergevin, 1967; Caffarella, 1994; Caffarella & Merriam, 1991).

Because we are trying to help adults become better at what they do and how they do it, it stands to reason that the adults we plan to teach may be a great source of information. Using the Blank and Russell model, the following steps should be completed when implementing a needs assessment.

- Establish a committee of organizers. This may be your advisory committee or a new adult education committee consisting of the agriculture teacher and one or two others.
- Identify the specific audience to be reached. Will the course be for farmers, agribusiness people, non-rural people, farm wives, or all of the above?
- Decide on what type of instrument to use for the assessment. A questionnaire, word of mouth, or a group brainstorming session could all be used effectively as an assessment tool.
- Determine what questions will be asked on the assessment. Topic ideas, objectives, speakers, dates and times to meet, locations for meetings, and possible tour sites should all be addressed.
- Collect information. Decide on course objectives, design, delivery, and evaluation procedures.
- Evaluate information received. Was the information practical, on-target, and usable?

Hardin Northern is a small rural school in Shelbyville, Ohio, of about 650 students in Kindergarten through the twelfth grade. The major industry is agriculture, and there is a need for people in agriculture to stay on top of the latest information. There have been adult short courses offered through the agricultural education department for years. To help organize the courses, a committee was put together that consists of an agriculture teacher, a course president, vice president, secretary, and a county agriculture extension agent. The Hardin Northern Adult Short Course is the name of the program and is available to anyone who is interested, but is specifically designed for farmers and agribusiness people in our community. While having tried using word of mouth and in a pinch still doing so, we have found that this is not a particularly good method of getting a list of community needs. A combination of a questionnaire and group meeting is a more effective way of performing the needs assessment. At

Small group activities can be used to determine adult student needs. Group variety is the instruction, and help students enjoy learning.

(Photos courtesy of J. Andrew Wilson and B. Allen Talbott)
Designing Effective Adult Education Programs: Design, Delivery, and Evaluation

Our last article dealt with determining the needs of the adult students in your class and discussed how to convert those needs into objectives. Now, how are you going to conduct your programs, who will be teaching, and how will you evaluate it? This article will focus on answering these questions. The program planning model in Figure 1, developed by Dr. Jerry Blank and Dr. Edna Russell at Purdue University (1987), looks at how needs, objectives, design, delivery, and evaluation fit together. As we discussed in our previous article, the four boxed items around the outside of the model should be considered when planning the inner circle. We also looked at how characteristics of adult learners can affect the needs assessment, and how the needs assessment is the cornerstone to a good adult program. We also discovered that the objectives for a course can be derived from the needs assessment. Once the needs assessment has been completed and the objectives for the course set, it is time to design the course, which is the next step in the program planning model.

Design

Adults have learning characteristics that are both particular to them, and common to every learner, regardless of age. When designing a program, it is very important to keep these characteristics in mind, some of which include:

- Adults are interested in learning things that can be applied to their lives.
- Adults are social creatures.
- Adults often have special physical needs such as diminished eyesight and hearing.
- Adults like hands-on learning.
- Adults have a wide range of learning styles and preferred teaching techniques.
- Adults have a wide range of responsibilities.
- Time is very limited.
- Adults want their money’s worth (Bergevin, 1967; Caffarella, 1994; Caffarella & Messier, 1991).

The design describes the overall structure, provides a basic plan for the construction, and establishes the learning environment for the program. When designing the program, it is again important to consider the four items in the boxes around the planning model in Figure 1.

The following are things that need to be done when designing an adult program:

- **Identify the program:** Include date, time, location, topic, and speaker. This will be very helpful in securing good attendance.
- **Identify the class:** Will the class be designed as individual topic areas or will one overall topic be addressed throughout the class? For instance, you may have a class on computer record keeping one time, and a class on insect and pest control the next time. Or, you may have computers as an overall topic and show how to use a word processor one meeting and how to use a spreadsheet the next two.
- **Identify facility limitations:** How many students can be accommodated, and how few students is too few? Is there a sound system? What about audiovisual equipment? Has the custodian been informed? Looking at these questions well in advance can save many problems in the long run.

**Rural Education and Training in Egypt**

(Retrieved from page 12)

or training and visit systems through the extension service in El Minia Governorate, b) what are the perceptions of rural people of the training and visit system in El Minia Governorate, and c) what is the best method of delivering an educational training and visit program to the rural sector in El Minia Governorate.

Sustained high levels of agricultural production and incomes are not possible without an effective agricultural extension service supported by agricultural research that is relevant to farmers’ needs. The aim of the training and visit system is to have competent, well-informed village-level extension educators who visit farmers regularly with relevant technologies and bring farmers’ problems back to researchers. Links between extension and research systems must be strong, and research must be oriented to the priorities of farmers. The mechanics of the training and visit system—the precisely delineated areas of staff responsibility, fixed work schedules, regular training of extension staff, and regular and frequent meeting of extension and research—have been designed to meet these basic requirements.

The work of extension staff should be focused on supporting the field-level agent, since he is the only extension worker who is in regular direct contact with farmers, teaches them extension’s messages, and handles much of the feedback from their problems and reactions to the extension/research system. All staff must support and assist the field workers by way of training and in-field guidance to do these tasks well. Since the business of extension is agricultural know-how, a basic characteristic of extension, based on the training and visit system, is the priority given to professionalism, specialist staff support, training, and close linkages with research, other sources of knowledge, and agricultural universities.

In addition to the fundamentals of management principles and leadership, four points should be kept in view in establishing or reforming extension along training and visit lines. First, professional, extension-trained regular training and visits are not only able to serve situations of low-level agricultural development, but it can also be adapted to suit all levels of agricultural sophistication. Second, the basic management principles of professional agricultural extension are similar, no matter what level of agricultural technology implementation. Third, extension operations may be adjusted to meet local needs—for example, increase the number and level of technical specialists and field extension agents (including perhaps specialized agents for farmers who have already attained very high levels of technology), or emphasize the complementary support of field extension workers who can be provided by well-coordinated mass media activities. Finally, the extension system should also be expanded over time to cover more farm-based production activities, although it is likely to concentrate initially on major crops.

**References**

What are the budget restrictions? When designing a program, it is very important to put together a budget. Focusing on costs first will allow the planner to recognize the amount of funding that will be needed. Consideration needs to be given to facility costs, equipment costs, program costs, and even refreshment costs. Funding can be obtained from a wide variety of sources, including: some interest groups, charging the students to participate, and local or state funding. It has been my experience at Hardin Northern that, by listing our total costs, we are better able to identify potential sponsors for programs. Because of budgeting, we seldom have to charge a participation fee.

What about refreshments? Adults enjoy a good cup of coffee or other drink, and a donut as they try to get their brains to grasp a given subject. The cost of refreshments can be high, but we have found that local agriculture businesses are usually more than willing to donate everything we need. Make sure that you recognize and give credit to these businesses. One more hint, if you don't like coffee, don't be the one to make it. You'll never get it right.

Sometimes things go wrong. It is important to realize that no matter how well you plan, things still go wrong. Try to have backup plans and things like: bad weather, guest speakers who are no-shows, visuals that get lost in the mail, and broken audio visual equipment. When you advertise the class, it is a good idea to let students know how to find out if the class has been canceled, delayed, or postponed.

Remember to evaluate the design. When you are finished designing the program, step back and evaluate it. Better yet, have someone else evaluate it. Are you forgetting anything? Have you set yourself up to fail?

Delivery
You have taken care of designing a good environment for the program. It is now time to decide how the program will be delivered. Keep the following items in mind:

Who will be instructing? Many agriculture teachers are under the misconception that they must teach the class. Agriculture teachers often act as the facilitator of the class, but they do not have to be the main instructor. Guest speakers, video tapes, and hands-on demonstrations are just a few of the alternatives. Remember, adults learn better from people they consider to be experts. The agriculture teacher may not be that person.

It is very important to plan what teaching methods will be used. Remember, that adults, like high school students, learn better from a variety of teaching techniques. Mix up the teaching styles. Lecture, discussion, panel discussion, demonstration, and many others can all be effective. Adults love a chance to do some hands-on learning.

Set up a timetable for each class. This will allow the class to run smoother and provide better organization. Pick a starting time and stick to it so you don't start out behind right from the start. Give yourself 5 to 10 minutes for introductions and an explanation of the needs assessment process. This will make people more comfortable and help to reestablish a felt need. Divide the rest of your time into half-hour segments, changing teaching methods at the end of each half hour. Schedule a break every hour and a half, and make sure the class ends on time. If people want to stay after class to talk in more depth, that's fine. Just don't make everyone else suffer.

Evaluate the delivery. Use the class participants and instructors to help evaluate the effectiveness of the delivery. This could be done in a very informal oral fashion, or a more formal written questionnaire. Be sure to record the comments somewhere so that you can use them to improve later programs.

Now that you have spent all this time planning it, get in there and do it the way you planned. Above all else, use a variety of teaching techniques and keep the class moving. Remember your objectives for the class and adjust to meet them.

Evaluation
Evaluation is often left off our list of things to do when teaching adults. You should have been evaluating each part of the program model as you planned or completed it, but an overall evaluation of the program also needs to be done. The most common thing to look for is an overall evaluation of student learning. If we do not know whether the class has learned, how do we know the program was effective? The easiest way to determine the amount of learning that took place is to evaluate the extent the objectives were learned. This can be done in a number of ways: written and oral testing of students, use of practical examinations to determine if the students are able to perform the task, and home visits to determine if the practices are used and understood. Until you are sure of what evaluation technique is best for your program, it may be wise to use a combination of techniques. You can then evaluate the evaluations to determine which was most effective. Make sure you know who will be administering the evaluation; it may be a good idea to have someone other than the agriculture teacher. A well-organized evaluation can provide the organizers of the program some great insight for ways to improve the program.

Conclusion
Adult education is vital to rural life. Agricultural education teachers have the unique opportunity to assist in providing this adult education. It is not easy to plan an effective adult education program, but a program planning model can make the job less strenuous. An effective needs assessment is the key to success. From it, objectives can be determined which allow planners to gain a focus. This focus helps to design a program that meets the needs of the students. It is also important to organize the delivery to make the program as beneficial and enjoyable as possible. Evaluating each of these steps as they are planned and implemented is also an important key to a successful program. When the program is completed, the organizers should be sure to check for learning. An enjoyable, well-planned program is not enough if the participants did not learn enough to meet the objectives. Remember, agriculture is a growing, changing industry. As educators, it is our job to help people grow with the industry. Using the program planning model can give an adult education planner a model to help organize the program. It is not a cure-all, rather, it is a beginning.

References

Coming Next Month...

Collaboration in Agricultural Education
Agricultural Education in the United States: Programs by Region and State

Since 1965, researchers from the Agricultural Education Division of the American Vocational Association have conducted an annual National Survey of the Supply and Demand for Teachers of Agricultural Education in the United States. The annual studies were conducted from 1965 until 1973 by Dr. Ralph Woodin, initially of the Ohio State University and later from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The study was continued by Dr. David Craig of the University of Tennessee from 1974 until 1984. Since 1985, Dr. William G. Camp from Virginia Tech has conducted the study except for 2 years when J. Dale Oliver, also of Virginia Tech, was responsible for the research.

This is the fourth in a series of reports to the profession on the results of the annual supply and demand study. For more details about the background of this ongoing study, and on the sources of the data, see the first article in this series, in the May, 1993 issue of the Agricultural Education Magazine.

Types of Teaching Positions

The table which follows reveals that the vast majority of teachers of Agricultural Education teach in either Agiscience (n = 1,355.5), Production Agriculture (n = 1,245), or some combination of agriculture courses (n = 2,992). Because many states are either revising their curricula or renaming their existing curricula to Agiscience, that program was added to the list of program options for the first time this year. Recoll from earlier articles that there were a total of 10,119 teachers of Agricultural Education in the US in the fall of 1993.

Clearly, programs labeled as production agriculture no longer represent the predominant mode of delivery in Agricultural Education. Rather, teachers whose programs consist of various combinations of agriculture courses dominate and production agriculture has fallen to third place, behind agiscience. On the other hand, for anyone familiar with the teaching patterns in Agricultural Education, it is a reasonable assumption that many of those combinations programs are dominated, or at least heavily influenced, by production agriculture.

Based on the findings of this study, a typical Agricultural Education teacher in the United States works in a general or comprehensive high school, in a single-teacher department, teaching a variety of agriculture courses much of the day, and having no adult or Young Farmer responsibilities.

Types of Secondary Agricultural Education Programs reported as of September 1, 1993

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<th>Eastern</th>
<th>Southern</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>US Total</th>
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<td>272</td>
<td>150</td>
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<td>272</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>1,245</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1,999</td>
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<td>103</td>
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<td>563</td>
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Look For This

In the next article in this series, data will be provided on the grade levels and department sizes of programs of Agricultural Education in the US in 1993.
The Road

The road that you travel
    is the road that you choose.
It is you who will decide
    if you win or lose.

All roads start
    as unblazed trails.
The road cannot decide
    if it is completed or if it fails.

It is the builder of the road
    through his heart and his soul,
That ultimately determines
    where the road is to go.

The builder of the road
    and the life of the man,
Are one in the same,
    both go where they can.

The road may be detoured
    by a sidetrack and turn;
As life is full of choices and lessons
    that the man must come to learn.

The road traveled most often
    is smooth and easily crossed;
As a life without challenge offers little
    to be won or to be lost.

The harder the builder works
    the harder it is for him to fail.
The more the man strives for success
    the more likely it is that he will prevail.

The road covers many a mountain,
    that it must try and climb.
Just as the man must conquer his goals
    one at a time.

The road that you travel
    is the road that you choose,
It is you that will decide
    if you win...or...you lose.

Marcus G. Beldin