The Agricultural Education Magazine

Mentoring Beginning Teachers

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Mentoring Beginning Teachers: The Profession’s Responsibility

By Lon E. Riesenberg

Dr. Riesenberg is professor and head of agricultural and extension education at the University of Idaho, Moscow.

Mentoring beginning teachers is the responsibility of the profession, of each and every individual in the profession of agricultural education, be they teacher educators, state supervisors or teachers. Mentoring beginning teachers is the responsibility of agricultural education professionals regardless of the existence of a specific mentoring program or the structure of an existing mentoring program in their state, region or area, and is the responsibility of the profession regardless of whether or not there is additional compensation for that type of activity.

All of us in the profession can look back to individuals that assisted or “mentored” us as we began our professional careers in agricultural education. Whether we admit it or not, there are individuals in each of our backgrounds that could, realistically, take us, either individually or collectively, for any success that each of us have had.

In some of our cases, the mentoring was proactive and structured, however, for many of us, it might have been incidental and not necessarily intended or organized as mentoring. For some of us, the influence was present from the first day of our professional career and responsibilities, and for some of us, it may have come at some time later. I would suggest that most of us would be very hard pressed to say that we did not receive any type of special counseling, mentoring, advising, guiding, coaching or role modeling.

As Richard J. Bergen mentions in his article, very little has recently been written in the Magazine about mentoring and how mentoring can benefit new, developing and veteran agriculture instructors and so the topic seems timely and appropriate. As you read the articles in this issue, you will read discussions of formal induction programs and formal mentoring programs, but you will also read about impacts on beginning agriculture teachers by veteran teachers that were not part of a formal program. These impacts were a result of the veteran teachers being very serious about their professional responsibilities toward their younger peers.

Many of our states have, over the past ten years, developed significant agricultural education teacher induction programs. These programs have been and are primarily designed and operated by teacher educators and state supervisors. While these programs have been effective and should be continued, I think the profession, as a whole, needs to develop significantly more emphasis on advising and mentoring beginning teachers.

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Each year at Idaho’s annual vocational education conference, the state organization of teacher educators and state supervisors makes a concerted effort to enroll each of its beginning teachers, whether they be new or continuing veterans, into one of our professional organizations and rightly so. There are tremendous benefits accruing to members of our professional organizations.

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However, the profession may want to consider offering another benefit to young, beginning teachers especially. By becoming a member of the professional organization, beginning teachers would have direct access to veteran teachers, teacher educators and state supervisors as advisors, teachers, coaches or role models whenever the young beginning teacher felt the need.

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Mentoring in Agricultural Education

By Richard M. Jooger
Dr. Jooger is an assistant professor and director of teacher education, Utah State University, Logan, UT

The issue's theme is "Mentoring Beginning Teachers." Each year, Dr. William Camp provides the program with a nationwide summary of the supply and demand for agricultural educators. In recent years there has been a greater demand than supply of well-qualified teachers.

Each year, many of our most effective teachers leave the profession for a variety of reasons. One reason teachers leave is because of the sense of isolation they experience as agricultural educators. In many cases, there is only one agricultural educator in the community or surrounding communities. Few people really understand the challenges faced by persevering agricultural educators.

One strategy for assisting agricultural educators with their challenges is to encourage beginning and experienced agricultural educators to become involved in effective mentoring programs. Since little has been written in The Magazine about mentoring and how it can benefit new, developing and veteran agricultural educators, this issue will address the following questions:

• What is mentoring?
• Why should we consider mentoring?
• What are the qualities of effective mentors?
• What are the roles and responsibilities of effective mentors?
• What are the benefits received by mentees and mentors?
• Considering the apparent benefits of mentoring, how can the profession respond?

I have vivid memories of my first year of teaching. In a few short weeks, I experienced the shift from meeting requirements for our agricultural education courses at the university to taking over the complete responsibilities of a veteran agriculture teacher! All of a sudden, I was responsible for the FFA, SAE program, facilities operation and management, and getting ready for the classroom and laboratory instruction.

Despite the typical feelings of isolation and loneliness, I taught for nearly a half a decade with limited assistance and guidance from any veteran agriculture or academic educators. However, I always looked forward to the annual visits of the regional and state agricultural education supervisors. Not unlike me, few of my cohorts experienced the guidance of a caring and effective veteran teacher. I always wondered what would have happened to my cohorts if left teaching after a year or two had they received more assistance and support from an effective mentor?

What is a Mentor?

Peterson (1989) described a mentor as a loyal friend, confidant and adviser, teacher, guide, coach, role model, patron and/or encourager. Odell (1980) described a mentor as an older, more experienced person who is committed to helping a less experienced person become prepared for many aspects of life. Inherent in these descriptions is the notion that becoming a fully competent teacher is a lifelong process that can be facilitated by a mentor in the early stages of development.

The use of properly prepared mentors in carefully designed mentorship programs has become one effective strategy for inducing new teachers into the agricultural education profession. Mentoring programs have been adopted by many businesses and industries with the hope of retaining contributing employees and clients.

What is a Mentoring Program?

Propriety designed mentoring programs bring together trained mentors and mentees (beginning teachers) or protégés, because: (a) beginning teachers need support and continuing staff development to succeed; (b) mentoring benefits the mentees, mentors and schools; and (c) mentoring is a successful institutional strategy (Newcomb, 1988). As you read the articles in this issue, you will note that mentors, mentees and students experience the benefits of quality mentorship programs. Successful mentorship programs often lead to greater enjoyment as beginning and veteran agricultural educators and FFA advisors. Hopefully this will lead to greater satisfaction and retention of agricultural educators.

What Can Beginning Agricultural Educators Receive from Mentors?

Considering the limited amount of time available to complete all the tasks of teaching agriculture, what support can beginning agricultural educators receive through involvement in a somewhat time-consuming, quality mentorship program? A brief overview of some of the benefits received by beginning teachers follows (Warring, 1991; Acton and Gall, 1992; Davis, 1992). A more detailed summary of benefits experienced by agricultural educators is detailed in articles in this issue.

Benefits of Mentoring

• Collaborative problem solving—beginning teachers have the opportunity to talk with caring professionals about new and emerging problems.
• Emotional support—mentors are often better able to list and offer support than the spouse, friends or family members of the beginning teacher since mentors more readily understand the challenges and joys of the agriculture teacher's position.
• Demonstration/modeling—after visiting with their mentors, beginning teachers can observe their mentor behaviors, practices and attitudes as they teach and interact with students, colleagues and administrators.

As a result, beginning teachers can systematically incorporate appropriate strategies to enhance their instruction and advisement of the FFA and SAE programs.

• Motivation and encouragement—effective mentors provide beginning agricultural educators with appropriate encouragement, recognition and motivation to persevere. Experienced teachers can often help beginning teachers more realistically view their daily challenges and opportunities.

What are the benefits of mentorship programs for dealing with their four most frequently reported problems? In order, the problems are: (a) classroom discipline, (b) strategies for motivating students, (c) dealing with individual differences of students, and (d) assessing student work. Mentors can also assist beginning agricultural educators in securing teaching and FFA resources and identifying effective personal strategies and techniques.

What Do Mentors Get Out of Their Involvement?

As one veteran agriculture teacher recently stated, "I'm not in it for the money!" Dedicated mentors invest a considerable amount of time with the hope of making a contribution to the success of beginning teachers.

The roles and responsibilities of a mentor (experienced agriculture instructor) when working with beginning agriculture instructors in a formalized mentorship program include, but are not limited to:

• Developing a relationship with the beginning instructor;
• Counseling and moral support;
• Providing coaching;
• Providing assistance for student evaluation and assignment grading;
• Helping with curriculum and lesson planning;
• Providing feedback on teaching.

No amount of money can replace the satisfaction many mentors feel when their mentees succeed in their chosen profession!

If you are a beginning teacher looking for a mentor, or if you are an experienced agricultural educator wondering if you should be a mentor, consider the following descriptions of an effective mentor:

• Committed to the agricultural education profession;
• Excellent classroom educator;
• Interested in working with a beginning agriculture educator;
• Interested in reading about and completing training to enhance teaching and mentoring skills.

QUALITIES, SKILLS AND ABILITIES OF EFFECTIVE MENTORS

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By T.W. Jeff Jeffery

Jeff is an agricultural mechanics teacher at Santa Maria High School, Santa Maria, CA.

The critical responsibility of training student teachers lies foremost with the cooperating teacher. The student teaching period is very important, the last stroke on the wheel of their training. As we work with student teachers we must keep in perspective the influence we wield on them and their future as an effective agriculturist teacher.

Working with student teachers as a cooperating teacher over the last 30 years has been challenging and rewarding. The agricultural education department of California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, has illustrated in my cooperating teacher training. Each student teacher is first evaluated on his/her potential in the classroom. Assigning their first class is significant; a class in which they will have some degree of success is very important. The student teaching site should be cooperative, have the facilities and equipment designated exclusively for the agriculture department, and a supportive administration.

To make the student teachers feel comfortable and become a part of the teaching staff it is necessary to:

1. Have the proper teaching credentials in place, fulfill district and state requirements to teach.
2. Have their own mailbox, e-mail and school fax number.
3. Have their own keys, teach them where they go and their responsibilities.
4. Be introduced to staff, principals, superintendents, secretaries, district staff, grounds, maintenance and transportation staff.
5. Introduce them to district forms, channels of procedure and phone rules.
6. Have their own notebook that includes district calendars, grading periods, school rules and procedures.
7. Give them a "windshield" tour of the area; introduce them to farmers, business people, agriculture advisory council members, SAIE programs and work experience sites.
8. Show them all areas in your agriculture department, rooms, storage, equipment and supplies.
9. Walk them through the total school, business office, counselors, nurse, principal, student supports, services, make them aware of what part they play in the bigger picture.
10. Assignments—direct them to complete tasks from cooperating college or university.

To help the student teacher succeed in the classroom:
1. Assign the student teacher his/her first class, go over curriculum and lesson plans. Have them write their own lesson plans instead of using the cooperating teacher's plans. Teach them that knowing the subject area well before stepping into the classroom leads to success.
2. Help them arrange the classroom for the first area of teaching; go over lesson plans, necessary supplies and equipment they require. Make every Monday or Tuesday record book day, do not overwhelm them with non-essential data, this will come as they advance.
3. For the first 10 days, sit and evaluate the student teacher. Do not leave. Tell students you can only assist them during an activity session. Never correct a student teacher during a lesson or in front of students, back them up.
4. Teach them discipline procedures, forms, student parent calls and conferences.
5. Student teachers need to make the students aware that they are concerned with their learning, feelings, ideas, hobbies and interests. They must first build confidence in themselves from students and form a common bond such as sports, principles, ideas, feelings and actions. They need to develop likeable characteristics and expressions towards students. They will return this.
6. It is very meaningful to make lessons real by relating to students' daily lives. Lessons need good anticipatory sets, stated objectives, purposes and presentations. It is very important to give students a reason why they should be doing something and get them started in the right direction.
7. Lead the class, don't do anything to the student teacher for you don't want done to you including shouting, whistles, bullying, and verbal "come-backs." When you learn to relax around the students, improved learning takes place.
8. Give your student teacher strength in their beliefs. Support them and compliment them, even if you know what they are doing is not quite correct. They will build their confidence and leadership as you build your FFA students. They may not make the greatest teacher, but you had better get in there and make them the finest you can because you are all they have.
9. Cooperating teachers need to stay out of the classroom after the student teacher has taken over the class.
10. The cooperating teacher's responsibility is to help the student teacher reach success. Frustration leads to failure; you must assist them in overcoming this feeling.
11. Help them learn proper discipline protocol.
12. Have them teach a full load for 2-4 weeks to feel what it's like to be a full-time instructor. Drop lesson plans after a few weeks and add a topic to a unit or weekly schedule.

Out-of-classroom responsibilities are also important:
1. Have them observe other teachers in your department and from other subject areas.
2. Help them learn to talk with parents or others; listen rather than criticizing. Its important not to be a "goody." Set a good example.
3. Share ideas about education, different techniques and teaching methods to use in the classroom.
4. It's important to learn how to "work" people, but not be arrogant as you have to deal with many different types of people. These people are an important part of your program.
5. Responsibility of accepting a task and completing the assignment.
6. Rely and lean on the cooperative teacher as you progress, this will help you develop faster towards becoming an effective teacher in the classroom.
7. Remember that agricultural education is a team player effort whether in the classroom, with staff or community, in the office or with your state or sectional/regional agricultural education organization.
8. Show your student teacher how to do everything: SAIE visits, home visits, forms, applications, (you can do one and they can do one to learn), staff responsibility form (give them a blank one to fill out on their own), budgets (general, VEA, Incentive Grant, FFA, booster club, etc.).
10. Be responsible in maintaining a clean classroom or shop. Keep vehicle and equipment clean and in safe working order.

11. Forms/procedures:
   - Bus and transportation/Field trips
   - Work orders
   - Use of school property forms
   - Injury/Worker's Compensation Forms
   - Discipline forms/referrals/expulsion
   - 911
12. Classified staff:
   - Importance
   - Assistance
   - Giving/gaining respect

13. Professional:
   - Sectional/Regional/State
   - Participation/offer

14. Thank you and Conduct:
   - Sample letter formats
   - Thank you letters/ correspondence

15. A clean desk and work area:
   - Clean every day
   - Make a "To Do" list of next day's jobs, don't feel bad if something is on the list for 10 days or more, JUST DO IT!

16. Have them start 1 1/2 hours before class. This is a helpful key to classroom management and success. Also, make sure they have time to live; an occasional Saturday, Sunday or evening off.

Conclusion

Never lose sight of the reality of your obligation in training this student to develop into an effective classroom teacher. Our commitment and professionalism are essential. We must be tactful but demanding. We must include and respect them, be truthful and supportive. They are looking for guidance and encouragement, they are not our gophers. We can do this only if we put ourselves in the perspective of the student teacher. They are real people trying to learn to cope with this massive job we call agricultural education. You should give them a letter of recommendation that reflects the positive outlook of them becoming a successful teacher.

From them, we may also learn new ideas and principles of education, computer skills, distance education and other changes that will make us better teachers in and out of the classroom. As legislation changes regarding teacher credentials, we must be alert and clarify those changes so we can better serve our prospective teachers. We should join with the colleges and universities in seeing that together we successfully help these young folks in our chosen agricultural education profession.
We Stand Upon the Shoulders of Giants!

By Gary S. Straquaddine and Rebecca P. Rehm

It is our purpose to examine this all-important mentoring relationship as it can assist the success of any agriculture instructor. Here we speak of an experienced teacher serving as a mentor to the beginning or newly experienced teacher. This unique process, sometimes aligned through organized programs, sometimes through informal association, has been demonstrated to improve teacher effectiveness and provide greater career satisfaction (Lloyd and Redick, 1991). The mentoring process is a viable method to enhance teaching, save careers, and keep the enthusiasm for teaching necessary for student success. Mentoring works if you allow it to take shape and form in building a relationship of mutual trust. One teacher works to guide another through the triumphs and tribulations of teaching.

"We speak of the mentoring core of education."

A Formal and Informal Process

Understanding the mentoring process can begin with a definition of terms. The first setting for the mentoring construct comes from the Greeks. In early mythology, a mentor was defined as the friend to whom Odysseus, when setting out for Troy, entrusted the care of his house and the education of Telemachus. The "friend," was seen as wise and faithful counselor or mentor. In the Bible sense, the term "shepherding" is used to define a similar concept, for providing the care and guidance of others.

Today, educational systems across the country employ formal and informal mentoring programs. Scene, like the Alaska's Mentor Teacher program, allow an elite corps of teachers to respond to teachers' calls for assistance in the ever-changing applied technology work environment (Sommell, 1991). Yet, the bulk of mentorship occurs through the informal alignment of master teacher and novice. Fortunately, the majority of these programs are successful because of the relationships that are developed and nurtured.

The Role of Mentoring Programs

A number of teacher preparation models call for continued instruction, especially in the first three years of teaching (Cruickshank, 1984). Because teacher preparation programs often realize the limitations of time and reality in preparing teachers, it is therefore not unlikely that teachers in the first three years of instruction will be required to continue their learning through workshops or graduate courses. Unfortunately, the neophytes are often taken away from their home school environments to participate in activities that appear to be held separate from their realities (and problems). Yet, isolated teacher development is likely to have relatively little impact on improved practice (Sanders and Schwab, 1980). The need is for connection to the home school, the issues of the day, the curriculum offered and theme of the community. To bring forth the non-threatening solution of problems, based upon the weathered experiences of those who have traveled the road to teacher success, a mentoring system can and should be implemented.

It is the informal mentoring systems employed throughout the schools of America that appear to bring unsung accolades of success. The beginning teacher is often overwhelmed with managing the learning environment, school administrators, community interactions, and personal-family issues. To balance all these variables requires an understanding of the goals, professional priorities, and guidance from those who have earned the wishes to become a mentoring capacity. The learned guidance of a mentor does not come because of an administrative assistant through a specially designed program. A mentor earns this distinction.

Requirements of a Mentor

Many desirable characteristics can be identified in describing a mentor. The mentoring programs must begin with mutual respect. The mentoring teacher must seek to remember back to the daily stresses earlier in their teaching career and place their comments in the perspective of what the beginning teacher can realistically accomplish. Similarly, the beginning teacher needs to have a high degree of respect for the mentoring teacher, seeing this as a model and as someone they would choose to emulate. The beginning teacher needs to value the suggestions and recommendations offered. Without mutual respect, the best planned mentoring programs are doomed to failure.

Along these same lines, the mentoring teacher must "walk their talk." Actions speak louder than words. An effective mentor is not one who returns, "Do as I say, not as I do." The mentor must show all their actions to be genuine. Their actions must carry over to the beginning teacher. A beginning teacher's confidence in a mentoring teacher can be easily damaged by actions contrary to spoken beliefs.

The beginning teacher needs to know the mentoring teacher will hold in confidence the fears and concerns discussed and sometimes demonstrated by the beginning teacher. Knowing that one has the open ear and closed mouth of another allows for the building of the trust needed to progress. Mentoring teachers also need to exchange stories from their earlier days of grasping around the teaching process in development of the techniques they now use successfully. Beginning teachers need to learn from their mentor experiences who are scared of parent-teacher conferences, advising the EPA chapter, or preparing for the official assessment visit by a school administrator. It is important our mentoring teachers remember back to those earlier days and share these memories with the beginning teacher. This will allow the beginning teacher to see that they are not the only ones ever to have such issues in their teaching career.

"We stand upon the shoulders of giants—the many men and women of the teaching profession who came before us and who so gladly gave of themselves, shared their experience, strength and hope."

Finally, the mentoring teacher must be willing to serve in a non-judgmental capacity. The beginning teacher can benefit best in the mentoring relationship when they realize they are not being evaluated. This is not to say that the mentoring teacher will never venture criticism of certain beliefs and practices the beginning teacher as they state. A beginning teacher's confidence in a mentoring teacher can be easily damaged by actions contrary to spoken beliefs.

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The beginning teacher needs to swallow all that self-induced pride. A beginning teacher, regardless of teacher education program, is not as prepared to teach as a master. The mentoring teacher can most easily work with a beginning teacher that is proud of their university training, but still humble enough to learn. A beginning teacher needs open mindedness and willingness. The open mind will allow for the ideas to sift into the teaching consciousness, as recommended by the mentor. The willingness is a call for action. All the open mindedness in the world will stand as unrealized potential without the action of willingness. Try out those new ideas in teaching, managing students, working with your community and acknowledging the role of your personal/family life.

Rewards of the Mentoring Process

The beginning teacher can benefit from the mentoring process. With an open mind and willingness to try new techniques, the beginning teacher can take the suggestions of the experienced mentor as guide posts along the way of successful teaching.

"We stand up on the shoulders of giants—the many men and women of the teaching profession who came before us and who so gladly gave of themselves, shared their experience, strength and hope."

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Mentoring From So Many...

By B. B. Foster

Dr. Foster is an assistant professor of agricultural education, University of Arizona, Tucson.

Where Would I Be Today Without My Mentors?

Mentors come in all shapes and sizes. Often they are not even recognized by those they help. My mentors have shaped my life through acts of kindness, support and direction. Without mentors, I would have never begun teaching, and more importantly, I never would have continued teaching.

In the Beginning...

Ira Black, area supervisor, and Roger Arnold, teacher educator, encouraged me to become an agriculture teacher. Even though I was not allowed to take it in high school. It seemed ludicrous to me that I would be allowed to enter a field from which I had been barred as a teenager. Fortunately, Mr. Black and Dr. Arnold both had more vision than I did and knew that the time was right and the need was growing for female teachers.

Bobby Waters, Max Bellard, Burch Milford and Doug Saltier (all agriculture teachers in the area) further proved the need for mentors. Everyone there made me feel at home—James White’s smile and Jim Key’s friendliness. We were special, almost invisible minions that touched my career and influenced the direction of my life. Sometimes people are not accustomed to helping everyone around them; they don’t even consider that they are mentors—it’s simply the way things are done.

Eddy Finley made me feel like I was the best in everything I tried. Consequently, if I didn’t feel as if I had done my best, I worked even harder to do so. The ever-gruff and impertinent Jack Pitrick made me feel like I had accomplished something simply by existing. He respected all of my tech-
niques (such as educational games and quality stick-ups) since my time at Oklahoma State. Bill Weeks faithfully kept me informed of possible position openings until I found my niche at the University of Arizona. "Jerry was mentor, father and inspiration rolled up into one. His capable and collected sure gave me a model toward which to aspire."

So When Does The Need For Mentors End?

Today, Dave Cox skillfully encourages my uniqueness, while keeping me on track with routine business. Glen Miller provides me with guidance through agricultural mechanics applications, and Jack Eillot lifts my spirits when things seem unreasonable.

Is there an end to mentoring? Are mentors like angels arriving just when you need them? I think not. I have had an ex-
ceptional one or two filled with wonderful people who were willing to share their knowledge and insight with me. So what is my responsibility as a professional and as a human being? Jerry Hawkins told me one time that the best way to do something could be a help for those who come after me. Hawkins told me that the best way to honor Hawkins was to be helpful to those who come after me.

There is a way to resolve our mistakes. The ability to listen is a gift. Those of us not naturally gifted in this area would be wise to develop the skill. Many times mentoring can be as simple as asking someone for help. If you don’t have problems, find one who does and help them.

The Gift of Time...

Perhaps the greatest gift we have to give as mentors is the gift of time. In his book, "John Randolph of Roanoke," William Cabell Bruce quotes John Randolph as saying, "Time is at once the most valuable and the most perishable of all our possessions." If we do not accept our responsibility toward the next generation, of what value will our time have been? As we all run through life roosting deadlines, write articles for magazines, carry out research efforts, preparing for classes, or getting ready for state competitive events, could we ever find time for those beginning teachers? We must carve out a corner in which to share with them our wisdom and folly. Because if we don’t, our experiences will tarnish, fade and the reality of our accomplishments will be lost.

Success is a matter of adjusting one’s efforts to obstacles and one’s abilities to a service needed by others. Most people think of it in terms of getting. Success begins in terms of giving.99

By —Henry Ford
A Mentoring Program That is Coming Into Its Own!

The annual MVAIA mentorship program is currently initiated during the summer conference with a special luncheon for all beginning teachers. The program includes a slate of agricultural educators with varying years of teaching experience who offer many ideas for a successful career. Speakers include a second-year teacher, a three- to four-year veteran, the Outstanding Beginning Teacher of the Year award winner, a ten-year veteran, and an instructor with more than 20 years of experience.

After the convention, the MVAIA vice president works with the regional directors and Dr. Roland Peterson from the University of Minnesota to identify and support mentors and their new teachers. The level of mentoring activities has varied. In some cases, lifelong professional and personal relationships have been established as a result of effective mentoring activities. In other cases, the results have been less noteworthy. However, regardless of the level of involvement, mentors and beginning teachers have expressed the value of the activities.

Benefits of the MVAIA Beginning Teachers Mentoring Program

• Beginning teachers have a professional educator who they know will listen and can understand what they are experiencing.
• Beginning teachers have a local source for new ideas about teaching concerns and practices.
• A formal mentor knows something about the politics of the local communities and schools.
• Beginning teachers obtain information regarding where and how to obtain teaching resources from the mentors.
• Beginning teachers have a local source of information and advice for advising the FFA chapter.

Elements of a Mentorship Program

Not unlike other mentoring programs, the MVAIA program has room for improvement. What can be done to improve and/or re-establish your mentoring program? Consider using the following organizational elements for guiding your program (DeBell, 1992):

• Implement effective pre-planning of the mentorship program.
• Gain administrative support for the project.
• Effectively match mentors and beginning teachers.
• Establish and clearly communicate the roles of all participants. Provide training for the mentor teachers. Consider a special "mentoring" summer session at your association's summer conferences to prepare your mentor teachers.
• Establish cooperation between teachers and administrators.
• Project coordinators must provide effective leadership to ensure the success of the program.
• Involves previous mentors and beginning teachers whenever possible.
• Publicize the project in the association and local communities.

By Kerry Lindgren & Richard M. Joerger

We Stand Upon the Shoulders of Giants, continued from page 9

As mentors we, too, can improve our teaching. We mentor best that which we need to know. By sharing our beliefs and experiences, mentoring teachers examine their own teaching processes. Such an inventory taking will expose the valuable for keeping while discarding the unnecessary. This allows the mentoring teacher to become more aware of their own teaching process.

Mentoring is payment for those who took us to any length to improve our teaching earlier in our careers. Whether we participated in a formal mentoring process or served as a good listening ear to a struggling teacher, mentoring has affected all teachers. Some serve to give back what they learned, as a sense of duty to this profession.

To conclude, the beginning teacher has always been available that require a little organization and some effort in the commitment to professional growth. For the mentoring teacher we conclude with the words of Louis Pasteur (1822-955): "Greatest is the joy of a teacher whose students become masters."

References

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Robert Terry Jr. Named AAAE Outstanding Young Agricultural Educator

This information was supplied by Dr. Vernon Luttt, University of Nevada, Reno, committee chair for this award. Congratulations, Dr. Terry.

Dr. Martin B. McMillion

Martin McMillion retired October 1, 1996, from the agricultural education faculty at Virginia Tech. He received degrees from West Virginia University, Pennsylvania State University and the University of Illinois. He spent agriculture at the secondary level in West Virginia and Pennsylvania.

McMillion served as a teacher educator and faculty member at the University of Illinois and Virginia Tech. He was editor of The Agricultural Education Magazine from 1973-1977. He also served on The Magazine's editorial board. In addition, Martin was a member of the editorial board for the Journal of AAEA.

McMillion was an active member of the Alpha Tau Alpha. He served as ATA's National Secretary and National Vice President. McMillion helped establish the Virginia Tech chapter of ATA and served as its advisor for many years.

McMillion's career emphasized work in curricular, supervised agricultural experience, Young Farmers and international agriculture. He leaves a body of work that includes numerous publications and presentations that have touched hundreds of students. He was granted emeritus status by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors on November 11, 1996.

Dr. Thomas A. Hoerner

Dr. Thomas A. Hoerner retired from Iowa State University in 1992, completing a distinguished career in agricultural education and agricultural engineering. He received his B.S. in 1957, M.S. in 1965 and Ph.D. in 1965 from Iowa State University.

Hoerner spent two years at Penn State University and 29 years teaching at Iowa State University. He is a national leader in agricultural mechanization teacher education. Hoerner supervised more than 100 teaching assistants, many serving in positions similar to his at universities across the country.

Hoerner was instrumental in establishing the National FFA Agricultural Mechanics Career Development Event and serves as the chief supervisor. He recently completed a publication highlighting the 25th anniversary of the competition. Hoerner received many awards throughout his career including: the Iowa Legislative Award for Teaching Excellence, Iowa FFA Distinguished Service Award, AMOCO Outstanding Teaching Award in the College of Agriculture, NASA Distinguished Service to Agriculture for Region III and the Honorary American Farmer Degree.

Dr. Edgar A. Persons

Edgar A. Persons officially retired from his position as professor and coordinator of agricultural education at the University of Minnesota on December 31, 1996.

Persons career at the University of Minnesota spans 52 years. He has completed 41 1/2 years in agricultural education. He received his B.S., M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Minnesota in 1953, 1965 and 1966, respectively.

Persons has made an enormous contribution to agricultural education in the state of Minnesota, in the Central Region, across the U.S.A., and in numerous countries around the world. He has led the nation in farm business management education.

Persons served as head of agricultural education at the University of Minnesota for 12 years. His leaving is a huge loss to the profession. We wish him the best in retirement. He now begins a new career as a cattle rancher in western Minnesota. Thank you, Dr. Ed, for your years of excellence and insightful leadership. You will be missed more than you will ever know.

Dr. Jack W. Pritchard

Jack W. Pritchard retired May 31, 1996, from the Department of Agricultural Communications and 4-H Youth Development, Oklahoma State University. Pritchard attained the rank of professor and was director of student teaching for 27 years. During his tenure, more than 1,000 students completed their student teaching under his supervision.

Pritchard received numerous teaching awards and made major contributions in developing leadership and methods of teaching courses. His boundless energy and enthusiasm over the years have motivated and inspire many students to become agriculture teachers.

Beyond his university contributions, Pritchard has contributed to the community through work with rural water districts and electrical cooperatives in Oklahoma. He is an avid runner and has distinguished himself in the senior Olympics in Oklahoma and Kansas.

Donald R. Herring Named AAAE Outstanding Agricultural Educator

Editor's Note: The following information was supplied by Dr. David Hovell of the University of New Hampshire, committee chair for this award. Congratulations, Dr. Herring.

Dr. Don Herring has been a member of the Department of Agricultural Education faculty at Texas A & M University for 27 years. He has distinguished himself with excellence in teaching, research, service and community activities. The numerous teaching, service and research awards and honors he has attained during his career underscore the tremendous impact he has had on the lives of the people with whom he works.

His faculty co-workers and students alike benefit from his talents, skills and experiences. He has dedicated his professional life to the growth and development of agricultural education and has made an unmistakably positive impact on our profession. He has been an active member of the American Association for Agricultural Education and has made significant contributions to the profession.

Dr. Herring has clearly earned the Russell Guin Outstanding Agricultural Educator Award.

Shinn, Barrick Receive AAAE Fellow Awards

Editor's Note: The following information was supplied by Dr. Dennis Scarbrough of Pennsylvania State University, committee chair for this award. Congratulations, Dr. Shinn and Dr. Barrick.

Dr. Glen C. Shinn

Dr. Shinn is professor and head of the Department of Agricultural Education at Texas A & M University in College Station.

Shinn has shown numerous examples of professional achievement in agricultural education. He has been a role model for what teachers should be. He constantly involves students in classroom instruction, encourages understanding of the concepts behind a practice, and uses examples and "what if" statements to actively engage students. The research Shinn conducts is timely and deals with real issues, and he conducts investigations that are ongoing and are used to address the needs of the profession. The service he provides to the profession extends beyond his department to the nation. He has served as president of AAAE, NAERMT chair and as a member committee for theAVA Agriculture Division Policy Committee.

The leadership demonstrated by Shinn is also evident. He was rated third among 49 department heads at Clemson University. He continually encourages people who work with him to excel and work toward their goals. As AAAE president, Shinn implemented collaborative work groups of programs on targeted, priority concerns for the profession.

Dr. R. Kirby Barrick

Dr. Barrick is the associate dean and director of the Office of Academic Programs and a professor in the Department of Human and Community Development at the University of Illinois.

Professional achievements in agricultural education are demonstrated by Dr. Barrick in a variety of ways. He has distinguished himself with excellence in teaching at the high school, extension system and university levels. He has earned teaching awards from AAAE, CTA-EU, the College and Gamma Sigma Delta. His research excellence is well documented by his awards for Outstanding Journal Articles and awards for Outstanding Young Member of AAAE.

...continued on page 16
Service to the profession has also been a vital part of Dr. Barrick's career as demonstrated by his honors from Alpha Gamma Rho, FFA, FFA Alumni and Young Farmers. His service activities have been notable across the nation for his work on the national FFA BOAC program upgrades. His leadership ability has been demonstrated in his rapid advance to college-wide administrative duties at the University of Illinois. He has served his professional organizations with his leadership skills and worked with local college and community organizations.

Many times, beginning teachers take over programs only a few days during the summer before school starts, and have many demands on their time with teacher conferences, fairs, etc., that it leaves these beginning teachers with very little time to organize. Veteran teachers, including teacher educators and state supervisors, would proactively advise and assist these young teachers to begin their career. This oversight and advice would continue on a scheduled training line throughout, at least, the first two years. I do not, at this time, have any way of paying veteran teachers for this additional duty and/or responsibility. I will not suggest sources of funds because I firmly believe that this is a responsibility of the profession and the profession within, and therefore does not need to be funded.

Some veteran teachers say that they are available whenever a beginning teacher asks for assistance, but it has been my experience that most beginning teachers, and that is why they are beginning teachers, are not aware when they need assistance. What does a beginning teacher, without any experience, use to judge their progress or their situation? Many would also suggest that veteran teachers are most willing to offer advice and assistance when asked. Again I say, how do most young teachers recognize situations in which they need advice and assistance?

This is also, some would suggest that it is the local school district's responsibility for assisting and advising beginning teachers. While I would agree with that contention, I also suggest that veteran professionals in agricultural education could provide more and better advice and assistance to beginning agriculture teachers than could any school administrator who does not have an agricultural education background.

It is my considered opinion that the profession has truly arrived as a profession, when it not only enrolls beginning teachers as members of the profession, but also offers and delivers significant advice and assistance to those beginning teachers. As veteran members of our profession, we should not wait until we are asked, assigned or paid for providing advice and assistance to our younger members. This should be an ongoing program. This should also be one of the benefits that our profession's professional organizations offer their younger members. I would submit that this may be the most useful benefit any beginning agriculture teacher could derive from immediately joining our professional associations.

Agricultural education, as a discipline, was an early provider of teacher induction. Much of this program centered around activities of teacher education and state supervision. It is my experience that many of the other vocational and academic disciplines have modeled agricultural education's induction strategies. Agricultural education was a leader and an innovator in this activity. Now is the time for agricultural education to also be a leader and innovator in terms of mentoring beginning teachers. If we are successful in carrying this forward, it will only add stature to our profession.

References


Roland Peterson, Mentoring (Irvine, CA: University of California at Irvine, 1989).


Considering the Apparent Benefits of Mentoring, How Can the Profession Respond?

After briefly considering the apparent benefits and activities associated with effective mentoring, what should the agricultural education profession be doing to promote wider use of mentoring programs? I believe the following suggestions can initiate some activities
Mentoring...The Profession Assumes a Greater Role in Teacher Preparation

By Roland Peterson

The Challenge

Preparing agriculture teachers has become a complex challenge for most teacher education programs. More university graduation requirements, demands by many universities for more efficiency in programs (class sizes of at least 15-20 ... clearly noted and continuing. Graduates vary in background and training load...), increases in the foundations of education course requirements, changing state licensure requirements, a constantly changing field of practice, and schools with great student diversity make planning teacher education programs a real challenge.

Today it is appropriate and necessary for agricultural education programs to continually change at the middle and senior high school levels. Consequently, teachers entering the profession must have a strong background in mathematics; in the physical and biological sciences in the agricultural sciences which includes plant science, animal science, natural resource science and engineering technology; plus agricultural business and economics concepts. They must also have some understanding of the humanities, social sciences, citizenship, an international perspective, and a cultural diversity perspective. Finally, prospective beginning teachers must have a solid background in teacher preparation.

The Interstate New Teacher Support Consortium (INTSC) for teacher performance requirements are being framed in Minnesota and numerous other states which will provide the basis for licensure/certification. These standards include demonstrated competence and evidence in (1) subject matter, (2) student learning, (3) diverse learning, (4) instructional strategies, (5) learning environment, (6) communication, (7) planning instruction, (8) assessment, (9) reflection and professional development, and (10) collaboration, ethics and relationships.

This emerging criteria becomes an enormous challenge for the development of teachers, especially undergraduates. It is also becoming evident, at least in some states, that before a teacher is granted a license they will be expected to have a one-year residency. Who will monitor the residency? Who will be responsible for determining whether a graduate teacher is granted a license and allowed to become an agriculture teacher? It would appear the profession must begin to function in partnership with teacher education.

The role of experienced agriculture teachers in preparing new teachers has existed for decades. They have served a key role as supervising teachers during the student teaching experience. However, it is also clear that a 10-week, a semester or even a year-long student teaching experience may not be a sufficient standard to determine who should be awarded the privilege of teaching as a career. Classrooms have become extremely complex. The pressures and demands on teachers continually increase. Graduates can become an integral part of the curriculum, collaborate with colleagues, bring the content of the natural and managed environments systems (agriculture and natural resources) into the total school setting, teaching all students about agriculture and its impact on humankind, planning meaningful school-to-work experiences, developing quality experiences for PFA—all are essential tasks to expect from a beginning teacher.

The Opportunity

With all of the expectations facing a beginning teacher, experienced agriculture educators must become an integral part of the process in bringing new teachers into the profession. Several years ago when Dr. George Wardlow (University of Arkansas) was a college at the University of Minnesota, we devised a mentoring plan which has functioned to some extent since its inception. This plan will likely have to become an integral part of the Minnesota teacher preparation program. The plan required all teachers experiencing to participate in a mentoring program to complete a course on mentoring.

Mentoring was a key to this plan. If one reviews the literature on mentoring, a number of definitions or commonly accepted meanings emerge. Redmond (1990, p. 188) defined mentoring as "the act of providing wise and friendly counsel." Knoll and McGovern (1986, p. 40) stated that a mentor is "an individual who actively participates in the mentee's professional development." Clawson (1985) viewed mentoring as functioning in several roles including: coach, positive role model, developer of talent, origin of doors, protector, sponsor and successful leader. Allkmaan (1986, p. 45) defined mentoring as "a relationship in which a person of greater rank or expert teacher, counsels, guides and develops a novice for organization or profession." From this review, mentoring appears to involve role modeling, encouragement and counseling.

In the mentoring plan instituted in Minnesota, an experienced agriculture teacher located close to the beginning teacher was assigned to serve as a year-long mentor for the novice teacher. Mentors were expected to have formal contact (either in person or on the phone) every week for the entire year. The mentor was also expected to observe the mentee teaching at least once each quarter. In addition, the beginning teacher was enrolled in a beginning teacher's course which met 2-3 hours every 4-6 weeks during the entire school year. The mentor was also expected to attend these sessions.

At the end of the school year, a final assessment was planned which was patterned after a typical oral exam. The mentor, the beginning teacher, the beginning teacher's principal, and the university professor formed the final assessment team. The beginning teacher was expected to review the year of the practice. The major phases of the beginning teacher's work were examined. At the close of the two-hour session, the beginning teacher was asked to leave the session. The committee then spent time discussing whether the beginning teacher should be encouraged to continue as a teacher. If the recommendation was to continue, areas needing further development were outlined.

The Outcome

Did the mentoring program work? What problems seemed to emerge? The program worked fairly well. I am confident those who experienced the final assessment found it a very rewarding but also somewhat threatening experience.

From our experience, it is evident that a successful mentoring program for beginning teachers requires (1) experienced teachers be prepared for the role of a mentor, (2) experienced teachers make a genuine commitment to function as a mentor, (3) resources from the state to secure the experienced teachers' time plus an incentive to carry the responsibility, (4) a teacher education program plan which provides for beginning teachers and is directly tied to the mentoring program so that all efforts are coordinated (a complete mentoring program needs to have a coordinated plan), (5) experienced teachers who understand, agree with and support the philosophy of the teacher education program, and (6) a commitment from the school system, which must fully value and support the effort. It is my opinion, based on this limited experience, that a mentoring program for beginning teachers will not be successful if it is developed on a voluntary, extra-duty basis.

The Urgency

As agricultural education programs expand at the elementary, middle and secondary levels, teacher preparation programs will become a greater challenge. McGinn (1992, p. 375) stated, "the problem with middle level teacher preparation programs lies not in their poor design but in their scarcity and low enrollments. Elements essential for middle level teacher preparation programs include (1) a thorough knowledge of the nature and needs of early adolescents, (2) a study of middle school curriculum, instruction, (3) a broad academic background, including concentrations in at least two academic areas at the undergraduate level, (4) specialized methods and reading courses, and (3) early and continuing field experiences in good middle level settings."

This demand is clearly being reflected in additional teacher preparation requirements being written into licensure regulations. Can the agriculture preparation programs prepare graduates for this vast array of demands? Is it likely that a year of residency or a planned mentoring system as we have attempted to design will have to be implemented to assist beginning teachers' movement into the profession. As preparation demands increase, the nurturing process of an experienced teacher appears to be essential if we are to support beginning teachers in their professional development. The challenge is not futuristic, it is before the profession at this very moment.

References


Recognizing Excellence in Agricultural Education

The NVATA annually recognizes agriculture teachers for excellence in teaching through four major award programs. With exception of the Ideas Unlimited winners, each of the regional winners received transportation, lodging, a cash award and complimentary registration to attend the awards program which was held at the NVATA Convention, Dec. 4-7, 1996, in Cincinnati, Ohio. Ideas Unlimited Program recipients received a travel stipend to attend the annual convention.

NVATA Outstanding Agricultural Education Program Award

The Outstanding Agricultural Education Program Award recognizes the nation’s most successful programs. It highlights how agriculture teachers integrate English, mathematics and science basics into their instruction and use new technology to teach students. It recognizes the success of local teachers in preparing students for careers and lifelong learning.

Sponsored by the Case Corporation, the 1996 regional recipients are:

Region II: Willmar High School, Willmar, Minnesota
- Teachers: Doug Hanson, Neal Pearson, Val Aarnoveld, Dave Damhof, Scott Thaden
Region IV: Preble Shawnee High School, Camden, Ohio
- Teacher: Harold Niehaus
Region V: North Lenoir High School, LaGrange, North Carolina
- Teachers: John Moore, Michele Spencer, Reggie Jenkins
Region VI: Frederick High School, Frederick, Maryland
- Teachers: C. Douglas Haring, Edward Mayne, Teresa Stevens

NVATA Outstanding Agricultural Education Teacher Award

This award program recognizes active NVATA members who are conducting the highest quality agricultural education programs. It rewards them for their excellence, leadership and service to the profession. Award recipients must demonstrate how they are innovating agriculture education catalysts at all learning levels, and how they help all students prepare for careers and lifelong learning.

Sponsored by New Holland, Inc., the 1996 regional recipients are:

Region I: Ray Minut, Arwater, California
Region II: Ronnie Dukett, Hartfield, Arkansas
Region III: Linda Rist, Viborg, South Dakota
Region IV: Willard L. Haley, Eldon, Missouri
Region V: Blane Marable, Bishop, Georgia
Region VI: Paul L. Cunnings, Walton, West Virginia

NVATA Outstanding Young Member Award

College enrollment in agricultural education training programs is decreasing. Unless trained students enter and remain in the profession for several years, a shortage of qualified agriculture teachers will continue to exist. The Outstanding Young Member Award encourages young teachers to continue in the teaching profession, and recognizes innovative, aggressive young teachers who have an exceptional professional record, including participation in NVATA. Members who have completed at least three, but not more than five years of teaching experience are eligible to compete.

Sponsored by John Deere, the 1996 regional recipients are:

Region I: Mitch Coleman, Dayton, Oregon
Region II: Jim Allup, Robstown, Texas
Region III: Pamela Beilke-Koonen, Alden, Minnesota
Region IV: Tamara Belavek, Lapere, Michigan
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What Do Mentors Get Out of the Mentoring Deal?

By Richard M. Joeger, Fred Christiansen and Jim Summers

Dr. Joeger is an associate professor and director of teacher education; Utah State University, Logan, UT; Christiansen is an agriculture instructor, Bear River High School, Tremonton, UT, and Pfe Summers is an agriculture instructor, Westside High School, Dayton, UT.

Mentoring requires commitment and unconditional support for the complete development of the mentee, or protégé. Joe Kelly, a senior trainer for A.O. Smith Harvestore Products, once stated, "If you help enough people get what they need, you will never need to worry about having your needs met!"

Two mentor teachers that have lived by that message are Jim Summers, a twenty-one-year veteran agricultural educator from Bear River High School in Garland, Utah, and Fred Christiansen, a thirty-seven-year veteran agricultural educator from Westside High School in Dayton, Idaho, and Fred have supervised student teachers from Utah State University for more than twenty years and thirty years, respectively. The following comments reflect their experiences as supervisors and mentors of student teachers.

Q: Why have you served as a mentor and student teacher supervisor for so many years?

Jim: It provides me the opportunity to give something back to the profession. Many of my high school, university and fellow agriculture teachers and colleagues have invested a lot of trust and time in me over the years. As a mentor, I can develop new friendships and invest in our future agricultural educators as they go through their formative teaching experiences.

Fred: When I have student teachers in the department, I have the incentive to be on my best professional behavior! Quite simply, it makes a better teacher. I learn a lot from the student teachers as I watch them plan and perform their lesson and work with the FFA activities.

Over the years I have enjoyed attending special supervision seminars with student teachers supervisors to learn more about other programs and supervision practices. These seminars have also allowed me to share what I have learned as a supervisor.

Q: What have you personally received by serving as a mentor?

Jim: I receive the satisfaction of seeing a student teacher apply new technical and teaching knowledge and skills they have learned at the university. As a result, I am able to keep current with new information and ideas for improving my classes. Because of my involvement with the student teachers, I am also able to maintain ties with university personnel who help me obtain teaching and information resources needed throughout the year. Since I am the only agricultural teacher in the building, this is nice to have student teachers who can serve as a sounding board for some of my plans and concerns.

Fred: When I have student teachers in the department, I have the incentive to be on my best professional behavior! Quite simply, it makes a better teacher. I learn a lot from the student teachers as I watch them plan and perform their lesson and work with the FFA activities.

Over the years I have enjoyed attending special supervision seminars with other student teachers supervisors to learn more about other programs and supervision practices. These seminars have also allowed me to share what I have learned as a supervisor.

Q: What unique challenges have you encountered as a mentor?

Jim: The most challenging times have been when student teachers chose not to carry out strategies to correct the challenges they face in the classroom. I believe it is important for me to be readily available for the student teachers to help their concerns and challenges. However, the student teachers need to readily implement the strategies that will improve their instruction. Likewise, student teacher supervision or mentoring programs without an understanding of intended goals, objectives and related training create confusion and frustration. It is important for all parties to be on the same page when completing an effective program.

Fred: Student teachers who have difficulty cutting their close ties from the university staff during student teaching.

Each year Fred and Jim have given many of their hours helping new student teachers enter the profession with a successful student teaching experience. Student teachers request placement in their programs well ahead of their senior year due to the quality of supervision provided by these mentors. What a tribute!

The following are the answers to the questions published in the November-December 1996 issue of The Agricultural Education Magazine.

1. G. - 1 - Retired (The only ones left are for the first time on the list, the FFA). 2. G. - 2 - Wendling, The only one for the remaining. 3. C. - Swift's and Company provided pictures of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson to the FFA chapters and pictures of Roscoe T. Washington and H. O. Sayegh to MFA chapters. 4. D. - Locally. 5. F - John Dorey provided small silver places to both FFA and MFA chapters. 6. F - Locally. The recommendation was to have a stemmer staff in each. 7. C. - The owl is a symbol of death to many Native Americans. 8. F - This question was not answered at the conference. 9. E. - Henry Groselock was elected national parliamentarian of the FFA in 1936. 10. C. - The NFA secretary was installed at the bell of corns.
Learn the secrets of the top agricultural education programs in the nation.

"The Professor" — Important information and news from the USDE, The Council, the NVATA, and others will be featured in each issue. The current status of federal legislation affecting agricultural education, new USDA initiatives, opportunities for profession development, etc. will be featured. If one wants to know what’s happening in the profession, this will be a must-read column.

"Go to the Head of the Class" — This quiz will continue, but there will be an open invitation for others who may desire to submit a quiz.

Gary’s goal for *The Agricultural Education Magazine* is to be the voice for the agricultural education profession. In addition to articles designed to help agriculture teachers improve their programs, there will be professional news, humor and frank, open discussions of issues affecting the profession.

Gary Moore, a professor of agricultural and extension education at North Carolina State University, has been selected as editor-elect of *The Agricultural Education Magazine*. Moore teaches courses on FFA and SAE at the undergraduate level and courses in time management, effective teaching, and foundations of agricultural and extension education at the graduate level. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, he serves as administrative secretary of the North Carolina FFA Alumni Association, is secretary of the Agricultural Education Division of the American Vocational Association, national President of Alpha Tau Alpha and Historian for the American Association for Agricultural Education.

Gary plans to continue the design and layout improvements of *The Agricultural Education Magazine* started by the current editor, Dr. Lou E. Riehberg. The major changes will be in the addition of several new features inside *The Magazine*:

- "The Soapbox" — Members of the profession are encouraged to voice their thoughts and concerns about current issues in agricultural education. If something is on your mind, here is a place to express those thoughts, even if they might ruffle a few feathers.
- "Joe Scatterscreen See" — The late E. V. Woltz of Texas A & M wrote a series of short stories about a fictitious agriculture teacher, Joe Scatterscreen. Each story is hilarious, but contains nuggets of wisdom concerning the job of the agriculture teacher.
- "The Spotlight" — One outstanding agricultural education program will be featured in each issue of *The Magazine*. We'll
Agriscience Teacher or Teacher?

Earning Professional Respect from Your Peers

By William Jobas III

Most agriscience teachers are very busy professionals. While many teach more periods in a day than their academic counterparts, they are also advising the FFA chapter. This usually involves many hours of coaching, chaperoning and attending the numerous career development events and meetings held each year. Add to this list the opportunity/responsibility of working with parents, employers and students on SAEs, and you are going to wonder why I am suggesting that experienced agriscience teachers do more.

The suggestion to do more stems from the question, "What are you doing for the school, the students and the curriculum as part of the system as a whole?" Do other teachers, administrators and school board members know you as the one who landscapes the school, makes floral arrangements for school events, and fixes lawnmowers, or do they know you because you helped develop the new School-to-Work initiative, chaired one of the Standards Committees for the school's accreditation, or led a seminar/workshop on computer proficiency?

As we promote the feats and successes of our students and urge all students to achieve their best, are we asking the same of ourselves? We ask students to go beyond the bounds of the classroom and become more involved in extracurricular activities and agriculturally related work. Are you achieving your professional best by going beyond the bounds of your classroom and becoming involved in extracurricular activities and school-related events?

How can you become involved? The answer is all around you and the time is ripe to become involved in different activities.

Federal initiatives in School-to-Work are awarding grants to schools that can demonstrate how the school and business community will cooperate in student learning. Agriscience teachers are already involved through the SAE program and can offer wonderful suggestions on making this proposal a success. Get on the team of teachers, administrators and business people and develop a program that will help the students, school and your program.

Go further in your professional development activities by becoming involved in non-agricultural events. Most schools undergo an accreditation review every ten years and look for volunteers for the steering committee or for chairing one of the major committees. Earn professional respect by doing an excellent job while you learn about the whole system.

Other items you should consider include: participating in your school's teacher association as an officer or committee member, becoming a department head or curriculum advisor, volunteering for the school district's staff development committee, serving on the building project committee, initiating workshops for other teachers on student volunteers, computer programs (SAE and proficiency), peer learning (PALS), and community development projects (BOAC, Food for America).

The Time Question

The hesitation here exists when currently active agriscience teachers/FFA advisors think about additional time away from their spouse/family. Interestingly enough, many of these activities take up little additional time away from your spouse/family because the skills, knowledge and resources you already possess and use in your classroom and the FFA. I believe that being involved with non-agriculturally related school's activities elevates your teaching professionalism and the significance of your program.

An astute teacher educator once clarified for me, "You are an agriscience teacher, more notably you are a vocational education teacher, but above all, you are a teacher."

Being the professionals we were trained to be, agricultural educators do a wonderful job in the classroom, the laboratory, with the FFA, and with student SAEs. However, we all too often overlook the needs of the rest of the school and what our presence, knowledge and expertise can contribute.

Let us do things that show others what we, the teachers who are concerned with the school as a whole and all of its students, not just those who are involved in the agricultural education program.
As part of an effort to encourage entrepreneurship among young people, 10 students from across the country received National Agri-Entrepreneur Awards and $1,000 during a ceremony at the 69th National FFA Convention in Kansas City, Mo. In addition to the $1,000 winners' cash awards, each of the national winners' chapters received $500 with which to promote entrepreneurship locally.

The awards are part of the Agri-Entrepreneurship Education Program which is designed to recognize young people for their entrepreneurial efforts and increase the amount of entrepreneurial skills being taught in high schools across the country.

Dr. Marilyn Kourilsky, vice president of the Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership Inc., says, “We believe that the jobs of the future—which are key to self sufficiency—will come from creative entrepreneurs who find new products and new ways to serve customers. The Agri-Entrepreneurship Education Program will help us focus on the challenge of fostering entrepreneurship, personal growth, and self-sufficiency in our nation’s agriculture-oriented youth.”

1996 National Agri-Entrepreneurs

- Kyle Bailey, 19, of Millersburg, Indiana, owns and operates Kyle Bailey Horseshoeing serving primarily gaming and show horses
- J.D. Chambers, 18, of Greensboro, North Carolina, developed a vertical hydroponic planter and is marketing it to the educational community
- Melissa Gomes, 16, of Le Grand, California, owns and operates Big Tree Bunnies which produces breeding animals for meat and fur production
- Zachary Horn, 18, of Sullivan, Illinois, owns and operates Horn Mowing serving residential and commercial customers
- Jami Kaptein, 16, of Fallbrook, California, holds the reins for a multi-faceted business which offers home animal care services, horse-back riding lessons, horse exercising and training, and a model horse collectors club and brokerage service
- Brian Phelps, 19, of Milford Center, Ohio, owns and operates Phelps Feeds, a livestock feed business offering ration planning and balancing services in addition to feed sales
- Casey Sharber, 16, of Sapulpa, Oklahoma, owns and operates a water plant business; she sells plants wholesale to three nurseries in addition to individual retail sales
- Veronica Shippy, 18, of Capitola, California, owns and operates Forget-Me-Not Flowers, which specializes in fresh arrangements, and Twigs and Things, a dry arrangement business
- Andy Tygrett, 19, of Tipton, Iowa, owns and operates Andy's Prizewinning Gladiolus, a horticultural business specializing in top-quality gladiolus
- Mandie Koch Valentine, 18, of Custer City, Oklahoma, owns and operates Blue Ribbon Pets, which specializes in mice, hamsters, gerbils, rats and other rodents

Program Information

The Agri-Entrepreneurship Education Program is conducted by the National Council for Agricultural Education. This initiative is sponsored by and in partnership with the Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership Inc. at the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, Kansas City, Missouri, as a special project of the National FFA Foundation, Inc.

The Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership Inc. is part of the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation in Kansas City. The Foundation's vision is self-sufficient people in healthy communities. To accomplish this vision, the Foundation develops collaborative relationships with other organizations to work toward common goals. Due to agricultural education's long standing focus on youth development and self sufficiency, the partnership is a natural.

The National Council for Agricultural Education was established in 1983 as a partnership organization to foster creative and innovative leadership for the improvement and further development of agricultural education. The Council provides leadership, coordination and support for the continuous improvement of agricultural education.