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Experiential Learning Evolves to Meet Student Needs

a lot of things have changed in agriculture and education since the Smith-Hughes Act passed in 1917. One thing that hasn't changed is the importance of experiential learning and supervised agricultural experience (SAE) programs.

However, the experiential learning portion of agricultural education programs has certainly evolved from the farm projects envisioned and required by Smith-Hughes. Today's agriculture teachers must continuously update their curricula and help their students create SAE programs to meet local needs.

Broadening Structure

As the students whom agricultural education serves become more diverse, so too must their SAE programs. William Camp, a professor and program leader of the Agricultural Science Foundation at Cornell University, conducted a research study on SAE, the results of which were published in the *Journal of Agricultural Education* (Vol. 41, Issue 3, 2000). The study concluded that the definition of SAE needs to be broadened and the structure expanded to accommodate the realities facing agriculture educators in the field.

Teachers have gone from monitoring strictly production SAEs to observing programs in the following four categories:

- exploratory (learning about the "big picture" of agriculture and its many related careers)



- research/experimentation and analysis (conducting research or analyzing information to discover new knowledge)

SAE programs consist of **planned practical activities** conducted outside of class time in which students **develop and apply agricultural knowledge and skills** under the supervision of the agriculture teacher or another adult.

- ownership/entrepreneurship (planning and operating an agriculture-related business, including service-based businesses)

- Placement (working for someone else either for pay or for the experience)

To assist teachers in helping students create SAE programs that meet their needs, the National FFA Organization has created several new resources. These include a new *SAE Handbook* that will be part of the REV It Up materials (see p. 12), and the SAE Posters and Idea Cards (see p. 11) that are available through *The Core* catalog.

In addition, this issue of *FFA Advisors Making a Difference* includes a series of stories featuring teachers who have been successful in helping their students create SAE programs that are far beyond the ordinary. You might find their innovative teaching techniques and approaches useful in your program.



Helping Hands Follow Hurricane Katrina

imagine leaving your classroom in tiptop shape on a Friday afternoon, then returning Monday morning to find a heap of bricks and waterlogged materials.

That's basically what happened to Wesley Graham and approximately 150 other agriculture teachers across the Gulf Coast last month when Hurricane Katrina ravaged the area. "We had worked hard to build a really strong agricultural education program here in Purvis, Miss., then Katrina blew it all away," Graham says with more than a note of sadness in his voice. "Seeing all your work in ruins tears at you pretty bad."

While Katrina destroyed many things, Graham's resolve was not one of them. "We are down, but we're not out," he says. "We're working hard to clean up and rebuild. We hope to be back in class around the first of October, but I think that is pretty optimistic. As I look around my classroom, it is hard to envision teaching here anytime soon."

Graham says knowing how much others care and want to help strengthens his determination. "It is wonderful to know that people outside this mess are thinking about us and want to help."

Planting Seeds of Hope

The National FFA Organization and the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) have been overwhelmed with calls and e-mail messages from teachers and students wondering how they can help. All the organizations involved in Team Ag Ed are working together on a coordinated fund-raising and support effort called "Seeds of Hope."

A packet of information was recently mailed to all chapters detailing the *Seeds of*

Hope campaign. In issuing the call to action, National FFA President Jackie Mundt asked chapters to raise funds and bring them to the 78th National FFA Convention in Louisville, Ky., Oct. 26-29. Contributing chapters will become a part of the "Seeds of Hope List of Heroes." The final tally will be announced at the end of the convention.

Living to Serve

"This year's convention theme is 'Living to Serve,' and we expect the *Seeds of Hope* campaign to be the most critical service activity of the year," says Doug Loudenslager, national FFA chief operating officer.

FFA will use money raised through the *Seeds of Hope* program to fund a sustained, long-term rebuilding effort aimed at restoring agricultural education programs and FFA chapters in the shortest time possible. An estimated 120 FFA chapters and schools, 5,000 students and their families, and about 150 agriculture teachers have experienced severe damage or total destruction to their homes, facilities and school projects, including human and personal property loss.

All financial contributions for this relief effort will be distributed to the Gulf Coast states based on applications submitted to the National Council for Agricultural Education. The Council will request applications from states affected by the hurricane and distribute funds accordingly. Applications will be submitted to The Council from the Team Ag Ed entities in the respective states to ensure that funds are distributed appropriately. The application process will be made as simple as possible to facilitate the needs of the states.

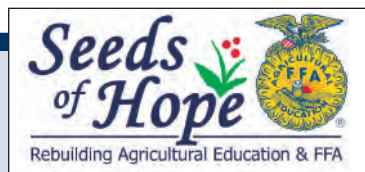
More details regarding how you can help, including information on how to adopt a program, may be found online at the following locations:



Purvis, Miss., agriculture classroom after Hurricane Katrina.

- National FFA Organization (www.ffa.org)
- National Association of Agricultural Educators (www.naae.org)

To receive the most current information about these hurricane relief initiatives, make sure you are subscribed to the U.S. Ag Ed listserv (details at www.naae.org/about/usedlistserve/).



How Your Chapter Can Help

- Implement a chapter fund-raising effort as part of the *Seeds of Hope* campaign
- Personally contribute to the *Seeds of Hope* campaign
- Adopt a program (www.naae.org)
- Gather supplies needed and send to the affected areas (www.naae.org)
- Send a message of encouragement to those affected (www.ffa.org)

Relief Efforts Underway

- Lincoln Electric has donated 100 engine-driven welders/generators for emergency power backup to FFA chapters in Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama (www.lincolnelectric.com)
- Texas FFA chapters are traveling to Mississippi to help rebuild fences
- Iowa FFA chapters are sending funds so that affected members may attend the national FFA convention

FFA Advisors Making a Difference is published eight times a year to assist FFA advisors in making a positive difference in the lives of students.

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The National FFA Organization is a resource and support organization that does not select, control or supervise state association, local chapter or individual member activities except as expressly provided for in the National FFA Organization Constitution and Bylaws.

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The FFA Mission

FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

The Agricultural Education Mission

Agricultural education prepares students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in the global agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems.

Rocky Mountain Marketing Communications, Inc.
Editorial Consultant
Published by Larry D. Case, Coordinator, Agricultural and Rural Education, U.S. Department of Education
This publication is available online at
[\[www.ffa.org/media/html/med-pub-index-htm\]](http://www.ffa.org/media/html/med-pub-index-htm)

Watch for the LPS Logo



The logo shows how this issue of *FFA Advisors Making a Difference* relates to Local Program Success, a national initiative to strengthen agricultural education programs. You'll see this icon on all FFA materials. The shaded apples show which areas the materials address.

Perspectives

Bringing Education to Life with SAE



By Bonnie Kegler
Agriculture Teacher,
Killingly High School, Connecticut

i love the SAE program and find it tremendously rewarding to witness the skill-building that takes place with my students. Placement projects may find them milking cows, exercising horses, selling feed and fertilizer or assisting a veterinarian in surgery.

My entrepreneurial students have managed and sold sheep, chinchillas, turkeys and eggs and offered services such as sheep shearing, horseback riding lessons and aquarium set-up. The feedback I receive from students is that their SAE is important to them.

No matter what their program, they have all felt a sense of accomplishment, pride in a task well done, and they know they have gained employable skills.

Look at all of the opportunities for your curriculum to be applied in the real world. I teach public speaking, marketing and animal husbandry because my students make the connection back to their SAEs, and they use the material. They see the connection from the classroom to the real world instantly.

I feel the strength of the agricultural education system is the way all three components—classroom curriculum, SAE and FFA—mesh together to create success.

Given the demands and responsibilities of teaching agriculture, I am aware teachers aren't looking to add more tasks to their "to do" lists. But, given time and by taking small steps, I believe you can develop and expect solid SAEs that will enhance your whole agriculture program.

The business people that hire my students for placement programs tell me how impressed they are by my students' work ethic. Once you have a student leave such a positive mark on a business, they will call you seeking to hire another student. Now you have the support of an adult in the community. Our chapter has asked these adults to serve on our consulting committee and judge public speaking events. This does wonders for community relations.

The National FFA Organization values SAEs by providing the proficiency awards program. I used the proficiency award applications as a blueprint when developing my own record book pages and incorporating them into class lessons. I set aside class time for the students to make record book entries, and they are graded every quarter. Thus, there is accountability for the SAE.

Students are expected to set goals, chart personal expenses, prepare a résumé, explain skills learned and take photographs. Entrepreneurial students record income, expenses, establish an inventory list and develop a marketing plan.

Teach them how to complete the award application, and once they have it captured on paper, it serves as an impressive portfolio. Some will even advance to being judged and—who knows—maybe a state and/or national winner is sitting in your classroom right now! You'll never know if you don't spend some time and invest effort in one of the agriculture teacher's most effective tools – the SAE program.

Creating Entrepreneurs, Building Communities

k eith Gundlach has an enviable track record of bringing home lots of convention hardware. More importantly, this agriculture teacher from Randolph, Wis., has helped his students build businesses within the community.

Take a look at the range of enterprises Gundlach has overseen, and it becomes obvious he is no one-trick pony. Doug Jung started a trucking company and now, at age 25, has 11 employees. Mike Schmidt owns a service business, removing manure for dairies and spreading it as fertilizer on nearby fields. Tony Crescio started making soap and air fresheners as a way to market excess mint oil stored in his family's barn. Mike Biel provides a pest removal service to local farmers. Kelly Brown raises alpacas and processes the hair into completed garments... and the list goes on.

All of these students have been recognized as national agri-entrepreneurs. Many have also received recognition through the FFA proficiency program. Several have even vied for recognition in the Stars Over America program.

Application as Teaching Tool

An enthusiastic proponent of the proficiency and degree programs, Gundlach's favorite is the agri-entrepreneurship program. "I think the agri-entrepreneurship application is the best teaching tool we have," he says. "We go through the application in my farm business management class,

Randolph FFA Chapter By the Numbers

- ~200 students in grades 9-12
- ~ 250 agriculture students (grades 7-12)
- single-teacher department
- requires a résumé every nine weeks
- located ~ 50 miles northeast of Madison
- fairly rural, but few full-time farmers

and I have students write answers to each of the questions. By the time they've answered the questions, they've written a business plan. Just writing the answers stimulates new thinking and new ideas. It makes them really evaluate their assets and focus on where their capital is tied up."

Gundlach doesn't stop with the essay questions. "I always invite a local banker in to speak," he says. "We talk about balance sheets, income projections, cash flow statements and the ratio of assets to net worth. The students begin to understand the significance of these tools and how the tools can be applied in their enterprises. When it is their money, all of a sudden you have their full attention."

Gundlach admits he prefers that his students develop entrepreneurial SAEs. "When their resources are involved, they take it much more seriously, and you can teach them so much more. Certainly young people can learn a lot in placement and exploratory SAEs, but they learn different skills when they actually own something. That's what our society is based on – ownership. That's what creates strong communities. Entrepreneurship is what creates jobs."

“ I think the agri-entrepreneurship application is the best teaching tool we have. By the time they've answered the questions, they've written a business plan. ”



Gundlach visits Tony Crescio to review his SAE program.

Generating Ideas

Where do all the ideas come from? Gundlach starts his new students with a diary-based record book. He asks them to capture their daily activities. By reviewing these activities, he can quickly get a sense of the students' interests. For example, Mike Biel had a beef enterprise in place, but Gundlach discovered that he enjoyed trapping on the side and had been removing pests for area farmers and being paid for the service.

"He had a business going already, he just didn't recognize it as such," Gundlach says. "When you discover something like that, it just takes a few simple questions to get a student thinking about ways they can improve and expand. Usually, these students just thrive because they're doing things they truly enjoy. They're not doing it out of a sense of obligation or just for a grade."

The Last Word

"The way I see it, if I keep developing local business owners, they'll eventually become school board members and I'll never be out of a job," Gundlach chuckles. What an understatement.

USDA Rural Development sponsors the National Agri-Entrepreneur Awards Program as a special project of the National FFA Foundation, Inc.



SAE: Steps to Success

have you ever sat in the national convention arena during a proficiency session and heard one chapter's name reverberate time and again? If so, did you wonder what their secret was to so much SAE success?

Gary Minyard, who teaches agriculture in Franklin County, Ga., hauled five proficiency finalists to Louisville last year and will shepherd two through the process this year. He shared a few of his thoughts regarding the success his students have achieved through their SAEs.

1. Introduce the Topic

"The students who take the exploratory course in middle school are introduced to the concept of SAE programs," Minyard begins. "We continue by presenting SAE concepts and showing the video, 'SAE: It's More Than You Think!' That gets the students to thinking beyond the obvious. Then, I have them go to a section on the Georgia agricultural education website that lists hundreds of potential SAEs." (<http://aged.ces.uga.edu/2004cds/cd1/SAE/index.html>)

2. Create an SAE Agreement

Once the students have been exposed to the concept of SAE and a wide range of possibilities, Minyard distributes blank agreement sheets and starts discussing the possibilities with students individually.

"Some students will have a list of ideas and, by discussing each idea, we'll narrow it down to a specific focus that is do-able," Minyard explains. "Many of our students start by volunteering to get experience in an area. I have students volunteer at the local animal shelter, at a vet's office, at the florist's shop – you name it. These experiences help the students discover what they like and, just as importantly, what they don't like.

"In contrast, some students come to us with very limited possibilities, either because of physical or mental disabilities," Minyard says. "But we've found ways to work with each student. Several of them have really enjoyed working in the school greenhouse, and we've helped them create SAEs to match that interest. We had one young man who couldn't speak, but liked working in the greenhouse. We created a placement opportunity for him at a local greenhouse, and he was in charge of all the baskets. He did a great job and earned his state FFA degree."

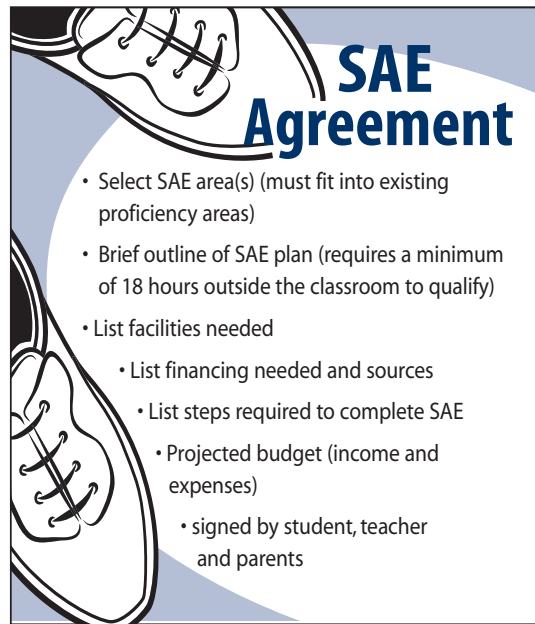
3. Keep Records

At Franklin County, the school provides a notebook for each student. "The notebooks include a medical safety form, a signed field trip permit and a record book," Minyard explains. "One day each week, the students work individually to bring their record books up to date. We've developed a point system for each section of the record book."

The students get points for attending FFA meetings, leadership activities, participating in career development events,

Franklin County By the Numbers

- ~1,000 students in grades 9-12
- 276 agriculture students (grades 9-12)
- ~250 agriculture students (grades 7-8)
- Two high school teachers, one young farmer teacher, one middle-school teacher (exploratory)
- 25 percent of final grade = SAE
- located ~ 90 miles north of Atlanta
- biggest poultry county in Georgia
- fairly rural, but few full-time farmers
- 80 percent of students from a part-time farm or non-farm home
- 20 percent of students from a full-time farm



SAE Agreement

- Select SAE area(s) (must fit into existing proficiency areas)
- Brief outline of SAE plan (requires a minimum of 18 hours outside the classroom to qualify)
- List facilities needed
 - List financing needed and sources
 - List steps required to complete SAE
- Projected budget (income and expenses)
- signed by student, teacher and parents

how complete their record of income and expenses is, their photos and captions, etc. "I require the students to turn in their record books at the end of each semester," Minyard says. "They know their grades will reflect how well they keep their record books."

4. Complete the Applications

Because of the record book requirements, Franklin County students have all the information they need at hand when it comes time to complete their proficiency and degree applications. Minyard and his colleagues don't require their upper-level students to complete proficiency or degree applications, but they do provide strong encouragement.



Minyard accompanies a successful student on the state FFA convention stage.

Innovative SAE Teaching Ideas

I like a growing number of FFA chapters, Minnesota's Chaska chapter sits on the edge of a metropolitan area.

Located just outside of Minneapolis, about 10 percent of the students in Dennis Bjorklund's Chaska agricultural education program have production agriculture backgrounds. Another 50 percent are from rural, non-farm backgrounds, and 40 percent live in an urban/suburban area.

Needless to say, the traditional concepts of SAE don't fit most of Bjorklund's students. To introduce SAE to his students, Bjorklund brings in a senior or a recent graduate to discuss SAE.



Megan Buckentine grooms a dog at Countryside Vet as part of her placement SAE.

Introducing SAE

"Students respond more positively when they hear things from their peers instead of their teachers," Bjorklund says. "I ask accomplished students to come in and share their thoughts about how they selected their SAEs and grew them into whatever it is they are doing today. When the new students see what the older students have accomplished, it sets the tone for me to begin the SAE unit."

After the guest speaker, Bjorklund teaches the SAE section in the *FFA Student Handbook*. He emphasizes the proficiency

award program and how students can receive recognition. "Many students work hard and will never receive an academic award," Bjorklund says. "The proficiency program provides great recognition for young people and provides a way for every student to excel and be recognized."

Engaging Students

Another point Bjorklund drives home is how much deeper engaged students become once they have started their SAEs. He chuckles as he tells of a recent experience.

"I have a student who purchased a couple of pigs to start his SAE. He was showing them at the state fair. The morning we were leaving for the fair, he called me twice before 6:30 to make sure I was planning to pick him up at 7. That's a student who is engaged. It was very gratifying."

Many of Bjorklund's students develop placement SAEs, particularly those who come from more urban backgrounds. "We set it up when they are freshmen and get them going. Our school is on a block schedule, so I usually only have these students in class for one semester each year. I encourage them to attend our monthly FFA meetings and set aside time following the meeting to follow up with them and answer any questions."

Record Keeping and Applications

The placement students are encouraged to save their pay stubs and record the type of work they were doing in the hours reflected. Then, Bjorklund teaches the students how to complete their record books using the pay stubs as source information.

When they become juniors, he assigns a proficiency application question each week as homework. "By Thanksgiving, the students have basically completed most of the application," Bjorklund explains. "Then, all we have to do after the first of the year is complete the financial pages."

“When you break the applications down into smaller, less intimidating steps, it really isn't difficult to get students to fill them out.”

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Bjorklund uses this tactic to increase the number of students who will complete the proficiency and degree applications.

"When you break the applications down into smaller, less intimidating steps, it really isn't difficult to get students to fill them out," he says. "Another student motivator is seeing their peers do well and being recognized. Once they see other students have success, they become more self-motivated."

Watching his students progress in their SAEs provides great satisfaction for Bjorklund. Whether it is a student who started out stocking shelves moving up the ladder to processing lab samples, or a student who starts and grows a landscaping or production agriculture business, the pride in his voice is evident.



Ally Binnebose rings up a sale at Waconia Farm and Home Supply, her SAE placement employer.



SAE Visits Build Relationships

the McCook Central FFA Chapter serves two small, rural communities in South Dakota—Salem and Spencer. This is about as rural as it gets, and yet fewer than one-third of the students in Terry Rieckman's agriculture courses come from production agriculture backgrounds.



Rieckman celebrated with Mike Gottlob when he was a national beef proficiency finalist. This year, Gottlob is an American Star Farmer finalist.

Over the past two decades, Rieckman's students have carried home a pile of hardware and established a solid track record in SAE-related programs. "I believe the key to success with students is identifying something they are interested in and helping them set a few realistic goals in that area," Rieckman says.

"I start the SAE unit by discussing our chapter history and pointing out how many people they know in the community have been successful in the proficiency and degree programs," he adds. "I have them review the list of winners on our chapter website [<http://tr015.k12.sd.us>] and ask them what they want to do when they graduate."

As the students call out areas of interest, Rieckman shows them how each idea fits into a proficiency award area. "The chance to earn recognition and cash

awards is a real motivator for today's young people," Rieckman says. "So, we talk about what they can win and what they'll need to do to build their ideas into full-fledged SAEs."

Internal Motivation

Of course, with such a strong track record, Rieckman also has students walk into his class knowing exactly what they want to do. "They've seen their siblings or cousins achieve success and they want the same opportunities," he says.

Pride is evident in Rieckman's voice as he explains how students' interests grow over time. "I have a young woman from a family farm who came in with an interest in food science. We determined a directed lab would be the most appropriate SAE avenue for her. She started conducting research on why manufacturers choose certain ingredients. That led to investigations into processing and distribution channels."

Rieckman continues, "She talked three classmates into participating in the Food Science Career Development Event. Last year, she won the state event. She continued building on that interest, researching food products and working with the science teacher on nutrition and calories. Then, she started making and selling her own type of sausages."



Kerry Roling conducts an experiment as part of her food science SAE.

McCook Central By the Numbers

- 146 students in grades 9-12
- 82 agriculture students (grades 9-12)
- located 35 miles west of Sioux Falls
- corn, soybean, dairies, swine and cow/calf operations are prevalent
- fairly rural, but few full-time farmers
- 70 percent of students from a part-time farm or non-farm home
- 30 percent of students from a full-time farm

SAE Visits

Regardless of whether students are in a placement, entrepreneurial or directed lab situation, Rieckman requires SAE visits and makes sure he takes a camera along. "I always try to take photos of the students during SAE visits," he says. "Beyond the photos, I try to focus on asking questions and offering ideas. Everyone likes to brag a little, and these visits give each student a chance to show off what they're doing and what they've accomplished."

Another highlight? "Some parents make really good pie," Rieckman deadpans, then adds, "These visits are a great way to improve the parent-teacher relationship. When you show parents you're interested in their kids, it makes a huge difference. You can open lines of communication, and everyone benefits."

Program Balance

One last thing Rieckman emphasizes is the balance needed between all three components of an agricultural education program. "The whole program is designed to work together. Having solid classroom instruction leads to strong SAEs. Strong SAEs motivate students to learn more, dig deeper. That often leads them to become more active in FFA. If you want to truly be effective, you have to emphasize and balance all three areas.

Learning Life Skills through SAE

have you ever equated applying for a proficiency award to applying for a mortgage or a job? Brenda Smith has, and she makes sure her students know the importance of the skills they are learning in her classroom as well as how those skills will be needed along the road of life.

Smith has been teaching agriculture at Norborne High School in Missouri for 25 years. During that time, her students have experienced significant success in their SAE programs.

As students approach Smith's classroom, they pass through a hallway covered with pictures of national-level participants in FFA proficiency, agri-entrepreneurship and CDEs. "We really do have a 'hall of fame,'" chuckles Smith. "Before students even set foot in my classroom, they know they will be expected to have an SAE program."

Success Breeds Success

Smith invites former students who have achieved SAE success to visit her class as guest speakers. "My students have seen these young men and women's pictures in the hallway. When the students here see how their predecessors started their SAEs and built them into award-winning programs, they start to think, 'Hey, I can do that, too.' They just eat it up," she says.

Once the ideas regarding individual SAEs have been planted, Smith starts stressing the roles of work ethic and discipline. "Everyone wants their photo to be in that hallway, and I make sure they know it won't happen without hard work. However, I also stress the rewards that come with that hard work."

One of the messages Smith delivers is that their SAEs can take them anywhere they want to go. "I have had members become national proficiency finalists and winners. As a result, they've had the opportunity to participate in FFA's international travel programs to Europe and Costa Rica."

Life Lessons

Smith stresses the role of record keeping and schedules one day a month for students to work on their record books during class. "I grade record books every quarter, and that counts for 20 percent of their grade," she says.

Smith also requires her sophomores, juniors and seniors to complete proficiency applications. "Whether it is to for an award or a job or a mortgage, understanding how to complete applications is an important life skill," Smith says. "I want my students to be able to figure out what it takes to be successful in life, and one of those things is figuring out how to fill out applications, some of which require financial statements."

She also compares the applications to those students will fill out when they seek employment. "A young person who can complete a proficiency or degree application will have the skills needed to complete most job applications, and do it in such a way that the application will garner attention," Smith says.

Engaging all Students

Even though Smith has a higher percentage of students from working farms than most programs, a majority of her students don't live on a full-time farm. She stresses that SAE programs are for everyone and points out students who have experienced success in niche areas.

Norborne By the Numbers

- 65 students in grades 9-12
- 40 students in the agriculture program
- 20 percent of grade = SAE
- very rural area
- self-proclaimed "Soybean Capital of the World"
- 35-40 percent of students from working farms



Smith's students review former members' accomplishments in the FFA Hall of Fame.

"For students who live in town or on small acreages, I use Carmen Webb as an example," Smith says. "Carmen started out raising a few chickens and a big garden, then added a food science component by processing the produce and the chickens. She sold her products at the farmer's market and earned national recognition in the agri-entrepreneur program and the proficiency program."

One look at Smith's graduates and where they are now confirms the lessons were learned. Take, for example, Mike Case. As a student, Case developed a business refurbishing old farm equipment. He was named a National FFA Agri-Entrepreneur for his efforts. After earning a degree in agricultural engineering from the University of Missouri, he landed a job at a major equipment manufacturer. Today, he designs combines. Lessons well learned, indeed.





2005 National FFA Agri-Entrepreneurs

Top 10 Reasons

to Become an Agri-Entrepreneur:

10. Learn how to write a business plan.
9. Become a part of the ownership society.
8. Make money for college.
7. Learn how to manage a business.
6. Learn how to balance your life and your bank account.
5. Help feed, clothe, house or entertain people.
4. Do your part to “stand solid for your part in that inspiring task.”
3. Create jobs in your hometown.
2. It’s the perfect way to start making your first million!
1. Be your own boss!



A Tribute to the Entrepreneurial Spirit...

The Agri-Entrepreneurship Awards honor FFA members who have recognized market opportunities that were overlooked by others and conceived plans to pursue the opportunities. This publication highlights the 2005 national winners and how they identified and pursued their opportunities.

Each of the ten National Agri-Entrepreneurs receives \$1,000 and a plaque during a recognition ceremony at the 78th National FFA Convention in Louisville, Kentucky.

As you study how these winners recognized and pursued their opportunities, think about the opportunities available in your community and what you could do to meet them. The entrepreneurial torch is burning bright in America and you have the ability to fan the flame in your community.

Creating Entrepreneurs

Taking a cue from business moguls such as Donald Trump and Richard Branson, today's teens are excited about the possibility of being their own boss, according to the Junior Achievement Worldwide 2005 Interprise™ Poll on Teens and Entrepreneurship. Sixty-nine percent of those taking the poll indicated they would like to start their own business, a five percent increase over last year's results.

Teens' enthusiasm for starting their own business is tempered by the knowledge that obstacles to success are numerous; only 10 percent of student respondents believe that starting a business would be "easy" or "very easy." The remainder indicated that this process would involve varying degrees of difficulty, thus underscoring the need for mentoring opportunities, small business loans and help devising a business plan.

Firmly embracing the possibility of achieving the "American Dream," 46 percent of teens believe the greatest motivator to start a business is "having a great idea and wanting to see it in action." Conversely, students think the most likely reason people don't start a business is "not enough money to get started" (33.5 percent) and "fear of failure" (32.5 percent). The notion of controlling one's own destiny may be spurring the dream of entrepreneurship, and that owning your own business can provide protection against economic shifts, as 42 percent of the respondents feel that "unemployment" is the biggest threat to the nation's economy.

But while students are interested in becoming entrepreneurs, most do not have the knowledge to take that step. The students' responses to basic questions on entrepreneurial issues indicated they are not ready to pursue their dreams. Students attributed their lack of understanding about starting a business to being taught little about how business works. While some young people traditionally learn about entrepreneurship from parents and other family members who own businesses, others have no access to such knowledge or role models. Many simply do not perceive creating a job or a business as a valid career choice because all of their role models are employees, not employers.

That's where the Agri-Entrepreneurship Awards Program comes in. The program is designed to increase the amount of entrepreneurship being taught in local agriculture programs across the country. With this information, students will be better prepared to become entrepreneurs and will begin to perceive entrepreneurship as a viable career choice.

Taking care of Business

Each local FFA chapter that participates is eligible to receive up to \$150. Each chapter is encouraged to submit its top applicant for state and national competition. Ten national Agri-Entrepreneurship Awards are given annually. Each national winner receives \$1,000 and is recognized on stage at the national FFA convention.

For more information on this exciting program, contact:

Agri-Entrepreneurship Program

National FFA Organization
P.O. Box 68960
6060 FFA Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46268-0960
317-802-6060
www.ffa.org

Beauty Products to Cash Flow

Elisa Bentz started her business when she was in the seventh grade by making lip gloss for her friends as Christmas presents. “I discovered that I really enjoyed processing agricultural products into gifts,” Bentz says.

“Throughout the years, I have worked to increase my production and the enterprise’s profitability.”

Along the way, Bentz began adding products. She diversified her lip-gloss line by adding flavorings, and started making fragranced bath salts and soaps.

Bentz started advertising and attending craft shows to market her products. She has traveled to shows in Iowa and Missouri, as well as attending those in her home state of Illinois. She also markets her products through local craft stores and her own website.

Bentz is a 2005 graduate of Tri-Point High School. While in high school, Bentz served as FFA chapter reporter and president, and as Section 9 treasurer and vice president.

Elisa Bentz EZ's Butterfly Boutique



- Age: 18
- Tri-Point FFA Chapter, Cullom, Ill.
- Parents: Keith and Sandi Bentz
- Advisor: Diana Loschen
- Product/service: lip gloss, bath salts and soaps made from agricultural products
- Proficiency Area: Agricultural Processing
- Website: www.geocities.com/ezbutterflyboutique/Home.htm



Gathering eggs for college cash

Justin Klinkner launched his business in December 2004. After meeting with a local agricultural supplier, Klinkner developed a detailed plan to show the costs and potential for profit in the organic egg business. “Once I finished the plan, my father and I remodeled an existing facility to house the birds,” Klinkner says.

“I purchased a flock of 350 Bovan laying birds, and raised them organically,” Klinkner explains. “Organic, brown-shelled eggs are in high demand in our local grocery stores.”

Klinkner sells his eggs on contract to Organic Valley, Inc., a large purchaser and distributor of organic food products. “The eggs are distributed in midwestern grocery stores to customers seeking high quality, organic eggs. All of the eggs that don’t meet Organic Valley’s quality standards because of size are sold locally within my community.”

Klinkner is a junior at Cashton High School. In FFA, he has competed in the poultry and soils career development events. Klinkner also plays football and wrestles for his school’s teams, and in 2004, was a world championship qualifier in the International Bow Hunters Organization.

Justin Klinkner Klinkner's organic Eggs

- Age: 17
- Cashton FFA Chapter, Cashton, Wis.
- Parents: Gerald and Ann Klinkner
- Advisor: John Heinberg
- Product/Service: organic eggs
- Proficiency Area: Poultry Production



creating calendars and cash



Kaitlynn Neville
Kaitlynn Graphics

- Age: 16
- North High-Bakersfield FFA Chapter, Bakersfield, Calif.
- Parents: David and Leslie Neville
- Advisor: Chris Dickson
- Product/Service: pharmaceutical calendar artwork
- Proficiency Area: Agricultural Communications

Neville is a junior at North High School. She is active in FFA, and a member of the National Honor Society. Neville is also a member of the U.S. Karate Alliance and has earned first place in national-level competition.

Kaitlynn Neville found a business idea in a rather unusual place. “Every student in my agricultural biology class is required to bring a cat, dog or livestock fecal sample to class,” Neville begins. “We have the equipment in our classroom to project microscopic images onto a large screen. As I sat watch-

ing and drawing identifiable objects in the various specimens, I started to see a picture within a picture.”

Neville took those images and developed a calendar to promote animal health. “The calendar features 12 interesting microscopic images along with reminders for managerial activities that should take place each month to protect animals from internal and external parasites,” Neville explains.

After creating a prototype calendar, Neville worked through her local large animal hospital to pitch the idea to a major animal pharmaceutical company for consideration.



Business is Blooming

- Age: 15
- Sutton FFA Chapter, Sutton, Neb.
- Parents: Lyle and Deb Nunnenkamp
- Advisor: Tom Hofmann
- Product/Service: specialty cut flowers
- Proficiency Area: Specialty Crops

Ashley Nunnenkamp threw open the Blossom Barn doors in 2004. “I grow and sell specialty cut flowers,” Nunnenkamp says. “These flowers are marketed to wholesale floral distributors, retail florists and at farmers markets. I grow more than 20 different types of flowers and plant several different cultivars of the same genus, which gives me a total of more than 50 different varieties.”

When selecting her SAE, Nunnenkamp sought something that would work well with her schedule. “I wanted something to do during the summer months. I start my flower beds in April, and sell the cut flower stems July through mid-October,” Nunnenkamp explains.

Nunnenkamp is a sophomore at Sutton Public High School. She served as junior president of her chapter during her freshman year, as well as attending a variety of workshops and the state and national FFA conventions. She is a member of the Sutton girls’ basketball team and the jazz band. She is also a member of the Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers.



Ashley Nunnenkamp
Blossom Barn



Building Fences, Bank Balances

Waco Phipps was working for the Anchor Cross Ranch building and repairing fences when he decided to start his own fence-building business. "I had acquired the skills I needed and developed a reputation for good work," Phipps says. "As I looked down the road, I wanted to develop a business that would allow me the flexibility to work within my college class schedule and earn a higher income than the minimum-wage jobs available to most college students."

Sandhills Fencing offers complete fencing services for landowners in south-central Nebraska. "I provide free estimates on all projects," Phipps says. "Whether a customer needs a new barb- or smooth-wire fence built, an existing fence repaired or re-stretched, or an old fence removed, I can provide that service. I can also install electric, metal, wooden and plastic fencing."

Phipps is a senior at Platte Valley Academy. He is very active in FFA, serving as his chapter's treasurer, vice president and president. Phipps is also an active volunteer, serving as a Salvation Army bell ringer, and as a *Progressive Farmer* Farm Safety Day Camp training coordinator.

Waco Phipps Sandhills Fencing



- Age: 18
- Platte Valley Academy FFA Chapter, Shelton, Neb.
- Parents: William and Robin Phipps
- Advisor: Arlen Mekelburg
- Product/Service: Fence building service
- Proficiency Area: Agricultural Services



Growing Food, Finances

Noelle Rist was looking for an SAE that would allow her to earn a little cash and stay close to home. "I began the business by planting a 3/4-acre vegetable and fruit garden and more than 800 trees in 2002," Rist says. "I increased the garden area to 1.2 acres in 2004 by adding strawberries, raspberries and additional sweet corn and other vegetables."

Willow Creek Produce and Nursery offers fresh, organically grown fruits and vegetables for sale at roadside stands and retail markets. In addition, she has planted nursery and Christmas trees, which will be ready to begin harvesting in 2008.

"In 2003, I discovered there is a growing Sudanese population in the Sioux Falls area," Rist continues. "Okra, a green pod vegetable, is a staple in the Sudanese diet. To help meet the increasing demand for this vegetable, I increased the amount of okra I planted. What began as a family favorite has grown into a great cash crop."

Rist is a senior at West Central High School. She has been active in the FFA chapter, participating in several career development events, receiving state proficiency awards and serving as a chapter and district officer. Rist is also active in athletics, participating in varsity gymnastics and cheer-leading. She is also a member of the National Honor Society.

Noelle Rist Willow Creek Produce and Nursery

- Age: 17
- West Central FFA Chapter, Hartford, S.D.
- Parent: Linda Rist
- Advisor: Linda Rist
- Product/Service: Fresh fruits and vegetables, nursery trees
- Proficiency Areas: Fruit Production, Vegetable Production, and Nursery operations



Creating Corn Mazes, Cash Flow



Scott Skelly Corn Mazes America

- Age: 17
- Janesville Parker FFA Chapter, Janesville, Wis.
- Parents: Thomas and Cheryl Skelly
- Advisor: Steven Redinus
- Product/Service: entertainment, corn maze consulting service
- Proficiency Areas: outdoor Recreation, Agricultural Services
- Website: www.cornmazesamerica.com

Skelly has served as the Parker Odin newspaper production manager, and is a member of the National Honor Society and the Wisconsin Fresh Market Vegetable Growers Association.

his maze. “By that time, I wanted to help develop other corn mazes, so I created my own website offering forums, newsletters and answering questions for customers who wanted to start their own mazes.”

By the spring of 2004, Skelly recognized a market for a corn maze how-to book, so he wrote and self-published one. In addition to selling books and managing his own maze, Skelly also designs, marks and cuts mazes for others.

Skelly is a senior at George S. Parker High School. He is active in FFA, serving as his chapter’s treasurer and vice president. He is also active in athletics, having been a member of his school’s soccer and tennis teams.

Scott Skelly started his business when he was nine years old, convincing his father to let him use three-quarters of an acre to create a corn maze on the family farm. Skelly continued creating corn mazes at his family’s farm. By the end of the 2003 season, he had about 3,000 school children and 6,000 other visitors walking through

Creating Hard Cash out of History

- Age: 18
- Washington FFA Chapter, Washington, Kan.
- Parents: Clinton and Kelly Stamm
- Advisor: John Kern
- Product/Service: refurbish Minneapolis-Moline garden tractors
- Proficiency Area: Agricultural Mechanics Repair and Maintenance
- Website: www.stammtractors.com

Jay Stamm bought his first garden tractor to restore when he was 12, and continued buying more as he could afford them. “I found that it was hard to find parts for these garden tractors, since they were only manufactured between 1962 and 1969.”

By traveling with his father to auctions and salvage yards, Stamm began building quite a collection of parts. “By connecting with other M-M collectors at tractor shows and conventions, I discovered I had many of the hard-to-find parts others were seeking. This led me to start a small business selling parts.”

Through StaM-M Sales, Stamm offers used parts and completely refurbished garden tractors. “I also have replacement products, such as seat cushions and decals, which are made to my specifications. I have several prototypes being made for battery box covers, grill screens and belt shields. These parts are generally missing on salvage tractors, so there is a big demand for them from my customers.”

Stamm is a 2005 graduate of Washington High School. While in school, he served his FFA chapter as reporter, treasurer and president. Stamm was also active in athletics, playing basketball, football and golf. Academically, he has participated in the Science Olympiad and has been on the honor roll. He is a member of the National Minneapolis-Moline Collectors’ Club and the National Prairie Gold Rush Club.

Jay Stamm StaM-M Sales



Fashions, Feed build Finances

Kashen Urban turned his hobby into a business in 2001. “My first year, I sold 120 lamb sweats and 75 muzzles, making a profit of \$432,” Urban says. “The next year, I sold 230 sweats, 200 muzzles and 10 undercovers. As my sales increased, so did my equipment needs.”

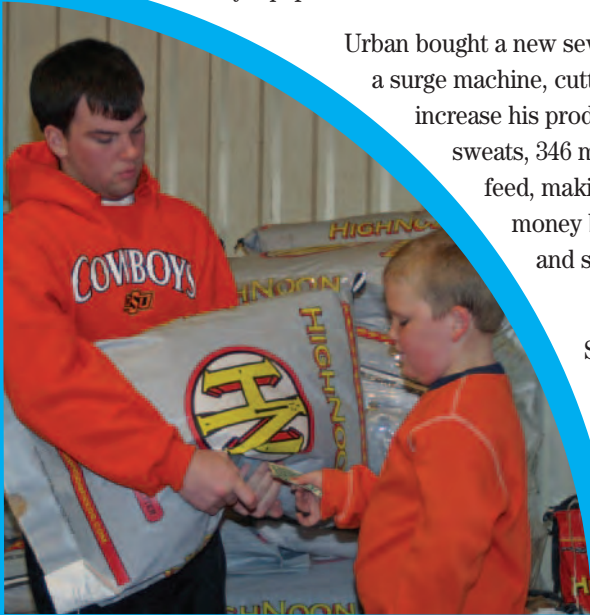
Urban bought a new sewing machine, a surge machine, cutting tables and an electric rotary cutter to increase his production capacity. “This past year, I sold 430 sweats, 346 muzzles, 84 undercovers and 2,120 bags of feed, making a profit of \$4,609. Each year, I reinvest my money back into the business. Adding new products and selling feed has helped my business grow.”

Urban is a 2005 graduate of Navajo High School. While in high school, Urban was very active in FFA, serving as an officer and attending many leadership conferences, camps and conventions. Urban was also active in athletics, playing baseball and basketball. He is a member of the Oklahoma Sheep Producers Association, the Oklahoma Hunting and Fishing Association and the National Wild Turkey Association.

Kashen Urban Urban Sheep Fashions and Premium Show Lamb Feed



- Age: 19
- Navajo FFA Chapter, Altus, Okla.
- Parents: Rifson and Melody Urban
- Advisor: Scott McCombs
- Product/Service: lamb sweats, undercovers, muzzles and show feed
- Proficiency Area: Agricultural Sales



Landscaping for a Living

Nicole Vogt started her business in 2002 by selling topsoil that was a by-product of her parent's excavating business. “I started by selling topsoil, then started plowing snow in the winter and thinking about a landscaping business,” Vogt says. “I had always liked building things and working with plants and trees.”

Along with selling topsoil and providing snow removal services, Vogt offers a wide variety of landscaping services, including shoreline maintenance, installing drain tile lines, ponds and waterfalls, weed barriers, patios, walkways and other hardscapes; seeding and sodding lawns, removing overgrown landscapes, mulching, and planting trees, shrubs and other plants.

“I provide free estimates for my customers,” Vogt says. “I meet them at the prospective job site, listen to what they hope to achieve with the project and suggest options that will meet their goals.”

Vogt is a 2004 graduate of Dodgeland High School. While in school, she served as FFA chapter reporter and president, and attended numerous leadership conferences and conventions. She was a member of the Spanish Club, the High Honor Roll and the cross-country track team, making the first all-conference team. Vogt is a sophomore at Milwaukee Area Technical College studying landscape horticulture.

Nicole Vogt Nicole Vogt Landscaping



- Age: 19
- Dodgeland FFA Chapter, Juneau, Wis.
- Parents: Thomas and Teri Vogt
- Advisor: Grace Roberts
- Product/Service: landscaping, snow removal
- Proficiency Area: Landscape Management



How Do I Get Involved?

- You must be a member of your local FFA chapter, your state FFA association and the National FFA Organization (you can be any grade level or age).
- Create an idea for providing a product or service that would fill a need in an agricultural, horticultural or natural resources related field.
- Develop a business plan to flesh out your idea and put it into practice.
- Check out the Agri-Entrepreneurship website for further information at [www.ffa.org/programs/ag_ent/index.html].
- Acquire a copy of the Agri-Entrepreneurship application and examples of previous winning applications. **NOTE:** *The application and examples are available from the National FFA Organization by calling 317-802-4255, by downloading from the FFA website at [www.ffa.org], or from the 2005-2006 Local Program Resource Guide CD-ROM.*
- Complete the application and send it to your state FFA association by your state's due date, or to the National FFA Organization by July 15.
- Complete the local award check request voucher and submit it with your application to receive a \$100 local winner check (one per chapter per year). Awards are also available at the state and national levels.
- Use the press release provided with the application to publicize your efforts and give your business a potential boost.
- Certificates with award medals are available to each chapter, \$100 awards are available to each state association and \$1,000 awards are available at the national level.

About the Program

The Agri-Entrepreneurship Education Program is an activity of the National FFA Organization. USDA Rural Development sponsors the program as a special project of the National FFA Foundation, Inc. For more information on this exciting program, contact your local FFA advisor, or the National FFA Organization, P.O. Box 68960, 6060 FFA Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46268-0960. Telephone: 317-802-6060. Internet: www.ffa.org.

About the National FFA Organization

FFA is a national organization of 490,017 members preparing for leadership and careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture with 7,210 local chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. FFA strives to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for **premier leadership, personal growth and career success** through agricultural education. Visit www.ffa.org for more information.

The FFA Mission

FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for **premier leadership, personal growth and career success** through agricultural education.

The Agricultural Education Mission

Agricultural education prepares students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in the global agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems.

The National FFA Organization affirms its belief in the value of all human beings and seeks diversity in its membership, leadership and staff as an equal opportunity employer. This brochure was prepared and published by the National FFA Organization in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education as a service to state and local agricultural education agencies.



Building quality programs and putting school to career in action

7 Keys to Success in Agricultural Education

🍏 Program Planning

3 Components	3 Strategies
🍏 Instruction	🍏 Partnerships
🍏 SAE	🍏 Marketing
🍏 FFA	🍏 Professional Growth

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Thinking Outside the SAE Box

even though Nathan Torrance teaches agriculture in the predominantly rural area of Woodward, Okla., only about 10 percent of his students come from working farms.

"Agriculture is such a diverse field," Torrance says. "We need to think far beyond crops and livestock. We need to think about food, science and communications. These are all areas that need well-trained young people who have some knowledge of agriculture."

Connecting the Dots

When it comes time to introduce new students to SAE, Torrance sets the tone by using the SAE Idea Cards (available through *The Core* catalog, p. 4). "I want my students to immediately begin thinking about a wide variety of ideas. I want them to start connecting their interests to careers in agriculture," he says. "The cards provide a great way to talk about everything from nursery/landscape jobs to small animal care to local businesses."

Torrance asks his students to give mini-presentations based on the SAE Idea Cards. Each student receives a card, then

has to give a quick oral presentation on their topic that covers if the activity is done in the Woodward area, and if it is regional or national in scope. This short activity jumpstarts students' speaking and critical thinking skills without them ever realizing it.

Torrance is also a big proponent of guest speakers. "I invite people from a variety of occupations to speak to my classes," he says. "I have them discuss the type of preparation needed for their career area and their day-to-day activities. This gives the students a better idea of what they might like to do after they graduate and can help focus what type of SAE might work best to prepare them."



horticulture students each have a section of the poinsettia crop to manage. They are required to keep records on their sections—recording costs of production and income. Sometimes we provide incentives, like a t-shirt or a small monetary prize for the student who does the best job at managing the crop and keeping records on a section."



Torrance visits four students at a local radio station as they produce a radio program for their SAEs. L to R—Stefanie Shifflett, Jamie Trissel, Nathan Torrance, Kami Jensen and Riley Pagget.

Reaching Out

Torrance believes one of the reasons his program has more than doubled in student enrollment in the past five years is because of this broad-based approach. "When you reach out to students and show them you are interested in them as individuals, lots of neat things start to happen."

One thing that has started happening in Woodward is more diverse students are enrolling in agriculture. "We had four Hispanic students last year who were interested in producing goats; this year we have 12 Hispanic students in the program and three blacks. Once we get over the traditional stigmas associated with agriculture, we can show these students a broad range of possibilities and how they can pursue their individual interests."

Torrance's students are also reaching out through a radio program. "I teach an agricultural communications class, and a group of students became interested in radio. Now, they work two days a week to produce a 30-minute radio program. It is a great SAE and has resulted in tremendous exposure for our program."



Woodward By the Numbers

- ~800 students in grades 9-12
- ~140 agriculture students (5 years ago, 54 students; only four were female)
- located in northwest Oklahoma; service hub for the area
- predominantly rural, agricultural and oil/energy are the predominant industries
- 90 percent of students from a part-time farm or non-farm home
- 10 percent of students from a full-time farm

SAEs on Campus

In addition to the classroom facility, the Woodward agriculture program has a large greenhouse and a school farm. Torrance maximizes student use of these facilities by allowing students to develop and house their SAE programs at school if it is necessary.

"One of things I do to get students started who don't have a lot of resources is to determine how we can use the school facilities," Torrance explains. "Sometimes students can take ownership of chapter projects to start their SAE. For example, we section off the greenhouse, and our

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Local Program Success

Involving the Whole Chapter in SAE



By Jeff Papke
Local Program Success Specialist
National FFA Organization

after teaching agriculture for nearly 20 years, Mark Forbush has learned a thing or two about how to inspire his students to create their supervised agricultural experience programs.

At Illinois' Corunna High School, where Forbush teaches, there are dozens of students interested in animal agriculture who do not live on a farm. The chapter co-op provides an opportunity for them to explore their interests.

Grant Funds School Facility

"We wrote a grant to the Glassbrook Endowment Fund (a portion of the Michigan FFA Foundation) to construct a new livestock research facility on our school property," Forbush says.

All of the students in Forbush's Corunna FFA Chapter were

involved in the grant-writing process and construction of the new facility. They did not hire anyone to assist with the construction.

With cash in hand from the grant, the chapter members began constructing a 16' x 32' addition to the school livestock facility. They finalized the construction last year and have begun their first set of poultry feed trials.

One of the critical features within the facility is its effective manure management system. A septic tank and drain field were installed to handle 90 percent of the waste. People can park next to the facility—which is on school grounds—and never know that there are pigs in the barn. The floors are washed into the system daily and the solid waste is washed away which keeps the odor to a minimum.

Opportunities for All

Members farrow sows in the barn. The chapter members raise the pigs in a co-op facility, also on the school property. The FFA members sign a contract and work together to raise the piglets.

The members plan to take pigs to the local county fair next fall. Forbush would like to increase the space allowed for members to work their pigs as they prepare to show at the fair.

The chapter co-op and research facility provide members who live in town and love to work with animals a location to house their projects. Students get excited about their projects, and this excitement has directly increased membership in the chapter.

Potential and Profit

"Every year, two or three students find a nice place to raise their animals after they have learned how to be responsible and have had a good profitable SAE here at the co-op," Forbush says.

The key is hands-on learning. "Students love to learn by doing," Forbush says. "My goals for SAE are simple: students need to be good record keepers and be responsible. Both are reinforced here because they are held accountable."



Corunna students process piglets shortly after they are born at the school's facility.

Local Program Success is a national initiative designed to enhance the quality and success of local agricultural education programs. LPS uses the total program concept of Instruction, SAE and FFA and four strategies (Program Planning, Marketing, Partnerships and Professional Growth) to assist local teachers in facilitating successful local programs that meet the needs of students and the communities they serve.



Promoting and Encouraging Young, Beginning Producers and Agribusiness Professionals



By Peggy Jo Tipton
2006 NYFEA President

education is the one thing in life you never outgrow.

We learn from teachers, books, workshops, conferences, experiences and our peers. The mission of the National Young Farmer Educational Association, known as NYFEA, is to promote the personal and professional growth of all people involved in agriculture with a focus on promoting and encouraging the young, beginning producers and agribusiness professionals through conferences and mentoring.

NYFEA, the adult agricultural education program (an extension of FFA, you might say), was founded in 1966 and currently serves people with organizations at the local, state and national levels. Participation is open to anyone with an interest in agriculture (no age limit). I am

excited about the opportunities we have to share with each other.

I'd like to invite you to become involved in NYFEA. Through contests, seminars, trade shows, tours, conferences and community service projects, NYFEA provides ample opportunities for all people involved in agriculture to refine their leadership, management and instructional skills.

NYFEA provides two annual leadership events – the National Ag Leadership Conference (NALC) held in the summer, and the National Institute, held in the winter. These two events are rotated across the United States, which promotes and provides diversity in our agricultural learning experiences. Delegate business meetings are held at each event, and officers are elected at the National Institute. The National Institute also provides the forum in which NYFEA salutes the Outstanding Young and Beginning Producers and Outstanding Young Agribusiness Leaders.

For the past 18 years, my husband, Rusty, and I have been extensively involved in the Young Farmer Association on the local, state and national levels. To say the least, our involvement has taken us many places across the United States, and even to the United Kingdom and Europe. As humble stewards of the land (and dairy farmers at that), we are thankful and blessed for the opportunities that adult agricultural education has provided. I would highly encourage you to make NYFEA a part of your life.

 **Partnerships**

Please visit our website at [\[www.nyfea.org\]](http://www.nyfea.org) for more information, or contact the NYFEA office at P.O. Box 20326, Montgomery, AL 36120; phone 334-213-3276, e-mail: [\[nyfea@mindspring.com\]](mailto:nyfea@mindspring.com).

SAE Resources Available

is it a challenge to help your students understand SAE and get a grasp on all the opportunities available to them through this element of the agricultural education program?

Several resources available through *The Core* catalog can help. Introduced in 2004, the SAE Poster Series and the SAE Idea Cards provide teachers with a way to help students grasp the concept of SAE and how it applies to them.

Cory Epler, who teaches agriculture in Arkansas City, Kan., used the SAE Idea

Cards in his classroom last spring. "I want to share how cool these are," he says. "First of all, I don't think that I've ever seen freshman so excited and eager about SAE programs. Not just the typical farm kid with a program already established, but ALL students."

Epler continues with a couple of comments he received from his students. "I have a special ed student who is a non-FFA member and has spent some time in lock-up. He wanted to know what we were going to do with the list of possibilities they created. Then he asked if he could do some of them because he thought they were cool.

"Another student made the comment that kids who live in town can do a lot of these ideas. I asked him if he was surprised by that and he said very. Again, a non-FFA member."

Yet another one of Epler's student commented, "Working at the golf course can be an SAE? I never realized that. I do that all the time."

 **SAE**

For more details on these resources, see page 4 in *The Core* catalog, or visit [\[http://www.ffaunlimited.org/suagexprs.html\]](http://www.ffaunlimited.org/suagexprs.html).

New SAE Handbook Coming Summer 2006

imagine a compact disc containing a collection of the best SAE ideas, teaching techniques and practices from top teachers across the country.

Now, add sample letters to students and parents explaining SAE, complete lesson plans with PowerPoint presentations, digital video clips showing SAEs in action, and a variety of recordkeeping systems. All of these resources and more are being assembled in a new electronic *SAE Handbook* that will make its debut during in-service sessions across the country during summer 2006.

"The current edition of the *SAE Handbook* was developed in 1992," says Seth Derner, an education specialist with the National FFA Organization and a REV it Up! project manager. "Students, pro-

grams and technology have all changed significantly since then. There was a real need to update this important resource."

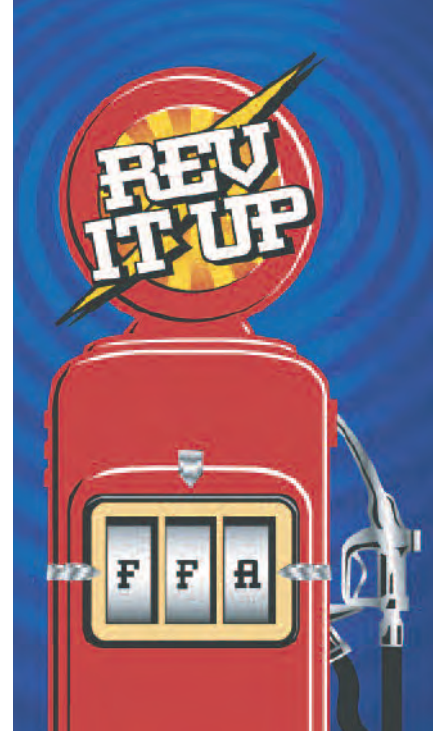
Innovative Ideas

A task force was assembled of teachers who had a proven SAE expertise track record. "All the ideas and samples in the new handbook were provided by teachers who excel in helping their students develop SAE programs," Derner explains. "I believe teachers will find the resources extremely relevant. We've essentially collected the best ideas and best practices from the best teachers relative to SAE and compiled them into the new *SAE Handbook*."

Derner is particularly pleased with the volume of ideas and information in non-traditional SAE areas. "Our students have changed dramatically in the last decade, and teachers have been looking for assistance in non-traditional SAE areas. This resource provides great ideas in these new areas. I think it will help teachers stretch their thought processes relative to creating SAEs that meet student and community needs in unique ways."

Examples Show the Way

Beyond the basics, the *SAE Handbook* will contain a collection of examples teachers can adapt and adopt for their programs. There are numerous examples of record-keeping systems, and samples of completed proficiency and degree applications that show how to effectively communicate how an SAE has



been developed. There are examples of assessment tools and a variety of SAE-related forms. All in all, the new handbook will be a great toolbox for teachers to use in developing the SAE component of their programs.

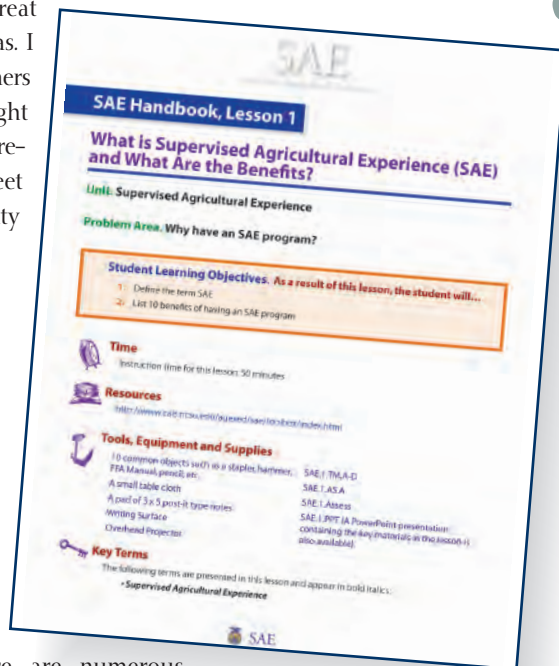
The electronic handbooks will be provided free of charge to teachers attending an in-service training session in 2006, then will become available through *The Core* catalog in 2007.



SAE Handbook Contents

- Introduction
- Lesson Plans with PowerPoint presentations
- SAE Ideas and Best Practices
- SAE Documentation and Recordkeeping
- SAE Fact Sheets
- Sample SAE Forms
- Partners and SAE
- Teaching Resources
- SAE Assessment Tools
- SAE Supervision and Visitation

The *SAE Handbook* is part of the REV it Up! series being developed by the National FFA Organization with funding provided through a USDA Rural Youth Initiative Grant as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.



The Core Catalog Provides Teaching Resources

Iast year, the National FFA Organization gave its Agricultural Education Resources Catalog a new name and a new look! *The Core* catalogs were mailed several weeks ago, so look for your catalog in your mailbox.

The Core has great products to assist you in the classroom, and those educational resources are now organized by their relevance to areas of the Local Program Success model. From Program Planning to Partners, you can easily find the resources you need for each area of your program.

In addition to containing the tried-and-true products with which you're familiar, the 2005-06 catalog features several new products.

Grow Your Program with NPK

When referring to plant-based agriculture, NPK is a common reference for the three primary soil nutrients. In the context of agricultural education, however, NPK stands for the *New Professionals Kit*, a software package designed to help agriculture teachers—both new and experienced—become successful.

The kit, which replaces the *Ag Teacher's Survival Kit* and includes lesson plans formerly found in that product, helps you design a

three-year plan for total program development. The software includes:

- comprehensive program assessment and goal-setting tools
- a personalized three-year action plan based on your program assessment
- an e-calendar to manage your plan, school activities and personal appointments
- easy-to-find forms and tools from multiple FFA resources to support the tasks in your action plan

The NPK tools take you through a step-by-step assessment of your current program in each of the seven key areas of Local Program Success (program planning, instruction, FFA, SAE, partnerships, marketing and professional growth). Once completed, the assessment helps you:

- identify high-priority goals for your program
- determine attainable tasks to help you achieve your goals
- set deadlines and working periods for each task

For additional details, refer to pages 1-2 of the 2005-06 catalog, or visit www.ffaunlimited.org/newprkitpc.html.

Polish for Presentations

Ever wonder how state and national FFA officers learn how to deliver such polished presentations? The answer can be found in another new product featured in *The Core* – *Great Speeches and Presentations*. This product includes lesson plans for developing and delivering speeches and presentations, examples of great speeches and presentations, a set of index-sized student planning cards and a poster.



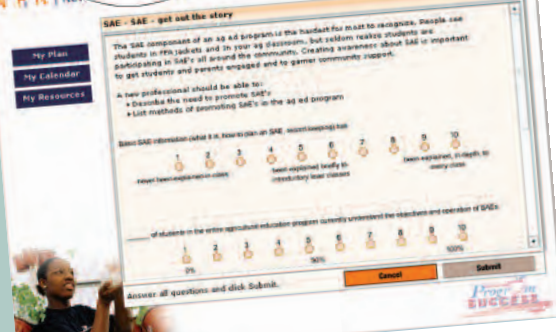
The materials are based on a system state and national officers have been trained with for the past decade. The “magic formula” helps you break down the three primary speech components (introduction, body and conclusion) into nine elements that, when used together, can help students create powerful presentations.

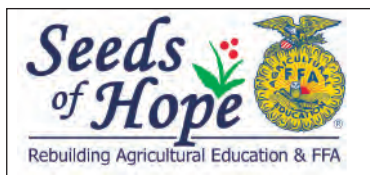
A booklet of speeches from historical leaders, past national FFA officers and national prepared public speaking winners is included to provide examples and motivation for your students. The kit also contains a set of planning cards for students to use in developing their speeches. Each kit contains 10 sets of cards—enough for 10 speeches or presentations. Additional planning card refill packs are also available.

Beyond using these materials in the classroom, they can be quite helpful as a self-study guide for students who are interested in further study of the topic. Students who are preparing to compete in the prepared or extemporaneous speaking career development events may also find these materials useful.



For more details, see page 20 of the 2005-06 catalog, or visit <http://store.yahoo.com/ffaunlimited/gufordegrspa.html>.



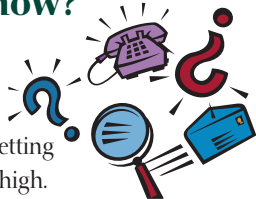


Seeds of Hope

The National FFA Organization has launched *Seeds of Hope*, a fundraising campaign to rebuild agricultural education and FFA programs in the Gulf Coast states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida hit hard by Katrina. For details, visit www.ffa.org.

Did you know?

- There are 2,969 American FFA Degree recipients this year, setting a new all-time high.
- 1,392 FFA members submitted state-winning proficiency applications to the national level; 196 were chosen as national finalists (four per category) to compete at the 78th National FFA Convention.
- Wisconsin, with finalists in 21 categories, has the most national proficiency finalists.
- Georgia and Nebraska each produced three national star finalists out of four possible areas; this is the most star finalists produced by a single state, ever.
- There were 585 National Chapter state gold applications submitted this year; 20 percent (or 117 total applications) were awarded a three-star rating, the highest rating that can be achieved in the National Chapter Award program.
- The national finalist judging process required 36 volunteer judges and six National FFA staff members a total of 1,580 hours of work to complete. It would take one person 10 months to do the same job the judges and staff completed in six days.



New Licensing Agreements and Fundraisers

The 2005-2006 school year opens with exciting new products, fundraisers and opportunities for chapters, members and supporters. Don't be surprised if you start seeing the FFA logo on gloves, T-shirts and other apparel at your local retail stores. FFA has signed licensing agreements with several top merchandising companies including Brahma gloves, Earth Tone Trading Company and International Sunprints. For all those scrapbooking enthusiasts, check out *It Takes Two* at www.ittakestwo.com, a Minneapolis greeting card and scrapbook company. For the latest in fundraising opportunities, go to www.ffa.org/ageducators/html/core_fundraisers.html to heat up your fundraising efforts with the likes of ZestyFundraising, Beary Thoughtful Bears and Really Big Coloring Books' new low pricing on calendars.

New FFA Recycles Project Supports Seeds of Hope

The Veteran Corporation is launching an easy and profitable new fundraising program for chapters called *FFA Recycles*. It's also educational, providing chapters with facts about electronic waste, remanufacturing and career opportunities. Best of all, Veteran is donating \$20,000 to the *Seeds of Hope* campaign to rebuild Gulf Coast FFA chapters damaged by Hurricane Katrina.

Did you know the e-waste pile is growing, with the United States generating more e-waste than any other nation? According to the Environmental Protection Agency, in 2000 U.S. landfills received more than 4.6 million tons of e-waste.

- Each year, more than 300 million inkjet cartridges are sent to landfills; only 10 million are re-manufactured.
- The ABS plastic from which the cartridges are made takes approximately

800 years to decompose in a traditional landfill.

- More than 80 percent of all households have an inkjet printer; each household disposes an average of six cartridges per year.
- FFA members and chapters can make a difference by participating in the *FFA Recycles* Fundraising Program.
- It's fun, easy and profitable – and it is good for the environment.

Your chapter will receive \$1.00 for each qualified cartridge redeemed; and for every two qualified cartridges you drop off at the *FFA Recycles* booth at convention, your chapter will get a chance to win one of three IBM ThinkPad Tablet PCs.

Veteran Corporation cannot accept any Epson brand inkjets or any ink tanks. Visit www.recycles.com for a complete list of qualifying cartridges.

When they learned about the *Seeds of Hope* campaign, Veteran officials decided to contribute \$20,000 of its advertising budget to *Seeds of Hope*. Veteran will also donate an additional 25 cents from each cartridge redeemed between now and the end of the year.

Veteran is encouraging FFA chapters to register online prior to the convention and to stop by the *FFA Recycles* booth in the East Wing behind the FFA Mega Store to redeem the cartridges collected. To find out more and to register for the fundraiser, visit www.ffa-recycles.com.



TeacherResources

2005 NAAE Convention

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the 2005 NAAE/ACTE Convention will not be held in New Orleans. NAAE and ACTE staff are exploring alternate locations and will provide updates on the new convention arrangements on their respective websites

[www.naae.org] and [www.acteonline.org].

2006 USDA Grant Program

The FY 2006 USDA Secondary and Two-Year Postsecondary Agricultural Education Challenge Grants Program, known commonly as the USDA SPEC Grants Program, has released its request for applications. The program's purpose is to promote and strengthen teaching programs in agriscience and agribusiness at secondary and two-year postsecondary institutions by enhancing curricula, increasing faculty teaching competencies, promoting higher education to prepare students for scientific and professional careers, incorporating agriscience or agribusiness subject matter into other instructional programs, facilitating joint initiatives among other educational institutions, and to respond to identified state, regional, national or international educational needs. CSREES encourages innovative proposals with the potential for regional or national impact to serve as models for other institutions.

Please visit [www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/rfas/sec_challenge.html] for details.

Proposals must be received at USDA no later than January 12, 2006.

Online Membership

The Step-by-Step Guide to FFA Online Membership is located at [<http://access.ffa.org/index.html>]. This new PowerPoint training document, created with the assistance of Pam Kilpatrick of the Alabama FFA Association, provides a step-by-step process for chapter advisors.



SAE Grants Available

Multiple grants will be awarded for initiating or improving SAE programs. Applications should be mailed to the National FFA Center. The postmark deadline is Nov. 10, 2005.

- Akey Grants: 20 grants at \$500 each will be awarded to applicants with swine production SAEs only.
- Merial Grants: 16 grants at \$1,000 each will be awarded to applicants with beef/cattle, dairy or sheep production SAEs.
- Levi Strauss Grants: 8 grants at \$1,000 each will be awarded to applicants within any SAE area.
- Triangle Grants: There are approximately 16 grants at \$150 each to be awarded to members with SAEs in either agribusiness or farming. Applicants must be from one of the following states: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota or Wisconsin.

ACTE Essay Contest

For the second straight year, the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) is sponsoring an essay contest in the memory of former ACTE Senior Director of Communications, Cliff Weiss (1951 -2004). A secondary and postsecondary CTE student will each receive an award of \$250 in addition to having their essay published in ACTE's *Techniques Magazine*.

This year, students are asked to respond to the following question, "How would you explain the value of career and technical

education to a new student?" The essay should be no less than 500 words in length for postsecondary and no more than 500 words in length for secondary students. All entrants must be enrolled in at least one CTE course. All essays must be received at ACTE Headquarters by Friday, November 18, 2005, to be considered. Submissions may be sent to: The Cliff Weiss Memorial Essay Contest, ACTE, 1410 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. For complete contest details please visit ACTE's website at [<http://www.acteonline.org/>].

Aquaponics Workshop

Have you considered constructing a school aquaponics system but do not have the funds to do so or the training to operate it? The solution might be attending the practical workshop, "Barrel Aquaponics – Construction and Operation" held at Camp Living Water, Bryson City, N.C., Oct. 10-11, 2005. Instruction will focus on aquaponics, which is a combination of aquaculture and hydroponics for mutual benefit. Lecture and AV presentations will include barrel system construction, selecting fish and plants to produce, management practices, maintaining water quality, system balance, day-by-day operation and considerations for expansion plans, which are adaptable to all types of environments.

Each attendee will be given an opportunity to construct a highly productive, small-scale system from barrels, capable of producing fish and a large variety of vegetables, greens and herbs. This will prove to be an innovative learning facility for students and teachers and will provide the experience needed before expanding to a larger system.

Special registration for agriculture teachers is available for \$25. The plumbing and pumps for construction of a barrel system is \$60 (not including barrels). For more information or to register, visit [www.aquacultureinternational.org]. For specific questions, e-mail Charlie Johnson: aqua@dnet.net.

National Collegiate Agricultural Ambassadors Program Launched

Collegiate FFA has selected 10 college students equipped with presentation and networking skills to promote agricultural understanding and development to serve as National Collegiate Agricultural Ambassadors.

The program's focus is developing and implementing a sustainable agricultural awareness program that influences and activates teachers and students at the community level to share the importance of agriculture.

Those selected to participate in the first group of ambassadors are:

- Pamela Bartholomew – University of Tennessee-Martin
- Stacia Berry – University of Wyoming
- David Bittner – Penn State

- Vanessa Brossman – Sam Houston State University
- Nichole Busdieker – University of Missouri
- Lindsey Calhoun – University of Kentucky
- Rudy Espinoza – Cornell University
- Jill Klepper – University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- Nicole Schmidt – University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Lindsey Small – Kansas State University

The 10 ambassadors were trained Aug. 8-12 at the American Farm Bureau Federation offices in Washington, D.C. Farm Bureau staff briefed the ambassadors about current agricultural issues and topics facing the industry. The ambassadors also worked on their presentation skills and participated in a media training session.

The collegiate ambassadors will begin traveling and making presentations to high school classrooms, community groups and other audiences interested in hearing a

clear, concise message on agriculture. Presentations will be based on four areas: economic importance, environmental stewardship, sound science and sustainable agriculture. If you are interested in learning more about the program or want to contact an ambassador near you, please contact Jill Casten, program manager, at 317-802-4556 or via e-mail at jjcasten@ffa.org.



Front row L-R: Lindsey Calhoun, Lindsey Small, Jill Klepper, Pamela Bartholomew, Nicole Schmidt, Nichole Busdieker
Back row L-R: Rudy Espinoza, Stacia Berry, Vanessa Brossman, David Bittner

 **Partnerships**



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Look for your next issue of *FFA Advisors Making a Difference* in December. It will feature stories on the national FFA convention, recruitment and diversity, as well as provide teaching resources and FFA news.